



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

1 JOHN 1:10- FALSE CLAIM #3: DENIAL!

COLORADO

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Dan File, P.O. Box 1088, Lake City, CO 81235-1088/303-345-8830 / filefamily@centurytel.net

As a failure to conform to God's law, our sins make us guilty and subject to punishment. However, when we confess our sins to God, He acts to bring us back into right relationship. "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us." (Psalm 103:10-12) Moreover, our sins not only make us guilty, but also make us unclean. Upon our confession, God specifically acts to cleanse us from the pollution of our sins. Sin produces a defilement that only God can remove! So God acts and removes "all unrighteousness" when we come to know Him in salvation. This indicates the cleansing is total not partial. Sin is our failure to measure up to the standard of right as set forth in Scripture. This total cleansing restores us to fellowship with God. The blood of Jesus is the cleansing agent, not our confession. However, the confession of our sin makes possible the Divine cleansing applicable.¹ Therefore, God's response to our sincere confession is to forgive and to cleanse.

I. 1 JOHN 1:10- FALSE CLAIM #3- DENIAL!

"If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us." 1John 1:10

The final false claim John puts forth is failing to see the depth of our depravity. There are those who deny the certainty of sin, but this next false claim says that they have never sinned. This is the most serious claim of all. And do not think it does not happen in our world today. John is clear about sin. To say that we have not sinned is more than a deliberate lie or being deceived. Rather it is to actually accuse God of lying, which reveals that His Word, His gospel is not in us for the gospel clearly assumes the sinfulness of all humanity.

John has contrasted the nature of God (God is light) with the nature of man. In addition, he has begun to show the characteristics of those who walk in the light as opposed to those who walk in darkness. It is not enough to claim that we are in the light. We must actually walk in it. If God is actually the light of our life, then that light will expose the darkness in our life. Those dark places will increasingly be forgiven and cleansed of sin. And growth in holiness means growth in true sensitivity to sin in our life. To follow Christ becomes our true desire.²

A. "IF WE SAY THAT WE HAVE NOT SINNED"- 1 JOHN 1:10A

To say that we "have not sinned" is in the perfect tense in the Greek and asserts a past condition of sinlessness up to the present. This is a blatant refusal to acknowledge any sinful act or deed in our conduct. This asserts that one has never sinned

and is such a blatant affirmation in view of the evidence of sin. John does not say that man lies, but rather that he makes God a liar! Why? Because God has declared in legal terms that "all have sinned" (Romans 3:23). Thus, all are in need of His salvation and grace. So who is right? Is the one who denies the reality of sin in general and in him specifically? On the other hand, is God right Who declares that all have sinned? Maybe Romans 3:4 says it best, "Rather let God be found true, though every man a liar."

B. "WE MAKE HIM A LIAR"- 1 JOHN 1:10B

It is one thing to show we are liars. But it is a much more serious action to make a liar out of God. It is a direct attack on His character. John asserts here emphatically that we are not merely charging God with telling lies, but declare in character that God is a liar and false in His very nature. This reduces God to the level of the Devil. (John 8:44)

These explicitly deny God's teaching that all have sinned and they implicitly deny the need for a Savior from their sin. Why would they even need a Savior? But God's Word could not be any clearer. Romans 3:10, 23 says, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Ecclesiastes 7:20 says, "Indeed there is not a righteous man on earth who does good and never sins."

Charles Spurgeon tells of the story of a man who once claimed to have no sin, thus confronting Spurgeon the great Baptist preacher. Intrigued, Spurgeon invited him to dinner. After listening to his claims, Spurgeon rose from his chair, picked up a glass of water and threw it across the man's face.

Immediately and understandably, this "perfect" person showed his imperfections, causing quite a scene allowing his anger and language to cross the line of courtesy. To which Spurgeon replied, "Ah you see, the old man within is not as dead as you claim. He had simply fainted and I have revived him with but a glass of water."³ We dare not think lightly of sin or our sin.

C. "AND HIS WORD IS NOT IN US."- 1 JOHN 1:10C

John makes it clear that God has not found a lodging in this one's life by saying "and His word is not in us." And unlike the previous claims, (1 John 1:7, 1:9) John now offers no corrective or remedy. The only hope for this one in John's text is to denounce the claim and accept the message presented in 1 John 2:1-2. It is a simple test of a person's profession to ask if they agree with God: what He says about them in His Word,

BIBLE STUDIES

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and specifically what He says about sin. We must keep in mind that true confession and repentance brings to us the hope and promise of forgiveness and cleansing in Christ.⁴

All of these false claims to have fellowship with God are false and fail because they deny the certainty of sin, thus proving the gospel has found no lodging in their life. Anyone, even those who profess Christ, seeking to cover up their sin, is in the depth of spiritual darkness, deception and blaspheme God. Now, true believers who sin do not deny sins presence or their difficulty with that temptation to sin. Instead, a true believer will openly and honestly confess sin and repent of them. Psalm 51 is a clear example of this. We cannot be justified apart from an honest confession of our sinfulness. (Luke 18:13-44, Proverbs 26:12, Ephesians 5:5)⁵

⁴Hiebert, D. Edmond, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*. Bob Jones University Press: Greenville, SC, 1991. Pg. 65.

²Boice, James Montgomery, *An Expository Commentary: The Epistles of John*. Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI, 1979. Pg. 33-34.

³O'Donnell, Douglas Sean, *Reformed Expository Commentary: 1-3 John*. P&R Publishing Company: Phillipsburg, NJ, 2015. Pg. 28-29.

With our eyes open to the awesome effects of Christ's atonement, let us not be blind to the reality of our ongoing sin. *“God is light”* is the message of 1 John 1:5-10. If we are to walk in the light as we are called to do, our first step is to recognize the darkness within our hearts. A proper assessment of self and sin in which we say neither *“we have no sin”* nor *“we have not sinned”* but rather *“we have sin”* and we *“still sin”*- should lead to a life of consistent, contrite confessions whereby the Father's forgiveness is given and our fellowship with God and others, through the blood of Christ, is renewed. It should also lead to a life that reflects the light of God- a theme that we will explore further in the rest of John's Epistle.⁶

⁴Hiebert, D. Edmond, *The Epistles of John: An Expository Commentary*. Bob Jones University Press: Greenville, SC, 1991. Pg. 69.

⁵MacArthur, John, *MacArthur Commentary Series on 1-3 John*. Moody Press: Chicago, IL, 2007. Pg. 30-31.

⁶O'Donnell, Douglas Sean, *Reformed Expository Commentary: 1-3 John*. P&R Publishing Company: Phillipsburg, NJ, 2015. Pg. 23, 30.