

Lesson for July 24, 2005

The Book of I John

Chapter 2

Verse 1

“My little children, these things I write unto you that you sin not.”

Remembering that in the original text of Scripture there were no chapters and verses will help us realize that John is continuing his thought from the previous verses. Obviously John had great affection for those to whom he is writing, since he called them his “little children.” The word in Greek for children is “teknion” which means “little darlings” or “infants.” Metaphorically, John is using this word to describe his relationship as their spiritual father.

The purpose for which he had written the previous verses is made clear in this phrase -- “that you sin not.” By continuing to “walk in the Light” is the method by which the believer can avoid committing personal sin. “Walking in the Light” is tantamount to being filled with the Holy Spirit. It *is* God’s will that the believer not sin, especially habitually committing the same sin.

“And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”

“If” is a third class condition meaning that maybe the believer will sin and maybe he won’t (at any given moment). The previous verses make it clear that the believer will sin. However, when the believer does sin he has a legal defense attorney (Jesus Christ) that will present his case before the Supreme Court of Heaven. The Greek word for advocate is “parakletos”, which means “to call to one’s aid” in a legal sense. Christ will cite the judgment that was placed on Him by God the Father as the payment for all sin. By citing His judgment for sin, Jesus Christ is stating that the believer is free from condemnation and no payment can be required of him for his own sin. This in no way absolves the believer from acknowledging known sins to God after salvation. It is actually on the basis of Christ’s substitutionary spiritual death that the believer receives forgiveness for post-salvation sins, when he confesses them to God.

Verse 2

“And He is the propitiation for our sins”

The key word is “propitiation” which in Greek is “hilasmos” and means “complete satisfaction.” God is completely satisfied with Christ’s payment for our sins. God’s righteousness and justice were satisfied at the Cross. Sin is not, therefore, the issue at salvation. The issue is whether a person will, by faith, accept Christ’s payment. Rejection of Christ’s payment does not change the fact that sin has been dealt with once and for all. Since God’s righteousness is completely satisfied (propitiated), His justice can impute to us His righteousness at salvation. (II Corinthians 5:21)

“and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

You will notice that the words “the sins of” are in italics in your Bible, meaning they were added by the translators. This addition does not change the meaning of this passage, as some would suppose. The fact is that all sin for all time for all persons was completely paid for by Jesus Christ. This does not mean or even imply that everyone is forgiven of sin. Forgiveness comes only when a person, by faith, accepts Christ’s payment for sin. As stated above, sin is not the issue at salvation since it has been paid for once and for all.

God will never “throw” your personal sins “in your face”, nor will He ever judge a person for his or her personal sins. Judgment in eternity for the unbeliever is based on his human good works, which are inadequate to get him in to Heaven and his rejection of Christ as Savior. Judgment in eternity for the believer is based on the execution or lack of execution of the Christian Way of Life.

Verse 3

“And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments”

In this and the following verses, John is not teaching works in order to keep your salvation, as it may seem. John is simply pointing out the fact that as a person begins to know the Lord (His character, His attributes, His thoughts) he will begin to keep the mandates (commandments) of God. The keeping of these mandates is a good indication that this person is truly a believer. The more you know about God, the more likely it will be that you will keep His commandments.

Keeping God's commandments is impossible without the control of the Holy Spirit. As we know, it is impossible to know God apart from the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit for which one must be a believer and must be in fellowship with God in order to be taught.

Verse 4

"He that saith, I know Him and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in Him."

Verses 4 and 5 clear up any misconception that John is teaching works for keeping your salvation. What this verse teaches is that when a believer fails to keep God's commandments (Bible doctrine) the truth (Bible doctrine) is not operational in his life. Therefore, this believer does not know God. Knowing God can come only as a result of accurately learning the contents of God's Word. Once a believer learns about God, he can begin to know God by thinking Bible doctrine (the mind of Christ). The Christian Way of Life is a life of thinking, which motivates the believer to keep God's mandates, whether those mandates are overt or invisible.

Verse 5

"But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected"

Again in this verse we clearly see that John is not talking about salvation, but rather the Christian Way of Life. The believer that keeps the mandates of God (Bible doctrine), as a royal priest and as a royal ambassador, is living in the "love complex." The love complex is a system of virtue-love designed for the advancing believer to first learn to love God and then his fellowman. The perfecting of God's love in the believer is a result of maximum time logged in the study and application of His Word. "Perfected" in this verse is the Greek word "teleioo" and means to complete, to accomplish, to consummate in character, to finish, to fulfill or to bring to maturity.

By abiding in God's love complex, the believer under the control and guidance of the Holy Spirit can keep God's Word. Keeping God's Word means thinking divine viewpoint, keeping short accounts regarding personal sin, staying in fellowship with God a maximum amount of time, allowing the Holy Spirit to teach you and guide you and applying Bible doctrine to your daily experience. The love of God can become mature in the life of the believer only as he exercises his love toward God in the development of his spiritual life. When this occurs the believer can also exercise love toward the entire human race, which we call impersonal love.

Impersonal love is how we regard and treat others, based on the virtue and integrity that we have developed in our souls.

“hereby we know that we are in Him”

As the believer resides in the love complex, the Holy Spirit bears witness with his human spirit, confirming that he is a child of God. However, the Holy Spirit cannot bear witness to a human spirit that is void of accurate Bible doctrine. This is the reason that many Christians doubt their salvation (they have no accurate Bible doctrine in the soul). Therefore, as God’s love is consummated in the believer as the character of Christ, he will have the assurance that he is positionally in Christ and experientially abiding in Christ.

Verse 6

“He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also to walk, even as He walked.”

John makes it crystal clear in this verse that he has been talking about the Christian Way of Life, not salvation. The word “ought” is the key to understanding this. Abiding in Christ is only potential for the believer; he may abide in Him and he may not abide in Him.

“Abideth” in Greek is “meno” and means “to dwell, “to be at home with” or in other words, to stay in fellowship with Christ. Fellowship means we have things in common with Him (His thinking, His motivation, His character). When we have His thinking (divine viewpoint), it motivates us to execute the Christian Way of Life (our walk). Christ executed the Protocol Plan of God perfectly, utilizing the power of the Holy Spirit and Bible doctrine in His soul. Christ tested and proved this supernatural way of life for every believer, but it is up to us to choose to live it.

Christ walked in perfect harmony with the will, purpose and plan of God. At no time did He seek His own agenda or step outside the plan. Christ, like no other human being in history, stayed totally focused on His ministry and the Father’s plan regarding that ministry. Christ willingly humbled Himself and was obedient even unto death so that He could secure our salvation. He also pioneered a life for us based on God’s power system (the filling of the Holy Spirit). It goes without saying, this life is far superior to the one offered by the cosmic system of Satan.