

This is the message which we have heard from him and announce to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5, WEB).

Prepared to Live in the Light

on 1 John 1:5

by Francis J. Moloney

A popular Christian poster proclaims: 'God is a verb, not a noun'. This slogan is based upon a very important biblical truth. The Hebrew word YHWH, widely used throughout the Hebrew scriptures to speak of God, is, in fact, a verb and not a noun. The author's proclamations 'God is light' (1 John 1:5) and 'God is love' (2:8, 16) continue this biblical tradition. These affirmations say more about *what God does* than *who God is*. God is not 'defined' as light. We are told, rather, that what genuinely illuminates our lives and our history, showing its blessing and blemishes, is of God. Similarly, where self-giving love is present, God is present.

First John 1:5 opens a passage which runs down to 2:2, where the author describes what Jesus does for us: 'We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous; and he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world' (2:1-2). Between these striking statements about God (1:5) and Jesus Christ (2:1-2), there is a series of statements about the believer. The light provided by God also admits the possibility of darkness.

According to the author, there are some who claim to have fellowship with God, but walk in darkness; who claim to be without sin, but deceive themselves; who say they have never sinned, and thus make the God of light and truth a liar (vv. 6, 8, 10). But there is another possibility for those who accept that they are sinners, marked by words of hope balancing each of the negative statements (vv. 7,9). The former way leads into darkness, untruth and absence of the word of God. Alternatively, if believers accept that they commit sin, then hope of God's forgiveness is possible because of the saving action of

God through the death of Jesus, his Son. Sin exists where people do not walk in the light who is God, and sin can be forgiven thanks to the saving death of Jesus. The judgments which the author makes depend entirely upon his fundamental affirmation: God is light (1:5).

Readers of 1 John are familiar with the use of the symbol of 'light' in the Gospel of John. It appears in the Prologue (John 1:4, 5, 9), and on two further occasions Jesus claimed to be the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5). For the Gospel of John, the presence of light in the world is the result of the presence of Jesus, but for 1 John: 'God is light' (1 John 1:5).

Behind the Christian use of the symbol lies the Bible's use of the symbol for God: 'The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?' (Ps. 27:1). But the Gospel of John does not associate every single presence of light in the world with the person of Jesus. There is a broader sense in which Jesus makes the light come into the world, so that judgment can be exercised. The people who do evil deeds do not wish to have them brought into the light, lest they be exposed. Light is the presence of the divine in the world, a presence which brings about judgment (see John 3:19-21). This meaning of 'the light' is also part of the message of 1 John 1:5-2:2.

Behind the Gospel's presentation of Jesus as light of the world (see John 8:12; 9:5) is a God who is light. The Gospel tells us that Jesus makes God known (see John 17:3). Thus, if Jesus brings light into the world, he makes known the God who can also be regarded as light. The message of 1 John 1:5 would have been understood by both those who were addressed by the letter and those who were accused by the letter as denying the teaching of the Gospel of John. As we will learn later, the author's opponents were once members of his community (see 2:19). The author tells his fellow believers that it is not enough to accept that God is light. Such a belief must lead to a certain form of Christian life. In other words, beliefs have consequences. To accept that God is the light, we must be prepared to live in the light (see John 3:19-21).

James to Jude. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2007. 120-121.

News

Area-Wide Singing: TODAY! Singing starts at 4:00 P.M. We will adjourn at 5:15 for potluck dinner and then begin evening Worship at 6:30 P.M. Mickey Harrison, the minister at the Morenci church, will deliver the lesson during the evening worship assembly.

Scott Richards (sp?), director of an India school of preaching, will share with us the Lord's work in India on TUESDAY, July 31 at 6:30 P.M. Please watch this space for better details.

Note from Louella Briggs: **Eric Kramer's grama, Helen Kramer**, passed away. Please pray for the family. Greg and I are still traveling and should be back home around July 21. I will leave with Stacy, Eric, and the kids to California for gram's funeral. Hope all is well there. We miss you all.

Jules Arens is home from the hospital and is recovering.

Michelle Cunningham, Scott Cunningham's wife, has been having feet and leg problems and is seeing a specialist this week to determine if she has rheumatoid arthritis. Pray that it can be controlled if that is what it is. Her father had very severe arthritis.

Prayer List

Healing: Jules Arnes, Faye Atchley (Ben's mom), Nicolas Self, Douglas Gardner, Brandon (Gerry Clark's grandson), Diane Cocks's brother-in-law, Ben Atchley, Dave Morse, Richard Tuey. **Personal:** Eric Kramer and family, Richard and Skeet Posey, Members of the Morenci church. **Travels:** Brian and Billy Martin, John and Sharon Cunningham, Greg and Louella Briggs (and grandkids), Eric and Stacy Kramer.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

3888 S Hwy 191, Safford, AZ 85546

22 July 2012

Sermon Topics

A.M. When We Walk With The Lord

1 John 1:5-10

P.M. Mickey Harrison, speaker

Evangelist

Ken Knowlton: 428-5974

Elders

Ben Atchley: 428-2246

Greg Briggs: 428-8756

John Cunningham: 428-0895

Services

Sunday Bible Class	10:00 A.M.
Sunday Morning Worship	11:00 A.M.
Sunday Evening Worship	6:30 P.M.
Wednesday Evening Class	6:30 P.M.