OPENING COMMENTS: With this edition of Turabian, the first 135 pages (first fourteen chapters) take you through the journey of how to write a good paper. This is excellent material and worthy of your reading. It will help you to write a much better paper.

Chapters fifteen, sixteen and seventeen deal specifically with bibliographies and footnotes. You should familiarize yourself with these chapters.

Since Northpoint Bible College uses the bibliographic style for footnotes and bibliographies, chapters eighteen and nineteen of the ninth edition do not need to be consulted.

Part III, pages 291–382, chapters twenty through twenty-six, contain various rules concerning spelling, punctuation, names, numbers, abbreviations, quotations, and tables/figures.

The Appendix begins on page 383. The first two sections of the Appendix, A.1 and A.2 will be particularly relevant to you as these state specific formatting rules and have examples for you to peruse.

PLEASE NOTE!!! You will need to consult with Turabian, as this standard is not meant to be complete nor exhaustive. When Turabian is directly referred to, the section number and page number in Turabian is stated.

TITLE PAGE: With top margin set at one inch, start the title of your paper at the number two (three inches down [under view set for print layout]). The title is to be ALL CAPS and centered. This is specific to Northpoint.

Place your name, class name, and date on four separate lines, centered, single-spaced, but not in all capital letters at number five and a half (six and one-half inches down [under view set for print layout]). This page is not given a page number.

See page seventeen of this document.

GENERAL Formatting AND PAGINATION: The font is to be twelve-point Times New Roman. The paper is to be double spaced; this includes a double space between each paragraph. Paragraphs are to be indented one-half inch (a typical tab). Never leave a heading without text following at the bottom of the page. Insert a page break or hit enter until the heading goes to the next page.
All pages are to have one-inch margins (top, bottom, and each side) including the first page of your paper and the sources consulted page (A.1.1, p. 384).

With a one-inch bottom margin setting and a one-half inch footer setting, all page numbers are to be placed in a centered footer. This is specific to Northpoint and differs from Turabian.

TABS should be used for a new paragraph, a block quote, and run-over lines of bibliography entries.

Page numbers begin on the first page of written text. There are no page numbers on the Title Page or Outline Page.

OUTLINE: Papers are to have an outline and that page is not numbered. The Outline is to follow the format and style as exemplified on pages eighteen and nineteen of this document. (Note, if you have an “A” as a sub division of “I” there must be a “B.” Similarly, if you have a 1 under “A,” there must be a 2, etc.) Please note the spacing and capitalization of this example. You are to double space between roman numerals and single space all other lines. This is specific to Northpoint. Capitalization should follow the corresponding section and sub-section style detailed below. For example, level one should follow headline-style capitalization. Note: this applies for capitalization only and does not include bold face font for the outline.

SECTION AND SUB-SECTION LEVEL STYLE: The following style is adapted from Turabian. Whatever designations are included in your outline are to be included in the text of your paper as section and sub-section headings. The first page of your paper is not to include the title of your paper. Upper-case roman numerals (I) will be section headings and considered first-level. These are to be centered, with boldface, and typed in headline-style capitalization. The upper-case letters (C) of your outline will function as second-level headings. These are to be centered but not in bold face and typed in headline-style capitalization. The arabic numbers (2) of your outline will function as third-level headings. These will be flush left, with bold face, and typed in headline-style capitalization. The lower-case letters (b) of your outline will function as fourth-level headings. These will be flush left, not in bold face, and in sentence style capitalization. The lower-case roman numerals i, ii, iii, of your outline will function as fifth-level headings. These will run at the beginning of a paragraph, in bold face type, with sentence-style capitalization and
a terminal period. See sample outline on pages fifteen and sixteen of this document and A.2.2.4, pages 404-405 of Turabian.

LINE SPACING: Before each section and sub-section heading there should be two double spaces. After each section and sub-section heading there should be one double space. The sequence is as follows: ending paragraph, two double spaces, section or subsection heading, one double space, new paragraph. The exception to this rule would be in the case of a heading immediately followed by a sub-heading. In such circumstances, there is only one double space between the heading and sub-heading. Please see sample paper for further examples.

PUNCTUATION: The closing punctuation of any sentence should be followed by a single space (21.1, p. 306).

PLAGIARISM: Plagiarizing can cause significant loss of points to a paper. The loss of points is, of course, secondary to the ethical issues involved in plagiarism. For more information concerning plagiarism, see 25.1, p. 359 and the section in your Student Handbook.

WHEN TO FOOTNOTE: See 4.2.2-4, pp. 43-45; 7.4–5, pp. 77-79; 7.9.1-4, p. 81-83; 15.1 and 15.2.1, pp. 139-140 for guidelines on when footnoting is necessary.

FOOTNOTES: Use regular paragraph indents for footnotes. Turabian suggests that all footnote entries are to begin with a non-superscripted number as regular text, followed by a period, single space, and then your bibliographic information (16.3.3-4, pp. 161-162). If your computer automatically superscripts the footnotes, you may continue to use this form. If you use superscript numbers, there is no period after the number but there is still a space. The key is to be consistent throughout your paper.

Turabian does not require the inclusion of the state if the city of publishing is well-known. The question becomes, what is a well-known city? To save any concern in this area, always include the state in the publication data. Use the two-letter postal code for state abbreviation (24.3.1, pp. 348-349). Foreign cities do not need the country of publication. This is specific to Northpoint and differs from Turabian.

The correct font size for footnotes is 10-point.

According to the ninth edition of Turabian, there should be a line separator between the text and the footnotes, and a double space
between each footnote. (See pp. 403, 406 of Turabian for an example.)

When citing certain references where only the author’s initials appear at the end of an article, find and use the author’s full name (when available), which is typically given in the front of the book. If you cite several sources to make a single point within the same sentence, group them into a single note. Do not place multiple footnotes within the same sentence. List the citations in the same order in which the references appear in the sentence; separate the citations with semicolons.

When documenting publication information and two or more cities are given, include only the first (17.1.6.1, p. 180).

See pages nine through thirteen of this document for specific examples of properly cited footnotes.

**SHORTENED FOOTNOTES:**

If a source is used for more than one footnote, the only time full bibliographic information is to be given is for the first foot note. For all subsequent citations of the same source, use a shortened form for the bibliographic information.

The format for subsequent citations is: indentation, the author’s last name, a comma, the page number, and a period. If you use two books written by the same author, you should then designate which book is being cited by using a shortened version of the title for subsequent uses.

When citing different words in sources such as Strong’s, Wigram’s, Vine’s, et al., use the short form of citation after the first footnote. When using such sources, listing the word in the footnote or in sources consulted is unnecessary.

The following guidelines should be used when using a shortened version of the title: First, if a title has four words or less, do not shorten it; use the full title. Second, if the title is longer than four words, use the first two or three main words of the title. Do not use “A” or “The,” unless they are somehow essential to the meaning of the work. Third, never use subtitles. Fourth, typically select from the first words and not the last words unless they more clearly describe the work. For example, if the title is *How I spend my Summer Vacation*, use *Summer Vacation*, as “How I Spent” or “How I spent My” does not clearly describe anything. Finally,
always be consistent. Once a group of words has been chosen, it is incorrect to deviate from that choice.

When creating a shortened note for an internet source, include the author of the website and date of publication. If no date can be found, include the date of access. If no author can be found, use the title of the page in quotation marks.

EXAMPLES:


2. Keener, 221. (Always use a page number, even if on the same page.)


CITATION OF SPECIFIC SOURCES: See 15.4, p. 143 for standards concerning citing online sources. See also 17.1.10 for electronic books, pp. 186-187. See 17.5 for additional information concerning web-site, blogs, and social media. See pages nine through thirteen of this document for various citation examples.

CORRECTING QUOTATIONS: The ninth edition of Turabian states that if you correct a misspelled word, you no longer need to put the [*sic*] after the correction, unless the error is “relevant to your argument” (25.3.1-3, pp. 364–365). Reminder: if you leave the misspelled word, you must place [*sic*] after it. If you do not do this, the grader will count the word as misspelled.

BLOCK QUOTATIONS: When using a direct quote of prose that is five or more lines, indent the quotation in its entirety by the same indentation as your paragraph (25.2.2, pp. 361-363). When quoting poetry which is longer than two lines, use a block quotation (25.2.2, pp. 362-363). A block quotation is to be twelve-point font and single spaced, with a double space separating it from the main text. The following is an example of what the format of a block quote would look like.
This is where your block quote begins. It is indented one-half inch (typical tab). The entire block quote is indented the same amount. There is a space between the last line of the previous paragraph and the first line of the block quote, as well as the last line of the block quote and the first line of the next paragraph. There are no quotations around it. It must be a minimum of five lines long. When finished with the block quote, insert a footnote to cite your work.¹

Do not use more than 1 block quote for every two pages of research.

**QUOTING THE BIBLE:**

When referencing a passage of Scripture for the first time, a footnote is to be inserted which states: All Scripture quotations are from the Updated New American Standard Bible (or whatever version you are using). All further Scripture references are to be cited in text. For example, the Psalmist writes, “O sing unto the Lord a new song, For He has done wonderful things” (Ps. 98:1). Since this is quoted from the NASB, it is not necessary to state what version you are using—this was stated in the footnote. If multiple translations are used, employ this phrase in the footnote: All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise noted, are from the Updated New American Standard Bible (or whatever version you are using). Therefore, any in-text citations are as follows: (Ps. 98:1, KJV). Please note the period is after the parenthesis. You do not need to add the word Bible to translations such as the New International Version or English Standard Version. However, if it is part of the title, as in New American Standard Bible, the word will be retained.

**BIBLICAL CITATIONS:**

When referring in text to whole chapters or books of the Bible, spell out the names of the books: Isaiah 1–39 (24.6, p. 351). When referencing a book that begins with a number, do not write the number out but rather use the arabic numeral. For example, do not write First Timothy but 1 Timothy. Do not write II John, but 2 John.

When citing biblical passages by verse (17.8.2, pp. 203-204; 24.6, pp. 351-352), abbreviate the names of the books, using arabic numbers if a book is numbered (1 Cor.). Use the traditional abbreviations for the Old and New Testaments as found in Turabian (24.6.1, 24.6.3, pp. 352-354). The same standards apply to the non-canonical Apocrypha (24.6.2, p. 353).
When referring to a single biblical verse in a sentence, the correct abbreviation for verse is v. The correct abbreviation indicating two or more verses is vv. (24.7, p. 357). When using a phrase like, “starting with v. 6,” the number six does not need to be spelled out. Capitalize and spell out “verse” at the beginning of a sentence.

Do not capitalize book in the phrase, “the book of Matthew.”

Do not cite the Bible as a source on the Sources Consulted page (17.8.2, p. 203).

Please consult individual professors to see if Study Bibles can be cited as a source.

**THEOLOGICALLY SPECIFIC CAPITALIZATION AND PUNCTUATION:**

Capitalization with theological words is often use specific. Be mindful of how a word is being used. Just because it is an important or key word does not guarantee its need to be capitalized. For example, the words love, truth, redemption, etc. are not needed to be capitalized.

The word Bible should be capitalized, but biblical should not. In the same fashion, the word Scripture and Scriptures are to be capitalized, but scriptural should not. Do not capitalize book in a phrase such as “book of John.” When speaking of the one true God, God is to be capitalized. When speaking of a false god, use the lower case. When you use pronouns for deity, capitalize He, Him, Himself, His, You, Your, etc. You are to capitalize God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. Use lower-case when referring to any spirit other than the Holy Spirit. Any name for God, either God the Father, God the Son, or God the Holy Spirit is to be capitalized (e.g., Shepherd, Comforter, Trinity, etc.). When referring to the Church universal, capitalize the word Church. When referring to the local church or churches, use the lower case. Capitalize Gospel when referring to “the Gospel of Matthew” as it is a title. Otherwise, do not capitalize gospel. Likewise, capitalize Epistle when referring to the Epistle of Ephesians as a title. Otherwise, do not capitalize epistle. Do not capitalize the words canon or canonical. Do not capitalize locations such as heaven, hell, and purgatory. Capitalize ‘Word of God’ when in reference to Christ or the Scriptures, but do not capitalize ‘word of God’ when in reference to something spoken by God.
Be aware that some Bible translations or other sources may not follow these rules which are specific to Turabian and/or Northpoint.

**QUOTATION MARKS:**
Use double quotation marks when quoting material. Use single quotation marks to set off words and concepts (21.10, p. 316).

**SPECIFIC CITATIONS:**
When using the designations AD and BC, AD is to precede the date (AD 33) and BC is to follow the date (20 BC). There is a space but no period after any of the letter designations (24.4.3, p. 350).

**RULES CONCERNING THE USE OF NUMBERS:**
Turabian cites the basic rules for when to spell out numbers and when it is not necessary (23.1.1, pp. 330-331).

To express a range of numbers, such as pages, years, or Scripture references, give the first and last (or inclusive) numbers in the sequence. When the numbers are expressed in numerals, you may cite in any of the following three ways: 319–321/John 1:1–4, *en dash* with no space between numbers; 319 – 321/John 1:1 – 4, *en dash* with a space between numbers; or 319-321/John 1:1-4/, a simple hyphen with no space. You must be consistent throughout your paper with the style you choose to use. This rule is specific to Northpoint.

Never begin a sentence with a numeral. Always spell it out. (23.1.2.1 p. 331). Do not superscript ordinal numbers (23.1.1).

**ITALICIZE FOREIGN WORDS:**
Transliterated foreign words are to be italicized, with exceptions noted in Turabian (22.2.1, p. 323). Hint: if the foreign word is a word for God, do not capitalize it, i.e., God in Greek should be *theos* and not *Theos* (unless the foreign word appears at the beginning of a sentence or is a proper noun: “Peter” is *Petros* in Greek).

**SOURCES CONSULTED:**
“Sources Consulted” rather than “Bibliography” is to be used as the heading for your source page. If the professor only wants a list of sources actually cited, then the list is to be entitled “Works Cited.” There should only be a one inch margin on this page or pages. Sources are to be organized alphabetically by author’s last name. The first line is flush left, the second and subsequent lines are indented by one-half inch (typical tab). Each entry is to be single spaced with a double space between each entry (A.2.3.5 and see pp. 413-414 for examples). See also the “Sources Consulted”
page of the example paper in this document. See pages nine through thirteen of this document for specific examples of how to correctly cite sources in your bibliography.

FOOTNOTE AND SOURCES CONSULTED EXAMPLES
(Footnotes are numbered, Sources Consulted entries are not numbered)

For fuller details on citation, please see Turabian chapters 16-17, with special attention to figure 16.1 on pages 151-153. Turabian sections and page numbers accompany each example where applicable.

In the initial samples that follow, the basic note format is written out, the first example illustrates what the first usage of a source looks like. The second example illustrates subsequent usages of the same source in a shortened format. The third example illustrates a shortened title being used to distinguish multiple resources by the same author.

One Author: (16.1, p. 151; 17.1.1, p. 171)

The first three examples show the way the ninth edition of Turabian states footnotes are to be numbered. If your computer program automatically uses superscripting for footnotes, you may continue to use this form. Note that there is a space between the superscripted number and the first letter of the author’s name. The sample paper follows this format as an example. The key is to be absolutely consistent.

##. Author’s First and Last Names, Title of Book: Subtitle of Book (Place of Publication: Publisher’s Name, Date of Publication), XX.


Sources Consulted Example:


Two Authors: (16.1, p. 151; 17.1.1, p. 171)

##. Author #1’s First and Last Names and Author #2’s First and Last Names, Title of Book: Subtitle of Book (Place of Publication: Publisher’s Name, Date of Publication), XX.

2. Grenz and Franke, 78.


**Three Authors:** (16.1, pp. 151-52; 17.1.1, p. 171)

###. Author #1’s First and Last Names, Author #2’s First and Last Names, and Author #3’s First and Last Names, *Title of Book: Subtitle of Book* (Place of Publication: Publisher’s Name, Date of Publication), XX.


**Four or more Authors:** (16.1, p. 152; 17.1.1, p. 171)

###. Author’s First and Last Names et al., *Title of Book: Subtitle of Book* (Place of Publication: Publisher’s Name, Date of Publication), XX.


2. Jackson et al., 650.


**Edition Number:** (17.1.3, pp. 177-78)

If your source is not a first or sole edition, you must cite which edition you are citing. Abbreviate such wording as Second edition to 2nd ed. Do not superscript ordinal numbers. For example, 2nd is incorrect; use 2nd.

2. Erickson, 34.


**Journal Articles**: (17.2, pp. 187-91)

Many journal articles are available online. To cite an article that you read online include a URL. If a URL is listed along with the article, use that instead of the one in your browser’s address bar. If a DOI (Digital Object identifier) is listed, append the DOI to https://doi.org to form the URL.

The volume number follows the journal title without intervening punctuation and is not italicized. Use arabic numerals even if the journal itself uses roman numerals. If there is an issue number, it follows the volume number, separated by a comma and preceded by ‘no.’ When a journal uses issue numbers only, without volume numbers, a comma follows the journal title. (17.2.4.1, p. 189).

##. Author’s First and Last Names, “Title of Article: Subtitle of Article,” *Title of Journal* Volume Number, Issue Number (Date of Publication): XX.


2. Cross, 115.


**Magazine Article:** (17.3, 191-92)


**One Source Quoted in Another:** (17.9.3, pp. 205-06)


**Chapters and Other Titled Parts of a Book:** (17.1.8, p. 183)


Note that in your bibliographical citation, the full range of page numbers for the chapter must be included.

**Bible Dictionaries and Encyclopedias with Multiple Contributors:**


This format is Northpoint Specific – Turabian places page numbers following the editor. (17.1.8.2, pp. 184-85)
Chapters and Other Titled Parts of a Book plus Reprint, Numbered Series, Editor, Translator: (17.1.1.1, p. 172)


Note that the use of italics in the example above is due to the use of foreign words. Titles for articles are otherwise not italicized.

Additionally, use ed. not eds. for multiple editors as ed. is short for edited by not editor. List all editors except in the case of a general editor.

Commentary Series and Volume Title (no number): (17.1.4, pp. 178-79).


Commentaries, Numbered Series: (17.1.4, pp. 178-79)


For numbered commentaries note that vol. is lowercase in the footnote and capitalized in the bibliography.

Commentaries, Muti-Volume, Multi-Author: (17.1.4, pp. 178-79)


For Keil and Delitzsch use the above example based on whether Keil or Delitzsch wrote the commentary for an individual book of the Bible. You also need to include the translator for Keil and Delitzsch.

Classical, Medieval, and Early English Literary Works (The examples below are the standard short citations which are preferable): (17.8, pp. 202-04)

1. Augustine *City of God* 20.2. (note: classical or medieval works do not take a comma after the authors name)

2. Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 1.83–86. (note: early English works do take a comma after the authors name)

Please see 17.8.1, pp. 202-203 for further information. This type of citation is not to be included on the Sources Consulted page, only as a footnote.

This type of entry is good for the above listed citations except the 38 volume Church Fathers series, which requires normal, full citation.


Electronic books, or e-books, are cited just like print books. You will also need to include information about the format you consulted. Many e-book formats lack fixed page numbers. Avoid citing app-specific or device-specific (Kindle) screen or location numbers, which may not be the same for others even if they consult the same format. Instead, cite by chapter or section number. If unnumbered, cite by the name of the chapter or section.


**Internet Source:** (17.5, pp. 194-97)

Use caution when citing internet sources, especially in academic writing. Please see sections 15.4 entitled “Electronic Sources” and 17.5 “Websites, Blogs, and Social Media” for more information on how to correctly cite internet sources.

Cite web pages and related content by identifying the following elements: author, title of the page (in roman type, enclosed in quotation marks), title (or description) of the site (usually in roman type; see 22.3.2.3), the owner or sponsor of the site (if not the same as the title), and a publication or revision date. Include a URL as the final element (see 15.4.1.3). If a source does not include an author, use the title of the website in place of the author in your bibliography (see 17.5.1).

For a frequently updated source, you can record a time stamp if the source includes one. If no date can be determined from the source, include an access date (see 15.4.1.5).


**Lecture:**


Chapter seventeen, pages 169-222, of Turabian has details and examples of how to correctly write footnotes and entries for your Sources Consulted page.
THE CHRONOLOGY OF PAUL

Former Student
Pauline Theology
November 30, 2022
Outline

I.  Introduction
   A.  The Problem of Chronology
   B.  The Purpose and Limitations of the Paper

II. Sources and Types of Evidence
    A.  Internal and External Chronology
    B.  Primary and Secondary Evidence

III. The Outer Framework
     A.  The Beginning
     B.  The End
     C.  Synthesis

IV.  Chronological Data in the Letters
     A.  Direct Chronological Indicators
        1.  External Chronology
        2.  The Galatians Sequence
           a.  Conversion
           b.  Three-year interval
           c.  First Jerusalem visit
           d.  Interval of fourteen years
           e.  Second Jerusalem visit
           f.  Incident at Antioch
        3.  The Hardship Catalogs
        4.  Synthesis
     B.  The Travel Sequence
        1.  First Macedonian Journey
        2.  Final Macedonian Journey
        3.  Ephesians Ministry
           a.  1 Cor. 16:8-9
              i.  The event
              ii.  The outcome
           b.  1 Cor. 16:1
        4.  Galatians
        5.  Paul’s Imprisonments
           a.  Possible Locations
              i.  Ephesus
              ii.  Ceasarea
              iii.  Rome
           6.  Synthesis

V.  Chronological Data in Acts
    A.  Internal Chronology
       1.  The Sequence of Events
2. The Passing of Time

B. External Chronology
   1. The Famine
   2. Herod Agrippa
   3. Sergius Paulus
   4. Claudius and the Jews
   5. Gallio
   6. Ananias the High Priest

C. Synthesis

V. Integration of the Letters and Acts
   A. Sequential Integration
   B. The Date of Gallio
   C. The Famine Relief

VI. Conclusions
   A. The Agreement from External Sources
   B. The Agreement in the Biblical Text
   C. Final Chronology for Paul’s Life
   D. Spiritually Transforming Moment in Writing this Paper

VII. Sources Consulted
SAMPLE

PAPER

FOLLOWS
CONTRADICTIONS IN 1 JOHN

Former Student
Johannine Epistles
November 15, 2022
Outline

I. Introduction

II. Historical Background
   A. Purpose of the Book of 1 John
   B. False Doctrines

III. 1 John 1:6-10

VI. 1 John 2:1

V. 1 John 3:4-8

VI. Conclusion

VII. Sources Consulted
Introduction

“But I am a good person.” It is a phrase that makes every evangelistic Christian cringe and every unbeliever nod their head in agreement. “I love my mom, give to charity and work in the soup kitchen Friday nights.” So many people in our world today think that because they are “good” people that they are not considered sinners. The only reasonable trail of this thought leads to, “Therefore I do not need a savior.” This idea of being devoid of sin plagues our culture today. Nevertheless it is not a new thought. A couple of thousand years ago, John battled this same issue. Who is considered a sinner? What are the repercussions of sin? And most importantly, why do I need Jesus? The people of John’s day were exposed to so many contradictory messages, many of them saying that they could just choose not to sin and therefore avoid a need for a savior.

So John writes to them, arguing that everyone sins and that sin is inherent to human life. But he follows it up with, “I am writing these things to you that you may not sin” (1 John 2:1). So which is it John? Is it true that man cannot avoid sin and by this be considered in league with the devil? Or can man really achieve perfection and not sin therefore making the work of Christ unnecessary? This contradictory paradox is what has become known as the “Contradiction of John.”

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1 All Scripture quotations are from the Updated New American Standard Bible.
Historical Background

Purpose of the Book of 1 John

Before we can fully understand why John wrote this paradox we must understand why he was writing this letter. It seems like John was writing this piece to multiple congregations that made up a community as a whole. Furthermore, it is thought to be “a homily in the form of a letter” meaning it was a homiletic writing addressed to the whole church with both theoretical and practical sections. Secondly, we must note that it was addressing a specific conflict that was taking place amongst the people to whom John wrote. This crisis was due largely in fact to false teachers who had left the church but were still in contact with its members. These teachers taught a different form of Christianity and were presumably the forerunners of the future developed Gnostic sects. It is likely that it was in response to these false teachers that John writes 1:6, 8, 10. Furthermore, John was writing to a large population of Jewish adherents who practiced a system of religious belief allied with Ebionism. It was in response to these two sects and their ensuing doctrines that John pens 1 John.

False Doctrines

As was previously stated, the first of these two false doctrines that were tainting the Johannine community was an early form of Gnosticism. Gnosticism’s connection and influence

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3 Strecker, 3.


with the epistle of 1 John is quite apparent. These false teachers, once part of the Orthodox Church, had left the church to establish their own competing institutions but were still in contact with the church members and were thus still sharing their heretical teachings. These men taught a harsh contrast between the spirit and matter. Spirit was good and divine but matter was created and evil. Therefore the material world could not be directly created by God and consequently the incarnation of the Son of God was impossible since the created world was evil and a good God could never become part of it. They thus concluded that Jesus was merely a man on whom the “spirit of Christ” descended upon at the crucifixion and was therefore no greater than them. This lead them get rid of any doctrine of salvation and instead teach that they had eternal life due to their direct knowledge of God. Furthermore, they did not need forgiveness or cleansing because they were sinless and were separate from the Orthodox Church which was “of the world.” They were even known to refer to themselves as the “enlightened ones,” “immovable race,” and “the perfect.” One has to wonder how these opponents of John could have even considered themselves Christians or have been accepted by members of the Christian church. It is thought that perhaps the orthodox believers misunderstood the teachings of these heretics to be real Christianity.

The second great heresy affecting the Johannine community was that of the Jewish Christians. These were Christians who were saved but held strict loyalty to the Law and Jewish

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7 Marshall, 17.


10 Scholer, 21.
customs. While they would have accepted the idea of God they may have had trouble accepting the messiah-ship of Christ. These views may have been affected by a primitive sect of Judaism known as the Ebionites who believed that Jesus was a good man who was “adopted,” so to say, by God. This belief may have caused the people to question Jesus’ ability to actually take away their sins. We see the fingerprints of both of these heresies overshadowing John’s message to the Ephesians.

**1 John 1:6–10**

Before we can compare the seemingly contradictory portions of John’s message we must examine them individually. Starting with verse 6, “John introduces the first of three antithetic test of Christian faith.” He is using this literary device to refer to the boasts of the aforementioned Gnostic teachers. John is trying to teach them that God has disclosed himself through Jesus and personal fellowship between man and God can only happen when man has a clear recognition of his true sinful, human nature. These false teachers, claiming that they were sinless, had not accepted this truth and had not come to terms with their actual nature. It is in this context that John begins his “If … But” assertions.

First he writes, “If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin” (vv. 6–7). We see here an example of John’s dualism between light and truth verses darkness and lies. In Hebrew

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11 Smalley, xxiii.


13 Smalley, 20.
thought, the lie, or *seqer*, is a wickedness equivalent to violence and anyone who speaks lies are in direct opposition to God.\(^\text{14}\) Essentially John is saying that the position of his opponents is not of ignorance but of active hostility to the truth. Thus we can see the effect this statement would have had on his Jewish audience. Furthermore, the devil was considered the origin of falsehood and we will see how John will use this thought against his audience later in his argument.

The statement “do not live by truth” had a very strong meaning to both the Jewish opponents and Gnostic teachers. This was the first appearance of the word “truth” or *alethia* which appears twenty times in the Johannine letters.\(^\text{15}\) Its usage “denotes the revelation of God’s nature and salvific purposes in Jesus his Son”\(^\text{16}\) and it is clear that John sees that this issue is what is being challenged. The Hebrew version of the word *alētheia* is *'emet*, which “conveys the notion of firmness or solidarity as a basis for trustworthy acceptance.”\(^\text{17}\) The idea was that when the revelation of God is accepted by a person, it becomes the basis from which that person lives. If one acts in this “truth” they are not simply following an outside model of what they think is good (Platonic thought), but rather they are acting from an interior principle.\(^\text{18}\) John is showing the stark contrast between walking in this “truth” and walking in the darkness like his opponents are doing.

The last part of this assertion is very interesting. John writes “If we walk in the light … we have fellowship with one another … and the blood of Jesus … purifies us from all sin” (1


\(^\text{16}\) Smalley, 23.

\(^\text{17}\) Brown, 199.

\(^\text{18}\) Brown, 200.
John 1:7). We need to keep in mind that John is writing to people who have left the fellowship of the church to start their own institution. F. F. Bruce writes, “To be severed from the fellowship of Christ’s people is to be severed from the fellowship of Christ himself”19 and Howard Marshall echoes this saying, “Persons who cut themselves off from fellowship with other Christians cannot have fellowship with God. But if they are prepared to live by God’s light, they will come into fellowship with them and with God himself.”20 What is the result of entering into this fellowship? This person will become conscious of their sin, the very thing that separates them from God. It is quite obvious that John is writing to the people who have left the church and are saying that they are sinless.

John’s next assertion states, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness” (vv. 8–9). In the previous verses John accuses his opponents of claiming fellowship with God even though they walked in the darkness. Verse 8 is either their response or what John anticipates could be their response. They argued that they did not need to be cleansed from sin because they had no sin from which to be cleansed. We see later that actions which John considered to be sinful they did not consider as sin.21

It is here that we again see a paradox in John’s words. Marshall writes concerning this assertion, “The converse is that if we do say we are sinners, the truth is in us; the resolution of that paradox is that to admit our sin is to face up to reality instead of pretending, and it is as we confess our sin that it is cleansed and no longer stands against us. If, however, we do not admit

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20 Marshall, 112.

21 Marshall, 113.
our sin, it remains unconfessed and unforgiven and hence the truth is not in us.”

The author is showing that confessing ones sins must correspond with “walking in the light” and “having fellowship with one another.” For the Gnostic, “walking in the light” could only be possessed through his gnosis or knowledge but John is showing that the Christian has acquired this light permanently through his faith.

Verses 1:10–2:1 complete the third and final portion of the threefold assertions. John writes, “If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” We can see the great similarities verse 10 shares with verse 8, but we can also see that verse 10 is far more defiant and blunt. It is thought that there were maybe two different types of Gnostics. One group claimed that they had removed from themselves the possibility to sin through their knowledge of the gospel, while the second group claimed they were sinless in their own knowledge before the gospel ever came to them. It is quite possible that is was to the first group that verse ten is addressed; to those who thought that it was the Word in them that made them sinless.

1 John 2:1

In 2:1 we see John make a switch from writing to his opponents to writing to his followers. His statement lends to some confusion because he writes admonishing them not to sin, but follows it with a “but if you do” sort of clause. This statement becomes even more confusing

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22 Marshall, 113.


24 Barker, 312.
when read in the light of the previous verse which states, “If we claim to be without sin we deceive ourselves” (v. 8). So, what does John mean by this? Firstly, it is important to note that John is not contending the possibility of a sinless state, but rather he is “pleading for the renunciation of the disposition towards sinfulness which issues in specific areas of wrong doing.”25 The phrase “in order that you may not sin” seems to reiterate this fact since it refers to “definite acts of sin rather than the habitual state.”26

Though John has been pleading with his followers to renounce sin he is not oblivious to the fact that sin is inevitable in our fallen human state. The fact that he again uses the aorist subjunctive tense (“if any should sin”) shows that he is referring to sinful acts not a sinful state nor habitual sinful actions. However, he does not leave them with this empty command but offers an answer for when they do find themselves in an action of sin. He encourages them that Jesus Christ is our advocate with the Father. The word “with” used here is pros or “facing.”27 This carries with it the idea that when a believer does sin, Jesus Christ, the Advocate, faces the Father with the believer and his sin. This may be yet another point to John’s argument not to sin. Christ died that the believer may be saved by His blood yet when the believer does sin, he forces Christ to “face God the Father with that saint whom he has saved in His precious blood.”28 Christ died that they may not be slaves to their sinful nature anymore and it is with this assurance that John can write to them “in order that you do not sin.”

25 Smalley, 35.

26 Brooke, 23.


28 Wuest, 109.
1 John 3:4–8

The last portion of John’s contradiction of sin is 1 John 3:4–8 with emphasis on verse 8. His argument rests on the contention that Christ came to take away the sins of the world and to destroy the works of the devil. To thusly continue in habitual sin is to be in contradiction with the whole purpose of Christ coming to earth and to contradict that purpose is to take side with the devil and the sin that originates from him. He begins this argument by saying, “Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness” (v. 4). This phrase “everyone who practices sin” is characteristic to John’s writing style and may be referring back to the Gnostic community that stated that they were the elite and free from sin. He is reminding them that sin is “universal in character.” Upon first reading this phrase one might think that John is referring to the literal breaking of the law. This however, is unlikely. First of all, this is the only place in 1 John were this term “lawlessness” or anomia is found and there is no reason why he would begin discussing a legal concept now. Also, the connection between sin and law breaking in the Old Testament is not strong. A more reasonable explanation is that “lawlessness” is the rejection of God and His Law. The two terms seemed to be used interchangeably thus indicating that sin in its very nature is lawlessness. In fact, “lawlessness is the essence, not the result, of sin.” If we remember that John and the heretics were disagreeing with what was sin and what was not, we see why he made this statement. Sin is not just a matter of moral indifference but an active, known rebellion to the will of God. This new law “is the expression of God’s unchanging,


30 Smalley, 154.

31 Smalley, 154.

32 Stott, 126.
eternal moral standard, which is energized by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of God’s regenerated people.”

John was not speaking of lawlessness in a legalistic matter. He was referring to the known, unconfessed sin in their life that violated the witness of the Holy Spirit inside of them.

In verse 5 John reminds his readers that Jesus, who came to take away sin, is sinless Himself. Thus, He stands in total opposition to sin. It makes sense that at the very least His followers would too stand in opposition to everything that is sinful. Again in verse 6 we see a contradiction by what John has said concerning the fact of universal sin and what he is saying now that “No one who abides in Him sins.” In saying this John is not stating that it is impossible for the believer to commit an act of sin as is seen in the various statements he made concerning the provision Christ has made for such sin (1:9; 2:1) and the admonition against claims of sinlessness (1:8, 10). He is, however, asserting that a sinful life does not mark a child that lives for God, so that anyone who entertains this sort of habitual sin cannot be a child of God. Bede writes concerning this issue, “This does not mean that there is no sin in us at all, since John has already stated that that is not the case. Rather, what he is saying here is that if we have God’s nature, that is, his Word, in us, we shall not go against the law of love.”

Verse 7 states, “Little one’s let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as he is righteous.” It could also be translated as such: “Little born-ones, stop allowing anyone to be leading you astray. The one who habitually does righteousness is

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34 Bruce, 90.

righteous, just as that One is righteous."³⁶ John is again warning them to not be lead astray by the people who have left the fellowship and are teaching false doctrines. Despite what his opponents were teaching, John writes that a righteous man will express himself in righteous conduct. He is referring to the ideal Christian character.

The culminating verse is verse 8 which states, “the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.” The purpose of this statement is to show the harsh contrast between the person who is “addicted to sin” and the believer that remains true to his righteous calling in Christ.³⁷ The righteous man will demonstrate his faithfulness to God by striving to live a moral life and by his spiritual nature while the man who is corrupt will continue in habitual wrongdoing.³⁸ It is thought that the language John employed here was not of a quite and calm wooing but rather of a “vehement polemic.”³⁹ He is drawing a clear line between those who live righteously and those that do not. There is no middle ground. Sin is real, it originated with the devil, was introduced to mankind in the Garden of Eden (perhaps why there is the reference to “the beginning”) and will ultimately rip men away from God if left ignored and unconfessed. John is not mincing words with his opponents. If they are living in immoral conduct, in “lawlessness” and in denial of their sin, they are in effect going against the very purpose for which the Son of God came in His incarnated form—to defeat the works of the devil.

³⁶ Wuest, 148.
³⁷ Smalley, 167.
³⁸ Smalley, 167.
³⁹ Smalley, 162.
Conclusion

At the beginning of this paper the question was posed, “What did John mean?” He seems to constantly contradict himself saying in one moment that sin is universal and in the next moment admonishing them to not sin for if they do, they are of the devil. In studying these portions of Scripture three important factors have been discovered that lend light to John’s apparent paradox. Firstly, John was very much so writing to a specific issue at hand. Both the Gnostics and the Jewish extremist were spreading false doctrine and it was in direct response to their teaching that John makes his seemingly radical statements. Secondly, upon examining his writings as a whole, one can see that John in no way contested a sinless state being something anyone could achieve, even through “knowledge,” the Gospel, or divine enlightenment. When John writes, “I am writing these things to you that you may not sin” he is encouraging them to strive towards ideal Christian behavior and to conduct themselves in the type of righteousness that is found only in the “Righteous One,” Jesus Christ. And finally, sin is a universal issue but we have a way out. Jesus Christ shed His blood so that He could become our Advocate and with us, face the Father, declaring us to be His children. So, who is a sinner? Everyone. What are the repercussions of sin? Death. And why do I need Jesus? Because He is the only one that can free me from my slavery to sin. Ultimately, Jesus is the only reason that we could ever hope to live any sort of a life devoted to righteousness and Christian conduct.

I originally chose to write this paper because I had no idea what the Johannine contradiction was and I wanted to learn about it. Upon reading the portions of Scripture that pertain to it I became frustrated because I realized that what John wrote really was confusing. After delving into what was meant, what was actually written, and what was going on in the community of believers, I can now understand why John wrote what he did. But above and
beyond that I was reminded of what Jesus did. When we look at the hopelessness of our sinful state, we realize what exactly Christ accomplished and is still accomplishing for and through us. I thought about what it would have been like to have to face the Father and give an account for my sins with no advocate by my side. The thought scared me. As I wrote about John’s words, that we are sinners and without Christ we would have no hope of being justified in the courtroom of God, I became overwhelming thankful for what was done for me. Augustine paints a picture of the perfect plan of God by saying this: “If you should have a case to be tried before a judge and should procure an advocate, you would be accepted by the lawyer and he would plead your case to the best of his ability. If before he finished his plea, you should hear that he is the judge, how you would rejoice, because he could be your judge, who shortly before, was your lawyer.”

Only a perfect, righteous and gracious judge would in essence give up his place in heaven so that he could stand by our stand and we could have a place in heaven ourselves.

Sources Consulted


