

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

November 10, 2017

FALSE CLAIMS

I have heard many people make great spiritual claims about themselves. Usually such claims turn out to be false. Jesus, himself, acknowledged *“If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.”* John 5:31. Jesus had no need to bear witness of himself because, as he said, *“the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me. And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me.”* John 5:36-37. Anyone can make a claim about themselves, but it is not the witness of man that matters, we must have the witness of God.

In his first epistle, the apostle John addresses the religious claims of those who walk in darkness. Darkness is anything that is outside of the glorious truth and reality of Christ. John recognized the darkness by two unmistakable witnesses; first was what was professed, and second was what manifested in the life. If either the profession or the life denied that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, ¹John 2:22 who came into the world to destroy the works of the devil ¹John 3:8 and take away our sin ¹John 3:5, John knew it was a walk in darkness. John spent much of his first epistle refuting the claims of those who professed to know and have fellowship with God, but their walk was in darkness. Over and over John found their witness to be false. Look at some of these claims and John’s response to them:

False claim: *“We have fellowship with him,”* but they *“walk in darkness.”*

John’s response: If you, I, or anyone else, walk in darkness, and claim fellowship with God, *“we lie, and do not the truth:”* | John 1:6.

False claim: *“I know him,”* but they *“keep not his commandments.”*

John’s response: He *“is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”* | John 2:4.

False claim: I *“am in the light,”* but he *“hateth his brother.”*

John’s response: He *“is in darkness even until now.”* | John 2:9.

False claim: *“I love God,”* but he *“hates his brother.”*

John’s response: *“He is a liar.”* | John 4:20.

There are two other false claims of those who walk in darkness that John deals with in his first epistle. These claims came from some who professed to believe Jesus is the Christ, but walked in darkness and denied their need to be cleansed from sin. Many of these were Jews who had kept the Law perfectly from their youth. They did not believe they had any need for *“the blood Jesus”* to cleanse them, because in their thinking, they *“had no sin.”* John 15:22. This may sound strange until we consider the words of the apostles.

Paul spoke of his life before coming to Christ, saying that he, *“touching the righteousness which is in the law, (was) blameless.”* Philippians 3:6. Many Jews, like Saul of Tarsus, were blameless under the Law and did not view themselves as sinners. This is brought out in Paul’s conversation with Peter at Antioch. Speaking to Peter, he said, *“We*

who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles..." Galatians 2:15. In the Jewish mind, it was the gentiles who were the sinners. The Jews trusted that they were not because they kept the Law. Jesus shattered this delusion, because he taught that SIN IN THE HEART IS SIN. He said, *"...whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."* Matthew 5:28. When they heard his words, their covering of self-righteous religious works was swept away. Jesus gave witness of this, saying, *"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin."* John 15:22. They hated Jesus because he took their religious covering away.

Those Jesus spoke of who, according to the Law, *"had not had sin,"* and those John spoke of who said *"we have no sin,"* both walked in the darkness of the Law. They trusted they had been perfectly kept from sin by the Law. John addresses this when he says, *"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."* I John 1:8. John could relate to them because he had come up under the Law also. In the preceding verse, he told them that if they would walk in the light of Christ, His blood would cleanse them from all sin. But these who walked in darkness believed they had no sin to be cleansed from.

John urges on, saying, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* I John 1:9. It is as though you can hear John pleading with them: "Sin in the heart IS sin! Stop denying it. You are just deceiving yourselves. Confess it and God will both forgive you and wash it away through the

blood of Christ.” Yet John knew the darkness and hardness of heart of these who trusted in the Law. He had been surrounded by it all his life.

John closes out this passage by addressing those who saw no need to be cleansed from sin because they believed they had kept themselves from sinning by obedience to the Law. He writes, *“If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.”* 1 John 1:10. They, like Saul of Tarsus, may have kept themselves from committing the act of sin, but Jesus taught that if it is in your heart, you have already done it. They were making Jesus a liar by rejecting the truth. Their self-righteous claims were false. The only person who is free from sin is the one who walks in the light and has been washed from their sin in the blood of Jesus Christ. Revelation 1:5.