

## HE THAT COMMITTETH SIN IS OF THE DEVIL

**TEXT: I JOHN 3:4-10**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. First John 3:8 says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil."
2. "Committeth sin" means, "practices sin." The Bible teaches that the man who practices sin is "of the devil." And the devil sinned "from the beginning."
3. According to the Bible, sin originally was external to man.
4. Genesis 1:31 says, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good."
5. Genesis chapter 3 gives us the record of the fall of man, and it tells of the entrance of sin into the human race.
6. The Bible teaches that man fell through the temptation of Satan. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12).
7. Thomas Brooks was a Puritan preacher and author. He wrote:

But when Adam fell — we fell.

When he lost all — we lost all.

There are five things we lost in our fall:

1. Our holy image — and so became vile;
2. Our divine sonship — and so became children of Satan;
3. Our friendship with God — and so became His enemies;
4. Our communion with God — and so became strangers;
5. Our happiness — and so became miserable.

8. Man fell through the temptation of Satan. And Satan fell from his former high estate.
9. Isaiah 14:12 says, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!"
10. The words, "for the devil sinneth from the beginning" (3:8), explain why the practice of sin is diabolical -- Satan is the originator of sin.
11. Our Lord said to the Jewish religious leaders in John 8:44, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do."
12. Referring to Satan, the LORD says in Ezekiel 28:17, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee."
13. Though many skeptics deny it, the Bible teaches the personality of Satan (cf. I John 3:8).
14. Our Lord was tempted by the devil (Matthew 4; Mark 1; Luke 4).
15. There are many reasons why Christians should not sin, and one of them is that when they sin they are doing the work of the devil (3:8).
16. The false teachers in John's day (the Gnostics) taught that knowledge was all that mattered, and conduct did not matter. But John insisted that practicing sin is irreconcilable and incompatible with true Christianity (cf. 2:1).

## **I. THE ESSENCE OF SIN**

1. The word "sin" is found ten times in our text (3:4, 5, 6, 8, 9). The word literally means, "to miss the mark."
2. God's standard is "righteousness" (I John 3:7, 10). First John 5:17 says, "All unrighteousness is sin" (cf. I John 1:9; 2:29).
3. Sin is "lawlessness," and sin is "unrighteousness" (I John 3:4).
4. Lawlessness is not merely the absence of law. It is the willful, defiant rejection of the law. It is the willful and defiant rejection of the Word of God and the will of God.
5. It is the substitution of self-will over God's will. It is devilish.
6. Satan said, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:13, 14).
7. That is why John says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning" (I John 3:8; cf. 3:10).
8. The absence of law carries with it the absence and denial of what is right. Sin is a deliberate deviation from God's standard of right and wrong.
9. Sin is willful rebellion, arising from the deliberate choice of the sinner.
10. One writer said, "Sin is the greatest tragedy of the entire universe. It's actually rebellion against God" (quoted by D. Edmund Hiebert).
11. First John 3:5 says, "And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no

- sin." The practice of sin is incompatible with Christ's mission.
12. The angel of the Lord told Joseph that Mary would bring forth a son, "and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). This is Christ's mission.
  13. The apostle Paul said that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (I Timothy 1:15). The practice of sin is incompatible with Christ's mission (cf. I John 3:8).
  14. John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).
  15. First John 3:5 says, "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins." W.H. Griffith Thomas said, "It is interesting to notice that in John 1:29 our Lord is said to take away 'sin' (the root), while here he is said to take away 'sins' (the fruit)" (*The Apostle John*).
  16. Christ "was manifested to take away our sins," literally, the countless, innumerable acts of human sin.

## **II. TWO DISTINCT CLASSES OF PEOPLE**

1. According to the Bible, there are only two classes of people -- those who practice sin and those who do not practice sin (3:6-10).
2. Those who continually practice sin are children of the devil (3:8, 10).
3. Worldly modern churches seem to believe there is a third class, an intermediate class -- those who profess to be Christian but live like devils. This is an abomination and must be refuted.

4. Many people are being deceived by false teachers (3:7a; cf. 2:26).
5. The older preachers did not mince words. George Whitefield used to say, "Man is half devil and half beast." Today's preachers are weak and cowardly, and they tell sinners what they want to hear.
6. The phrase "committeth sin" does not refer to single occurrences of sin, but habitual sin -- "practices sin" (sins repeatedly, regularly). The practice of sin is contrary to Christ's purpose for believers.
7. For a professed Christian to persist in the practice of sin shows that he is still spiritually blind to the purpose of Christ -- "He was manifested to take away our sins" (I John 3:5).
8. It shows that he willfully scorns and rejects the intention of Christ for him -- that he "sin not" (2:1).
9. The added words in I John 3:5, "and in Him is no sin," underscore the sinless nature of Christ. First John 2:1 says He is "Jesus Christ the righteous."
10. The Lord Jesus Christ is "pure" (3:3), and since He is righteous and pure He opposes unrighteousness and impurity, especially in the lives of those who profess to be His followers.
11. The Lord Jesus Christ is sinless. This is taught throughout the New Testament.
  - Our Lord challenged His adversaries in John 8:46, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?"
  - Second Corinthians 5:21 says, "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."

- Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."
- Hebrews 7:26 says, Christ "is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."
- First Peter 1:18 and 19 says, we have been redeemed "with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."
- Referring to Christ, I Peter 2:22 says, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

12. First John 3:5 teaches us that our sinless Saviour is the perfect pattern of what the child of God should be.
13. John gives us marks of God's children, and the marks of the devil's children. The child of God abides in Christ and sinneth not (3:6). He "doeth righteousness...even as he is righteous" (3:7).
14. On the other hand, the children of the devil continue in willful, habitual sin (3:8-10). Their lives are characterized by the practice of sin as the ruling principle of their lives.
15. When John says, "whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him" (3:6), he means the person was never born again (cf. 3:9). The person is lost and has never been intimately acquainted with the Lord.
16. The Lord Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me" (John 10:27).

17. The practice of righteousness does not make a man righteous. The practice of righteousness reveals the man's inner nature. It is evidence that he is a child of God (3:7-10).

### **III. DELIVERANCE FROM SIN**

1. Deliverance from sin is grounded in the work of the incarnate Son of God. God took the initiative -- "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil" (3:8b).
2. We have been saved from the penalty of sin (hell), and from the power of sin (3:9).
3. The stated purpose, "that He might destroy the works of the devil" (3:8b) "presents Christ's redemptive mission as it relates to that great adversary of God and man -- Satan.
4. The plural word "the works" (3:8) "points to the massive activities of the devil in leading human beings into sin. All those works have a certain coherence as being prompted by satanic hatred and rebellion against God" (Hiebert).
5. The verb "might destroy" (3:8) refers to Christ's victory over the devil on the cross. Hebrews 2:14 says, "that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil."
6. The verb "destroy" does not mean "to annihilate" but to "undo" (*Scofield* margin).
7. Hiebert says the word "variously means 'to loose, untie, break up, give release,' as when the disciples loosed the colt in Matthew 21:2. In His victory over the devil on the cross Christ broke the chains of sin

- whereby the devil had brought mankind under his domination (Heb. 2:14, 15). This undoing of the devil's works in breaking the power of sin was effectively initiated at Calvary, is now going forward through the Spirit-empowered preaching of the gospel, and will be consummated at Christ's return and the incarceration of the devil (Rev. 20:1-3)."
8. When a man is born again, God's "seed" abides in him (3:9). The indwelling of God's "seed" changes the believer's thinking and guides his moral conduct. This is the meaning of regeneration -- "born again" (3:9b; cf. 5:18).
  9. The word "seed" is translated from the Greek word *sperma*. Sometimes the word refers to the product of this seed, such as children and offspring. For example, the Bible refers to "the seed of Abraham" and "the seed of David."
  10. Here in I John 3:9, the word refers to the divine energy of the Holy Spirit operating within the soul by which we are regenerated. Because we are indwelt ("for his seed remaineth in him") by this supernatural, divine energy, we do not practice sin. John says "cannot" (3:9).
  11. Albert Barnes said, "*And he cannot sin*. Not merely he will not, but he cannot...This cannot mean that one who is renewed has not physical ability to do wrong, for every moral agent has; nor can it mean that no one who is a true Christian never does, in fact, do wrong in thought, word, or deed, for no one could seriously maintain that: but it must mean that there is somehow a certainty as absolute as if it were physically



impossible, that those who are born of God will not be characteristically and habitually sinners."

### **CONCLUSION:**

From H.A. Ironside: Years ago when I went to California as a boy, the only oranges we knew were the ones with seeds. But then two of the Washington navel orange trees were brought to Riverside from Brazil and cultivated. Cuttings were taken from these parent trees at Riverside, and orange trees were budded with the Washington navel shoots, and their character was completely changed. A man having a forty acre orchard and not wanting to be left completely without fruit, would have the tops of one half of the trees cut off. Twenty acres would go on bearing the oranges with the seeds. But he would cut under the bark of the lopped trees, and put in the navel orange cuttings, and in a couple of years all those trees would have new branches and would be loaded with oranges. I might say to the owner, "What kind of oranges are these?" "Washington navel oranges," he would reply. "Is that the only kind of oranges they bear? Don't they sometimes bear oranges with seeds?" "Oh no," he would say; "A budded tree does not produce seeded oranges." But even as he speaks I stoop down and see a little shoot under the branches coming out of the trunk of the tree, and say, "Look, what is that shoot?" He would snip it off, or taking his knife out of his pocket would cut it away, saying, "That's from below the graft. It must be pruned off." You see what is characteristic of the budded tree is that it bears the navel oranges, but if one does not watch, below the grafting there will be a shoot of the old nature.

Likewise as children of God we cannot go on living in sin. If you ever find a Christian slipping into anything unclean or unholy, you know that this comes from below the graft -- it is the old nature manifesting itself!

How can you keep the old nature from producing sin? By using the pruning knife of self-judgment. Whenever you find any tendency of rebellion against God, any tendency of self-will, any tendency to think of unclean or unholy things, get out the pruning knife and use it unsparingly on yourself. These tendencies are of the old nature, not of the new, and they must not be allowed to grow and develop, or they will destroy your fellowship with God. "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin,...because he is born of God." The new life given to him is eternal life. It abides in him, and he cannot continue in sin because he is born of God.