

Series: 1 John

Title: The Manifest Difference

Text: 1 John 3: 4-8

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Throughout 1 John, the apostle is declaring “THE MANIFEST DIFFERENCE”—the open, clear, obvious difference—between the children of God and the children of the devil. When something is “manifest” it is made plain, obvious, and unmistakably clear. For example: “*Christ was manifested*”—he came in the flesh, openly, clearly seen of all men. John is declaring the manifest difference between the children of God and the children of the devil. He said of the children of the devil, antichrist,

1 John 2: 19: They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made MANIFEST that they were not all of us.

1 John 3: 10: In this the children of God are MANIFEST, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

The children of God “*do righteousness*”—we abide in Christ with his saints unto the end and love our brethren. The child of the devil “*doeth not righteousness, neither loveth his brother*”—the child of the devil does not abide in Christ, neither love his brethren. He commits “the sin” which is “*unto death*”—apostacy.

1 John 5: 16: If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. 17: All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

Apostacy is the sin unto death by which a sinner proves himself a child of the devil. Apostacy is renouncing the truth: blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, forsaking Christ, forsaking the truth of the gospel, forsaking assembling with Christ’s people under the preaching of the truth. (Mt 12:31,32 Heb 10:26-29) The person who willfully forsakes Christ unto the end after that he has heard the truth, proves himself reprobate.

Proposition: Throughout his epistle, and in our text, the apostle John comforts believers by assuring us that those born of God through the righteousness of Christ cannot apostatize but shall abide in Christ unto the end.

This is what John has been declaring from chapter 1. Since we have been away from 1 John let’s review

1 John 1: 5: This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6: If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

If we say we abide in Christ, and yet walk in darkness, apostatizing from Christ, we lie and do not the truth. Christ said he *that doeth truth* cometh to Christ the Light that his deeds may be manifest that they are worked in God or by God.

1 John 1: 7: But if we walk in the light [if we abide in Christ], as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

1 John 2: 3: And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

John tells us in chapter 3, “This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

1 John 2: 4: He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

He that says he knows Christ, yet he does not believe on Christ, neither loves the brethren, is a liar and the truth is not in him. He is not born of the incorruptible seed by which the child of God cannot apostatize.

Now, here is our text

1 John 3: 4: Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law. 5: And ye know that [Christ] was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

Next, John speaks of the sin that manifest the difference between the child of God and the child of the devil. This is the context of the whole epistle. So I will substitute “apostasy” for the word ‘sinneth’.

1 John 3: 6: Whosoever abideth in him [apostatizes] not: whosoever [apostatizes] hath not seen him, neither known him. 7: Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness [abideth in Christ] is righteous, even as he is righteous. 8: He that [apostatizes] is of the devil; for the devil [is an apostate] from the beginning. For this purpose

the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9: Whosoever is born of God doth not [apostatize]; for [Christ's] seed remaineth in him: and he cannot [apostatize], because he is born of God. 10: In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever [apostatizes] is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

APOSTASY IS SIN IN TWO WAYS

1 John 3: 4: Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

Now, everyone that is taught of God knows that sin is the transgression of the law. We just read 1 John 5: 17, "*All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.*" Everyone taught of God knows that committing sin is transgression of the law? So why does John use the word "*also.*" Look at the context. John had just written,

1 John 2: 29: If ye know Christ is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness [abides in Christ] is born of him.

We saw how *knowing Christ is righteous* makes us know that those who abide in Christ are born of him. Through Christ's righteousness we received the Spirit of adoption by which we are born again.

Galatians 4: 4: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5: To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6: And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. [*ye have an unction from the Holy One and know all things*] 7: Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

So "*knowing Christ is righteous*"—knowing that we are given the spirit of adoption through his righteousness—"ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness [abides in Christ] is born of him." Then John says 1 John 3: 1: "*Behold,*"—the word is "*knowing.*" It is the same word translated "knowing" in verse 29. Knowing we are born again through the righteousness of Christ, he says then, "*Knowing what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God*"—knowing it took God sending his own Son to be made a curse for us to make us righteous that we might receive the adoption of sons we know what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us. And by Christ purifying us and giving us this good hope that "*when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is*"—Christ makes the believer "*purify himself.*" Christ make us come out of the darkness to abide in Christ the Light. So John says in our text, "*Whosoever sinneth*"—whosoever apostatizes and goes out from us back into the darkness of lies and abides therein—"transgresseth *ALSO the law: for [apostacy] is the transgression of the law.*"

The apostate transgresses in two ways.

One, John just said he transgresses against Christ and God his Father. After speaking of those who manifest themselves to be apostates, John said they transgress against the Son and the Father.

1 John 2: 22: Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father AND the Son. 23: Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father.

Christ said,

John 5: 22: For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: 23: That all *men* should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him. 24: Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

Brethren, when we hear Christ's word, we hear, "*This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.*" (Jn 6: 29) So believing on Christ, we believe on the Father who sent him. So John said 1 John 2: 23: *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father:*

2 John 1: 9: Whosoever transgresseth, [same word as our text] and ABIDETH NOT IN THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, hath not God. He that ABIDETH IN THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST, he hath both the Father and the Son

So first, the apostate transgresses against God the Father and Christ his Son. Then in our text, John adds in our text, 1 John 3: 4: "*Whosoever [apostatizes] transgresses ALSO the law.*"

Youngs literal translation says "*Every one who is doing THE SIN, THE LAWLESSNESS ALSO he doth do, and THE SIN is THE LAWLESSNESS.*" THE sin of rejecting Christ is THE lawlessness. Christ is "*the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believes*" (Rom 10: 3) Through faith in Christ believers establish the whole law of God because Christ established the law for his people. Therefore, to reject Christ is to abide under the curse and condemnation of the law. Christ said,

John 3: 18: He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

So the man who rejects Christ, not only transgresses against God the Father and God the Son, he ALSO transgresses the whole law.

Galatians 5: 3: For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. 4: Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.

The man who professes to be in Christ the Light, yet renounces the believers rule of life which is *faith in Christ, which works by love*—and goes back to Mt Sinai, trusting his own works by living under law, though he condemns God's saints as being antinomian, he is ANTICHRIST AND ALSO ANTILAW [LAWLESS]. The apostate transgresses against God and also the law.

BUT YE HAVE AN UNCTION AND YE KNOW

1 John 3: 5: And YE KNOW that [Christ] was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

By the unction Christ gives his people, ye know this is the truth therefore you abide in Christ.

Whose sins did Christ come to take away?—“*our sins*”. You who are born of him, know this. You know that Christ came to take away the sins of God's elect, his sheep, as many as the Father has given him. By the unction he has given us, we know that Christ came and succeeded in taking away our sins and in him is no sin. Christ is the one typified in Scapegoat. The LORD laid on him the iniquity of all his people and Christ took all our sins away and God remembers our sins no more.

Isaiah 53: 6:...the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all...8:...he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

Therefore, in Christ is no sin. There was no sin in Christ at birth. Christ knew no sin during his life. He did no sin when he was tempted of the devil. Even when he bore the sin of his people so real that he called them “*mine iniquities*”, yet in himself, was no sin. But John is declaring that since Christ took away the sins of his people all who abide in him are without sin and by the unction Christ has given us ye know!

Hebrews 9:28: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

WHOSOEVER ABIDETH IN CHRIST CANNOT APOSTATIZE

1 John 3: 6: Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever [apostatizes] hath not seen him, neither known him. 7: Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness [abideth in Christ] is righteous, even as [Christ] is righteous.

You who abide in Christ believe on Christ through the righteousness of Christ. By his blood, we have been given the Spirit of Christ so that we are born of him and abide in him. John says, whosoever apostatizes “*hath not seen him, neither known him.*” Christ said, “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*” That means “*Whosoever abideth in Christ*” does so because we have been born again. We have “*seen him and known him*” by God-given faith.

Go through this epistle and count how many times, John says “Ye know.” Christ has given us an unction and we know all things—*we know him, we see him*—by faith. Therefore, we do not and cannot leave Christ!

We cannot NOT abide in him—“*whosoever abideth in him, sinneth not.*” Indeed, in Christ we have no sin of any kind. Indeed, in Christ we have fulfilled the law and cannot transgress God's law because Christ fulfilled it. But Christ spoke of another sin that those born of him shall not commit.

John 12:46 I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me [SHALL] NOT ABIDE IN DARKNESS.

By the unction abiding in us, we cannot apostatize from Christ. John said, “*as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.*” (1 Jn 2: 27)

Contrasted to this: “*Whosoever [apostatizes] hath not seen him, neither known him.*” He has not been made righteous. He has not been born from above. He has not seen Christ, nor known Christ from the beginning though he professed to.

John is writing this “*concerning them that seduce you*” and so again he says “*let no man deceive you*”. So he says in verse 7, “*Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness [abideth in Christ] is righteous, even as [Christ] is righteous.*” Indeed, those in whom Christ abides are no longer the servants of sin. Roman 6 promises we are dead [justified] from sin and by Christ abiding in us we are free from the dominion of sin so that “*sin shall not have dominion over you for you are not under the law but under grace.*” Christ has taken up dominion in us and made us servants of righteousness. But here, in context, “*doing righteousness*” is “*abiding in Christ.*” Christ called it “*doing truth*”. It is believing on Christ and continuing in Christ until the end. It is only through faith in Christ that we are righteous even as Christ is righteous. But let no man deceive you, he that believes on Christ and abides in Christ is righteous even as Christ is righteous. There is nothing for us to add to Christ's finished work.

Brethren, there were many deceivers then and there are many deceivers now declaring to believers that we must go back under the law or we cannot be saved. The apostles dealt with this in every epistle more than any other deception. Let no man deceive you. He that abides in Christ is righteous even as Christ is righteous. We cannot and must not add anything to Christ.

THE MANIFEST DIFFERENCE

1 John 3: 8: He that [apostatizes] is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. 9: Whosoever is born of God doth not [apostatize]; for [Christ's] seed remaineth in him: and he cannot [apostatize], because he is born of God. 10: In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

John showed us that the believer who abides in Christ does so because we are born of our everlasting Father, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, John contrasts us with the apostate, declaring he that apostatizes is of his father, the devil.

“Doing righteousness” means “abiding in Christ” because John contrasts “abiding in Christ” with the child of the devil who commits the same sin as his father the devil, “*He that sinneth is of the devil; for the devil SINNETH from the beginning.*” What sin did the devil do from the beginning?

John 8:44: Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and ABODE NOT IN THE TRUTH, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it...47: He that is OF GOD HEARETH GOD'S WORDS: ye therefore HEAR THEM NOT, BECAUSE YE ARE NOT OF GOD.

We will look at the following in more detail next time. But, briefly, notice that John gives glory to Christ, declaring the reason the child of God cannot apostatize is because of Christ's works for us and in us. “*For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.*” Christ did so on the cross when he crushed the devil's head and Christ does so in us when he binds the strongman and takes dominion in our hearts in the new birth. Therefore, “*Whosoever is born of God doth not [apostatize]; for [Christ's] seed remaineth in him: and he cannot [apostatize], because he is born of God.*”

This is the only manifest unmistakable difference between the children of God and the children of the devil—*1 John 3: 10: In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness [believeth not and abideth not in Christ] is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother...*

But the child of God keeps the commandments of our Father—*1 John 3: 23: And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, [which is doing righteousness, abiding in Christ] and love one another, as he gave us commandment. 24: And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.*

Amen!