

Freddy Davis  
321 Anton Dr., Tallahassee, FL 32312  
freddy.davis@capitolcom.org  
850-339-2679  
www.capitolcom.org/florida

**Capitol Commission Bible Study  
Light and Darkness  
1 John 1:1-10**

**Prologue - 1 John 1:1-5**

John begins his letter with a statement about the truth of his testimony concerning Christ. He asserts that the words and works of Christ were not simply abstract, questionable moral teachings, as the Gnostics said, but things he had actually witnessed first hand. In verse 1, he speaks of *what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands*. He wanted his readers to know that Jesus Christ – the *Word of Life* – was a real, objective, historical person.

One false Gnostic belief was that the true God was so pure he would never soil himself by coming to the evil material world. But John refuted that teaching by saying in verse 2: *the life was manifested* on earth. In other words, God in heaven did become a human being (Jesus Christ), and his coming provided the means for humanity to gain *eternal life*.

John, though, was not only working to counter false teachings. He wanted to also facilitate fellowship in the church. In verse 3, he states that part of his purpose in writing was *that you too may have fellowship with us*. This did not refer simply to human social interaction, but included actual fellowship with God. He said: *“and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”*



In verse 5, John begins dealing with the concept of light and darkness, and notes how it relates to the person of God himself. He said, *“God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.”* Here, the word “light” means moral and spiritual purity. Then, to strengthen his point, he says, *“in him there is no darkness at all.”* That is, there is no sin or evil (darkness) in God whatsoever. Grasping the absolute holiness of God is fundamental to an understanding of a Christian worldview.

**Three False Claims about Relationship with God - 1 John 1:6-10**

Beginning with verse 6, John starts dealing with one of his main concerns. The Gnostic teachers had been making false declarations about what it meant to have a relationship with God. John set the record straight by addressing three falsehoods.

The first false claim was that it is possible to live an immoral lifestyle and still fellowship with God. The biblical teaching is just the opposite. Sin and God can no more coexist in the same place than can light and darkness. John asserts that those who make this claim tell lies *and do not practice the truth*. To further emphasize this point, he says, in verse 7, that Christians receive two particular benefits from living in fellowship with God – *fellowship with one another* and *cleansing from sin*.

In verse 8, John deals with the second false Gnostic claim – that *we have no sin*. Anyone making this claim is attempting to say that individuals can live a life free of sin. But John indicates that those who believe that *are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us*. The remedy for the sin problem is not denial of its existence, but confession and repentance. In verse 9, John declares, *If we confess our sins He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*.

The third false Gnostic claim is found in verse 10. This claim was that *we have not sinned*. They made this claim based on the belief that there is no connection between the human spirit and the physical body. Thus what happens with the body has no affect on the spirit. This directly contradicts God’s revelation about human nature. So, in making this claim, the Gnostics *make Him (God) a liar*. Human beings do have a spiritual essence, but, in this life, it is not separated from the body. When a person commits sin, it is not just a physical act, but also contaminates the spirit and prevents fellowship with God.

**Why This Passage is Important Today**

Simply put, the reason the truths expressed in this passage are important is because they are true. God really does objectively exist and has revealed himself to mankind. Beyond that, we do have a sin problem which separates us from him. But God has provided a way to have the sin problem resolved. Those who personally receive Christ enter an objective personal relationship with him, and the sin which separates humanity from God is forgiven and removed.