

I John 1:5 – 2:2

Intro. • After reading these verses, do you find them problematic?

- Explain some of the possible problems of interpretation in these verses.

1:5 • Is there a similarity in the transition from “life” to “light” as there is in John’s gospel, John 1:4-9?

- What is meant by “God is light”?
 - God is holy?
 - God is visible?
 - God reveals Himself?
 - God exposes sin?
- Can you think of any other New Testament statements which declare that “God is...”?
- How does the statement, “in Him is no darkness at all,” clarify or expand the previous statement that “God is light”?
 - the negative side of the preceding positive?
 - denies monism of light and darkness dwelling in one Being?
 - asserts there is no evil in God’s goodness?
 - emphasizes that God’s character allows for no incongruity, inconsistency, imperfection or relativity?

1:6 • Notice the six (6) “if” clauses in verses 1:6 – 2:1. What do they mean?

- the “if” of an hypothetical argument?
- the “if” of an anticipated possibility?
- the “if” of explaining a situation?
- the “if” of comparison with others who have?
- the “if” of projecting what should be?
- the “if” of conditional contingency to subsequent phrases?
- the “if” of linear cause and effect?
- Has the pronoun “we” changed reference from verses 1-5? If so, who does the “we” refer to in verses 1:6 – 2:1?
- When John employs the “if we say...” phrase in 1:6,8,10, is he implying that the statement is....
 - accurate?
 - erroneous?
 - hypothetical?
- What does the assertion, “we have fellowship with Him”, mean?
 - we are “partakers of the divine nature”? (cf. II Pet. 1:4)
 - we are “joined to the Lord in one spirit”? (cf. I Cor. 6:17)
 - we have a common union of spiritual condition and function with God in Christ?
- What does it mean to “walk in darkness”? (cf. John 8:12)
 - to live as an unregenerate, non-Christian? (cf. Eph. 5:8)
 - to conduct one’s life in the context of nocturnal hiddenness? (cf. Job 24:13-17)
 - to act without God’s revelation and/or illumination?
 - to derive character in one’s behavior that is not the character of God?
- How does this result in John’s conclusion that “we lie”?
 - a delusion of ignorance?
 - a false assertion of fact?
 - a behavioral misrepresentation of the character of God?
- What is meant by “we do not the truth”?
 - we do not believe Christian doctrine?
 - we do not conform to behavioral patterns of Christian living?
 - we do not keep practicing the Christian life, until we get it right?
 - we do not allow the life of the personified Truth of Jesus to be lived out in our behavior?

- 1:7**
- Does the “if” clause in this verse have a different meaning than the “if” clause in the previous verse?
 - What does it mean to “walk in the light”?
 - to live by the directed guidance of God’s revelation and illumination?
 - to derive one’s behavior from the character of God?
 - to live openly and transparently as a Christian?
 - to be enlightened unto an ever-increasing spirituality?
 - If “God is light” (vs. 5), how can He be “in the light”?
 - Are the last two phrases (“we have fellowship with one another” and “the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin”) conditioned by and contingent upon our “walking in the light”? If so, is this a “work” of human responsibility and performance?
 - Does “fellowship with one another” mean ...
 - the common spiritual condition of Christians?
 - a common social participation in Christian community?
 - the commonality of expressing God’s character in the Body of Christ?
 - When John refers to “the blood of Jesus cleansing us from all sin,” is he referring to ...
 - the mystic application of Jesus’ blood to remove the pollution of sin?
 - the redemptive efficacy of Jesus death to remove the consequences of sin?
 - the sanctifying effect of the “finished work” of Christ in the process of holiness?
 - the cathartic action of the work of Jesus as He purifies the sinful tendencies of the “flesh”?
- 1:8**
- Is the “if we say” clause used in the same manner as in verse 6? (cf. questions on vs. 6)
 - What was meant by the assertion, “we have no sin”?
 - we have no sin-tendencies in our “flesh”? (cf. Rom. 7:17)
 - we have no guilt or condemnation for sinful behavior? (cf. Rom. 8:1)
 - we are made perfect in Christ, and cannot sin?
 - we are “spiritual”, and the externalities of sin are but an illusion?
 - we have been forgiven in Christ (past, present, future), so we cannot be charged with sin?
 - we are “one with Jesus”, so every expression is Jesus’ activity, even if it appears to be otherwise?
 - we are forever saved, so sinful expressions are but an irrelevancy?
 - How do those who make such an assertion “deceive themselves”?
 - they are self-deceived through ignorance or confusion?
 - they allow themselves to be led into error by false-teachers? (cf. 2:26)
 - they allow themselves to be misused and misled by the Satanic Deceiver, who is the “Spirit of Deceit”? (cf. 4:6)
 - Does “the truth is not in us” mean ...
 - we have no understanding or comprehension of the gospel of truth?
 - we have not been enlightened to a spiritual understanding and knowledge of truth?
 - we do not have the One who is Truth, Jesus Christ, living in us?
 - we have not allowed the personified Truth of the indwelling Christ to function in us?
- 1:9**
- Does the “if” phrase correspond with the “if” phrase of vs. 6? ...vs. 7? ...vs. 8?
 - What is involved in “confessing our sins”?
 - admitting our sins to a priest?
 - acknowledging our sins in a public assembly of the Christian community?
 - being sorry for our missteps and mistakes?
 - agreeing with God that our behavior has been misrepresentative of His character?
 - recognizing that we have “missed the mark” of Christian expectations?
 - an emotional or visible display of contrition?
 - enumerating the specific and particular sins in our behavior?
 - assenting to the fact that we are a sinner who needs to be forgiven and regenerated?

- Does the statement that God “is faithful” mean ...
 - He is faithful to His character?
 - He is faithful to divine justice?
 - He is faithful to His promises?
 - Does the statement that God “is righteous” mean ...
 - He is a just Judge?
 - His character is that of righteousness?
 - He is right in all that He does?
 - Is the “forgiving of our sins” ...
 - an additional act of God to provide forgiveness of on-going sins?
 - an automatic benefit to all Christians for all sins subsequent to regeneration?
 - an application of the satisfying sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for sin?
 - an absolution of sin declared by the heavenly Judge?
 - an arbitrary act of God dependent on whether we have properly and sufficiently confessed and repented of our sins?
 - an absolute and objective action of God to pardon and forgive the sins of an unregenerate sinner?
 - Does the “cleansing us from all unrighteousness” refer to ...
 - the past action of God’s cleansing us from all sin and making us white as snow?
 - the continuing action of God’s enacting holiness in our behavior?
 - the psychological action of overcoming any sense of condemnation?
 - the reprogramming of our fleshly desires?
 - the cleansing action of the “finished work” of Jesus Christ as He deals with our misrepresentative behavior?
- 1:10**
- Is the “if we say...” phrase used in the same manner as in verses 6 and 8?
 - How is the assertion, “we have no sinned,” different from the assertion, “we have no sin” in verse 8?
 - we have no ever, at any time, sinned?
 - everything we have done was ordained and predestined by God?
 - we have no sinned because sin is a figment of one’s imagination, erroneous thinking, an illusion?
 - we have not sinned because there is no absolute standard for determining what “sin” is?
 - we have no sinned since becoming Christians, because we are “Christ-ones” who are “spiritual”?
 - we have not sinned since becoming Christians, for sin is an irrelevant preoccupation with externalities?
 - they are not essentially different?
 - How does the assertion “we have not sinned” make God a liar?
 - because God has said that “all have sinned” (cf. Rom. 3:23)
 - because Jesus Christ is the only sinless One?
 - because we attribute to God behavior that is misrepresentative of His character?
 - because we disintegrate the integral oneness of God’s Being and Act?
 - because we equate God with the devil, who is “the father of lies”? (cf. Jn. 8:44)
 - Does “His word is not in us” mean ...
 - we have never received Christ as our Savior and Lord?
 - we do not believe the message of the gospel?
 - we have not memorized the Scripture in our heart?
 - we no longer have Jesus Christ dwelling within our spirit?
 - we are disallowing the functional operation of Christ’s life in our behavior?

- 2:1**
- When John explains that the objective of his writing was “that you may not sin,” does he mean ...
 - that you may never sin again?
 - that you should not take sin lightly?
 - that you should not regard sin as a normal part of the Christian life?
 - that you should overcome habituated sin-patterns?
 - that you should not regard sinful expressions and acts as an inevitable necessity in the Christian life?
 - that you should not forget the provision of God’s grace in Jesus Christ to overcome sin and live righteously?
 - Does the “if” clause (“if anyone sins”) have the same meaning as the “if” clauses in 1:7 and 1:9?
 - When John writes, “If anyone sins”, is he ...
 - questioning whether Christians will sin?
 - hypothetically speculating that Christians will sin?
 - realistically asserting, “when anyone sins...”?
 - In what way does Jesus presently function as a “Paraclete” in the lives of Christians?
 - as a Comforter or Consoler when we sin?
 - as a Counselor to advise and instruct us in Christian living?
 - as a defense attorney to argue our case before the Divine Judge?
 - as an Advocate to plead His righteous act (cf. Rom. 5:18) before the Father?
 - as a priestly Intercessor having made the satisfying sacrifice for sin on our behalf?
 - as an Intercessor who laid down His life for others and continues to do so?
 - as an Encourager to encourage us to live out of His righteousness?
 - as a Helper who empowers us with His righteous character?
 - Why is the living Lord Jesus identified as “Jesus Christ, the righteous”?
 - because Jesus was an is sinless?
 - because Jesus encourages us to live righteously?
 - because Jesus is a Just Judge?
 - because Jesus is the Righteous One who dwells in the Christian to express His righteous character in our behavior?
 - because Jesus, as the Righteous One, supersedes the power of sin in our lives?
- 2:2**
- What does it mean to assert that Jesus “is the propitiation for our sins”?
 - Jesus paid the price to placate or appease the angry God over sin?
 - Jesus was the sacrifice that satisfied the legal requirements to atone for sin?
 - Jesus is the agent of character-generation that satisfies God’s intents for righteousness in man?
 - Jesus, by the substitutionary, atoning sacrifice of His death, continues to be that which satisfies the just character of God when we misrepresent Him by sin?
 - In what sense is Jesus the “propitiation ... for the whole world”?
 - the universal salvation and reconciliation of all men?
 - the universality of the efficacy of Christ’s death for all men?
 - the universal availability and potential of reconciling all men to Christ by faith?
 - the cosmic reintegration of the created world into harmony with God?
- Conc.**
- How would you express, in your own words, the primary import of this passage?
 - Has John implied that sinful, misrepresentative behavior does cause a break in functional fellowship with God?
 - Was John concerned about the incongruity of (alleged) spiritual condition and behavioral expression?
 - Was John concerned about the residual effects of false-teaching by some who had defected from the Christian fellowships in the area?