

THRU THE BIBLE SYNTHESIS
"Part LIII: 2 John - The LIMITS Of Fellowship With God"

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

(1) You have often heard me teach that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone. You've heard me back it up by quoting Ephesians 2:8-9 until you undoubtedly know those verses by heart. As such, you now know that we are non-ecumenical.

(2) Also, you have also heard me take stands against fellow believers and Evangelical organizations for their compromise with error:

(a) This last year, I have noted my disagreement with Promise Keepers in its asserting, and I quote: "Almighty God wants to bring Christian men together regardless of their . . . denominational background . . . Baptist, Presbyterian, Assemblies of God, Catholic, and so on . . ." (Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper, p. 160-161 (quotation of Coach Bill McCartney)). I told you that this violated Gal. 1:8-9 that orders us to separate even from fellow believers who promote a faith plus works salvation as does Catholicism and some Charismatics!

(b) You heard me state my inability any longer to recommend Dallas Theological Seminary, my seminary of training, and how I have written to President Church Swindoll about this due to DTS's statement that "Roman Catholics and Evangelical Protestants can unite in opposition to such evils as abortion on demand and pornography." (DTS statement mailed out to all DTS alumni, December 1995) This stand is condemned by Gal. 1:8-9, and would lead future impressionable seminary students toward ecumenism unless enough alumni take this kind of stand!

(c) You heard me state in the October 27th Adult Sunday School class that I can no longer recommend the **teachings** of Billy Graham. For years he has used questionable theologians as crusade advisors, including Canon Hugh Montifiore in the Cambridge Crusade whom the August 18, 1967 issue of Christianity Today notes said: "Jesus might have been a homosexual." (Ohio Bible Fellowship Visitor, Aug.-Sep., 1975, p. 2) But recently Rev. Graham has said of America, "We are a multireligious nation . . . We are all brothers and sisters in our hearts . . ." (Colin Greer, Parade: The Sunday Newspaper Magazine, Oct. 20, 1996). I told you that this statement promotes false gospels to ecumenists who can take Graham's remarks to condone not accepting His gospel in spite of what he may correctly preach in his crusades!

Well, are these separation stands too unloving? Where do I stop drawing the line on fellowship, and where is the Biblical basis for this, and how can we be seen as really LOVING Christians?!

(We turn to the "Need" section in the sermon notes . . .)

Need: "Jesus said that all men would recognize that we were His disciples by our LOVE, John 13:35. If that's so, WHY don't we unite with non-Christian religions like OTHER churches do?! In fact, WHY don't we even fellowship with ALL those churches that preach the same GOSPEL!? Aren't we thus being UNLOVING?!"

- I. **When man sinned in Eden, he was INFLUENCED to DO so by NOT AVOIDING a FALSE fellowship (as follows):**
 - A. When God created man in the perfect environment of Eden, man at first had satisfying fellowship with God, Gen. 3:8-9 implied.
 - B. However, Eve and then Adam fell prey to an **evil FELLOWSHIP:**
 1. Satan tempted Eve through the **appeal** of what **then** was the most **respected** animal, the serpent, Gn. 3:1a.
 2. He thus sought a **rapport** with Eve **to influence her to believe his LIE** that she might **sin** and **die**, Gn. 3:1b-5 with John 8:44.
 - C. Having fallen **prey** to **error** by **rapport** with Satan, Eve and later Adam sinned and were conquered by **death**, Gn. 3:6-7, 16-24; 2:16-17.
 - D. In judgment, God put a natural **AVERSION** between humans and the **SERPENT**, **setting the precedent** for man to **AVOID appealing but false, evil** and destructive **fellowships**, Genesis 3:15.
- II. **God had John write 2 John as a memorandum for believers to AVOID false fellowships and retain a fulfilling rapport with GOD.**
 - A. John wrote 2 John to counter Gnosticism that taught that God was too holy to touch an evil material universe, meaning that Jesus did not come in a **real** body! This error undermined Christ's substitutionary work on the cross, Ryr. St. Bib., KJV, Intr. to 1 Jn., p. 1770. (2 Jn. 7)
 - B. John wrote for Christians to **resist** such error **before** it made **headway** in their **beliefs**, and that by **avoiding** its **false FELLOWSHIP:**
 1. John revealed that there is a **true LOVE** with its **true fellowship** and a **false LOVE** with its **false fellowship** (implied), 2 Jn. 1a,b.
 2. He noted that the **true LOVE** and its **true fellowship** is based upon commonly held **true DOCTRINE**, 2 John 1c, 2a.

3. He said that **TRUE** doctrine is **STATIC**: it does **NOT EVOLVE** from **original truth like FALSE** doctrine does, 2 Jn. 2b, 5a, 6b, 9a.
4. John revealed that ordering one's life after the **true, non-evolving doctrine**, with its connection to **true Christian LOVE** also yields **great JOY** between its parties in fellowship, 2 John 4a, 12c!
5. Applying these insights to life, John taught that believers needed to **SEPARATE fellowship** from those of **wrong beliefs in the wrong fellowship** order to **AVOID** long-term spiritual **damage**:
 - a. John warned that many Gnostic deceivers had gone out into the world, and that believers uniting with them by evolving their beliefs away from original true doctrine through new, errant interpretations would lose their divine rewards, 2 Jn. 7-9 (NIV).
 - b. If one stopped asserting Jesus as God Incarnate, he would not promote His redemption, but assert a false gospel, 1 Jn. 4:1-3.
 - c. Well, since **true joy** comes from **true fellowship** that is attached to **true doctrine**, and since **true doctrine** is **STATIC**, John advocated having **no fellowship** with those whose **theology** had **denied** the **original** Christian doctrine of Christ's incarnation! Otherwise, they would promote that error and harm their own fellowship with God (v. 8) let alone promote a damaging gospel to others needing eternal life, 2 Jn. 9-11 with Gal. 1:8-9.

III. **2 John adds to the "thread of redemption", revealing one must draw LIMITS against FALSE fellowship that LEADS TO denying the BELIEFS one must adopt for fulfilling rapport with God.**

Application: *To love as GOD wants us to love, (1) believe on Christ as Savior from sin to be SEPARATED from Satan's error and kingdom, Jn. 3:16; Col 1:13-14. (2) Then, have rapport with God and other believers by (a) confession of sins (1 Jn. 1:9) and (b) obedience to Scripture (1 Jn. 2:3-6) in the control of God's indwelling Holy Spirit, Gal. 5:16-23. (3) Also, realize that truth and true fellowship are DISTINCT from a false fellowship based on error, so separate from false doctrine and its fellowship circles according to Scripture's commands, 2 John 9-11. (4) Scripture also teaches fellowship separation from FELLOW BELIEVERS whose false doctrine hinders the body, cf. 2 Thes. 3:14-15 et al. (5) The EXCEPTION to separating from those of such errant beliefs comes when they really seek the truth from us: we should meet with them to witness as did Jesus with Nicodemus, a ruler of apostate Pharisees, John 3:1-21; 19:39. Yet, if they influence others toward error, we are not to fellowship with them, 2 Jn. 9-11.*

Lesson: *The unity Jesus promoted was NOT a BROAD ALLIANCE, but a SELECTIVE ASSEMBLAGE constituted to rescue man from the very errant beliefs that HINDER fulfilling union with God, Jn. 17:9,16,20-21! (see Ephesians 4:7-13)*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . .)

We have a very practical application to make regarding the issue of Biblical separation and the limits of fellowship with a holy God:

Washington Post, Page A01, the Internet). Well, if the pope's statement that evolution is more than just a theory, then one has to conclude that Genesis 1-2 is **less** than the **truth**, for Genesis 1 and 2 do not allow for evolution, Davidheiser, Evol. And The Chr. Faith, p. 168.

(2) Additionally, a number of Evangelical groups are promoting the glossing over of theological differences between Catholicism and Protestant Evangelicalism as follows:

(a) David Briggs of the Associated Press reports on a union between some Evangelicals and Catholic leaders, noting that "'it is neither theologically legitimate nor a prudent use of resources' to proselytize among active members of another Christian community." Thus, Catholics and Evangelicals are to let other differences lie and stop trying to evangelize each other as though all of them are true believers!

(b) Dr. Billy Graham, as quoted by Colin Greer in Parade: The Sunday Newspaper Magazine on October 20, 1996, said: "We are a multireligious nation . . . We are all brothers and sisters in our hearts . . ." When asked by Greer about other Christian leaders who don't agree with this view, Graham responded: "Well, I don't agree with them."

(3) With this glossing of beliefs not only between Catholicism and Evangelicals, but also randomly of Evangelicals with all other religions in America, not only is the doctrine of salvation by faith alone challenged, but so is the inerrancy of the Word of God that **contains** it.

(4) Accordingly, I will submit to the Nepaug Congregational Church congregation under the Church Board of Elders and Deacons' approval a statement to be voted on at our next Annual Meeting slated for January 31, 1997. That motion will propose that we add to our Church's statement of faith that "We believe God created the universe without use of any evolutionary processes whatsoever . . ." I will thus advocate that our Church officially stand for the inerrancy of Genesis, and thereby affirm the Bible's assertion that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone. We will thus stand against false fellowships based on false doctrines by promoting the truth of God's Word! **The proposal will then be a LOVING proposal by its promoting true fellowship in our body!**