

I JOHN: TRUE SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

III. The Believer's Human Depravity And True Spiritual Fellowship

(1 John 1:8-2:2)

I. Introduction

- A. When the Apostle John wrote 1 John around A. D. 90 ("Introduction To The First Letter Of John," Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, p. 1770) he implied in 1 John 1:3 that a significant number of his readers were not enjoying spiritual fellowship with the Apostles, with God the Father and with God the Father's Son, Jesus Christ!
- B. That lack of fellowship with God in John's era certainly occurs in many believers today, for Christ predicted this would be the case in Revelation 3:14-22 in His message to the Laodicean Church. We thus continue our study of 1 John in 1 John 1:8-2:2 on the believer's human depravity and true spiritual fellowship (as follows):

II. The Believer's Human Depravity And True Spiritual Fellowship, 1 John 1:8-2:2.

- A. When John wrote that as a believer fellowships with God, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses him from all sin (1 John 1:7), he anticipated that someone might errantly claim that he no longer had a sin nature since he fellowshiped with God. (B. K. C., N. T., p. 885) John thus wrote that if we say that we no longer have a sin nature due to our fellowship with God, we believers deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us, 1 John 1:8.
- B. Thus, whenever the "light" or revelation of Scripture exposes an act of sin caused by the believer's yielding to his sin nature, the believer should be ready to confess it as sin to the Lord in prayer that the Lord might forgive him and cleanse him from all unrighteousness, 1 John 1:9; *Ibid.*
- C. If God's Word reveals that a believer has committed an act of sin, that believer must acknowledge that he has sinned, agreeing with Scripture, for to deny that he has sinned makes God out to be a liar, itself a great sin, and the Word of God is not then in that believer, 1 John 1:10; *Ibid.*, p. 886.
- D. In writing these things about sin and restoration to fellowship with God, John did not mean to imply that the believer should continue to sin and seek God's forgiveness as a natural experience in the Christian walk. Rather, God desired that the believer order his life in full alignment with God's Word that he might *never* sin, but enjoy endless spiritual fellowship with the Lord and other godly people, 1 John 2:1a; 1:3-4; Gal. 5:16.
- E. However, if a believer *does* commit an act of sin, God wants him to know that he has an Advocate with God the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, 1 John 2:1b. This advocacy ministry of Christ is illustrated in the case of Christ's ministry in behalf of the Old Testament High Priest Joshua in Zechariah 3:1-7 (as follows):
 1. God's prophet Zechariah was shown by a vision Israel's High Priest Joshua of Zechariah's day standing before the Preincarnate Lord Jesus Christ, the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at Joshua's right hand to resist him with accusations of sin against him, Zechariah 3:1 with Revelation 12:10b.
 2. The Angel of the Lord, the Preincarnate Christ, then asserted that the Lord had rebuked Satan, claiming that Joshua was a brand plucked out of the fire, Zechariah 3:2. Based on the sacrifice Joshua had offered, God had recognized the cleansing from sin that this sacrifice represented in the coming atonement of Christ's sacrifice on the cross! (cf. Romans 3:24-25 with John 1:29 and 2 Corinthians 5:21)
 3. Accordingly, Joshua who was clothed in filthy garments, representing sins, had his clothes replaced with clean clothes (Zechariah 3:3-5), and the Angel of the Lord, the Preincarnate Christ, directed Joshua to obey Him, keeping the charge of the Lord in his office as High Priest, for honor from God, Zech. 3:6-7. This honor involved Joshua's having "access to God along with the angels," *Ibid.*, Ryrie, ftn. to Zech. 3:7.
 4. Applied to believers in Christ today, Jesus as our Advocate opposes the charges Satan brings against us (cf. Revelation 12:10b; 1 John 1:2b) when we confess our sins, and Christ applies the efficacy of His atonement on the cross, His sacrifice there for our sins, to forgive and to cleanse us from sin!
- F. Christ then functions as the Propitiation, the satisfaction of God's judicial demands that our sin be punished that was met in Jesus Christ's work on the cross, 1 John 2:2a; *Ibid.*, ftn. to 1 John 2:2.
- G. In addition, Jesus also functions as the Propitiation for the sins of the whole world (1 John 2:2b), meaning that Christ's atonement was universal contrary to five point Calvinism that claims Christ died only for the elect!

Lesson: *We believers still have the sin nature we had before salvation so that we can still sin. When we do sin and Scripture exposes it to us, we must confess that sin to God for forgiveness and restoration to fellowship with Him. The Lord wants us not to sin, but if we do sin, He wants us to realize that He has provided an Advocate for us with God the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, that we might be cleansed and restored to fellowship with the Lord.*

Application: *May we always fellowship with God and not sin, but if we do sin, may we use God's antidote for sin.*