

I JOHN: DISCERNING TRUE FROM FALSE SPIRITUALITY

Part II: The Standard Of True Spirituality

(1 John 1:5-7)

I. Introduction

- A. 1 John was written to combat false teachings that had begun to affect the Early Church by A. D. 90. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1770: "Intro. to the First Letter of John;" Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 881)
- B. Much error afflicts Christendom today (Brannon Howse, Rel. Trojan Horse, 2012, pp. 485), and one such area is that of spirituality: some hold that true spirituality involves the merging of the Church with government and business to set up God's kingdom on the earth in global unity in accord with John 17:20-21, Ibid., p. 297-426.
- C. The teaching of the Apostle John in 1 John 1:5-7 applies to this matter, so we view the passage for our insight:

II. The Standard Of True Spirituality, 1 John 1:5-7. (Ibid., Ryrie, p. 1771 for the word "Standard")

- A. When the Apostle John wrote of the standard of true spirituality in 1 John 1:5-7, he based it on the foundation of true spirituality revealed back in 1 John 1:1-4 -- the words of Jesus' original apostles (as follows):
 - 1. We learned in our last lesson that Jesus' original apostles had once-for-all-heard (*akekoamen*, perfect tense of *akouo*, "hear," U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 813; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 12) and once-for-all-seen (*heorakamen*, perfect tense of *oraō*, "see," Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 180) with their eyes the Word of Life, the Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, 1 John 1:1b.
 - 2. We also learned that this Word of Life, Jesus Christ, "was [already] existing" (*en*, the imperfect tense of *ēimi*, "is," in the beginning of creation (1 John 1:2) (Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 187), that He was thus the Eternal God eternally co-existing with God the Father! (1 John 1:1a)
- B. Thus, this **unchanging, divinely authoritative** Jesus Christ had given His original apostles a message that they were to give to other believers, which message if heeded would bring their listeners into fellowship with Jesus Christ and God the Father just as Jesus' original apostles fellowshiped with the Lord, 1 John 1:3-4.
- C. That **message** the apostles had once-for-all-heard (*akekoamen* again, cf. 1 John 1:1a, 3a) and were declaring to John's readers was that God is "light" and in Him is no "darkness" at all (*oudeis*, "in no respect, in no way," Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Arndt & Gingrich, A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T., 1967, p. 596), 1 John 1:5.
- D. By "light" and "darkness," the Apostle John defines as either obeying God's revealed commands (light) or disobeying them (darkness), Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 John 1:7, and we explain this as follows:
 - 1. John's definition of "light" relative to God and to Christ is explained in his Gospel at John 7:52 and 8:12 that in turn alludes to Isaiah 8:19-9:2: (a) since John 7:53-8:11 is not part of John's original gospel (Ibid., B. K. C., N. T., p. 346), the charge by Jesus' opponents in John 7:52 that no prophet arose in Galilee is countered by Jesus' John 8:12 claim to be the "Great Light" predicted in Galilee in Isaiah 9:1-2! (b) Thus, Jesus fulfilled Isaiah 8:19-9:2 in His earthly ministry, what John himself witnessed, cf. Matthew 4:12-22.
 - 2. That "Great Light" was God's revelation in His Incarnate Son in Galilee in gracious response to Israel's having abandoned heeding God's written revelation in the Old Testament Scriptures, Isaiah 8:19-20; 9:1-2.
 - 3. Thus, by "light," John meant God's revelation, be it the written Scriptures or in His Son's earthly life!
- E. Therefore, John added that if we say that we spiritually fellowship with God but walk in "darkness," that is, if we order our lives in disobedience to God's revelation in His Word, we lie, and do not the truth, 1 John 1:6.
- F. However, John added that if we order our lives in the "light," that is, in obedience to the directives of God's revelation in His Word, we have fellowship with God, His Son and the godly, be they apostles or other believers, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son is cleansing us from all sin, 1 John 1:7 with 1 John 1:3-4.
- G. Since God is "light" and in Him is no "darkness" **at all** (1 John 1:5), fellowship with God occurs only if one fully obeys written Scripture; anything less is "darkness" where the Lord's fellowship does not exist **at all**.

Lesson: *The Apostle John claimed that Jesus' original apostles with the unchanging, divinely authoritative revelation of Jesus Christ had heard from Him that one must completely heed God's Word to fellowship with Him, that any disobedience of that once-for-all Bible revelation puts one outside of true spiritual fellowship with God.*

Application: *(1) May we believe in Christ to have eternal life, John 3:16. (2) Then, to fellowship with God, may we fully obey written Scripture. (3) As for the application of John 17:20-21 in today's religious realms (see our introduction), Jesus did not claim the Church must unite with world governments and businesses in global unity, for in John 17:16-17 Jesus said the Apostles were not of the world, that He wanted them to be separate from it! Rather, the unity Christ sought was a select unity -- a unity of those who were separate from the world!*