

# 1 John 2:11

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

## Analysis

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**But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.** John develops the consequences of hating one's brother beyond verse 9's statement. "He that hateth his brother" (ho de misōn ton adelphon autou) again indicates ongoing, habitual hatred—settled animosity, contempt, or indifference toward fellow believers. The threefold consequence intensifies: he "is in" darkness (his state), "walketh in" darkness (his conduct), and "knoweth not whither he goeth" (his disorientation).

"Is in darkness" (en tē skotia estin) describes his current position—separated from God, truth, and spiritual life. "Walketh in darkness" (en tē skotia peripatei) describes his lifestyle—habitual conduct characterized by sin, error, and spiritual blindness. "Knoweth not whither he goeth" (ouk oiden pou hypagei) reveals profound disorientation—lacking direction, purpose, or understanding of life's trajectory. This person is spiritually blind, wandering without knowing they're lost.

"Because that darkness hath blinded his eyes" (hoti hē skotia etyphlōsen tous ophthalmous autou)—the aorist tense "hath blinded" (etyphlōsen) indicates completed action with lasting effect. Darkness didn't merely affect vision; it destroyed it. Sin, particularly the sin of hatred, progressively blinds. What begins as hardness of heart ends in complete spiritual blindness—inability to perceive truth, recognize sin, or understand reality. This is terrifying: one can be so blinded

by sin that he doesn't recognize his blindness. Hatred is both symptom and cause of this condition.

## Historical Context

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Biblical imagery of spiritual blindness runs throughout Scripture. Isaiah pronounced judgment on Israel: "Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes" (Isaiah 6:10)—persistent sin resulting in judicial hardening. Jesus applied this to Pharisees (Matthew 13:14-15, 23:16-26). Paul described unbelievers as having "the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Corinthians 4:4).

The Gnostic teachers ironically illustrated this verse. Claiming superior enlightenment and knowledge, they were in fact blind—unable to see the truth about Christ's incarnation, the necessity of love, or the seriousness of sin. Their hatred of orthodox believers whom they deemed inferior revealed their profound darkness. They knew not where they were going—their teaching led to spiritual destruction.

Church history provides tragic examples of hatred blinding professing Christians. The Crusades, Inquisition, Wars of Religion, and slavery-defending theology all demonstrate how hatred can blind people who claim to walk in light. When Christians harbor racial prejudice, class contempt, or sectarian animosity, they reveal darkness regardless of claimed orthodoxy or spiritual experiences. Contemporary culture wars sometimes produce similar blindness—Christians hating those who disagree, unaware that their hatred proves their darkness.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Psalms 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

## Study Questions

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1. How does hatred progressively blind us to truth, making us unaware of our spiritual condition?
2. What specific forms of hatred (prejudice, contempt, bitterness, unforgiveness) might be blinding you to God's truth or work?
3. How can you cultivate love for those you're tempted to hate, recognizing that such love is essential for spiritual sight and clarity?

## Interlinear Text

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ὁ δὲ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ  
G3588 But he that hateth G3588 brother his in G3588 darkness  
G1161 G3404 G80 G846 G1722 G4653

ἐστὶν καὶ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ περιπατεῖ καὶ οὐκ οἶδεν  
is and in G3588 darkness walketh and not knoweth  
G2076 G2532 G1722 G4653 G4043 G2532 G3756 G1492

ποῦ ὑπάγει ὅτι ἡ σκοτία ἐτύφλωσεν τοὺς  
whither he goeth because G3588 darkness hath blinded G3588  
G4226 G5217 G3754 G4653 G5186

ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ  
eyes his  
G3788 G846

## Additional Cross-References

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**John 12:35** (Darkness): Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

**Revelation 3:17** (Parallel theme): Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

**1 John 1:6** (Darkness): If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

**Titus 3:3** (Parallel theme): For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

**Proverbs 4:19** (Darkness): The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble.

**1 John 2:9** (Darkness): He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

**John 12:40** (Parallel theme): He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.

**2 Corinthians 4:4** (Parallel theme): In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

**2 Corinthians 3:14** (Parallel theme): But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.