

Lesson for October 9, 2005

The Book of I John

Chapter 3:4-9

Verse 4

“Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.”

Transgresseth in Greek is the word “parabasis” and means an overstepping or going beyond. In the case of the Law of God, transgression is the violation of His mandates and His commands. The observance of the Law was never designed to provide salvation. All sin is violation of God’s Law. (Romans 7:1-12)

The Mosaic Law was given by God for the entire human race in three parts. Codex #1 was the moral code (including The Ten Commandments) for the entire human race. Codex #2 was the spiritual code, which was shadow “Christology”, pointing to the Cross. And Codex #3 was the social code regarding what to eat, what not to eat, etc. The nation of Israel was given the responsibilities of taking the message of the Gospel to all nations and of guarding the Word of God.

The Mosaic Law exposed man’s sinfulness and his need *for* salvation. After salvation, the Church-Age believer is no longer in bondage to the Law. After salvation, the believer is to place himself “in bondage” to the Law of Christ. The study of the Law (God’s Word) showed Paul that he had been spiritually dead and that he possessed a sin nature. (Romans 7:7) This was the function of the Law: to reveal man’s true condition. This condition was spiritually death and separation from God. The Law shows man the magnitude of his sinfulness and how desperately he needs a savior.

Verse 5

“And ye know that He was manifested to take away our sin; and in Him is no sin.”

According to John 1:29, the purpose of Christ coming to earth was to pay the penalty for man’s sin. This is the reason that Christ was “manifested”, which is the Greek word “phaneroo.” “Phaneroo” means to make visible, to appear, to make clear or to make known. Christ appeared on the scene for the purpose of going to the Cross, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world. John points out that in Christ

there is no sin (no sin nature or personal sin). It was His impeccability that fully qualified Him to pay for mankind's sin. It was His impeccable life that became the pattern of the execution of the Christian Way of Life for every Church-Age believer. (I Peter 2:24; II Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 7:26)

When the believer chooses to commit personal sin, he not only breaks the Law of God, he also minimizes Christ's sacrifice for that sin. This is one reason that John encourages the believer to remain in fellowship in God's power system and not commit sin.

Verse 6

“Whosoever abideth in Him sinneth not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen Him, neither known Him.”

The Greek for *abideth* is “meno” and means to be in fellowship with Him. While the believer is in fellowship with God he has the power not to sin (the filling of the Holy Spirit). Once the believer chooses to sin, he is no longer in fellowship with God and has no supernatural power to resist temptation.

The believer that “sinneth” is a reference to a continuous action. The point John is making is that the believer who continues to habitually sin after salvation has not discerned or perceived (Greek word for “seen” is “horao”) the truth of the Hypostatic Union of Christ and what it entails. In the same manner, the believer who continues to habitually sin does not understand (Greek word for “known” is “ginosko”) Christ. It is also true that the believer who is out of fellowship with God cannot learn Bible doctrine and cannot properly apply what doctrine he does know.

Verse 7

“Little children, let no man deceive you; he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.”

Deceive is the Greek word “planao” and means to go astray, to wander, to deceive by leading into error or to seduce. How does the believer “do righteousness?” Doing righteousness is the production of divine good under the filling (control) of the Holy Spirit. The one who is doing this kind of righteousness can only be a person who possesses the righteousness of Christ. This righteousness is the same righteousness that Christ possesses, which is given to every believer at salvation. However, believers do not always produce divine righteousness. The best the believer who is out of fellowship with God can produce is human righteousness.

Verse 8

“He that committeth sin is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning.”

Satan was the first created being to commit sin. Satan’s original sin was arrogance (pride – Isaiah 14:12-15). He is said to be the father of sin. Therefore, the person who commits sin is “of the devil.” It was arrogance that caused Eve to commit the first sin in human history (though she was deceived). And it was arrogance that caused Adam to commit the first deliberate sin in human history. Eve’s arrogance was her desire to be like God; knowing good and evil. Adam’s arrogance was choosing Eve over God. (Genesis 3:15-24; I Timothy 2:14)

“For this purpose the Son of Man was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

Jesus Christ won the *strategic victory* (planning and directing of operations to counter the enemy) over Satan. God told the Serpent (Satan) that He would put “enmity between Satan and the woman; between his seed and the seed of the woman.” The seed of Satan (those who crucified Christ) would bruise the heel of Christ (a non-fatal blow), but the woman’s seed (Jesus Christ) would bruise the head of Satan (a fatal blow). (Genesis 3:15) This prophecy was fulfilled at the Cross when Satan dealt a non-fatal blow to Christ (since He came back from the dead and is alive today). Christ, on the other hand, dealt Satan a fatal blow that will be reality at the end of human history (when Satan and his fallen angels are cast into the Lake of Fire for all eternity). (Hebrews 6:17-20; Colossians 2:9-15)

It is because of Christ’s victory over Satan that the believer can win the *tactical victory* (the method or procedure carried out against the enemy) over Satan. The filling of the Holy Spirit supplies the power to accomplish this. The Christian Way of Life is a supernatural way of life and it requires a supernatural power to live it and to overcome the tactics of Satan, his demons (fallen angels) and his world system. (John 16:33; I Corinthians 15:51-57; I John 5:1-21)

Verse 9

“Whosoever is born of God does not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”

The Greek word for seed is “sperma” and means to sow. From the context we see that John is referring to the “new birth”. Regeneration, a theological term for being “born again”, is the term

for when God creates a human spirit in the believer at salvation. "Born again" is a poor translation of the Greek and leads one to think that the human spirit already exists and is simply being regenerated. The Greek words for *born again* help us to fully understand the meaning: *born* - "gennao", which means "to bear or to bring forth a child"; *again* - "anothen", which means "anew or from above". The word *regenerate* in English can mean to be restored, to reform, to bring into existence again, *but* it can also mean to be made anew. However, the Greek word for *regeneration* is "palingenesia" and means a new birth. Regeneration is a new birth, a spiritual birth from above (from God). It is the "new creation" of II Corinthians 5:17, which is better translated "a new spiritual species". When a person is "born again" he becomes God's *seed* (Galatians 3:29). It is a brand new nature, something that did not exist prior to faith in Christ. (John 3:1-8; I Thessalonians 5:23; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 2:1,5; II Corinthians 5:14-21)

It is the human spirit that provides the believer with the ability to have a relationship with God, to learn, to understand and to apply Bible doctrine and to produce divine good (service to God). (Romans 1:9; 8:16; Job 32:8) An unbeliever does not possess a human spirit and is therefore *unable* to have a relationship with God, to understand spiritual things or to produce divine good. (I Corinthians 2:14) It is the human spirit that the Holy Spirit teaches and this becomes the positive influence in your soul. Divine Viewpoint Thinking is the result of this influence and overrules Human Viewpoint Thinking when properly applied. The soul of man has the potential to be corrupted since it contains "free will". The human spirit, on the other hand, does not contain free will and, therefore, has no potential for corruption. The creation of the human spirit also sets up a battle in the soul. This battle between the sin nature and the new spiritual nature is for the control of the soul. (Galatians 5:16-17; I John 3:9)

Another key word in this verse is *remaineth* and is the Greek word "meno." "Meno" means to abide, to stay, to be at home with, to dwell or to reside. The final key word is "him." "Him" is the Greek word "autos" and can be translated *him* or *it*. The context determines which one is used. In this verse "autos" should be translated *it*.

Considering all of these Greek words and the context of the verses, verse nine can better be translated: "At the moment when a person is born of God, he is not sinning, because God's seed (the believer) keeps on residing in it (God's power system or the filling of the Spirit). Furthermore, he is able not to sin if he resides inside this power system because he has been born of God."