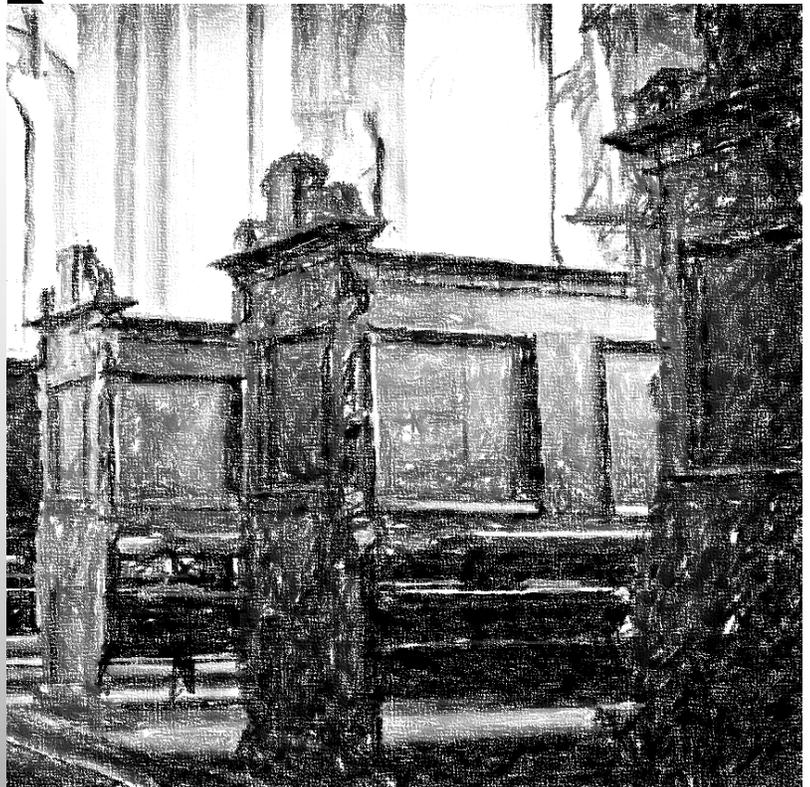




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# The Epistle of First John

Responding to Threats Against The Church's One Foundation

1 John 1:5-2:2

In verses five and following, the Apostle John sets up what is called a 'binary notion.' Simply stated, a binary is two categories that are opposed to each other. For example, we see binaries all the time in our modern movies and stories. Consider the following:

Batman vs. Joker	Superman vs. Lex Luther
Light vs. Dark	Good vs. Evil
Hero vs. Villains	Allies vs. Axis

It is quite obvious from our text that the binary that John sets forth is Light versus Darkness. More specifically, John attributes Light to God and darkness to sin, lies, and the kingdom of the devil. John is showing that there are only two ways - two realms. In other words, one cannot ride the fence between Light and darkness. There is no middle ground. God is Light, and in Him, there is no darkness at all.

And so, if we say that we have fellowship with God, yet we walk in darkness... we are not only a hypocrite but are lying to ourselves and living in deception. One must keep in mind that the realms of Light and darkness are

antithetical - opposing. Just as people would think it peculiar to belong to both the Republican and Democratic parties, it is even more peculiar to say or act in a way that affirms Light and darkness at the same time!

We need to pause at this moment and remember from previous lessons that John is certainly not a Gnostic. If you can recall, Gnostics divided life into two realms: material and spiritual. For the Gnostic, material is evil, and spiritual is good. Perhaps we could say that the Gnostic deemed material as darkness and spiritual as Light. John, though, shows that Light and darkness are not necessarily attached to material and spiritual but attached to God (Light) and sin (darkness). Simply stated, both the material and spiritual realms have been infected with the darkness of sin. However, through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, the remedy for humanity is not the escape of the soul from this material world but the restoration of both body and soul through the finished work of Jesus.

And so, the Christian's allegiance is not to spiritual things, as if they are Light, and rejection of the material as

If they are darkness. But instead, our allegiance is to God, who is Light. The Lord who created everything material and spiritual is Light. And sin (darkness) infects God's creation..

Now, speaking of darkness, John is very clear that wandering in the darkness has a very clear and definable makeup and flavor. Consider the following binary of Light vs. Darkness:

<u>Darkness</u>	<u>Light</u>
Fellowship with Devil	Fellowship with God
Walk in Deceit	Walk in Forgiveness
Walk with Denial of Sin	Walk in Confession
Life is based on a lie	Life is based on truth

Again, there is no middle ground between darkness and Light. And so, a life of darkness is living within a lie – a denial of reality. However, a life of Light is authentic living – a life based in reality and genuine truth. More specifically, John says that a life lived in the Light is not a life where we never sin, but a life where we do not seek to hide that sin from God through deception and lies.

What this means is that when we confess our sins, we are not living in darkness, even though sins might sound awfully dark. But instead, confessing sin is living in truth – it is calling a spade a spade. It is shining light on dark deeds.

We must avoid the pitfalls of the Legalists and Libertines! Legalists are those individuals in life that live in darkness, always concealing their sins by doing all sorts of good things to distract themselves and others from the skeletons in their closets. They are living a lie. Libertines are those individuals on the opposite side of the spectrum that live in darkness, always celebrating their sins by trying to convince themselves and others that evil is good. They are living a lie when they attempt to display the deeds of darkness as if they are of the Light. False prophets and deceptive people will always cry out peace when there is no peace and will deny sin when there really is sin, creating lives of deceit.

But you, O Christian, are a child of the Light, which means you confess sins. You know that walking in the darkness is ignoring or denying your sin – living a lie. But when you confess your sins, you are conceding to reality - admitting of your wrongdoing and your ever-constant need of God's forgiveness. Don't conceal or celebrate sin, O Christian, for that only leads to the deadly consequence of shutting yourself in dark with no Light – walking blindly through life. The Christian does not belong to darkness where sins are concealed or celebrated, but confessed, and confess boldly before Christ, for in Christ there is complete forgiveness!



