

Series: 1 John

Title: Children of the Devil, Children of God

Text: 1 John 3: 8-10

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1 John 3: 8: He that committeth sin 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 commit sin; for [Christ's] seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, 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...

Proposition: There is one difference the grace of God has made between the child of the devil and the child of God by the works of Christ for and in his people which is manifest.

THE CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL

1 John 3: 8: He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.

What does John mean by “*committeth sin?*” It is the same sin as the devil—“*for the devil sinneth from the beginning.*” He that is the child of the devil committeth the sin which his father the devil sinneth from the beginning. What is the devil’s sin?

Christ told the Pharisee’s exactly what the devil’s sin is. As you read John 8, take note of what the Pharisee’s did and why which is in bold type. Christ said it is the same sin as their father the devil. The apostle John is declaring the same thing in our text. Christ said to the Pharisee’s, who boasted and put confidence in the fact they were Abraham’s natural sons,

John 8: 37: I know that ye are Abraham’s seed; but **YE SEEK TO KILL ME**, because **MY WORD HATH NO PLACE IN YOU**. 38: I speak that which I have seen with **MY FATHER**: and ye do that which ye have seen with **YOUR FATHER**. 39: They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham’s children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

Christ meant if they were the spiritual children of Abraham, born of God, then, without a doubt, they would have done the works of Abraham. What work is that? It is the work John speaks of in our text which manifests the difference between the child of God and the child of the devil. It is what the child of God does and cannot cease doing—we believe on Christ and love our brethren.

Instead, of doing this, Christ said of the Pharisee’s—“*ye seek to kill me.*” The reason, Christ said, is because they were not born of God, of the incorruptible seed—“*my word hath no place in you.*” Therefore, Christ said they were not children of God but children of the devil. Read on:

John 8: 40: But now **YE SEEK TO KILL ME**, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. 41: **YE DO THE DEEDS OF YOUR FATHER**. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. 42: Jesus said unto them, **IF GOD WERE YOUR FATHER, YE WOULD LOVE ME**: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me. 43: Why do ye not understand my speech? even because **YE CANNOT HEAR MY WORD**.

Christ declares that seeking to kill him they were doing the deeds of their father, the devil. He said if God were their father then they would do what every child of God does by being born of God by the incorruptible seed—*"Ye would love me."* This is what John declares in our text. Those born of God are created anew and in the new man we love our brethren: we love Christ and we love our brethren in Christ. The chief way we love one another is by believing on Christ, by continuing abiding in Christ, by never ceasing to do so. Believers do so because we hear Christ's word in the inner man. But Christ said to the Pharisee's—*"ye cannot hear my word."* Pay close attention to what Christ says next. Here is the devil's sin.

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.

John said the devil sinneth from the beginning. Our Lord Jesus declared what that sin is. The devil's sin is that he was *"a murderer from the beginning and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him."* The devil was an apostate from the beginning with no love for Christ or his brethren because there is no truth in him. Therefore, Christ declared the devil's children do the same.

John 8: 45: And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. 46: Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? 47: He that is OF GOD HEARETH GOD'S WORDS: YE THEREFORE HEAR THEM NOT BECAUSE YE ARE NOT OF GOD.

So be sure to get this. The devil's sin was that he committed apostacy—he was a murderer and abode not in the truth from the beginning because there is no truth in him. Christ said therefore those who are of their father the devil will commit the same sins of their father. The children of the devil commit the sin of not believing on Christ, not abiding in Christ, not abiding in the doctrine of Christ. They apostatize from Christ because their father, the devil, was an apostate from the beginning. Therefore, they have no love for Christ or his brethren but seek to kill both.

In 1 John 3: 12 John illustrates this using Cain. He said Cain *"was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."* Cain's evil works were he abode not in the truth. He came before God with the fruit of the ground which were the works of his own hands, without blood. Neither did Cain have a spiritual love for his brother but murdered Abel because God said Cain's own works were evil and his brother's works were righteous. The only way we are told that Abel *"doeth righteousness"* was that he believed on Christ: he abode in Christ, he abode in the doctrine of Christ. He came to God with the blood of a lamb meaning he believed on Christ.

Throughout John's epistle, he says the child of the devil is manifest in that he commits the sin of not believing on Christ nor does he love the brethren. John uses different phrases to identify this sin. But they all mean this same sin—*"walking in darkness", "doing not the truth", "keeping not his commandments", "they went out from us", "denying the Father and the Son", "abiding in death", "believing not God", and "committing the sin unto death."* In our text John identifies this same sin this way, *"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."* (v10)

So be sure to get this. This is the sin that the child of the devil commits: he believes not on Christ neither loves the brethren. He does so because his father, the devil, committed the same sin from the beginning. As John declares in his second epistle, *"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God."* (2 Jn 1: 9)

THE CHILDREN OF GOD

1 John 3: 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 commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

Those born of God do not commit this sin of the devil. Those born of God believe on Christ and love their brethren. Throughout the epistle John identifies faith and love by various phrases such as: “*walking in light*”, “*keeping his commandments*”, “*keeping Christ’s word*”, “*abideth in him*”, “*abideth in light*”, “*sinneth not*”, “*doeth righteousness*”. By all these phrases John means the same thing as 1 John 3: 23, “*And 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.*”

The Son of God was manifest according to God’s purpose to destroy the works of the devil for his particular people that God gave him before the world was made.

Hebrews 2: 10: For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings. 11: For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified *are* all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, 12: Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. 13: And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. 14: 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. 16: For verily he took not on *him the nature of angels*; but he took on *him* the seed of Abraham. 17: Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto *his* brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things *pertaining* to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. 18: For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

“*In ALL THINGS he behooved Christ to be MADE like unto HIS BRETHREN that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconcillilation for the sins of his people.*” This was why the Son of God was made of a woman, made under the law, made sin for us and made a curse for us—that our merciful and faithful High Priest might make reconciliation for the sins of his people.

Therefore, as Romans 6 and 7 declares, with all his people in him when Christ was crucified on the cross we were crucified and our body of sin was destroyed. We were made free from sin and free from the law. When Christ arose to newness of life we arose in him. By Christ taking away our sins, the devil’s works of accusing the brethren unto God were destroyed.

1 John 3: 5: And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

Then, through Christ’s righteousness—having accomplished justifying his people from our sins—God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts that we might receive the spirit of adoption. The new birth is how Christ destroys the works of the devil within his people. We saw that this is what John meant when he said,

1 John 2: 29: If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

We saw it in Galatians and Paul declared the same thing in Titus 3,

Titus 3: 5: Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; 6: Which he shed on us abundantly THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR SAVIOR 7: THAT [HAVING BEEN] JUSTIFIED BY HIS GRACE, we should be MADE HEIRS according to THE HOPE OF ETERNAL LIFE.

So Christ not only destroyed the works of the devil for his people on the cross, but through his righteousness Christ also destroys the works of the devil in his people.

Christ illustrated how he destroys the works of the devil in those he redeemed by describing the devil as a “strong man armed.” His “palace and his goods” are God’s elect who Christ redeemed. We were under the power of the devil while unregenerate. But Christ is the one “*stronger than he.*” Christ takes his people from the devil in regeneration as “*his spoils*” of victory.

Luke 11: 21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: 22: But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

So in 1 John 3, John declares the result is—“*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.*” Being born of God, the child of God does not apostatize from Christ. We do righteousness—we believe on Christ—unto the end and we love our brethren.

“*For his seed remaineth in him.*” Christ’s seed is the incorruptible seed, the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever within the regenerated believer. It is the word by which the gospel is preached unto us. Being born of Christ, our Everlasting Father, the last Adam, we have Christ’s word abiding in us therefore the effectual result is that we abide in the doctrine of Christ unto the end.

1 Peter 1: 21: Who BY HIM do BELIEVE IN GOD, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that YOUR FAITH AND HOPE might BE IN GOD. 22: Seeing ye have purified your souls in OBEYING THE TRUTH through THE SPIRIT unto UNFEIGNED LOVE OF THE BRETHERN, see that ye love one another with a PURE HEART fervently: 23: BEING BORN AGAIN, not of corruptible seed, BUT OF INCORRUPTIBLE, BY THE WORD OF GOD, WHICH LIVETH AND ABIDETH FOREVER... 25: And this is THE WORD WHICH BY THE GOSPEL IS PREACHED UNTO YOU.

Christ said that “*the devil is a liar and abode not in the truth because there is no truth in him.*” John said of the child of the devil, “*He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.*” (1 Jn 2: 4) But you who are born of the incorruptible seed, have the truth in you. And because the word “*liveth and abideth for ever*”, you live forever and abide in the truth forever, abiding in Christ forever.

“*And he cannot sin.*” Not only do we not commit the sin of apostacy—the sin of forsaking Christ—we cannot sin. Christ “*put away our sins, and in [Christ] is no sin.*” By Christ’s cross-work our body of sin is dead and we also are become dead to the law so that no one can charge us with sin before God’s holy law. Therefore, justice demanded this new man be created within us and that we be kept by the power of God forever. So now, by being born of his incorruptible seed, in our new man, we cannot sin. Our new man is of God’s creating. It is that “*new man, which after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness*”; (Eph 4:24) Within every child born of God, the new man renewed by the washing of regeneration is “*a new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of [Christ] that created him.*” (Col 3: 10)

Therefore, believer, John gives us this comforting assurance, “*whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.*” Brethren, it shall never be

charged to us that he “*doeth not righteousness neither loveth his brethren.*” It shall always be said that we keep his commandment,

1 John 3: 23: And 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.* 24: And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in [Christ], and [Christ] in him.

Believer, we keep his commandments unto the end because by being born of God, Christ dwells in us and we in Christ. We cannot sin in our new man therefore we cannot *commit the sin of apostacy!* Most things the child of the devil does, the child of God can do. But this is the one clear, open, unmistakable manifest difference between a child of God and a child of the devil. The child of God cannot sin the sin unto death because Christ seed remains in us and we cannot apostatize because we are born of God. This is the difference which the grace of God has made through the righteousness of Christ.

1 John 5: 18: We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten, of God, keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. 19: And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. 20: And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. 21: Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

Hebrews 10: 23 Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) 24: And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: 25 Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

Amen!