

# So That You May Know

## An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1 John**

### Chapter 13- The First Line **1John 3:4-10**

#### 111. Distinguishing Between Sin and Righteousness- Part 10

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WAOY Tuesday 11/13/07

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We're continuing our verse by verse "journey" through the Epistle of **1John**, and today I want to continue to look at what John taught about "The Distinction between Sin and Righteousness. So let's read **1John 3:4-10** again together:

**4** Everyone who practices sin also practices lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness.

**5** You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

**6** No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.

**7** Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

**8** the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.

**9** No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

**10** By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.

Now on the last broadcast, we were going over verses 7& 8, and I want to continue to go over those verses again today:

**7** Little children, make sure no one deceives you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous;

**8** the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the

**beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.**

Now today, I want us to pay close attention to the last part of verse 8 where John said:

**... The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.**

Now John says here that the *reason* that Jesus was manifested was so that He would “**destroy the works of the devil**”. Now what exactly does that mean? What are “**the works of the devil**” and *how* did Jesus destroy them?

First of all- the “works of the devil” are most succinctly understood as being sin. Sin is the work of satan and Righteousness is the Work of God. So the two- sin and righteousness- are polar opposites which conflict with each other. Sin is judged by God while Righteousness describes God. Sin is the transgression of God’s Law and therefore a contradiction to God’s very Own Character and Nature. Sin offends God. God is personally insulted by sin and sin dishonors all that God is and all that God has said. Therefore God is correct to hate sin and God is also correct to be angry with those who engage in sin.

So John says here that Jesus Christ, the Son of God was manifested or that He “appeared” so that He- Jesus- all by Himself- would destroy the “works of the devil”. So here is how this works.

In these verses that we have been studying, John tells us that it is *characteristic* of the devil to sin. That means that it is part and parcel to the very character and nature of satan to disobey and rebel against God. And John is also telling us that it is God the Father’s very Own Character and Nature to be completely free from sin and therefore be Holy. And then John tells us that it is the very Character and Nature of Jesus Christ- the Incarnate God- to *take away* sin. So to get this, we must put verses 5 and 8 together:

**5 You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.**

**8 ...The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.**

So in these two verses, we see that Jesus does something *for* us and then we see that Jesus does something *against* the devil. He takes *away* our sin *and* He *destroys* the works of the devil. Well, how did He do that? Obviously, Jesus did this by becoming a propitiation for our sin- as John told us in **1John 2:2**. And John reminded us in that verse that not only did Jesus do this for the Jews- but also for the Gentiles as well.

Now we must remember that the taking away of sin could only come about by a High Priest Who is sinless Himself. None of the Levitical High Priests could ever make this claim. Every single High Priest under the Old Covenant who offered sacrifice for sin had to first sacrifice for *his own* sin- because every Levitical High Priest was himself a sinner.

But not Jesus- Who is our great High Priest- Who Himself was sinless and perfect in every way. He had no sin and so His Sacrifice for sin was the only Sacrifice that was ever offered at any time by anyone that was able to actually and in reality *take away* sin. Read with me **Hebrews 10:4**:

**For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**

All that the Old Covenant sacrifices could do was offer a temporary reprieve from God's Wrath against sin- just long enough- until the Son of God was manifested. Not any bull or goat or lamb or sheep offered under the Levitical priesthood could take away one single sin. These sacrifices were all but shadows and types of the coming Messiah's Sacrifice of Himself- Who all by Himself- would purge our sins and take them all away! But now read with me **Hebrews 10:11-14**:

**11** Every priest stands daily ministering and offering time after time the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins;

**12** but He, having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, ***SAT DOWN AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD,***

**13** waiting from that time onward ***UNTIL HIS ENEMIES BE MADE A FOOTSTOOL FOR HIS FEET.***

**14** For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are sanctified.

Because God became Man- and because this God- Man was sinless-

and because this sinless God- Man was offered as a propitiation to God for our sins- we no longer have a *temporary* reprieve from sin- but now we are perfected forever by virtue of the fact that the very sinless, spotless Righteousness of Jesus Christ is imputed to us by the agency of Faith alone- apart from any human works and *that* Righteousness allows us entrance into Heaven.

You see, dear friends- we are not saved by works. And most of us would agree with that. But we must also acknowledge that we are not saved by minimizing our sin either; nor are we saved by simply changing the definition of what sin is- so that we can continue to live wrongly and simply not call that bad behavior- “sin”. Grace does not mean that God doesn’t still hate sin.

No, God never changes and our sins must be paid for. God doesn’t simply say that Christ came so that it no longer matters whether we sin or not- because it still matters. What the Good News of the Gospel teaches is that all of God’s Wrath was justly and fully poured out upon our sins- but that it was not poured out upon us. God’s Wrath against our sin was poured out in fullness upon Jesus- Who took our sins upon Himself as the propitiation.

So since our sins have been paid for; since God’s Justice against our sins has been fully satisfied- God’s Wrath has been forever turned away from us and we are now free to love and serve God without God’s Condemnation when we fall short.

Now the first comment that is made when this glorious Biblical Truth is presented is that this Doctrine allows for people who are saved to live any way they want to without penalty. These people say that this Biblical Truth gives people license to sin with abandon. But that is not what this Truth is teaching at all. Let me explain.

The first thing we need to establish is that what I just taught you is *exactly* what John taught in sacred Scripture- and therefore it is true and correct and right. So we don’t need to preface our remarks about this by saying, “*If this is what the Bible teaches*” because manifestly the Bible does in fact teach this. So if wicked people take this Truth and abuse it and wrongly interpret it and wrongly apply it and they use the marvelous Grace of God as an avenue to do whatever they are big enough to do- that does not in any way detract from the Truth of this Doctrine. That simply reveals who these people are and reveals what kind of heart they have.

God takes sin seriously, dear friends. And the proof of that is the fact that the sinless Lamb of God- the Best that God had; Heaven's most prized Possession hung screaming in agony on the Cross to pay for our sins. So if the only thing that people get that out of what John teaches here is that sin no longer matters- it is only because those people are not saved at all- but are deceived about their salvation- because part and parcel to what being saved means is that truly born from above people have a new divine nature that has both the desire and the power to love and serve God. So if people use any Scripture to justify why they live continually in sin- that only proves what John said back in **1John 1:6**:

**If we say that we have fellowship with Him and *yet* walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;**

And in **1John 2:4**:

**The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;**

And again in **1John 3:6**:

**No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.**

But even though there are many who would pervert the Truth in our day- and who would try to twist the Truth to justify their own ungodly hearts- the Truth is still the Truth and we must be careful that we do not change what the Bible says in order to fight against those people who would twist the Scriptures to their own damnation.

John taught very clearly that Jesus Christy was manifested to completely and utterly and forever take away the sins of those who are saved. And the reason that the New Covenant is far superior to the Old Covenant is because no sacrifice under the Law ever took away one sin- while the one single Sacrifice of Jesus Christ took away our sins forever! And that doesn't just make the New Covenant *different* from the Old Covenant- no, no, no, that makes the New Covenant to be so infinitely superior to the Old that it would be sinful to remain in the shadows of the Old.

Only in Jesus Christ is sin completely and finally taken away. Every other method that God gave is but a partial and temporary reprieve against the Wrath of God until the promised New Covenant could be manifested through Jesus Christ.

So several things were necessary in order for our sins to be taken away. First- the fulfillment of Jeremiah's 500 year old prophecy in **Jeremiah 31** had to become real and the New Covenant had to come forth. Secondly, a spotless Lamb – a male- and the first born- had to be found which was utterly sinless. And all of our sins had to be placed upon this innocent, sinless Lamb. Thirdly, a High Priest who was not after the order of Levi- but Who was after the order of Melchisedec had to come forth Who was Himself also perfectly sinless. Fourthly, this sinless High Priest had to offer the sinless Lamb to God and all of God's fury and all of God's Wrath against all the sins of Mankind had to be poured out without reservation against this Lamb. Fifthly, all of God's Fury and all of our sins had to be left in Hades and the Sinless Spotless Lamb had to rise again in victory as God's Divine "Seal of Approval" upon what He had done. Sixthly, the very Righteousness of this sinless Lamb had to be imputed to the guilty party in the greatest act of Grace and Mercy that the world has ever known and then that sinless High Priest ascended into Heaven to sit down at the Right Hand of Majesty continually making intercession for us. And that is the only reason that you and I can stand today free from God's Wrath and Condemnation and that is why we have been made fit for Heaven!

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our journey through the Epistle of **1John**. May God help us all.

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