

Introduction / History:

Who was He writing to?:

- We don't know exactly what they were teaching, but we can loosely infer or reconstruct from John's letters that they:
 - Denied incarnation of Jesus as God
 - Denied & ability of Jesus' death to atone for sin
 - They disregarded commands to love each other
 - They claimed to be operating according to Holy Spirit's direction

John Likely Wrote Other Letters Too (Letter Intercepted by Diotrophes)

II John 7-9 *"Many deceivers do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh."
"Anyone who does not abide in the teaching of Christ does not have God."*

III John 11 *"Do not imitate what is evil, but what is good."
"The one who does good is of God, the one who does evil has not seen God."*

I John 1:1-4 Prologue

John says: *"We proclaim a message to you so that you may have fellowship with us, and our fellowship is with God the Father & His Son Jesus Christ."*

John Then Says Something Interesting

Vs. 4 *"We write these things so that OUR joy may be made complete."*

- Not your joy, but our joy.
- John & fellow apostles desired that all should have fellowship with Jesus Christ.

I. Walking In The Light 1:5 - 2:2

- Vs. 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."***
- Vs. 1 It was from the **beginning** (not just the Gospel, but before the foundations of the World)
 - What we **heard** with our own ears
 - What we **saw** with our own eyes
 - What we **beheld and handled** with our own hands concerning the Word of Life

This is a HUGE Statement Against Apostates Advocating Additional Teachings Beyond Jesus

What Is This Message We Proclaim? That God is Light & IN Him There Is No Darkness

- Understanding God is light was not a new concept for John's audience
 - **Genesis 1:3** One of first acts of creation was to light and separating the light from darkness.
Genesis 1:1-8 light is used **13 times**
 - **Genesis 15:17** God revealed Himself to Abraham as a smoking firepot & blazing torch.
 - **Exodus** God led Israel as a Pillar of Fire by night.
 - **Leviticus 24** God instructs people to provide oil so lamps in tabernacle may burn continually.
 - **Psalms 27:1** The Lord is my Light & my salvation
 - **Psalms 119** Your Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.
 - **Matthew 4:16** Jesus fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy
 - **John 1:4-9**

Consider What Jesus Then Said to His Disciples

- John 8:12 ***"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."***

In Other Words, God Had Baked Into Humanity The Symbolism of Himself As Light

- God continually reinforces the symbolism of light w/ 3 truths.
 1. Light represents His **Presence**
 2. Light Represents **His Revelation & Understand**
 3. Light Represents His **Salvation**.

Jesus-Just Like the Literal Sources of Light Before Him Is a Manifestation of God.

John Calls on This Imagery to Contrast Those Who Know God & Those Who Do Not.

Vs. 6-2:2 John Refutes 3 Separate Claims That Some Must Have Been Claiming

- He develops a pattern as he addresses these claims:
 1. He is going to reiterate what we assume was **the claim** by the ungodly
 2. What **the consequences** of such a claim means or looks like.
 3. What the **cure** should be of someone who DOES have or desires fellowship w/ God.

Claim #1 by the Ungodly Vs. 6-7 “We Have Fellowship With God”

- **Vs. 6a** John reveals the **Claim** *“some claim to have fellowship with God, but still walk in darkness”*
- **Vs. 6b** John reveals the **Consequence**
 - the result is that these people **lie and do not practice truth**.
 - They claim to know God, but they **reject what Christ has taught**.
 - They claimed fellowship with God while **still practicing sin as a lifestyle**.
- **Vs. 7** John reveals the **Cure**. Jesus’ cleanses us from all sin.
“Walking in the light as He Himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sins.”
 - **Vs. 3-4** John already highlighted the unity of believers to one another & to God Himself.
 - **Vs. 2:19** reminds his readers that some had separated because they were not actually believers.
 - By default, fellowship w/ God & other believers is impossible by living in darkness.
 - Fellowship & walking in the light is **ONLY** possible through Jesus’ blood.
 - **“Cleanses”** (referring to blood) is **present tense**
 - Jesus continues to cleanse us as often as we sin.
 - This is in **NO WAY** a license to sin.

Claim #2 by the Ungodly Vs. 8-9 “We Have No Sin”

- **Vs. 8a** John reveals the **Claim** *“some claim to have fellowship with God and say they don’t sin.”*
 - We might better translate this as they don’t struggle with sin.
 - These guys seemed to deny outright that their activities were sinful at all.
- **Vs. 8b** John reveals the **Consequence** *“deception of our own selves, truth is not in us.”*
 - James describes a man in a mirror, sees reality, then departs & completely disregards the image.
 - John specifically indicates that we deceive **ourselves**.
 - We aren’t necessarily deceiving others. • We certainly aren’t deceiving God.

Illustration: Indiana Jones Last Crusade *“Everybody’s Lost But Me”*

- **Vs. 9** John reveals the **Cure** *“when we confess our sins, God cleanses us.”*
 - The very denial of sin can only be remedied by the recognition & confession of sin.
 - **Vs. 9** **“Confess”** = **Present** ongoing recognition of sin by us
“Cleanse” = Aorist completed action by God.

Our ongoing recognition needing Savior is premise upon which God legally declares us righteous.

- Righteous is a legal term. • This is about our position in Him.
- We should not interpret this confession as an activity that keeps us saved.
 - Specific unconfessed sin **DOES NOT** disqualify us from eternity with God.

Lastly, John Clearly Reveals That God Does This Because of Who HE Is

Vs. 9 *“God Forgives Our Sins Because He is Faithful & Righteous”*

- John is clear that this is only possible because of the character of God Himself.
- He does this because this is Who He is.

Claim #3 by the Ungodly Vs. 10-2:2 “We Have Not Ever Sinned”

- Vs. 10 John reveals the Claim *“some are claiming to never have sinned or have no sin nature.”*

(Multiple opinions about this statement. It can appear as a repeat of Vs.8)

- **Explanation #1** The Perfect tense of “sinned” implies a present state as a result of past action
 - They may be saying we don’t sin now, and we’ve never sinned in the past.
- **Explanation #2** Slightly more universal rejection of past sin.
 - The perfect tense refers to the universality of sin nature in men.
 - **Romans 3:23** *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”*
 - Original sin occurred in the past, & is still a reality today for all men.
- Vs. 10 John reveals the Consequence *“....we make Him a liar & His Word is not in us.”*
- God has said that all men sin • To deny personal sin or sin within humanity is against God’s truth.

Before We Get to the Cure of the Dilemma in Vs. 10 We Start A New Chapter

Howard Marshall considers 2:1-2 a continuation of John’s Pattern in Verses 5-10

- Vs. 2:1a is viewed as a slight “side-note” or parenthetical thought before he returns to his point.
 - John’s aim is that believers would recognize their sin, confess it, and strive to abstain from sin.
- Vs. 21b John reveals the Cure *“God has provided an advocate for us to deal with sin.”*
 - John highlights that Jesus is our legal representative in God’s courtroom.
 - Jesus pleads on our behalf before the Father.
 - He does not plead our innocence as though there is no evidence for guilt.
 - He is pleading for our pardon on the basis of our confession & his payment for the sin.
- 2:2b Jesus is not just the atoning sacrifice for John’s audience but for all who confess him as Lord.

II. I John 2:3-11 Keeping God’s Commands

- John is still concerned about people who claim to know God, but deny Jesus.
- He will address this more through a dialogue directed at believers.

Verses 3-6 John Is Going To Answer the Question “How Do We Know If We Know God”

- Vs 3 *“By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.”*
 - He has just railed on those people who claim to have fellowship w/ God but do not.

The Natural Question by Believers Could Be “Do I Know God”

- We can know that we know God by how we keep His commandments
- John is **NOT** saying that keeping God’s commandments is a prerequisite for salvation
- John is not saying that keeping God’s commandments is how we become or stay saved.
- John highlights that our intimate experiential knowledge of God leads us to natural obedience.
- A heart that has not been changed for God is still bent towards sinning.
- An unsaved heart does not naturally desire to obey God

Vs. 4-6 *“The one who says “I have come to know Him” and does not keep His commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him.”*

John Reveals That the Identifying Test of Knowing God Is Our Daily Walk

- Vs. 6 does our daily life produce a reflection of the life of Jesus?

However.....What Jesus’ Life Looks Like Is Love For People

- Vs. 7-11 Appears like a new section, but most likely a subsection of what we have already discussed.
- Vs. 7-8 *“I’m not writing a new commandment to you but an old commandment”*
“On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you.....”

1. What is the Commandment?

We are given clues in the fabric of Vs. 9-11 – “**Love One Another**”

2. Why Is This NOT a New Commandment?

- *“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” John 13:34*
- It was new when Jesus gave it. It is no longer new to John’s audience.

3. What IS New About This Commandment?

- Vs. 8 there is a paradigm shift that previously did not exist.
- John is referring to the actualization, or realization of the body of Christ loving each other.
- The fullness of the command is being revealed in a way that had not happened before.

Conclusion:

John is clearly addressing the claims many people were making to have fellowship with God but they denied Jesus. He's addressing this dilemma to his saved audience.

1. Today As Believers We Have Benefits of Being Declared Righteous – In Right Standing w/ God
 - We have the benefits of eternal security in Christ Jesus.
 - Sometimes we temporarily deny a particular sin or activity in our lives.
 - The Holy Spirit will eventually convict us of this.
 - We Do Not make it a practiced lifestyle of sin like these people who “claimed” to know God.
 - We should still recognize the activity of confessing our sins.
 - Not for salvation-but in the interest of recognizing that we transgressed against God
 - There is a humbling & relieving dynamic when our sin is confessed.
2. We may not struggle with whether we actually know God as John's audience may have wondered.
 - Evaluating our lives according to the manner in which Jesus walked IS appropriate.
 - From day to day does my life reflect Jesus' life more and more?
 - Do I love others as Jesus loved others?
 - Not necessarily miraculously healing them & multiplying fish & bread for them.
 - Do I have a compassion for the lost as he wept for the lost?
 - Do I grumble with serving others as though its an obligation & not a privilege?