

Holiness of God

1 John 1:5

Introduction

Even though 1 John is not a theological treatise, it is full of theology. John wrote the introduction (1-4) with the focus on the Word of Life...the Person of Jesus Christ and His message, and how that the truths that he declares is based on his eyewitness to Him. He goes on further by introducing us to God...John starts with the character of God to move us to the points about sin. But before we can know about sin, John says that God is light. This is a profound statement because John makes sure that his readers are aware of the theological truths about God, namely His holiness. John does not say "God is love" or "God is mercy" (even though both are true and profound statements) but that "God is light". Let us look at what he says about God is light.

I. God is light

- In Himself

- Not "a" light or "the" light
- God appears as light

- Moses saw God's back and he had to veil his face (**Exodus 33-34**; cf. **2 Corinthians 3:7, 12**)

- **1 Timothy 6:15-16**

- which God will bring about in his own time-God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can*

- **Psalm 104:1-2**

- O LORD my God, you are very great; you are clothed with splendor and majesty. He wraps himself in light as with a garment; he stretches out the heavens like a tent*

- God is source of light

Note: All knowledge of holiness and truth comes from Him

- **Psalm 27:1**

- LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?*

- Light is life

- **John 1:4**

- In him was life, and that life was the light of men.*

- **John 8:12**

- When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

Transition: God is light, and He is the source of light which is the same as life, but we also see that light is truth and holy.

- Light is true

- **Proverbs 6:23**

- For these commands are a lamp, this teaching is a light, and the corrections of discipline are the way to life,*

- **Psalm 119:105, 130**

- Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*

- The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple.*

- Light is holy

- **Hebrews 12:14, 29**

- without holiness no one will see the Lord.*

- For our "God is a consuming fire."*

- **Isaiah 57:15**

- For this is what the high and lofty One says—he who lives forever, whose name is holy*

Transition: This is the most important part of what John says about God being light and in him there no darkness at all and that has to do with His character—His holiness. Why does John start with this? To understand salvation we have to start with the holiness of God because without knowing His holiness, we can never understand or know that we need to be saved from sin and darkness. John says that “in Him is no darkness at all” and this is another of his polemic statement—light and darkness.

II. Holiness of God

- What is holiness

Note: Holy from both the Greek and Hebrew words mean separate, distinct.

- No one can compare to Him

- **Exodus 15:11**

“Who among the gods is like you, O LORD? Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?”

Note: His holiness is His purity. He is the standard of holiness and we are judged by that (**Romans 3:23**). We see His holiness in creation (It was very good) and in the law (**Romans 7:12**)

- Light vs darkness (in him there is no darkness at all)

Note: Darkness is antithesis of God...it represents the sinful, worldly system (**Matt 4:16, John 3:19**); represents hell (**Matt 25:30**); represents separation from God (Luke 23:44). God calls us out of the darkness into His light (**1 Peter 2:9**). Light is salvation from God revealed through Jesus Christ.

Note: He cannot be part of darkness (in Him is no darkness at all)

- **Habakkuk 1:13**

Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrong.

- **Job 34:10**

So listen to me, you men of understanding. Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong.

- **John 1:5**

The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not overcome it.

III. Jesus Christ, the revelation of holiness

- Holiness revealed in Christ

- **John 1:18**

No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known (explained Him).

- **Hebrews 1:1-3**

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining by his powerful word.

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- God gives us light through Christ Jesus (**2 Corinthians 4:4-6**)

The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

- **Isaiah 6:1-10**

- Lord high and lifted up—Adonai: sovereign one...title of YHWH
- Angels—6 wings, covering the face and the feet (see Moses' burning bush saga)
- Holy, holy, holy (**Revelations 4:8**)
- Isaiah's reaction—doomed, destruction upon him. Why? Sin from the heart (lips)
- Forgiveness of God—note that his lips must be cleansed.

- V8-10 the commission of Isaiah; his message to Israel would result them in not believing and justly deserving judgment
- **John 12:36-41**
 - V38 – **Isaiah 53:1**
 - V 41—John says that Isaiah saw Christ on the throne, high and lifted up. What implication is this? Jesus Christ is the holiness of God revealed to us. (**John 1:14**)
 - Jesus' holiness revealed in the cross—he died a sinless death. He did not die as a sinner, but that He was imputed upon Himself our sins.

Conclusion

The forefront of Christian theology is the holiness of God. When man sinned, he fell into darkness and became alienated from God. Before we can be saved, we must start with God's holiness. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (**Proverbs 1:7**). When we consider the holiness of God and contemplate on it—we will be like Isaiah, recognizing the reality of our sins and its effects, namely death. We then will come to His presence and find mercy and grace through Christ Jesus alone.