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Our aim is to regularly post a new lesson on the first part of each month. So if you wish to follow this course of study, please check regularly each month. If no new lesson appears at the beginning of a particular month, it indicates that we were unable to get it ready in time. In such a case, please check for it after the first of the following month. Your questions or comments are welcomed and will be responded to as much as possible.

PATHWAY OF LIGHT STUDY COURSE

by R. W. Young

“But the path of the just is as a shining light that shines more and more unto the perfect day.” (Prov. 4:18)

“These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of Yahweh; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.” (1 John 5:13)

LESSON 159, 1 John chapter 3

As we continue our study of 1 John we now come to the central chapter. It is numerically central (chapter 3 out of 5) and it is central subject-wise, for it clearly highlights those things that prove a person is has the true faith that brings eternal life.

VERSES 1-3 Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of Yahweh: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. (2) Beloved, now are we the sons of Yahweh, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. (3) And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

It is totally amazing that Yahweh would take the dust of the earth made by Him into a living soul, or person, and from such lowly persons raise up some who would become His own children, a family of beings who would become one with Him. John marvels at Yahweh’s great love to us in calling us children of Yahweh. We are not only called the children of Yahweh, which is itself wonderful. We are actually made one with Yahweh by being joined to Him in our actual being.

In John 17:21 we read Yahshua’s pray for us, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, *art in* me, and I *in* thee, that they also may be one *in* us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.” This is organic union. We have been joined organically to Yahweh, who is Spirit, by receiving His own Holy Spirit into our human spirit so that we are in Him and He in us. What we now wait for is the manifestation of the sons of Yahweh, which comes at the first resurrection.

Rom 8:19-23 speaks of this being our hope, or expectation, as well as it being that for which the whole creation is waiting – the manifestation of the sons of Yahweh in the redemption of our bodies. This is what John here speaks of here as well.

But first he reminds us that, because we are Yahweh’s children, we are hated by the world just as Yahshua was hated by the world at large. We read His words in John 15:18-19: “If the world hates you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. (19) If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.” They hated Him because His life, by word and deed, showed forth the character of Yahweh and, thereby, shined a light on the wrong of their lives.

If we live as He lived, and speak as he spoke, we will also be a light that shows the wrong of the way of life as lived by the world at large. Thus Paul wrote in 2 Timothy 3:12-13, “Yea, and all that will live godly in Messiah Yahshua shall suffer persecution. (13) But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.” Perhaps we do not suffer as much persecution as those early believers did due to our not witnessing as strongly as we ought against their unrighteousness by our words and deeds.

Let’s go back to John’s word about the manifestation of the sons of Yahweh. He says that it doesn’t yet appear what we shall be, or shall become, as the children of Yahweh. As Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 13:12, “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” At present we walk in the measure of light that we have. As we increase in light we are to walk on in each new measure of light that we receive. This causes us to grow in “the grace and in the knowledge of our Master and Savior Yahshua the Messiah” as Peter says in 2 Pet 3:18. Or, as we read in 2 Corinthians 3:18, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of Yahweh, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of Yahweh.”

Ultimately, as John says, when we see Yahshua as He really is in all His radiance and splendor (which will be at His return to receive us unto Himself) we shall, then, be made just like Him. We will receive sinless, immortal, in corruptible bodies like His (Rom 8:11, 1 Cor 15:51-52; Phil 3:21). We will be pure and holy just as He is.

Then, John says that everyone who has that expectation (or “hope”) in him will be purifying themselves, even as He is pure. In other words, if that is really what you are looking forward to – to become like Yahshua – you will be working toward that goal in the present time. It is a contradiction to say you want to become like Yahshua and still live like the devil today. If that is your real goal – to see Him and become like Him at His appearing – you will, of course, be trying to learn more about Him and seeking to change into His likeness in the present time.

VERSES 4-6 “Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. (5) And ye know that he was mani-

fested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. (6) Whosoever abides in him sins not: whosoever sins hath not seen him, neither known him.”

Here the apostle John is contrasting those who are looking to become like Yahshua at His appearance from heaven (and are purifying themselves) with others who are continuing to live in sin. He declares that Yahshua was manifested – that is became flesh – that He might take away sin, which He did by the sacrifice of Himself on Calvary, and by coming to live in us by the Holy Spirit in His resurrection and glorification.

Hebrews 2:14-15 says, “Forasmuch, then, as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; (15) And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.” As long as man only had death to look forward to his only goal in life was to get the most out of it in the present time by the satisfaction of his appetites and desires, which is a life of fleshly, and self centered, living – a life of sin. But when we have eternal life to look forward to we are set free from that bondage to this world and can heed Peter’s instructions: “Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul”. (1 Peter 2:11)

As John tells us here, as one of the main evidences that we are true believers and have eternal life, “whoever remains in” Yahshua “does not sin”, and “whoever does sin has not seen Him, neither known Him.” He is talking, of course, about the general practice in life. That is to say, John is not saying that the believer never sins and that anyone who does commit a sin is not a true believer.

Obviously, we are still able to sin even after accepting Yah’s gift of eternal life. Otherwise, after telling us in chapter 2, verse 1, to not sin, John would not have next said, “If any man sin we have advocate with the Father” etc., as he said in verse 2. But here in 1 John 3:6 he makes it very plain that sin can not be an on going part of our lives as believers. Although we have not yet become perfect in knowledge and, therefore, all sin without realizing that we are doing so, the life of a true believer is a life without knowingly continuing to sin. Sin will be an exceptional thing, not an ongoing practice, in the life of the believer.

This is all brought out by the use of the present tense in the Greek. Thus it should read, “Whosoever abides in him is not sinning: whosoever is sinning hath not seen him, neither known him.” Known sin is not the practice in the life of a true believer, but merely an exception if at all.

The statement translated in the KJV as, “Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law” is not a good

translation and has led to some to take John to be saying that “transgressing the law is sin”. They say that it is sin not to keep the law, meaning the Law of Moses.

However, the words “the law” are not in the Greek text. The correct translation is as it reads in the EVS and other translations: “Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.” Lawlessness is a condition of the heart and mind. It is doing your own thing and not accepting rules of conducts, especially biblical teachings.

Even if one accepts the KJV translation, a proper reading does not give one the statement that some make it to say, which is that transgressing the law is sin. If you accept that as the meaning, instead of taking what it does say, which is the “sin is transgression of the law”, you are misreading it.

If you sin, no doubt you have broken some command of Yahweh’s law as given to the children of Israel – the Law of Moses. However, that is not the same as saying you are sinning if you break any of those commandments or teachings. If, for instance, you do not wash when you touch something unclean, you are not necessarily sinning. Even if you eat some unclean meat, according to Yahshua that does not defile you spiritually, for (although the context was concerning eating with unwashed hands, nevertheless) Yahshua flatly said “nothing entering into the mouth defiles a man. (Mark 7:15) And Paul said in Romans 14:14, “I know, and am persuaded by the Master Yahshua, that *there is* nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteems any thing to be unclean, to him *it is* unclean.” This is obviously a reference to the kind of statement made by Yahshua.

This does not mean that we should ignore the Law that told the Israelites what are the clean and unclean animals. Even though we have died with Yahshua so that the law has no jurisdiction over us, it is still part of the right way of living in the physical realm. It is still part of all scripture, which is given to us to teach us righteousness, or right ways of living, in all areas of life, spiritual and carnal areas.

Finally, if transgressing the law is sin, then, to not be circumcised is sin. Thus the apostles at the apostolic council recorded in Acts 15 were telling the Gentiles that it was alright to sin, for they told them they did not need to be circumcised, while circumcision was integral to keeping the law. And Paul who said, “Is any called in uncircumcision, let him not be circumcised” (1 Cor 7:18) was also telling them that it is alright to sin, if transgressing the law is sin. Of course that cannot be so.

This is an entire subject that would take much time to discuss, and we have already done so in other lessons – as how we as believers relate to the law. But in summary the Bible teaches that we have died with Messiah, and are thus also dead to the law so that it has no jurisdiction over us. (Gal 2:19, Rom 7:1-6, et. al.) We are not under the letter of the law. However, it is still scripture and gives us the instructions of how to best live in this present physical world.

Furthermore, any of the moral commands – such as those against fornication – are still required of all believers. The Ten Commandments, and much of the Law of Moses, contain those moral commandments that we all will keep if we are followers of Yahshua.

Nevertheless, to make a blanket statement that to break any of the rules in the letter of the law is wrong (speaking of the Law of Moses, as it is called, which was written in a book and put beside the Ark of the Covenant and not in it as the Ten Commandments were). So this verse in 1 John 3:4 does not teach that to break, or transgress any of the law is automatically sin. The KJV properly analyzed does not even say that, and certainly a proper translation of Greek (as “sin if lawlessness”) does not either.

We will go on from here in the next lesson.