

I JOHN: TRUE SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP

XIV. Anticipating The Judgment Seat Of Christ With Boldness

(1 John 4:17-19)

I. Introduction

- A. When John wrote 1 John, he implied in 1 John 1:3 that a number of his readers did not enjoy spiritual fellowship with the Apostles, with God the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ!
- B. This lack of true fellowship occurs with many believers today as Christ predicted in Revelation 3:14-22 for our era. We thus view 1 John 4:17-19 on anticipating the Judgment Seat of Christ with boldness (as follows):

II. Anticipating The Judgment Seat Of Christ With Boldness, 1 John 4:17-19.

- A. Though the Apostle John had introduced the theme of boldness (*parresia*) at Christ's coming for the Church in 1 John 2:28, and at the midpoint of his argument he had addressed the issue of boldness in prayer (1 John 3:21-22), he moved further in 1 John 4:17-19 to teach how "(l)oving Christians can even have boldness at the judgment seat of Christ when the Lord returns," Bible Knowledge Commentary, New Testament, p. 900.
- B. John claimed that in this way, the love [of God] is permanently perfected (*teteleiotai*, perfect passive of *teleioo*, "be fully developed," U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 822; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 402, 401) with us, that we might have "confidence" (*parresia*, Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 635-636) in the day of the judgment, 1 John 4:17a. We explain this matter (as follows):
 1. John does not here refer to the Great White Throne Judgment of Revelation 20:11-15 where unbelievers see their eternal destiny hang in the balance, for that judgment is past for the believer, cf. John 5:24. (Ibid., Bible Know. Com., N. T.) Rather, John's epistle is written to believers (cf. 1 John 1:1-4), and they will have their Christian lives evaluated by the Lord at the "Judgment Seat" [the Greek term is *bema*, "tribunal, judicial bench," 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 139] of Christ (1 Corinthians 3:12-15) where they will receive either a reward or a loss of reward, though their soul is still saved, 1 Cor. 3:14-15.
 2. Nevertheless, even at this important event that occurs after the rapture of the Church, a believer may have confidence (*parresia*) "that God will approve the quality of his life . . ." (1 John 4:17a)
- C. The **basis** of such *confidence* that God will approve of the believer's life arises from that believer's realization that he exhibits God's love in his life, that He has become like His Savior Jesus Christ Who also expressed God's selfless, gracious love in giving Himself for sinners on the cross, 1 John 4:17b with 1 John 4:9-10; Ibid.
- D. Conversely, if a believer "is frightened of" (*phobeo*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 870-871) the Judgment Seat of Christ, that "fright" (*phobos*, Ibid., p. 871) indicates that God's love has not yet been perfected in him, for there is no "fright" (*phobos* again, Ibid.) in God's love, but the perfect love [of God] casts out "fright" (*phobos* again), for "fright" (*phobos* again) has "punishment" (*kolasis*, Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 441), and he who "is frightened" (*phobeo* again, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.) has not been permanently perfected (*teteleiotai* again, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.) in the love [of God], 1 John 4:18.
- E. However, John reminded his readers that if they were confident that God's love was perfected in them, that love was derived from God by grace, for believers do not originate God's love, but love because God first or "earlier" (*protos*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., Arndt & Gingrich, p. 732-734) loved them, 1 John 4:19. When we believers stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ with confidence for having seen God's gracious love perfected in us as it was in Christ, we will do so not by any merit of our own, but by God's great grace!

Lesson: *If we believers rely on the Holy Spirit to see God's love perfected in us, a love that is graciously selfless and that casts out fright so that we can stand before the Lord free of fright, though we will have confidence in His presence, we will need to appreciate God's grace that led us to that point in that we did not love God first, but He loved us when we did not love Him and He graciously sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins, 1 John 4:10!*

Application: *(1) If we are afraid to appear before the Lord, (a) may we check to see if we have been saved, for if we have not been saved, facing God WOULD be a terrifying experience, for we would then have to face Him at the Great White Throne Judgment where He will need to cast us into the Lake of Fire for eternal punishment since our names were not written in the Lamb's book of life! (b) If we then need to accept Christ as our Savior, may we do so immediately! (2) If we ARE saved but we still dread facing the Judgment Seat of Christ, we have not been perfected in the love of God, and we need to rely on the Holy Spirit and fellowship with God, heeding His Word to see God perfect His love in us by leading us graciously to love the undeserving. (3) If God has perfected His love in us so that we anticipate Christ's Judgment Seat with confidence, may we realize that we do so by God's grace!*