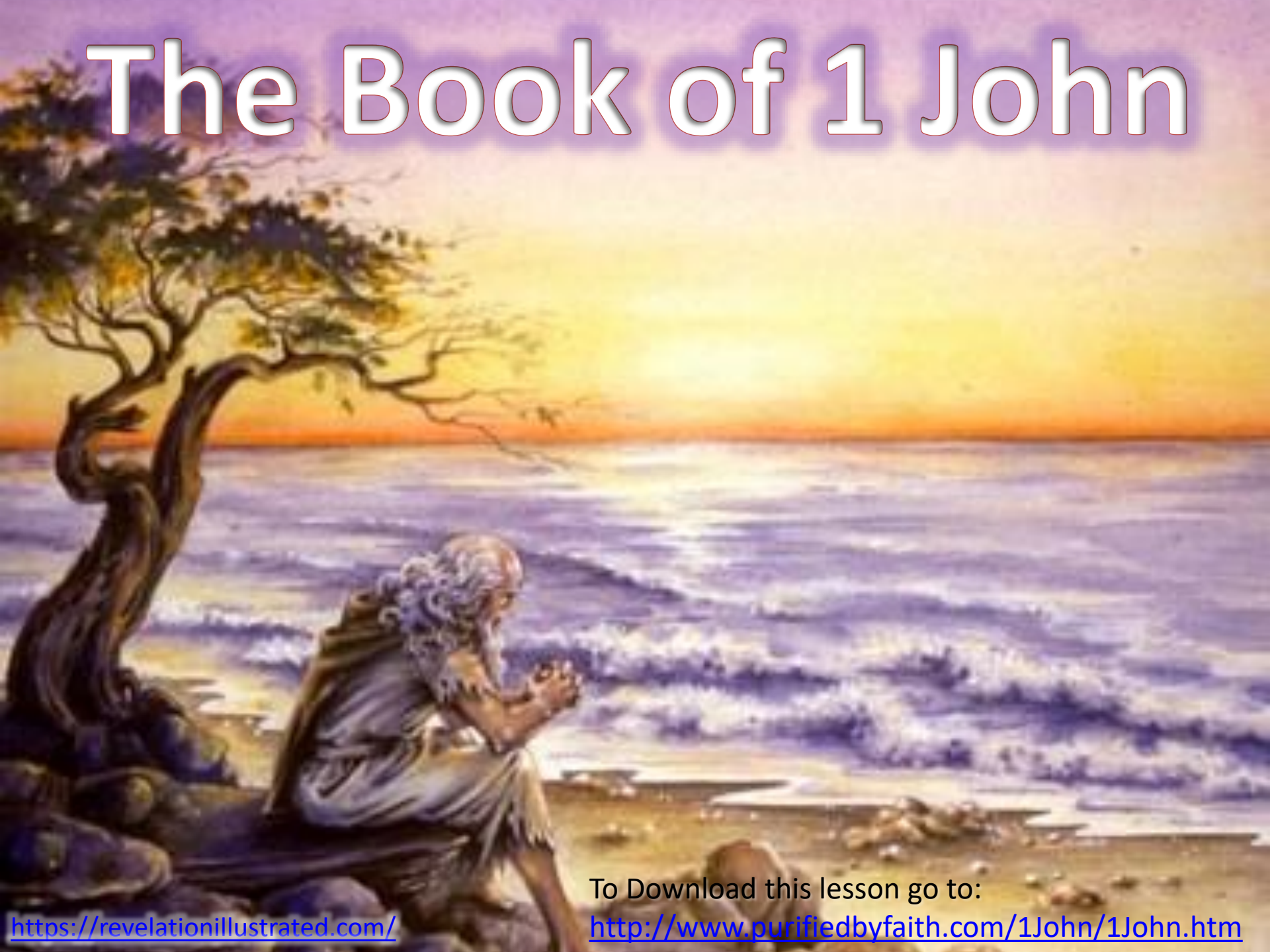


The Book of 1 John



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Outline of 1 John

- 1:1-4 - *Prologue: John Introduces the Major Theme of the Letter - **FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD***
- 1:5-2:28 - *The First Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: **RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE and BELIEF** in Jesus*
- 2:29-4:6 - *The **Second** Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: **RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE and BELIEF** in Jesus*
- 4:7-5:21 - *The Third Presentation of the Three Tests of FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD: **RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE and BELIEF** in Jesus*

2:29-4:6

*The **Second** Presentation of the Three Tests of **DIVINE SONSHIP: RIGHTEOUSNESS, LOVE** and **BELIEF** in Jesus*

- **2:29-3:10a** - *Divine Sonship* tested by **RIGHTEOUSNESS**
 - God is righteous therefore everyone who “*does what is right*” is “*born of Him*” (2:29)
 - The present status and future hope of the “*children of God*” (3:1-3)
 - **Divine Sonship** is utterly contrary to all sin (3:4-10a)
- **3:10b-24a** - *Divine Sonship* tested by **LOVE**
 - Anyone who does not obey the command to “love one another” is not a child of God (3:10b-11)
 - Cain as the model of murder and hate - whose example is followed by the world (3:12-15)
 - Christ as the model of love – whose example we must follow in order to have confidence in our relationship with God (3:16-24a)
- **3:24b-4:6** - *Divine Sonship* tested by **BELIEF** in the Spirit’s Message

1 John 3:4-10a

Divine Sonship is Utterly Contrary to All Sin

⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸ Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. ^{10a} By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God...

An aerial photograph of a city, likely Chicago, showing a dense urban area with green spaces, roads, and a large body of water (Lake Michigan) in the background under a cloudy sky.

1 John 3:4-10a

Divine Sonship is Utterly Contrary to All Sin

High Level Overview

1 John 3:4-10a – Overview

- In this section, John shows that to ***continue in sin*** is to oppose the whole purpose of Christ's first coming.
- This text divides into ***two*** parts. Last week we looked at the first part, this week we will look at the second:

	1 John 3:4-7	1 John 3:8-10
The Introductory Phrase	<i>Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness (3:4a)</i>	<i>Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil (3:8a)</i>
The Theme	The <i>Nature</i> of Sin is <i>Lawlessness</i> (3:4b)	The <i>Origin</i> of Sin is the <i>Devil</i> (3:8b)
The Purpose of Christ's Appearing	<i>He appeared to take away sins (3:5)</i>	<i>The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. (3:8c)</i>
The Logical Conclusion	<i>No one who abides in him keeps on sinning (3:6a)</i>	<i>No one born of God makes a practice of sinning (3:9a)</i>

The [Greek] participle poion [translated “*whoever makes a practice*”] is in the present tense and thus speaks of a person who is **continually committing sin**. His whole **pattern of life** is one of sin. (Burdick, p.241)

⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸ *Whoever makes a practice of sinning* is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. ^{10a} By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God...

The phrase “*of the devil*” (in verse 8) is parallel to “*born of God*” (in verse 9). Although the Scripture does not use the expression “**born** of the devil”, Jesus did say, “*You are of your father the devil*” (John 8:44).

⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸ Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. ^{10a} By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God...

1 John 3:4-10a

The tense of the [Greek] verb hamartanei [translated “*has been sinning*”] is present, depicting **continuing action**. . . Throughout all the years “*from the beginning*”, the devil has been **continually** engaged in sin. (Burdick, p.242)

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The devil's sinning "*from the beginning*" **probably** refers to Genesis 1-4, where the devil tempted the first couple, and their sin spread to Cain, who murdered his brother, something which is hinted at in the Fourth Gospel, where Jesus says the devil was a murderer "*from the beginning*" (John 8:44). (Kruse, p. 123)

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John's Teaching about the Devil

- The *Origin* of the Devil

- According to John 8:44, the devil did not “*hold*” to the truth: **John 8:44** - *You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.* (NIV)
- This seems to indicate that the devil once **had** the truth, but later fell (no longer “holding” to the truth).
- “*for there is no truth in him*” indicates, not **why** he fell, but **how we know** he fell.
- Therefore the devil's murderous and evil activity must be dated “*from the beginning*”, not of his **existence**, but of his fallen career

John's Teaching about the Devil

- **The *Activity* of the Devil**
 - The devil's activity is ***constantly evil*** because he is ***by nature*** "the ***evil*** one" (John 17:15; 1 John 2:13-14, 3:12, 5:18-19)
 - The devil's evil work belongs particularly to ***three spheres*** (which correspond to the ***three tests*** of 1 John):
 - **Lack of *Righteousness*** - He is the original sinner.
 - **Lack of *Love*** – He is a murderer.
 - **Lack of *Truth*** – He is a liar.

John's Teaching about the Devil

- **The *Activity* of the Devil (continued)**
 - **Lack of Righteousness** – He is the *original sinner*.
 - He himself has “*been sinning from the beginning*” (1 John 3:8)
 - He tempts *others* into sin (cf., Mat 6:13)
 - He is, in fact, the *originator* of *all* sin (1 John 3:8)
 - **Lack of Love** – He is a *murderer*.
 - Cain in killing Abel gave evidence of his diabolical origin (1Jn 3:12)
 - So did the Jews who sought to kill Jesus (Jn 8:40-41)
 - Foiled in his assault upon Jesus, the devil now persecutes the church (Rev 12:4-6, 13-17)
 - He is called the “destroyer” (*Apollyon*) (Rev 9:11)
 - **Lack of Truth** – He is a *liar*.
 - He is a liar and the Father of it, there is no truth in him (Jn 8:44).
 - Consequently he is the accuser of Christians (Rev 12:10)
 - Their *adversary* (meaning of the Hebrew word, “Satan”)
 - A *slanderer* (meaning of the Greek word *diabolos*)
 - He seeks to deceive Christians by the lies of the false prophets (cf., 1 John 2:21-22, 4:2)

John's Teaching about the Devil

- The *Power* of the Devil

- He is able to insinuate evil thoughts and designs into the minds of men: **John 13:2** - *During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him...*
- He has on **some** occasions been able to **enter into men** himself personally: **John 13:27** - *Then after he had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, "What you are going to do, do quickly."*
- He is the **Prince** (literally, "**ruler**") of this world (Jn 12:31, 14:30, 16:11)
- His dominion is so extensive that **the whole (unregenerate) world** is said to be **under his control**. (1 John 5:19)
- Indeed, unbelieving men are said to be **of** the devil. He is their "**father**" and they are his "**children**" (Jn 8:44; 1Jn 2:10)

John's Teaching about the Devil

- **The *Overthrow* of the Devil**

- His overthrow began with the arrival of the Son of God over whom the devil has “no hold” (Jn 14:30)
- The express purpose of Christ's first coming was to “destroy the devil's work” (1Jn 3:8)
- This was accomplished supremely by Christ's death and resurrection (Jn 12:31).
- So far, however, his overthrow has been a dethronement rather than a decisive destruction.
- His final defeat will not take place until the last day (Rev 20:10)
- Meanwhile, it is possible for the Father to “protect” from the evil one those whom the Father has given to Christ (Jn 17:15). God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them (1Jn 5:18).
- Indeed they are able to “overcome the evil one” (1Jn 2:13-14, 4:4)

*The reason the Son of God appeared was to **destroy the works of the devil.***

Question: In what way did Christ's appearance "*destroy the works of the devil*"?

*⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸ Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. **The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.** ⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. ^{10a} By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God...*

1 John 3:4-10a

In what way did Christ's appearance “*destroy the works of the devil*”?

- *The devil's works are all the sinful attitudes and activities of which he is the source, whether directly or indirectly.*
(Burdick, p.243)
- Kruse observes:
 - John does not say **how** Jesus destroyed the work of the devil, only that he **did**.
 - John does say elsewhere that Christ appeared to take away sins (3:5), something he achieved by offering himself as an atoning sacrifice (2:2; 4:10).
 - John also says that Jesus' blood (death) cleanses people from all their sins (1:7,9).
 - We can safely infer that through his atoning death Jesus dealt with the problem of human sin and in so doing destroyed the works of the devil.
 - In the light of all this, the author urges his readers not to be led astray by those who claim sinful behavior does not matter.
 - It must matter, for the Son of God appeared to destroy the work of the devil, which is to lead people into sin.

No one born of God...

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“born of God” — γεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ *gennao ek theos*

- This is the second of ten references to being born of God in 1 John.
- Nowhere in **this** letter does John describe what is involved in the **process** of being “born of God.” His interest is more **practical**. He is interested in the **behavior** of those born of God:
 - They do right (2:29)
 - Do not sin (3:9; 5:18)
 - Love one another (4:7)
 - Believe that Jesus is the Christ (5:1)
 - And overcome the world (5:18)
- The **process** of being born of God is explained in the **Gospel** of John. There being born of God is something which ultimately can only be effected by the will of God (John 1:11-12). It is . . . described as being born of the Spirit (John 3:5-8). Putting these things together ***to be born of God here means being brought to new spiritual life by the will of God through the agency of His Spirit.***

*John is declaring, not that the regenerated person does not **commit** sin, but that he does not **continually engage** in sinning. The Christian does not follow the example of the devil, who has been **continually sinning** ever since his fall. (Burdick, p. 246)*

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...for God's seed abides in him

⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸ Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. ^{10a} By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God...

1 John 3:4-10a

“*seed*” σπέρμα *sperma*

- This is a bold metaphor, using the idea of God’s “sperm” by which people are born of God, which when unpacked refers to the work of the Spirit in believers.
- The word “seed” is used in the Septuagint both:
 - Literally (meaning plant seeds)
 - Metaphorically (meaning male sperm, human children or descendants).
- It is used both literally and metaphorically in the NT also. Its metaphorical use in the NT covers a wide range of meanings:
 - A person’s children or physical descendants (Mat 22:24-25; Mark 12:19-22; Luke 20:28)
 - And in particular Abraham’s physical descendants (John 8:33, 37; Acts 7:6; Rom 4:18; 9:7-8; 2Cor 11:22; Heb 11:18).
 - Abraham’s spiritual descendants (Gal 3:29)
 - And to Christ as the promised “seed” of Abraham (Gal 3:19)

“*seed*” σπέρμα *sperma*

- However nowhere else in the NT (or the Septuagint) is it used in the expression “God’s seed”, as it is here in 1 John 3:9.
- The other metaphorical uses of the word “seed” do not help us much in trying to understand what is meant by the expression “God’s seed”
- The controlling idea in **this** verse is that believers are those to whom God has given birth.
- As such, they cannot continue in sin, the primary reason being that God’s seed remains in them.

“*seed*” σπέρμα *sperma*

- What is it that **actually** remains in those born of God that makes it impossible for them to continue in sin?
- Within 1 John believers are said to have remaining in them (be indwelt by)
 - The gospel message they heard from the beginning (2:24)
 - The anointing / Holy Spirit (2:27)
 - God himself (3:24; 4:12, 15, 16)
- Of these three, the Holy Spirit is the most satisfactory option, in light of the fact that the new birth is effected by God through the Spirit, and it is the Spirit who in Johannine theology remains with and in believers.

“*seed*” σπέρμα *sperma*

- “*God’s seed*” **could be** a collective noun for the children of God (cf. Jn 8:33; Gal 3:29), and “*in him*” could mean “in God”. The whole phrase would then be translated “the offspring of God abide in Him, and they cannot sin because they are born of God” (i.e., *God’s seed abides in him* = **God’s child remains in God**)
- It is **more probable**, however, that the expression “*God’s seed*” is accurately rendered by the RSV text “God’s nature” or “the divine seed” (NEB), and that “*in him*” refers to the child of God (i.e., *God’s seed abides in him* = **God’s nature remains in the child of God**)

“*seed*” σπέρμα *sperma*

- The new nature exerts a strong internal pressure towards holiness which enables John to affirm without fear of contradiction that a person having God’s seed cannot go on living in sin (2Cor 5:17; 2Pet 1:4). Indeed if he should continue in sin, it would indicate that he had never been born again.
- That *sperma*, like *chrisma*, refers to the Holy Spirit is not impossible. . . . We shall probably never know for certain precisely what John intended.
- But whether the implanted and abiding seed is the ***word of the Gospel***, or ***the Holy Spirit***, or the ***divine nature*** thus imparted (cf. 2Pet 1:4), John’s meaning is the same, namely that it is the Christian’s supernatural birth from God which keeps him from sinning.

*It is because of the Spirit's indwelling presence as the sperma ["seed"] of God that the regenerated person does not engage continually in the practice of sin.
(Burdick, p.247)*

⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸ Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. ^{10a} By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God...

1 John 3:4-10a

*Here, John goes beyond his previous statement. Not only is it true that the believer **does not** continually sin, but he **cannot** do so. Again, the present tense verbs are significant. . . .He may commit individual acts of sin, but it is not possible for sin to be a pattern in his life. (Burdick, p.248)*

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1 John 3:4-10a

The designation “the children of the devil”, clearly shows that the phrase “of the devil” (v.8) is to be understood as referring to the source of the persons described. Although John does not go so far as to say they are born of the devil, he does indicate that in a spiritual and moral sense, they are derived from the devil (cf. John 8:44) . (Burdick, p.248)

⁴ Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. ⁵ You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. ⁶ No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. ⁷ Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. ⁸ Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. ⁹ No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. ^{10a} By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God...

Therefore, doing what is right and not doing what is right (both understood as ongoing actions) become important identifying marks of the children of God and the children of the devil respectively. (Kruse, p.126)

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Paraphrastic Commentary
on 1John 2:29-3:10a
by Donald W. Burdick

- ▶ (29) If you are sure that all God is and does is in perfect harmony with what is right, then you may correctly conclude that every man who consistently does what is right is God's child, not by adoption but by birth.



Paraphrastic Commentary
on 1John 2:29-3:10a
by Donald W. Burdick

- ▶ . (3:1) Consider what indescribable love God has lavished on us! He even calls us His children-and that is just what we are! Since people did not know and appreciate Jesus when He was on earth, we can be sure that they will not understand us either. (2) Dear friends, now we are members of God's family, but we do not yet have detailed knowledge concerning our future state. We only know that when Christ comes again we will be like Him both in holiness and in resurrection body. Of this we can be sure, because we know that we will be able to see Him as He really is (and only those who are like Him will be capable of seeing Him in this way). (3) Everyone who has this confident expectation resting upon Christ is even now undergoing a constant sanctifying process so that he is becoming daily more like Christ.

Paraphrastic Commentary
on 1John 2:29-3:10a
by Donald W. Burdick

- ▶ (4) The practice of sin is continued rebellion against God and His law; sin, in reality, is refusal to conform to God's will. (5) You well know that the reason That One came was to take away our very acts of sin; furthermore, in Him there dwells none of sin's depravity. (6) No one who has an intimate, saving relationship with Christ engages in sin as a constant habit of life; anyone who does so has not seen Him (with the eye of faith), nor has he come to know Him. (7) Dear children, continue to resist those who would lead you away from the truth: the only one who is righteous like Christ is the one who habitually performs acts of righteousness. (8) The one who is continually committing sin is a child of the devil, because the devil has been committing sin constantly ever since his fall. The reason Christ came was to undo every act for which the devil is responsible.

Paraphrastic Commentary
on 1John 2:29-3:10a
by Donald W. Burdick

- ▶ (9) No one born into the family of God constantly performs acts of sin. This is true because God's new life principle forever dwells in the believer. It is impossible for him to live in sin because by new birth he has become God's own child. (10a) This is how you can distinguish between God's children and those of the devil: The person who does not habitually engage in acts of righteousness has never become a member of the family of God.

Class Discussion Time



*Class Discussion Time

- There seem to be two extremes in how much people think about and attribute to the devil:
 - Some, if they believe in him at all, give almost **no** thought to the devil or what role he might be playing in the world around us.
 - Others seem to see the devil involved in, and behind, almost **everything** going on around them.
- Do you think there is a balance to be had here in how we see the devil functioning?
- We only looked today at the major ideas presented in scripture concerning the devil by the **Apostle John**. Consequently, there are a number of other areas that we did **not** look at:
 - How much we do or do not know about how Satan originally fell.
 - Ideas surrounding the idea of demon possession:
 - Whether such possessions are still occurring in the world today.
 - If they are, can a Christians ever be demon possessed?
 - If people can be possessed, and we as Christians were to encounter such individuals, what, if anything, can we or should we do about it?
- Are you curious about any of these areas or do you have any ideas concerning these areas that you would like to share briefly?