

The Message from the Beginning

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The apostle John was a clever writer. He used the theme of Genesis to introduce Jesus: “In the Beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). The Word became flesh and lived in the world. The significance of this cannot be overstated. John shows us a *new beginning; a new creation that is begun with Jesus*.

Later in his life, John wrote three epistles. The first letter conveys the meaning of the new creation. John could write about this because of who he was. He had been with Jesus: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us” (1 John 1:1-2).

John was called by Jesus to be an apostle when he was a young man; likely a teenager. He witnessed many miracles. He listened intently to Jesus teach. He was the only apostle to witness the horrific crucifixion of Jesus. He saw the resurrected Lord. After forty days of being with the resurrected Lord, John saw Him ascend to Heaven.

John sacrificially devoted the rest of his life testifying to what he witnessed of Jesus. But, John did more than simply recount what he saw. He taught people the meaning of what he witnessed.

The blessings of believing John’s testimony, the Gospel, are significant. We can have fellowship with him and Christ (1 John 1:3). Our life can be given new meaning and overflowing joy (1 John 1:4). But, how can we enjoy being part of the family of the Word? In the remaining part of First John chapter one, John answers this question.

1. Walking in the Light. John wrote, “This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin” (1 John 1:5-7).

John explains the message they heard from the Beginning. What they heard and saw in Jesus was light. There was no darkness in God. But, what does this mean? We must walk in the light. We cannot walk in darkness. In other words, new creation means a new life.

In more practical terms, we cannot live in sin if we want to live in the family of God. Light exposes darkness. Jesus once said that this was the reason some refuse His light: men love darkness more than light because their deeds are evil (John 3:19-21). Living in the light of God is how we are cleansed and protected by the blood of Christ.

2. The danger of self-deception. John warned about claiming to have fellowship with God while living in darkness (1 John 1:6, 8). Such claims are evidence that self-deception has occurred. Self-deception is how sin advances in our lives. Like Eve, we may deceive ourselves into thinking that something good will come from sin. Or, with a twisted view of the blood of Christ, we may convince ourselves that we are entitled to sin.

By coming to the light, we must turn away from the darkness of sin. Turning from sin is not easy. Such change begins with a strong resolve.

3. Confessing our sins. How can we live in the light and protect be protected from self-deception? Confessing our sins. John wrote, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us” (1 John 1:9-10).

Thinking of someone unwilling to confess his or her sins sounds extreme. There may be some who refuse to acknowledge their sin. However, John is not writing to just anyone. He is writing to Christians. Haven’t Christians stopped sinning by coming into the light of God?

In this part of the chapter, John is writing about the process of growing into a new creation. We are to examine our lives. Where we find sinful attitudes and behaviors, we are to confess them to God and ask for His forgiveness. Then, we are to grow new attitudes and behaviors that are reflective of Him and His Son. This takes time and diligence.

4. Cleansing our sins. John emphasizes the power of the blood of Christ to cleanse our sins. When we confess our sins, cleansing is promised. Cleansing involves purging and purifying. Also, the word means “to free from the guilt of sin.” Confessing our sins to God is cathartic for our spirit. We confess our sins in faith that He will forgive our sins. Through this process, we can be renewed spiritually and emotionally.

Conclusion

The first recorded words of God in Creation were, “Let there be light” (Gen. 1:3). In addition to bringing order to the earth, these words were spoken in anticipation of Christ, the Light of the World (2 Cor. 4:6). Christ coming to the world had/has a profound consequence on us. The message that John heard from the Beginning was about love, light, and transformation.

By Christ, a new day has dawned in the world. A new understanding has been revealed. Therefore, we cannot continue to live in the darkness of sin. We can and must come into the light of God through faith in the blood of Christ to forgive our sins. We must become committed to shining God’s light into our hearts to expose and expel darkness. By doing this, the light of Christ will lead us home.