

# 1 John 2 Notes

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## ***Conditions For Fellowship (1:5-2:2)***

- Confession of sin (1:8-2:2).
  - John continues to discuss the test of obedience in the first chapter. Beginning in 2:7, John discusses the test of love. Beginning in 2:18, he discusses the test of truth. Three false claims to knowledge are stated in vss. 4, 6, and 9. Each of these claims is denied and the evidence of the true knowledge of God is proclaimed.
  - As John resumes his discourse on sin and forgiveness, we see a striking change of mood. Whereas earlier he was focusing on his opponents and their false teaching, now he speaks about these matters as they affect followers of Christ.
  - There is no question in his mind that sin and obedience to God are irreconcilable. Sin is the enemy. The intent of the Christian must always remain the same -- not to commit sin. The answer to lapsing into sin is the forgiveness of God made available by Jesus.
  - Our advocate does not maintain our innocence but confesses our guilt. He is the atonement, the appeasement, or the covering for our sins. This atonement is not limited as the Calvinist believes, but is available to all.

## ***Conduct In Fellowship (2:3-27)***

- Imitation of Christ (2:3-11).
  - There appears to be a break in subject matter with what precedes as the author now turns to the topic of knowing God. Knowing God is a corollary to the idea of walking in the light and of having fellowship with God.
  - True knowledge of God does not end with speculative ideas, but with obedience to God's law and with the presence of God's love in the Christian. "Perfected" carries with it the idea of continuous growth and development; it describes both state and process.
  - When we are in fellowship with God, walking in the light, we also walk in love. We are all members of God's family, so we ought to love one another. This was even an "old commandment" back in the days of Moses (Leviticus 19:18). But it was also a "new commandment" which lies at the point of its realization and fulfillment. Even though the Old Testament taught the duty to love, never before had perfect love been so plainly manifested as if was in Christ. So the newness is not in the command to love, but in the perfect manifestation of love in the person of Christ (cf. John 13:34).

- The hate for one's fellow Christian shows that the light they follow is nothing but darkness. Hate is the absence of the deeds of love. To walk in the light is to love one's brother, and God's love will express itself in actions. Love unexpressed is not love at all. When it is absent, hate is present.
- John now gives us a positive test of living in the light. Unlike his opponents, his concern is with deeds, not claims. The one who does not live in the light will not manifest God's love. The one who loves and abides in the light will never cause the offense the opponents do.
- One who hates his brother is not simply in the darkness, but will spend his life in darkness. Though he has eyes, he can see nothing. Life is a search without direction.
- Separation from the world (2:12-17).
  - John addresses "little children," which refers to all children of God (vs. 12). In vss. 13-14, "fathers," "young men," and "children" all refer to different levels of spiritual maturity. John gives them the most basic words of assurance possible. They have received forgiveness through the blood of Jesus. In this knowledge they may stand firm. Because they are forgiven, they may also have fellowship with God and true knowledge of Him.
  - Having assured the Christians of their position before God -- i.e., their sins are forgiven, they know the Father, and they have victory over the devil -- John moves to application. He warns them not to love the world. "World" occurs six times in vss. 15-17 and it represents the evil system under the grip of the devil (John 12:31; 14:30; 1 John 5:19).
  - The "lust of the flesh" refers to a selfish outlook that pursues its own ends, independent of God and of one's fellowman. The "lust of the eyes" can mean everything that entices the eyes. It is a tendency to be captivated by outward show. The "pride of life" is one who glories in himself or in his possessions. It is reflected in whatever status symbol is important to them or defines their identity.
- Affirmation of their unction (2:18-27).
  - We are now in the last time or dispensation. The "antichrist" is one who is against Christ or in opposition to Him. In fact, there are many who would have these characteristics. They are going to be ones who have left the fellowship of Christians because they did not abide in the doctrine of Christ. When they leave the doctrine of Christ, they furnish proof that they are in error and are not to be extended fellowship.
  - The author returns to the heretical claims of his opponents. They probably claimed superior knowledge because they had received an exclusive ritual anointing that gave them knowledge. "Anointing" is

used infrequently in the New Testament, but Luke and Paul do use it with reference to the Holy Spirit. The revelation of God's word from the Holy Spirit gives Christians a clear view of true religion, thus securing them from error.

- The "antichrist" is fully identified as someone who rejects Jesus Christ. When denying Jesus, one must deny the Father as well. The antichrist is not some mystical being which will appear before the millennium, but is one who simply denies Jesus. Therefore, many still can be honestly referred to as "antichrists."

### ***Characteristics Of Fellowship (2:28-3:24)***

- Purity of life (2:28-3:3).
  - In contrast to the "antichrists," John's readers are exhorted to make certain that they "remain" in the teaching of Christ. If they do, they will "remain" in the Son and Father.
  - The first occurrence of "know" in vs. 29 is from a word meaning "the sense of perceiving an absolute truth," while the second occurrence of "know" means "to know by experience," "recognize," or "come to perceive." John reiterates a familiar point that Christians are not verified so much by what they claim as by how they live (Romans 6:18; cf. Luke 1:6).
  - For John, to be born of God and to become His child means to accept as the standard for conduct the Father's righteousness as revealed through the Son.