

## WHO BELONGS TO WHO? 1 John 3:8-10

### INTRODUCTION

#### ENCOURAGEMENT

- There is a spiritual movement going on in universities around the country.
  - Last winter at Asbury College and Regent University, Lee University in Cleveland, OH, hundreds were saved at Auburn University and baptized, a powerful movement among the 20-30 of the nation's *Historically Black Colleges and Universities* (HBCUs), Texas A&M University the same, again hundreds at Ohio State University, again at the University of Alabama, again at Florida State University 6,000 gathered around a lake as students were baptized past midnight, University of Houston, and the same at Baylor University.
- The number of cultural influencers who are carrying a message of Jesus, His truth, and His ways is increasing. Many of them in the context of spiritual warfare.
  - Multiplied millions are being reached through Victor Marx, Shawn Ryan, Tucker Carlson, Richard Brand, Todd Hermann, the number of Christians being interviewed favorably by Joe Rogan, Dan Bongino, Charlie Kirk, Candace Owens, Glenn Beck, and more.
- God is working and moving, but it will take His people *living with clarity, courage, and conviction, knowing who you are and what is yours in Christ* in our realms and influence in this life.

**MESSAGE THEME:** *Live with clarity, confidence, and conviction in Christ, knowing who you are and what is yours in Christ.*

### REVIEW

- John provides evidence of one in fellowship with God.
  1. *Pursuit of righteousness and obedience to God,*
  2. *Pursuit God's love toward Him and others,*
  3. *Pursuit of truth regarding Jesus Christ, God, and life in them.*
- John incorporated the Second Coming of Jesus Christ as hope and subsequent motivation for Christians living in challenging times.

### SPIRITUAL PARENTAGE vs. 8-10

*1 John 3:8–10 (ESV) 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. 10 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, nor is the one who does not love his brother.*

- This section develops the imagery of family resemblance and parentage in terms of sin.

### **Satan and Sin** vs. 8

*1 John 3:8 (ESV) Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. . .*

#### **1. The Devil and Sin**

- This verse opens with the statement that *the one who practices sin* (present tense; continually habitually sinning) *is of the devil*.
  - Sinning characterizes the devil, not God. One who continually lives out sin and disregards God's will and commands cannot belong to God.
  - Jesus stated this concerning the Pharisees.

*John 8:44 (ESV) You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

#### **2. The Devil's History**

- Satan has sinned ever since he first sinned. Sin is his characteristic trait.
- Everyone who practices sin exhibits his character, due to belonging to him.
- Habitual actions are an index of character.

### **Jesus' Incarnation & Satan** vs. 8b

*1 John 3:8 (ESV) . . . The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*

- The characteristic work of Satan is sin, destruction, and death.
- The reason for Christ's first coming was to destroy the works of the devil.
  - "Destroy" is translated from Gk. *Wd luo*, which means *to loosen from, to overthrow, to do away with*.<sup>5</sup>
- We know that Satan still attacks and succeeds against the Christian with temptation.
  - This word cannot mean that Satan's works are destroyed in an absolute sense,
  - But that his works are deprived of their power and are rendered inoperative, conquered, and overthrown.<sup>6</sup>
- Though Satan is still busy with his diabolical works, through Jesus Christ, one can escape from His dominance and control.
- THIS IS HUGE!! Satan is rendered powerless in the life of the believer. His access and power are only what we give over to him.

- He will come with lies and temptations and try to induce fear, unbelief, insignificance or inferiority, and spiritual impotence.
- **All are falsehoods. We must have clarity and conviction as to who we belong to and what belongs to us in the person and power of Jesus Christ!!**
- Satan's work is sin and destruction; Jesus' work is characterized as destroying sin and replacing it with righteousness, life, and freedom.
  - Jesus has torn down Satan's fortress of sin and frees people from sin's domain by transferring them to the realm where they abide in righteousness and light.
  - So, we have seen sin defined as *lawlessness regarding God's laws*, and now we see its origin is *of Satan*.
- John lays the foundation to say that sin is absolutely incompatible with the sinless person and sin-defeating work of Jesus Christ.

### **A Logical Implication** vs. 9

*1 John 3:9 (ESV) 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.*

- **John's two summary statements:**
  - 1) the person born of God does not practice sin,
  - 2) the person born of God cannot go on sinning.
- Those are powerful statements.
  - How do you see yourself, as a sinner struggling not to sin or as righteous, living out who you are.
- **1. Remembering John's Previous Statements**
  - REMEMBER: John already stated that those who belong to God can sin and do sin, but Jesus is our *advocate* and the one *who paid the price for the punishment for our sin*.
    - John is not denying the possibility of sin in the faithful Christian.
      - NOTE: that in **2:1**, the grammatical structure of the verb sin is in the "aorist tense."
      - That typically describes the reality of a single event or action, as opposed to a continuous or repeated action.
      - Gracious forgiveness is provided for our sins when the Christian sins.
- **2. Understanding John's Current Statements**
  - He says that *No one born of God practices sin. . .*
    - The word "practice" is translated from the word *poieo*, which means *a settled habit or practice*.
  - At the end of the verse, he says *. . .he cannot sin. . .*
    - Here *sin* is a "present infinitive."
    - If it had been an "aorist," it would have meant one could not commit "a" sin. Being in the "present," it is saying one is not able to habitually sin.

- *JOHN IS SPEAKING OF A CHARACTER THAT IS EXPRESSED IN A PREVAILING HABIT OF BEING LAWLESS TOWARD GOD, NOT AN INCIDENTAL ACT. (Westcott)*
- 3. **The Reason for These Statements**
  - John gives the reason for this as being the fact. . . *God's seed abides in the spiritually born-again person. . . and . . . because this person is born of God.*
  - *His seed*, being God's seed, speaks to the life-giving principle of God's life, nature, and power that is given to one who truly knows God.<sup>7</sup>
  - This takes place in relationship to the reality of being born of God. The new principle or nature indicated by *His seed*, is received at the new birth.
  - Being "born again," as Jesus referred to in speaking to Nicodemus in **John 3:1-8**, is a deep and radical transformation.
  - It is the abiding influence of *God's seed* in everyone who has truly been *born of God*.

**2 Peter 1:3-4** (ESV) *His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.*

- John is saying that when Jesus's work opposes and destroys sin, how can those born of God habitually continue in it?

### **More Insight for Discernment vs. 10**

**1 John 3:10** (ESV) *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, nor is the one who does not love his brother.*

- John now provides again insight for discernment. *By this, the children of God and the children of the devil are identifiable.*
- He is saying it is already apparent what we are, whether *children of God or the devil*.
- In fact, he says the difference is evident to the discerning.
  - Note there are only two groups, not three or one.
- Our parentage is of God or the Devil, nothing in between.
- In the spiritual sense, God is not the Father of all people; not all people are His children in terms of a special salvific relationship.
- The way to become a child of God is;
  - by personally embracing the truth about Jesus Christ to your own life in faith and receiving Jesus Christ as the Savior and Lord of your life. **THAT IS THE HUMAN SIDE.**
  - Resulting in being born of God and receiving God's nature by the Holy Spirit. **THAT IS THE GOD SIDE.**

*John 1:12-13 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

- The lack of practicing righteousness and loving others who belong to God proves a lack of divine life in such a person.
- One born of God is related to God in righteousness toward Him and in love to others born of God.
- Looking back over the previous twelve verses, John is saying,
  - “If Christ appeared both to ‘take away our sins’ and to ‘destroy the devil’s work,’
  - And if, when He appears a second time, ‘we shall see Him’ and ‘we shall be like Him,’
  - How can we possibly live a life practicing sin?
- To do so would deny the purpose of both His first and second appearances.
  - If we are faithful to His first coming and ready for His second, we must purify ourselves, as He is pure.
  - By so doing, we shall give evidence of our being truly spiritually born of God.”<sup>8</sup>
- Behavior is a test by which one’s basic orientation in life may be discerned.<sup>9</sup>

## **APPLICATION**

### **Live in Objective Assurance**

- In much of Christianity that is familiar to America, *experience* is the “centerpiece” of Christianity.
  - (Experience is real and vital in the Christian faith and life.)
- The concern with experience as an emphasis is that one’s assurance can be unwittingly tied to *what one feels* in one’s relationship with God or what one *experiences* in one’s relationship with God.
  - With such a dynamic, one’s assurance can be fragile.
- John’s instruction is that *feeling the experience* is not the primary measure of spiritual rebirth or one’s heart and relationship with God.
- Don’t let the Enemy win the war of your mind by sabotaging God’s truth with your emotions and feelings!
  
- According to John, a preeminent by-product of spiritually being born *again is the internal impulse to live righteously before God*, which manifests itself in righteous conduct.
  
- *It is a desire for and evidence of behavior foreign to this world that provides evidence that something divine has happened in one’s life.*
- *By this, the children of God are apparent.*

## Live With Discernment

- John gave his readers some objective keys for critical discernment.
- The key to discernment was behavior, sometimes called fruit, a persons speech and actions.
- So many times, warnings are sounded by many in the body of Christ;
  - *You are not to judge.*
- Then verse Matthew 7:1 is thrown out as a proof-text.

*Matthew 7:1 Do not judge lest you be judged.*

- (There is a difference between judging with your subjective standards and God's objective standards.)
- **John is saying one can judge and is to judge.** That is why he said, *Let no one deceive you*, and by this, *the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious* ("obvious" means apparent).
- Later (**1 John 4:1**), John will command his readers to *test the spirits*. How does one do this?
  - By evaluating words that are spoken and deeds that are practiced.
- Jesus said *the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart*. **Matt. 12:34**
- Paul says that certain ones *profess to know God, but by deeds, they deny Him*. **Titus 1:16**
- When Jesus sent forth His disciples on a mission in **Matt. 10**, He was warning them they needed to be discerning. He said in **vs. 16** *be wise as serpents, but harmless as doves*.
- We are not advocating a self-righteous, holier than thou, spiritual witch-hunt, but discerning wisdom that comes from God's word and is applied by the Holy Spirit that says do not glibly receive verbal testimony without regarding the conduct or behavior of one's life.

**END SLIDE:** *LIVING IN DISCERNMENT AND CERTAINTY IN AN UNCERTAIN WORLD requires living with clarity, courage, and conviction in Christ, knowing who you are and what is yours in Him.*

## Endnotes

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<sup>5</sup>Joseph Henry Thayer, D.D., *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament*, (Milford: Mott Media, 1982), s.v. Iuo.

<sup>6</sup>John R.W. Stott, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries; The Letters of John*, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1992), p. 129.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p 131.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p 133.

<sup>9</sup>Thompson, *The IVP New Testament Commentary Series*; p 95.




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MESSAGE THEME: *Live with a clear and biblical understanding of God, righteousness, sin, the devil, and your relationship to each.*

1

REVIEW



- John provides evidence of one in fellowship with God.
  1. *Pursuit of righteousness and obedience to God,*
  2. *Pursuit God's love toward Him and others,*
  3. *Pursuit of truth regarding Jesus Christ, God, and life in them.*
- John incorporated the Second Coming of Jesus Christ as hope and subsequent motivation for Christians in challenging times.



2

UNDERSTANDING SIN vs. 4-8



*1 John 3:4–8 (ESV) Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; 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 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.*



3

UNDERSTANDING SIN vs. 4-8

Sin's Definition vs. 4



*1 John 3:4 (ESV) Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness.*



4



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*Romans 14:23 . . . and whatever is not from faith is sin.*

*James 4:17 Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin.*

*1 John 5:17 All unrighteousness is sin, . . .*



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UNDERSTANDING SIN vs. 4-8

Sin's Definition vs. 4

Jesus' Incarnation & Sin vs. 5

*1 John 3:5 (ESV) You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.*



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UNDERSTANDING SIN	vs. 4-8
The Definition of Sin	vs. 4
Jesus' Incarnation & Sin	vs. 5
<i>His Work</i>	



*1 John 3:5 (ESV) You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.*



7

*1 Peter 2:24 (ESV) He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.*

*2 Corinthians 5:21 (ESV) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.*



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*Hebrews 9:26 (ESV) for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

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UNDERSTANDING SIN	vs. 4-8
The Definition of Sin	vs. 4
Jesus' Incarnation & Sin	vs. 5
<i>His Work</i>	
<i>His Person</i>	

*1 John 3:5 (ESV) You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin.*

10

UNDERSTANDING SIN	vs. 4-8
The Definition of Sin	vs. 4
Jesus' Incarnation & Sin	vs. 5
A Logical Implication	vs. 6



*1 John 3:6 (ESV) No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him.*



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UNDERSTANDING SIN	vs. 4-8
The Definition of Sin	vs. 4
Jesus' Incarnation & Sin	vs. 5
A Logical Implication	vs. 6
Critical Insight for Discernment	vs.7



*1 John 3:7 (ESV) Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.*

*Matthew 7:23 (ESV) And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'*



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UNDERSTANDING SIN	vs. 4-8
The Definition of Sin	vs. 4
Jesus' Incarnation & Sin	vs. 5
A Logical Implication	vs. 6
Critical Insight for Discernment	vs.7
The Devil and Sin	vs. 8



*1 John 3:8 (ESV) Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. . . .*



13

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*Sin's Relationship to Satan*

*1 John 3:8 (ESV) Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. . . .*



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*John 8:44 (ESV) You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*

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UNDERSTANDING SIN vs. 4-8

Jesus' Incarnation & Sin vs. 5

A Logical Implication vs. 6

Critical Insight for Discernment vs. 7


The Devil and Sin vs. 8

*Sin's Relationship to Satan*


*The Devil's History*

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UNDERSTANDING SIN	vs. 4-8	
A Logical Implication	vs. 6	
Critical Insight for Discernment	vs. 7	
The Devil and Sin	vs. 8	
<i>Sin's Relationship to Satan</i> <i>The Devil's History</i> <i>Jesus' Incarnation &amp; Satan</i>		

*1 John 3:8 (ESV). . . The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.*



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APPLICATION	
Recognize the Work of Jesus in Your Life 1. The Objective Reality 2. The Subjective Responsibility	



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