

THE

HARVESTER

"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." [Luke 10:2]

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"WHOSOEVER IS BORN OF GOD DOTH NOT COMMIT SIN . . ." (1 John 3:9)

This is a statement in the first letter of the Apostle John to the church. It is often misquoted and misunderstood. However, in order to get a clear understanding of this passage, let's examine this in light of several other scriptures. 1 John 3:9: *"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God".*

Let me ask you a question: DO YOU SIN? ARE YOU BORN OF GOD? At first glance, this passage of scripture seems to be saying that those who are Christians DO NOT SIN -- but, in

THE HARVESTER
1120 Sun Hill Road
Birmingham, AL 35215-4106

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1 John 1:10, he says that *"If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us"*.

Do these scriptures contradict each other? Not at all. As these two passages are, at first glance, contradictory, we shall see that they, in fact, are not! John says in 1 John 3:9:

"Whosoever is born of God ..." or, anyone who has been converted to Christianity. How is one *"born"* of God? It is through obedience to the Word of God (1 Pet. 1:22-23; 1 Cor. 4:18; Rom. 1:16; Jas. 1:18).

"... doth not commit sin". The apostle is relating to Christian brothers and sisters that when we are obedient to the Word of God we must stop the practice of sinning. In other words, we are no longer in the **SINNING BUSINESS**. We are out of the habit of sinning. We do not continue to practice or commit sin.

What are your intentions toward sin? Do you intend to *"practice"* sinning the same as before becoming a Christian? If so, you have not experienced the *"new birth"*. Jesus said to *"Be born again"* or to come to a new level of living. As Christians, we should never intentionally sin (willful sinning - Heb. 10:26). We all slip occasionally, but when we DO sin, it is not intentional. This is entirely different from what John relates to us in this passage. We do not **CONTINUALLY** commit or practice sin as we did before we were converted; another way to put it would be to *"live in sin"* (Rom. 6:1).

We have all heard some brother lead a prayer in the assembly and say, *"Lord, forgive us of our MANY sins"*. Beloved, Christians must not have MANY sins! Someone may well ask the question, *"Why not?"* The answer is simple --

we do not have the nature to continue in sin. Christians have been given a "divine" nature.

Peter tells us that Christians have been given "*great and precious promises*", and through these promises we share in the DIVINE NATURE. The divine nature is spiritual -- not the natural -- man. 2 Pet. 1:4: "*Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust*".

Turn with me to the book of Galatians, chapter five. Paul is discussing these two natures. Beginning in verse 16, "*This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh*". 17, "*For the flesh lusteth* (continues - jac) *against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would*".

He is saying the exact same thing that John is saying in our opening passage of scripture -- "*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin ...*". Notice -- Anyone who will "*... Walk in the Spirit . . . shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh ...*". There is no doubt that every Christian has a great battle to fight. The sins of thought, the sins of action, the sins of words and the sins of omission are very difficult to overcome, but we have all of the tools to do it with, i.e., the Word of God.

Jesus, in John 3:16 said: "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth* (continues - jac) *in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*". According to Young's Analytical Concordance, anytime you find the suffix "eth" at the end of a word, it means "to continue". Look:

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Ray McManus
3265 Fowlers Ferry Rd.
Gadsden, AL 35901-9130
Phone: (205) 442-4181

John 3:16 "*. . . whosoever believeth* (continues to believe - par. mine -- jac) *in him . . .*" This holds true in every passage where you find "eth". It either means "continue" or "does not continue".

1 John 3:10 "*In this the children of God are manifest* (made known), *and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.*" This is a good example of the negative of "eth" -- "*doeth not righteousness . . .*"

Regarding 1 John 1:10, every human has committed sins. Those who do not continue to live Christlike and practice the righteousness of God, by which each individual will be judged, "*doth commit sin*". Can you see the difference? In chapter one, he speaks of general sins of the past which must be repented of; in chapter three, he speaks of a lifestyle -- one which is free of the natural inclination or DESIRE to sin. There has never been a Christian who has had the desire, inclination, motivation or intention to EVER sin. It is not in the spiritual man to want to do so. So, our prayer to God is that we understand and accomplish what John's message is to us, namely, that we WILL CONTINUE TO PRACTICE righteousness.

(Please study the entire chapters of Romans 6, 7 and 8 for deeper insights into this subject.)

JOHN A. CLARK

213 Greer

San Angelo, TX 76903

SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. For what city was Jonah sailing after the Lord called him to preach?
2. Does the Lord deliver the righteous man from all his troubles?
3. What should we ask the Lord of the harvest for?
4. What did the Psalmist ask God to shatter in the mouths of the wicked?
5. What book of the Bible says the word of God is not chained?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. Since Christ died for us, then we should no longer live for ourselves but should live for whom? CHRIST (2 Cor. 5:15)
2. Name the two things that God used to destroy Sodom? FIRE AND BRIMSTONE (Gen. 19:24)
3. Peter says one's faith is more precious than what? GOLD (1 Pet. 1:7)
4. How did David say he panted after the Lord? LIKE THE DEER AFTER WATER (Psa. 42:1)
5. What happened when Moses struck the rock at Horeb? WATER CAME OUT (Exo. 17:6)

BLAMING IT ON SOMEONE ELSE

The other day I ran into one of my most significant discovery in the Bible. It is a passage that is sorely needed to be read and voiced in our country today. It is found in Ezekiel 18:2-19. *"What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right, . . . he shall surely live, saith the Lord God . . . Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like, that hath not eaten upon the mountains, neither hath lifted up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, hath not defiled his neighbor's wife, neither hath oppressed any, hath not withholden the pledge, neither hath spoiled by violence, but hath given his bread to the hungry, and hath covered the naked with a garment, that hath taken off his hand from the poor, that hath not received usury nor increase, hath executed my judgments, hath walked in my statutes; he shall not die for the iniquity of his father, he shall surely live."*

When we study the above passage, the first thing that jumps out is the fact that each person must answer for his own deeds. The son will not perish simply because of his father's sins, nor vice-versa. But another important lesson is sometimes overlooked in Ezekiel 18. Did we pick up on the fact that if a son has an ungodly father, that son still has the choice of doing right or wrong? An

unrighteous father does not guarantee that all his children will be likewise unrighteous!

The impact of Ezekiel 18 can best be appreciated in view of what is going on in our nation today. Alcoholism is cited as a disease which is hereditary and so-called 'scientific' studies back this up. They say getting drunk is a "sickness" passed on to us by our parents. Other studies say that sexual perverts (most notably homosexuals) can attribute their "preferences" or "tendencies" to their genetic makeup or family upbringing. Sodomites and lesbians claim that God made them 'that way'. Serial killers accuse their crimes to some long-ago traumatic incident that happened in their early childhood and thus, caused them to develop their psychotic nature to harm people. In short, people today are trying to blame someone else for their own individual sins. They blame God, they blame their parents, they blame their spouses, they blame their ancestry. They blame everybody under the sun but themselves!

The old proverb that, *"The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"*, is no longer true. Every soul is responsible for what he does and say in their lifetime. If a man does *"that which is lawful and right, . . . he shall surely live, saith the Lord God?"* It does not matter at all what his father has done before him (v. 19). And yes, contrary to all the doctor's reports and sociologist's studies, it is very possible for a righteous son to come out of a troubled family (vs. 14-18). No one is ever 'forced' to commit a sin because of his family environment. A man does NOT HAVE TO become a drunkard or a sexual pervert or a murderer or whatever, if he chooses not to! Everybody has the option to do what is right in the sight of God. Nobody has the option to blame their ungodliness on someone else. RAY

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place & Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
January 8 - 10	Laurel Church London, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

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BIBLE PRINCIPLES OF SALVATION

I. ALL PEOPLE HAVE SINNED

1 Ki 8:46 Rom 3:10 Rom 3:23 Rom 5:12 1 Jn 1:8 1 Jn 5:19

II. A SINNER WILL FACE ETERNAL DEATH

Ezek 33:8-9 Rom 6:23 2 Thes 1:7-9 Jas 1:15 Jas 5:20 Rev 21:8

Unless he:

- Hears the Word of God
Matt 13:23 Lk 10:39 Jn 10:16 Rom 10:17 Eph 1:13 1 Thes 2:13
- Realizes Jesus Christ is the Only Way to Eternal Salvation
Jn 6:68 Jn 14:6 Acts 4:12 Eph 2:18 1 Thes 5:9 Heb 5:9
- Believes Jesus is the Son of God
Mk 16:16 Jn 3:16 Jn 8:24 Jn 20:31 Acts 10:43 Acts 16:31 Heb 11:6
- Is Convicted in his Heart of his Own Disobedience
Acts 2:37 Acts 16:29 Acts 24:25 2 Cor 7:8-11
- Repents of his Sins
Lk 13:3 Acts 2:38 Acts 3:19 Acts 17:30 Acts 26:20
- Confesses his Faith in the Lord Jesus
Matt 10:32 Acts 8:37 Acts 19:18 Rom 10:9-10 Phil 2:11 1 Jn 4:15
- Is Baptized by Immersion for the Remission of Sins in the
Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
Matt 28:19 Mk 16:16 Jn 3:5 Acts 2:38 Acts 8:36-39 Acts 10:47-48
Acts 16:33 Acts 22:16 Rom 6:3-6 Gal 3:27 Col 2:12 1 Pet 3:21
- Lives a Faithful Life, Guided Only by the Authority of the NT
Matt 25:21 Rom 1:16 Tit 2:11-12 Heb 4:12 Jas 1:21 1 Jn 5:4 Rev 2:10
- Worships in Spirit & Truth, not Forsaking the Assembling, and
Observing the Lord's Supper every first day of the week
Matt 4:10 Jn 4:23-24 Acts 2:42 Acts 20:7 1 Cor 11:20-30 Heb 10:25
- Prays for Forgiveness, if he should Fall into Sin again
Acts 8:22 1 Cor 10:12-13 Eph 6:18 1 Thes 5:17 Jas 5:15-16 1 Jn 1:5-10

III. ONLY THOSE WHO DO THE WILL OF GOD SHALL BE SAVED

Matt 7:21 Matt 12:50 Lk 6:47-48 Rom 2:13 Jas 1:22 1 Jn 2:17 Rev 22:14