

## Seeing Sin for What it Is # 9

1 John 3: 4-10

Dr. J. Wilbur Chapman used to tell of a Methodist preacher who often spoke on the subject of sin. He minced no words, but defined sin as “that abominable thing that God hates.” A leader in his congregation came to him on one occasion and urged him to cease using the ugly word. “Pastor,” he said, “We wish you would not speak so plainly about sin. Our young people, hearing you, will be more likely to indulge in sin. Call it something else, a “inhibition,” or “error” or a “mistake,” or even “a twist in our nature.”

“I understand what you mean,” the preacher remarked and going to his desk brought out a little bottle. “This bottle,” he said, “contains strychnine. You will see that the red label here reads “Poison.” Would you suggest that I change the label, and paste one on that says, “Wintergreen?” He made his point. You can call sin by other names, but none-the-less, it is still sin. <sup>i</sup>

We would never think of letting our children play with poison or explosives, and yet many do not want preachers to deal with sin. Amidst our day of tolerance, there is little tolerance for those who treat sin from a biblical perspective. It is dangerous, destructive, and bears eternal consequence left to itself. We need to see sin exactly as it is!

John was not passive in dealing with sin. He boldly proclaims truth concerning sin. I want to examine these [truths](#) as we consider: [Seeing Sin for What it Is](#).

**I. The Tendency to Sin** (4, 6b) – This passage clearly reveals the tendency we all have to sin. Being born into this life, inheriting the adamic nature, we all possess the tendency to sin. Notice:

**A. The Significance of Sin** (4) – [Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law](#). Our society has developed an “anything goes” mentality. “You only live once, so you might as well enjoy it.” “Everyone else is doing it, so what will it hurt.” Few see the significance of sin and the dangers associated with it. John declares that sin is a transgression of God’s law. It is utter rebellion against the holiness and expectations of God.

- Sin is enmity with God. Those who dwell in sin have no fellowship with God. Those who remain in sin, never being pardoned of sin through the atonement of Christ, have no part or relationship with God. As believers we are not bound by the law. It is not the means of our salvation, but we cannot discredit the holy standard of God. One cannot embrace sin and be pleasing unto the Lord. Clearly sin bears great significance. It cannot be ignored.

**B. The Consequence of Sin** (6b) – *whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.* On the surface this verse seems hard to be received. Who among us lives above sin? Who among us can honestly say they commit no sin? We must understand the context in which John speaks. This has the idea of “*continuing in sin; to go on sinning and sinning.*” John speaks of those who live in sin, never having been born again in Christ. Those whose lives are dominated by sin, marked by a continual desire to please the flesh, have not encountered the Lord, nor are they known of Him.

▪ That certainly blows a large hole in the argument of: “what can a little sin hurt?” Many see no real consequence of their sin, especially while they are young. They feel as if they are entitled to live a little and indulge themselves. Continuing in sin, with no desire for reconciliation to God through sanctification in Christ, confirms one is apart and separated from the Lord in their sin. *2 Cor.4:6 – For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*

**II. The Tragedy of Sin** (8a, 10) – John also reveals the great tragedy of sin within the lives of mankind. Consider:

**A. The Reality** (8a) – *He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.* I assure you, those who demand tolerance do not like this truth, but that does not negate its relevance. Sin originates with the devil, and those who continually commit sin without any remorse or sense the need for repentance, are of the devil. The truth is we are either children of God or children of the devil. There is no middle ground. We are either saved and acceptable to God through Christ, or we remain in our sin, associated with Satan and his desires.

**B. The Rejection** (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.* One cannot hope to live as they please, living a life filled with sin in an effort to satisfy the flesh, and be accepted of God. It is impossible to escape the all seeing eye of the Lord. There can be no doubt that He knows all who belong to Him. All of the saved, and only the saved, will inhabit heaven. All of the lost, and only the lost, will be condemned of God to an eternity of judgment in hell.

▪ One’s relationship with Christ is not merely something one hopes exists. The Spirit of God reveals our need for salvation in Christ, and we understand He is the only means of salvation. Being born again brings confirmation through the Spirit and from within the Word. Those who have never received Christ as their Savior are manifest as the children of the devil. Their spirit does not bear witness with God’s Spirit. I have doubted at times, but those who are born again in Christ know it. Those who have never trusted Christ in salvation are aware of their condition as well.

**III. The Remedy for Sin (5-6a, 8b)** – Clearly sin is a major problem with eternal consequences, but we are not without hope. There is a remedy for sin in Christ. Consider:

**A. His Purpose (5a, 8b)** – And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; <sup>[8b]</sup> For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Christ came to earth with purpose. He came to take away our sins and destroy the works of the devil. Since the fall of man in the Garden of Eden, sin has entered the heart of every man. That sin created enmity with God. He could not accept us because of our sin.

- We were separated from God because of sin. Sin when it is finished brings forth death. Hell awaits those who die in their sin. These are the works of the devil. Jesus came to cleanse our sin and reconcile us to God. Through His substitutionary atonement and victorious resurrection, Jesus defeated the works of the devil.

**B. His Purity (5b)** – and in him is no sin. Sin is the problem for all humanity. All stand in need of cleansing from sin. All stand in need of salvation. Salvation was possible, but there was only one way it could be secured. There had to be a perfect sacrifice, one in whom no sin or guilt was found. Jesus was the only one who had no sin and He was the only one worthy to bear our sin as the fulfilling sacrifice. Had Jesus known sin, He could not have purchased our redemption!

**C. His Provision (6a)** – Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not. We do not possess the means within ourselves to overcome sin. The flesh is strong and we cannot defeat it in ourselves. Abiding in Christ is the only way to experience reconciliation from sin and victory over sin.

- Again, the text does not imply sinless perfection on the part of the believer. It does not imply that any sin committed after conversion results in the loss of salvation. It does imply that the desire for continual, habitual sin has ceased within our lives. (Illus. The Nile river flows some 4,160 miles. It is the longest river on earth and flows from the south to the north. Along the route the Nile begins to bear a little to the west, and eventually flows toward the south for a distance. However, the flow returns to the north and continues its track to the sea.)

**IV. The Victory over Sin (7, 9)** – Sin is something we all face. We are born with a sin nature. However, it is possible to enjoy victory over sin in Christ. This is achieved through:

**A. Regeneration** (7) – [Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.](#) John speaks of the mark of a true believer. Those who have been made righteous in Christ will seek righteousness, just as Christ our Lord is righteous. This is not possible within ourselves. The flesh does not desire true righteousness. After we are born again in Christ, the old man of sin dies and we are resurrected a new creature in Christ. In Him, and through Him, we seek His righteousness.

- The first step in being victorious over sin is salvation in Christ. Those who have never been saved will not enjoy victory over sin.

**B. Intervention** (9a) – [Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: I love this thought.](#) Those who are born again in Christ have the seed of God implanted within. He becomes our heavenly Father. The flesh isn't saved, but our spirit takes on the nature of God. That is not to say we will never falter or commit any sin, but that we possess a new nature. We have the Spirit of God abiding in us. When the enemy comes to entice us, we have One who intervenes for us! [2 Pet.1:4 – Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.](#)

**C. The Preservation** (9b) – [and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.](#) This ought to bring great comfort to the heart of every believer. Again we must emphasize that John does not speak of sinless perfection. He does reveal an eternal truth that we must grasp. Those who are born of God through Christ the Son will never revert back to the old man. We are saved and secure in Christ. I will certainly miss the mark on occasion, and hinder my fellowship with the Lord, but I will never be separated from Him because of sin!

- Isn't that a blessing? God does an eternal work in us the instant we are saved. We are made part of His family and will never possess the old adamic nature again!

**Conclusion:** There may be much debate today regarding what is acceptable and what isn't in our modern society, but God's standard has not, and will not change. Sin remains sin in His eyes. We all have a tendency to sin. Sin brings tragic consequences. There is hope and help in overcoming the sin problem we all face. Christ is the answer for sin. We must see sin as it is, but we must also realize there is a remedy. Do you know Christ as your Savior? Are you struggling with sin today? If so, look to Jesus. He alone can pardon and cleanse the sin in our lives!

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<sup>i</sup> <http://www.kentrivette.com/1john14.htm>