

1 John

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1 John 1:5

Vs. 5

- The qualities and character of a person will be directly related to the qualities and character of the god he serves. Ebenezer Scrooge's persona in "A Christmas Carol" was a direct reflection of the god of material wealth he served. Here, we are to understand from John, that the Christian, like his God, is to be Light, with no darkness at all. Thus the person who is a Christian and the person who is not, start at completely different point on the question of ethics and morals. In Dickens' story, Scrooge is stopped by two men the week of Christmas who are collecting money for the poor. The men are operating from the position that it is their Christian duty to provide for the poor, especially during winter. For Scrooge, starting from a different point altogether, he had a totally different view. "Are there no poor houses? Are there no prisons?" he asked. And when told that many would die during the winter if provision was not made, he replied that he was fine with that as it would "decrease the surplus population."
- This is why it is difficult for Christians today to speak to the question of ethics and morals in contemporary society. In the larger culture people today are more like Scrooge than the Apostle John. Words like "justice", "peace", "life", and "love" have completely different meanings in each respective camp. John in his letter may be dealing with first century Gnostics who know a god completely disconnected from life on earth and thereby utterly disinterested in one's ethics and morals and we today are dealing with a world that *AT BEST* hold to that Gnostic belief, but most really hold to no belief in God at all.
- Light is almost universally associated with God. When John says, "God is Light", he is speaking to the glory and grandeur of God. Even today, with all

our sophistication, we are awed by a streak of brilliant light piercing the night sky. God inspires that kind of awe. Further, light cannot be hidden. God as Light desires to be seen and known. And not only is He illuminated by His own Light, so too are we and so too is our sin. Throughout the New Testament we see the tension between Light and darkness, because the Darkness just wants to be left alone and not exposed. To say that “God is Light” is to speak to God’s purity and holiness. There is no darkness in pure light and there is no darkness in God. He does not lie or deceive. He does not force Himself on anyone. His judgements are clear with no obfuscation. Finally, to say that “God is Light” is to point to how God is a faultless guide. Psalms 119:105 tells us, “Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” Proverbs 3 tells that if the wisdom, the Light of the Lord, is attached to your body and soul, “Then you will walk in your way securely and your foot will not stumble.”

- Darkness is another matter. John says that in God there is no darkness at all. Darkness in Scripture represents all that stands opposite of Christ.
 - 1) Darkness represents the Christless life, that time in a person’s life before they met Christ. In Eph. 5:8 Paul writes “for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light, so walk as children of Light.” Peter says in 1 Peter 2:9 that God has “called you out of darkness into His marvelous Light.” Jesus says in John 8:12, “I am the Light of the world. He who follows me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”
 - 2) Darkness is hostile to light. In the opening lines of his gospel, John writes that the Light shines in the darkness but the darkness cannot overcome it (John 1:5). Here is a picture of God’s Light seeking to destroy the darkness and the darkness can do nothing to prevent it. Darkness knows it is in a life or death struggle with Light and it is a struggle that it cannot win.
 - 3) Going back to the earlier point on language, darkness also stands for ignorance. Apart from Christ a person cannot know the meaning of words like justice, peace, life, and love. Only with Christ can the true meaning of such words be known. The dark represents the total lostness of people without Christ. Jesus said in John 12:35 that, “he who walks in darkness does not know where he goes.”
 - 4) Darkness also stands for chaos. When we say the world is in chaos it is

just another way of saying the world is in darkness. Paul seems to have had the chaos of the early moments of creation in mind in 2 Cor. 4:6 (read).

5) Darkness also refers to the immortality of the Christless life. CS Lewis once said that you and I have never met a mortal person. All of us are born with the eternal spark of God within us. So it is not ever really a question of living or dying here on earth but rather the real question is where we live in eternity: either in the Light of God's love and joy and wonder OR in the darkness of eternal separation from God, with all its pain, suffering, and sorrow. 6) Darkness does not allow for growth. Eph. 5:11 refers to the "unfruitful" deeds of darkness. Here in the dark no fruit of the Spirit will ever grow. 7) Darkness is a synonym for lovelessness and hate. Hate is a sign of that a person lives in darkness (1 John 2:9-11).

- In the darkness, Christless people seek the shadows and fill their lives with shadow things - things with no substance, no strength; things that cannot ever satisfy...things that cannot stand the Light (2 Peter 2:9; Jude 13; Eph. 6:12).