

Assurance of Fellowship with God

In the beginning God created man to be different from all other living things. Not only did the Creator breathe life into him, the Almighty made man in His image, too (Genesis 1:26). Now God is spirit (John 4:24). Thus, man's inner being is in the likeness of his Creator. Man possesses a characteristic of his Maker.

After creating and placing Adam and Eve in the garden, God would spend time in Eden with them (Genesis 3:8). He spoke directly to them. Their relationship was special. Then sin severed that fellowship. God has no fellowship with sin. He began unfolding His plan and purpose to restore sinful man to Himself in order that He may have fellowship again with man as He desired from the beginning.

Throughout the Biblical record, Jehovah worked in men's lives so that He would be their God and they would be His people. He kept a very special relationship with the descendants of Abraham. On Mount Sinai God said, "If you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be a special treasure to Me above all people" (Exodus 19:5). "I will dwell among the children of Israel and will be their God." (Leviticus 29:45) The Lord God chose the ancient nation of Israel to be a people for Himself (Deuteronomy 7:6). Because they rebelled and disobeyed Him, He drove them out of the Promised Land, which He had previously given them. But God still longed for fellowship. Through prophets He foretold of a time when fellowship would be restored. "I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33). "My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Ezekiel 37:27). "They shall be My people and I will be their God, in truth and righteousness" (Zechariah 8:8).

Fellowship with God is now accessible through Jesus Christ. The heavenly Father predestined that adoption as sons is by His only begotten Son (Ephesians 1:5). The Lord taught that He is the way, truth and life to the Father (John 14:6). A person becomes a son of God "through faith in Christ," putting on Christ by baptism (Galatians 3:26, 27). When a believer abides in the teaching of Christ, he has fellowship with the Father and the Son (2 John 9). All who are children of God are heirs of God according to the promise of glory (Romans 8:16-17).

Our Creator longs to have fellowship with us, whom He created in His likeness. Thus He set forth Jesus to be our propitiation and communicates His will of redemption through the gospel of Christ that we may come to a true knowledge of God and be assured of the fellowship He has promised. We can know the Lord. We can be saved. We can have assurance that we are walking with God and He with us; that He abides in us and we in Him. Having the promise that God will be a Father to us and we children to Him, Paul admonished Christians to cleanse themselves "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 6:18; 7:1). Fellowship is assured when we are living righteously.

In the apostle John's first epistle, he wrote to instill confidence within God's children of the precious fellowship they shared in the Lord. Using divinely inspired exhortations, Christians can objectively examine and measure themselves to know if they are in the Lord and the Lord in

them. “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another” (1 John 1:7). “Whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.” (2:5) “If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. . . . And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” (2:15, 17) “If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.” (2:29) “Everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.” (3:3) “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.” (5:1-2) “We know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ.” (5:20) Light has no communion with darkness. Therefore, fellowship with God is assured when we are truly following and adhering to Him who is the Light of the world.