

So That You May Know

An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John 5:16&17**

Chapter 29- The Sin Unto Death

270 The Sin Unto Death- Part 10

WAOY Tuesday 10/28/08

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today we're going to continue to look at what John taught about "The Sin that is unto Death". So let's open our Bibles and read **1John 5:16&17** again together:

16 If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not *leading* to death, he shall ask and *God* will for him give life to those who commit sin not *leading* to death. There is a sin *leading* to death; I do not say that he should make request for this.

17 All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not *leading* to death.

Now I mentioned this in the beginning of our study of this passage- but there is a need for me to say this again on today's broadcast. This **Epistle of 1John** was one the very last Books that contains inspired Words that was ever written. The Apostle John wrote this Epistle as an old man while living his last days in the city of Ephesus- where Timothy was the pastor.

As I told you before- John was the last living Apostle on earth- the very last of the few men who were specially called and chosen to set up the Christian Church by the Doctrine that they received directly from God the Holy Spirit.

You see, the Apostles were not just men who heard from God or men who set up a Church- no, these were the men who wrote down the One for all given to the saints Faith so that we would have it today and men who established the Christian Church on the earth.

Now I realize that it is popular today for self- appointed and unaccountable men to say that God has called and chosen them and spoken to them and that they are modern day apostles and prophets- but the facts just don't bear that out, dear friends. Like I said- Apostles

were not just men who heard from God- they were men who were specially chosen to articulate the Apostle's Doctrine and who correctly interpreted the Old Covenant Scriptures. That Doctrine is not being established today- it has already been established and that correct interpretation of Old Testament Scriptures is not going on today- it has already occurred and was written down for us in the 27 New Testament Books.

For example- turn with me to **The Acts 2** and look at Peter's very first sermon. In **The Acts 2:14**, Peter said:

... Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words.

Then in verse 16- Peter put the correct interpretation on the prophecy that Joel made 800 years earlier and recorded in **Joel 2:28-32**. Now how did this fisherman, who had no formal education, know that what the prophet Joel had uttered in the 9th Century BC was fulfilled on that day in that city and in that Upper Room with those men? How could Peter possibly have known that? Because he was an Apostle and because he had been endued with Power from on high and because that was the reason why he had been empowered.

Now in **The Acts 2:25**- Peter also applied the correct interpretation to what King David had written 600 years earlier in **Psalms 16:8-11**. In verse 29- Peter correctly interpreted **1Kings 2:10**; in verse 30, Peter gave us the correct interpretation of **Psalms 132:11**; and in verse 34- the Apostle Peter- freshly empowered with God the Holy Spirit gave the world the one single correct interpretation for **Psalms 110:1**.

Now keep in mind, dear friends, that Peter was not giving us *his own personal* interpretation of these Old Covenant Scriptures- no, Peter was giving every single human being in the world from that time until now the one single *correct* interpretation of those Old Covenant Scriptures that had been written down hundreds of years earlier. In other words- nobody can ever read those passages again and not know what they mean or get another interpretation because Peter- empowered in his office as an Apostle- told us what God meant when God originally gave them.

Another way of saying this is that if anyone today gets a different interpretation of say, **Joel 2:28-32** other than what Peter said that it

meant- those people are preaching false doctrine and they and their teaching should be rejected.

Now as we talk about this issue, dear friends, we also have to understand that Joel and David and the other Old Testament writers didn't know themselves what they were writing when they wrote these verses down. These men only saw the things of God in a mystery; at a distance- and they never fully understood what they were writing the longest day that they lived. And it wasn't until the Apostles gave us the correct interpretation of the Old Covenant in what they wrote down for us in the New Testament- that anyone fully understood how to fit all these different pieces together.

Now notice also that Peter didn't say, "*This is what these Old Testament verses mean to me*", or "*This is what I think they mean*", or "*This is my own best guess*". No, Peter said, "**This is that!**" He didn't just speak with confidence or self- appointed righteousness- no, Peter spoke with Divine Authority- he knew what he was talking about because God had called him and the other Apostles to do just that. And nobody before the Apostles and nobody since the Apostles had that kind of Divine Authority.

Now the New Testament is divided into four classifications of Books. You have four Books called Gospels- those are the Books that tell all that is true about what Jesus said and what Jesus did in His earthly ministry. Then you have the diary of the first 30 years of Christianity called **The Book of the Acts of the Apostles**. Then you have a Book of prophetic events that are coming in the future and that is **The Book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ**. That is three groups and a total of six Books.

And then you have the last category of 21 Books- which are the *teaching* Books of the New Testament. These Books are called, Epistles- and they are letters written directly by the Apostles themselves or men who were authorized by the Apostles to give the Church all Christian Doctrine and instruction about how a man is justified and how to set up the Church and what constitutes true Salvation and what the requirements are for leading in the House of God.

It is in *these* Books that you get the correct and full understanding of the sayings and deeds of Jesus in the Gospels such as what His

sinless life provided and what His death on the Cross and His Resurrection brought forth.

So collectively, the 27 New Testament Books are the Books which finish the Divine Revelation of God to Man and they are those Books which give the correct and full understanding of all that the Prophets wrote for us in the Old Covenant Scriptures.

And this is very important to understand, dear friends, because for example- if you read the Old Covenant Scriptures without at least a working knowledge of what those Scriptures mean from what the Apostle said that they meant in what they wrote in the New Testament- you will get off base real quick. So what the 21 New Testament Epistles are is a correct explanation of what the Old Testament Scriptures mean and how they apply to us today.

Now you don't have to take my word for this, dear friends. You can check out what I am saying by reading what was written by the men who lead the Christian Church immediately after the death of the Apostle John. If anyone could have led the Church astray- these men could have. These are the men who could have probably gotten away with whatever they wanted to because there were no more Apostles alive who could have rebuked them and exposed their deception.

Men like Polycarp and Clement and Irenaeus and Justin Martyr- who collectively were called the Fathers of the Church- who led the Christian Church immediately after the death of John. These men had all power and ability to do whatever they wanted to and they probably would have gotten away with it. Most of the people of that day were illiterate and copies of the Scriptures were rare and so expensive that the average person didn't own a personal copy even one single Book of the Holy Bible during his entire life.

But as you read what these men wrote- you discover some amazing things. Now keep in mind that while nothing that they wrote was inspired by God- it does serve a purpose as to give us insight into what these men thought and what they taught during the second century of Christianity.

One thing stands out that was common with all of them. Not one of these men ever referred to himself as being an Apostle. Not one of these men ever said that anything they wrote was inspired by God or that it rose to the level of being equal with Scripture. None of these men said that God spoke directly to them; or that they received special

revelation from God that had not already been given to the Apostles and written down in Scripture.

No, the goal of these men was not to reinvent the wheel here; it was not to hear some new thing or to be creative with Christianity. No, these men labored under the solemn burden of teaching and preaching and being faithful to the very same faith that had already been given and articulated and expounded and written down by the now dead Apostles. In fact, in their writings- these men referred to the time when Christianity was being established on the earth as being, “The Days of the Apostles”.

In fact, all during the first 20 centuries of the Church- the only people who labeled themselves as being Apostles or Prophets or who taught that they had received special revelation from God that was not already in the Bible were the heretics- the bad guys- the false teachers- who were trying to subvert Christianity and destroy it.

And it was not until the last half of the 19th century that the Church of Jesus as a whole began to entertain the notion that Apostles and Prophets were offices that could and should still be filled- so it really makes you wonder why Christians from around the world never saw the need for these two offices to be filled for over 1900 years after the death of John.

Two good sources to check out what I am saying would be, *The History of the Christian Church*- edited by Phillip Schaff and *The Writings of the Fathers* edited by Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson.

So to say that God is still speaking Revelation to men today is to find fault with that which God has already spoken and it is best not to do that, dear friends. And for anyone to suggest that the Christian Church has not already been established on the earth and needs to be set up in our day by modern Apostles and Prophets or that the Holy Scriptures need updating or further additions is the height of arrogance and blasphemy and it is to ignore 2,000 years of history and the faithful work of millions of believers over that time.

You see, I don't believe that our generation is the most advanced generation that has ever lived and that we are more intelligent and more spiritual and more holy than previous generations. I do not buy that for one second. When I read the writings of the Puritans and then read a book by an author of our day- it is like comparing *War and Peace*

to a comic book. No, we have great need, dear friends, to relearn our history and to look backward to the day when men actually walked with God and when faithfulness was sought after more than wealth and when personal holiness was more important than physical health and when the Holy Scriptures were actually preached and taught and learned and read and studied and valued and loved and defended and obeyed.

Now I said all of that to say this- what John wrote in this Epistle was not to create any new Doctrine that had not already been created by the earlier Books. John's job was not to give us some new revelation that nobody else had taught before. But John's calling was simply to restate in his own way- the eternal Truths that had already been articulated and written down for us in the 22 Books that came before his five.

So when John speaks here about the Sin unto Death- John was not creating a new understanding of sin or dividing sin into two different groups or to try to create a new Church ritual or to usurp anything that had been written before. John's main focus here was to teach us that we are to pray for one another so much and so often and to get to know each other so well- that when we see a brother sin a sin that might cause God to destroy his flesh- that we fall on our knees and plead for that covenant brother so that God may forgive him.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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