



A NEW YEAR: ATS STILL STRONG

Beneath the quiet summer heat of Georgia, ATS has been ordering its affairs to insure another wonderful year for our students. Though the changes are relatively small, ATS is certain they will enhance the student's experience.

One small change involves the ATS web site. With a new web master, ATS is actively seeking to enhance its presence on the internet, so be on the lookout for positive changes in this area.

Also, new courses and student programs are in development. New language courses and new ministry courses are top priority, as many

ATS students have shown keen interest in these particular areas.

Spring Graduation marked another milestone in ATS' rich history. Students from many states attended the ceremony, and Dr. Jimmy L. Hayes challenged the students with his passionate sermon to the graduates. To all in attendance, God's blessing of the Seminary was apparent, and all who came expressed their enjoyment of the ceremonies.

Be sure to support the Seminary with your prayers and your tuition. Remember, ATS relies upon you to assist God's servants across the world.

NCCA CONFERENCE

The National Christian Counselor's Association will be holding their annual conference this year at the Regal Sun Resort in Orlando, Florida. It is a wonderful opportunity to learn, to fellowship, to pray with other counselors, and to give thanks to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This year counselors and students will be able to

- Increase understanding of how to apply the five temperaments
- Learn how to maximize membership with NCCA
- Learn specific techniques for improving family relationships and saving marriages
- Outline techniques when counseling people working in stress related occupations

- Understand a ministry strategy to increase your public contact through chaplaincy
- Be updated on compliance issues involving pastoral counseling in the public domain
- Be taught how to effect bereavement counseling and hospice patients through your outreach

Save money by applying to attend the conference now. Call NCCA at 941-388-6868 and ask for a registration brochure immediately or register online at www.NCCA.org/conference. For questions only, you may also call 941-907-9796.



Pictures taken at the 2008 Spring Graduation

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1 John: Chapter 3—Fellowship Again

By James Hayes, Th.D.

3:1 “See what kind of love the Father has given to us so that we might be called children of God! (Because of this, the world does not know you, because it did not know Him.)” Verse 3:1 returns John’s audience to the discourse on love and fellowship. Through verse 2:11, John had been focusing upon the lifestyle that allowed the Church to validate a person’s profession of faith. However, in 2:12-29, John turned aside to encourage and warn three different classes of Christians in his congregation. With that warning and encouragement completed, John returns to the love and fellowship discourse, continuing the thought from 2:11. This discourse will continue through 4:1.

With 2:5, John brought the first section to a climax, clearly indicating that fellowship was only to be experienced while one walked with God. In 2:6, he continued with the logical conclusion of this fact: if one was God’s child, he owed God a just lifestyle that would indicate to all others that he esteemed his family name. Then, with 2:7-11, John began to reinforce the issues that had been dealt with through verse 2:6, indicating that one was either fellowshiping with darkness or with light. However, in 2:12-29, John turned aside to encourage his audience. Verses 2:28 & 29 served as transition verses, concluding the parenthetical section and returning to the Light/darkness polemic.

More importantly, though, John closed the parenthetical section with Father-child imagery which he had continually woven into the preceding arguments. With this imagery placed in the transitional verses of 2:28-29, John could now encourage fellowship with God out of duty for the family name.

[“See what kind of love the Father has given to us, so that we might be called children of God!” Since the Christian is born of God, he is by nature a descendant (*τεκνα*) of God, and thereby a part of God’s own family. John emphatically identifies the deep love (*αγαπη*) that God had given to Christians was love to such a degree that Christians could be identified with God as His children.

“child” is defined clearly here as being the a member of God’s family. It is not the same as *paidia*, which emphasizes the maturity or age level of the child. (See verse 2:13).

“Because of this, the world does not know you all, because it did not know Him.” The entire sentence is written as a parenthetical statement. The Nestle-Aland text reads “does not know us” rather than “does not know you all.” Either reading is acceptable, as both emphasize that John’s audience is ostracized from the world because of the relationship they hold with Jesus.

The world does not understand the Christian because it does not understand the Christian’s source of life, the Father. This particular word for “to know” emphasizes knowledge through experience, as opposed to the verb of 3:2, which emphasizes knowledge as mere fact. Therefore, since the world does not have the experience to understand either the Son or the Christian, the sense of the verb is understood by translating the verb phrase as “the world does not understand us, because the world did not understand Him either.”

3:2 “Beloved, now we are children of God ... Him even as He is.” Since the Christian is God’s adopted child, he can know that one day he surely will be like God’s begotten child. The sense of being “like Him” will be discussed in a paragraph below. John’s audience throughout the epistle has been addressed in certain Christian terms: “we” “us” and “dear children.” Now, John explicitly labels all Christians as God’s children.

“but it has not yet been revealed what we will be. But we have known that when it should be revealed, we will be like Him.” Although John has assured his audience of their current status, being children of God, he encourages them by letting them know that the adoption is not the



end of the salvation process. Instead, there is a future change that will take place, although even John himself is unsure of all that the change will involve. John’s uncertainty is based upon the fact that the effects of the change have not yet been revealed. However, the fact that a change will take place is well known, and regardless of all the implications, one thing is certain: the Christian will be made like Jesus.

Some commentators and versions see the verb “to be revealed” as a reference to Jesus, and translate the second sentence of the verse as “We have known that when He should be revealed, we will be like Him.” (See NASB for an example similar translation). In truth, “The subject may be Christ as in verse 9, or the future manifestation just mentioned. Either makes sense, though probably ‘it’ here better than ‘he.’”¹ However one translates the passage, the revealing

of our final state and the revealing of Jesus both will take place at the same moment, “in the twinkling of an eye” (I Cor 15:51-53 & I Thes 4:15-17). Thus, regardless of the translation, the truth of the passage survives.

“like” The concept of the word is key to understanding John’s exhortation of verse 3. Let it be said immediately that the “like Him” is not a reference merely to a glorified body, if that even be in view here. Instead, a question of status is in view.

In classical Greek, the word “does not denote the similarity which leaves a place for distinction, i.e., mere similarity, but the similarity which consists in congruity.” Therefore, the persons in the comparison may be said to be “of the same status.” In truth, then, it should be agreed by all parties that “divine sonship is not the highest stage in the nature and being of the Christian. Fulfillment is reached only when Christians are like Christ.” But, the question of the “like Him” still must be carefully considered.

The word “like” (ὡμοιοι) is used in Revelation 1:13 and in Revelation 14:14. In these two occurrences, Jesus is said to be “like unto the Son of Man.” However, if understood in the sense of the “like” rather than “status” the verses are unintelligible, for Jesus *is* the Son of Man and cannot be like

Himself. However, if “Son of Man” is understood as equivalent to the Messianic Office (see Matthew 8:20; 9:6; 10:23; 11:19; 12:8, 32, 40; 13:41; 16:13, 27, 28; 26:64, for example), and the word ὡμοιοι is understood in the sense of “status,” then Revelation 1:13 and 14:14 are completely logical: “I saw One with the status of the Son of Man,” that is the Messiah of the Old Testament covenants. If this same understanding of the word is passed to I John 3:2, where two persons are being compared, then more insight to John’s promise might be gained.

In verse 3:2, John stated that Christians would be “like Him.” If the sense of *status* is assumed for a moment, the implications are in complete agreement with the remainder of the New Testament. Romans 8:17 states clearly that Christians shall be “joint heirs” with the Messiah. Galatians 4:7 states that Christians shall not be merely sons, but inheritors. See also Ephesians 3:6, Titus 3:7, I Peter 1:4, Revelation 21:7 and Galatians 3:29. Thus, *all* children of God will be receivers of the promise and inheritors with the Messiah of the Kingdom. Note Revelation 1:6 (and also 20:6), which illuminates to some degree the Christians status in the coming age: “kings and priests.” If Jesus is the King (Revelation 19:16), and if the Christian is to be seated in His throne (Revelation 3:21), and if the Christian is to be a joint heir with Him, and if the Christian is

an heir of God through Him, and if the Christian is an heir according to the promise, then the Christian can look forward to the great realization that in the coming age, he will be not only a son of God, but an inheritor of God’s promises with Jesus, even to being seated in His throne.

With the above statements in view, it should be emphatically understood that it is not the absolute nature of Jesus as God that is being attained by the Christian, but it is the complete equality with Jesus as the Messiah-Ruler that is being granted as an inheritance. Thus, every adopted son is being granted the same inheritance as the naturally begotten Son. Therefore, the “status” is being a co-inheritor with Jesus.

3:3 “And each one having this hope concerning Him, he purifies himself, even as that One is pure.” Since the Christian, the adopted son (Ephesians 1:5 & Galatians 4:5), will one day inherit equally with the Son of birth, John exhorts the Christian to live purely, even as Paul pleaded for his congregations to walk worthy of His calling (I Thessalonians 2:12).

“this hope concerning Him” is a reference to the hope of being a joint heir with Him. If Jesus is to receive the promise of God, then the Christian also will receive the inheritance as promised by God and the Son.

“he purifies himself” is not a reference to self-preservation in the

salvation process. Rather, it is a reference to a self-determined effort to apply the power of the Holy Spirit in one’s own life to walk according to God’s laws.

“even as that One is pure” The Christian’s goal is to be like Jesus here in this world. He should desire to be pure even as Jesus is pure, effectively pointing men to the Father. Because of the sin nature, no Christian will ever fully accomplish this goal, but it is to be the goal nonetheless.

3:4 – 3:10

This passage is one of the most difficult passages in the entire Bible. It has been made more difficult because of the tremendous abuse the passage has received throughout the history of the Church. However, the passage can be understood if careful study is made within the passage itself and if careful comparison is made between the passage and other New Testament passages.

First, let it be said that the passage has nothing to do with the requirements or results of salvation. The passage, instead, deals entirely with fellowship. This will become evident as the text itself is dealt with in detail. Secondly, there are some important verses of Scripture that must be constantly be kept in the mind of the reader while the passage is studied:

Book Review: An Unstoppable Force

By Dr. R. Seaborn

An Unstoppable Force written by Erwin Raphael McManus is an insightful and magnetic voice challenging the church of the 21st century. It is a call for the body of Christ to end mediocrity and rise to challenge of its true call. McManus stated that if we accept the premise of the church as an organism then we know that the church has the capacity for environmental adaption. His push throughout the book is for the church to see itself as she truly is, an overcomer of hindrances, a no fear organization and an unstoppable force for cultural change.

McManus divides the book into four movements that he envisions the church must accept to become healthy, vibrant and effective.

In Zero Movement the term atrophy is used to describe what he considers to be a wasting away of the church because of its effort to survive and thrive as is in this broken world as opposed to being a trend setter, servant and a witness for Jesus Christ. The problem according to McManus did not begin when prayer was removed from public schools but when the church tried to preserve its heritage rather than build on it. McManus asks, if those who prepare for leadership are looking for the safe place, who will lead the church into the dangerous places?

The First Movement involves friction traction, momentum, and change theology. For the church to be effective it must engage the invisible in order to advance the kingdom of God. In this postmodern society that expresses various beliefs and customs the church must have a spiritual expression that crosses religious, racist, and isolationist barriers. The church must adopt a global perspective that encompasses a new spirituality, globalization, urbanization, population explosion, technological change, and information explosion. To be effective the church must be willing to engage and create traction to

make a difference. No longer should the church build monuments but the church must join the movement. McManus calls this momentum, when the church is not following the world but changing the world.

The Second Movement involves E-motion and cultural architecture. According to McManus there is a radical difference in leading a person to faith and leading people to faith. Leading the person to faith produces a follower versus leading people to faith produces a movement. McManus uses the word ethos. Ethos is what happens when many individuals make autonomous choices that create a unified movement. It is the fuel of our caring and the fire of our passions. The church in the author's opinion must create and shape culture. There must be an uncommon commonality to fuel a movement. Human creativity and potential must be unleashed so that the greatness of God may be glorified and it did among the apostles.

The Third Movement involves the cultural architect, spirit design theory, and soul environments. McManus believes that strong leadership is a key to engaging a world that is hostile toward the church. He describes various leadership styles and their strengths and weaknesses. McManus believes that leaders must prepare people as well as themselves. As opposed to looking to new methods and models leaders should look to the example set by the first century church. In dealing with the complexity of relationships in the church and in the community spiritual leaders McManus commented must be the architects, designers, and artists rather than keepers of tradition. It is hard to believe says the author "that a movement born of visionaries and dreamers would become dominantly known for its traditions and rituals."

I have longed believed that preaching should address the culture in a way that brings about change. However, most traditional churches have labeled such sermons as worldly. As a result I think that many people find the church irrelevant and out of touch with reality.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

TEST SCORE: If you receive an "I" on any exam, this simply means that your test is scored "incomplete." To remedy this grade, please call the ATS Grade Department at 1-229-336-5550 EXT 110.

EXAMS: Please be sure to include your name and ID on all exams!

GRADUATE LIST: All recent graduates are now posted under the Alumni Link on the ATS Home Page.

Associate Textbooks: The Weirsbe textbooks now cover both the OT and NT and include a CD with additional information. The price is only \$10 more than the previous price, and students will have a complete commentary on the entire Bible.

IMPORTANT NUMBERS:

ATS Grade Department: EXT 110

ATS Registrar: EXT 100



1 John: Cont'd

1 John 1:8, 10 **If we should say we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us ... If we should say that we have not sinned, we are making Him a liar, and His word is not in us.**

1 John 3:6a **While one is remaining in Him, he is not sinning ...**

1 John 3:10a **By this means, the children of God and the children of the Devil are revealed.**

Also, it should be noted that 1 John 3:10a should not be severed from the passage, as it is vital to understanding John's entire thought for the passage. The entire passage, like the passage containing 1 John 2:5, is to give a means by which the church can know if one is a child of God so that fellowship may be extended to that person. It is not to be used as a standard to acquire salvation. It is, however, the standard (as was established in 2:5 and other earlier verses) for fellowshiping with God: no sin may enter into His presence!

With these verses in mind, and with verse 10a properly added to the passage, let the careful Bible student consider the following remarks prayerfully.

3:4 "Each one who is committing sin also is committing lawlessness; and lawlessness is sin." Verse 3:4 and 3:6 immediately cast the reader back to 2:3 – 2:11. Notice in 2:3 that the Christian is required to keep God's commandments – that is God's laws. Here, the law or the breaking of the law, is in view as well.

"the one committing sin" the present participle *poiw`n* ("doing") has been translated here as "committing." While the continuous aspect of the present participle has been emphasized at times, the aspect can at times be overemphasized at the expense of the obvious truth. It is not the act of continually committing sin that is breaking the law, but the one time act of sinning that is regarded as breaking the law. While this may seem obvious at this point, too many students forget this point in coming to 3:9. So again, let the reader assert that any sin is sin and is therefore a transgression of God's laws.

Not to berate the point, but it must be remembered that other New Testament passages teach this same clear truth: any sin, without regard to its practice, is regarded as the breaking of God's law. Notice James 2:10 – **For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.** Romans 3:23 implies this same truth: **For all have sinned, and are coming short of the glory of God.** It was not that all have practiced sin and thereby are falling short of the glory of God, but that

upon the first sin, each one was considered a sinner who is still falling short of the glory of God. Romans 5:12 again teaches the same truth: it took but one sinful act for Adam to separate the entire human race from God's presence. The simple conclusion to which one must logically come is that since God is perfect and untainted by sin, one who desires to fellowship with Him cannot contain any sin in himself if the fellowship is to remain in tact. (What then is the hope of any man, for who is without sin? Again, the reader must remember that through the blood of Jesus, a penitent Christian can be wholly cleansed so that he might enter God's presence and enjoy God's fellowship).

poiw`n ("doing") As noted above, this is a present active participle that has been translated as "committing" in this passage. However, one additional note should be added concerning the present active participle: the action of the present active participle is usually understood to take place during the action of the main verb of the sentence.¹ Therefore, the sense might be understood as "While each one is committing sin." Logically, it must be understood in this sense, for as soon as one is not committing sin he is no longer breaking the law.

"and sin is lawlessness" Literally, the Greek reads "and the sin is the lawlessness." As with James 2:10, the verse supports a one-sin-breaks-the-law view of sin. All sin is acting outside of the God's prescribed standard, and all sin is therefore lawlessness.

3:5 "And you all have known that That One was revealed so that he might separate our sins from us, and sin is not in Him." Since all sin is a transgression of God's law, and since all Christians will sin (1 John 1:8,10), then John here reminded his readers that there was yet hope for fellowship with the sinless God through the man Jesus Christ. As man's Redeemer, Jesus came to restore fellowship between God and man, and through His death and resurrection, Jesus is able to cleanse man even to the point of separating his sins from him so that a man thereby made sinless might enter into the presence of a sinless God.

"and no sin is in Him" This phrase disqualifies the notion that practice of sin is in view in the remainder of the passage. Absolutely no sin is in the God-head: neither in the Father, who is Light; nor in the Son, in whom there is no sin; nor in the Spirit, who is Holy. Therefore, those who wish to commune, dwell, abide, fellowship with a perfect God must by necessity be completely free from sin, for no sin can enter into His presence. And, as verse 3:4 so clearly stated, each breaking of the law is sin. So again, it should be understood that *no sin* is the standard of entering into His fellowship.

3:6 "Each one who is remaining in Him is not sinning; each one who is sinning neither has seen Him nor even has known

Him” While the verse may be misappropriated to teach sinless perfection here in the earthly life, it is actually teaching quite the opposite and is in complete agreement with 1 John 1:8 and 1:10 and the New Testament as a whole.

The AV translates the passage as “Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.” The NASB translates the passage as “No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.” Both of these are sound translations that teach correct doctrine if balanced with the teaching of the New Testament as a whole. However, in examining the verse as an individual verse, some certain points need to be considered.

“the one who is remaining in Him” The word translated as “remaining” here comes from the Greek present active participle *mevnwn*. It can be translated in a variety of ways: remain, stay, abide, live, dwell, continue, etc.¹ However, “remain” in this verse seems most appropriate, as will be stressed in the following discussion. Importantly, the present active participle “describes an action occurring at the same time as the main verb” of the sentence.¹ Here, the main verb is *oujc aJmartavnei* (“he is not sinning”). Thus, the action of “remaining in Him” can only be understood to occur while one “is not sinning.” Therefore, because of this grammatical fact, the sense must be understood by translating the first part of the verse as “While one is

remaining in Him, he is not sinning”! Certainly, this is in perfect accord with the entire book and the New Testament as a whole. It is only while a Christian is “keep[ing] His commandments” that he “remains in the light” with “no cause for stumbling in him” (1 John 2:3, 10). As soon as he sins – that is, breaks God’s commandments just once! – he removes himself from the light and enters the dominion of darkness. He then remains in the darkness until he confesses his sin(s), whereupon Jesus removes those sins from him and any other unknown sins so that he might once again be whole and eligible to enter the Light and fellowship with God (1 John 1:8-9). It is due to this “while” element of the participle that it has been translated as “remaining,” for the sinlessness is conditioned upon his remaining in the light.

There are several important implications of this verse. First, a Christian is only void of sin so long as he remains in the light.



E	Y	D	A	K	Y	Y	H	U	E	D	A	M
C	S	V	I	K	K	I	R	Y	R	Y	M	R
H	R	W	E	V	T	E	R	T	U	C	O	I
L	E	H	V	F	I	L	B	I	L	D	R	H
I	T	T	E	V	P	D	R	U	E	A	N	T
G	A	D	N	I	K	I	E	R	H	R	I	R
H	W	C	I	E	W	N	V	F	E	K	N	A
T	S	K	N	M	M	G	O	U	R	N	G	E
P	V	C	G	L	A	A	A	L	B	E	E	V
C	R	E	A	T	E	D	M	R	U	S	E	E
W	O	M	A	N	I	S	A	R	D	S	R	R
T	N	E	P	R	E	S	S	B	I	E	T	Y
F	O	W	L	B	G	O	O	D	R	F	N	N

ADAM	FOWL	MORNING
CREATED	FRUIT	OVER
DARKNESS	GARDEN	RULE
DIVIDE	GOOD	SERPENT
EARTH	HERB	TREE
EVENING	KIND	WATERS
EVERY	LIGHT	WOMAN
FIRMAMENT	MADE	YIELDING

Genesis 1-3 Word Puzzle

Find the words listed to the left in the above word puzzle.

Words can be horizontal, vertical, or diagonal, and either forwards or backwards.

Good luck!

Immediately upon leaving the fellowship of God in any degree, sin creeps in. Second, the sinless state is required to fellowship with God. Any sin (not practice of sin) removes access to God's fellowship. Third, going back to 1 John 1:8-9, Jesus must continually be cleansing the Christian who is continually confessing his sins so that this sinless state can be maintained for fellowship. Therefore, practice of sin is not in view, but rather the necessity of the continual act of avoiding all sin is being declared, with the concession that sin will occur and must be removed by confession to God.

This verse is a **key verse** for understanding the passage as whole, as it restricts the sinlessness to those times when the Christian indeed is "remaining in Him."

"he neither has seen Him nor even has known Him" The verbs οὐκ εἰδωκεν ("he has not seen") and οὐκ ἐπίγνωκεν ("he has not even known") are both perfect active indicative verbs. Recall that the perfect verb indicates an action completed in the past with abiding consequences. Thus, "while one is sinning" he is avoiding the abiding consequences of the new birth, choosing to remove himself to the dominion of darkness and living in such a way that the past and completed action of knowing and seeing Him is not affecting Him. As soon as a Christian confesses his sin(s), those sins are forgiven and he is accepting the abiding consequences of the seeing and knowing so that he desires and enjoys the fellowship of God.

A biblical example may serve to illustrate the point. A son was born unto a man of some wealth. He enjoyed the benefits of that wealth as a son for many years. However, when he became a young man, he became disillusioned with his father's rules. Therefore, he asked for his inheritance and went away from his father's presence. In a foreign country, he wasted his inheritance until he was destitute. Some time after taking a despised job of feeding hogs, while hungry and rejected by society, he remembered the wealth and fellowship that he had enjoyed while in his father's presence. Therefore, he

decided to go to his father and to repent of his actions and to ask for permission to be back in his presence, even as a servant. Of course, the father immediately forgave him, even before the confession was complete, and had him cleaned and restored to the privileges of the position that he had so foolishly forsaken, so that the son could indeed be back in his presence.

Of course, the above story is that of the "Prodigal Son." However, it does aptly illustrate the principle of the verse. While he was walking with his father, the son enjoyed the full privileges of his sonship, including full fellowship with his father. But, upon removing himself from that dominion, he placed himself in a foreign dominion. However, while in that foreign dominion, he was still the son of his father; but he was rejecting the benefits of that sonship. It was not until he repented of his folly that he was cleaned and restored to the privileges of his position. He was not to be made a servant (a change in position!), but was to be restored to the privileges of sonship (a change in fellowship!). So too with the Christian. While he is not sinning, he is enjoying the privileges of his position (child of God) – fellowshiping with the Father. However, immediately upon sinning just one sin, he chooses to remove himself from His presence and to go into the foreign domain of darkness, where he is in a state of not receiving the privileges of his position (child of God). But, upon confessing the sin, the Father immediately cleans him and restores him to the privileges of his position – full fellowship with the Father – and never even considers changing his position.

Notice that it has been carefully stated above that only the "privileges of the position" are lost – not the position itself! At no time is a child of God anything less than a child of God, though that fact may at times be concealed rather than revealed (as with the prodigal son). However, the privileges ebb and flow according to one's relationship with the Father (as with the prodigal son).

"he has not even known" also need one additional thought. To insure that the careless student does

not attempt to apply these verbs to a man who is not saved (in this verse), notice John 14:7-9. Notice verse 9, in which Jesus addressed Philip, in particular: **Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?** The verb "hast known" in this verse is also a perfect active indicative verb. Obviously, Philip had known the Lord Jesus – but that knowledge was not matured enough to allow him understand as he should have who Jesus truly was. The knowledge of 1 John 3:6 is the same. If one who is a Christian is sinning, he has not known – in the sense of understanding who God truly is – God as he should, or else he would not have departed from His fellowship to sin.

The sum of the verse is this: while one is sinning, he is in the domain of darkness and is not remaining in the presence of the Father; thus, he is in a state where the abiding beneficial consequences of having seen and known Him are stifled.

3:7 "Dear children, let no one deceive you! The one who is doing righteousness is righteous, even as That One is righteous." The principle is sound: if one is doing what God requires of him, he is righteous and is being Christ-like.

"dear children" Notice that John followed the hard standard of verse 6 with the tender "dear children" that subtly confirmed the permanence of their position. Never, not even for one moment, does John's discourse consider loss of position (sonship) as a possibility. Rather, at all times, he consistently addresses the believers as what they truly are: the dear children of God.

3:8 "The one who is committing sin is from the Devil, since the Devil is sinning since the beginning. (For this reason the Son of God was revealed, so that He might destroy the works of the Devil." For the third time in the passage, the present active participle ποίῳν ("doing") is used by John. In verses 4 and 7, it clearly limited the duration of the action of the participle to the time of the main verb. Here, too, it serves this

purpose. Therefore, the sense understands the first part of the verse as “While one is sinning, he is from the Devil.” Although verse 3:10a will serve to solidify the position of this commentary, suffice it to say until then that the Christian can successfully conceal his origin, even to the point of displaying Satan-like characteristics. Furthermore, while anyone – including a Christian – is sinning, he is revealing his natural birth tendencies, whose origin (in a certain spiritual sense) is Satan.

“For this reason the Son of God was revealed, so that he might destroy the works of the Devil.” Since sin is of the Devil, and since it is completely against the nature of God, and since it affects even God’s children in this life, Jesus was revealed to destroy the works (sin) of the Devil. However, though the power of sin was removed at the cross, the Christian still must deal with the presence of sin until the Second Coming.

3:9 “Each one who has been begotten from God is not committing sin, since his seed is remaining in Him; and he is not able to sin, since he has been begotten of God.” Taken with 3:6, this verse is one of the most difficult in the entire Bible. It has been abused, misused, and tampered with to such a degree that entire false systems of salvation have been developed from it. However, the verse, like 3:6, is consistent with all of the New Testament. Remembering 1:8-9, John is certainly not teaching sinless perfection or “Lordship Salvation” in this epistle. Instead, John is teaching an important truth about the position of the Christian in God.

“Each one who has been begotten from God” This phrase is a description of every Christian, not mature Christians only. Every Christian was at some past time (the moment of accepting Jesus by faith) born of God; but the results of that new birth continue throughout all eternity. However, as explained under 3:6 and 3:7, the time of not sinning by the Christian is limited to the time he spends in the presence of the Father. As the abiding beneficial consequences of having seen and known the Lord can be denied (see 3:6), so

too can the abiding beneficial consequences of being born into a family be denied (as in 3:6, too). Therefore, while the perfect participle indicates a completed action in the past, it also equally represents a continuing effect (which this commentary rightly stresses can be rejected).

“he is not committing sin” While many commentaries stress the “continual aspect” of the present tense verb *poiei* (“he is doing”), John is stating the absence of all sin. Since God is the source of the Christian’s birth, and He is completely perfect, His offspring by nature must be perfect too. This is the clear sense of the verse. Yet, it must be balanced with 1:8-10, remembering that the Christian at this present time must struggle with the old nature, which is an enemy of God. But while allowing the present consequences of the past birth to affect him, the Christian is not sinning.

“since His seed is remaining in Him” The meaning of the phrase is quite debatable. It could be translated accurately as “since His seed is remaining in him” where “him” is the Christian and “His seed” is the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, it could be translated accurately as above with “Him” being a reference to God and “His seed” being a reference to the Christian. To reach the most likely meaning, notice the John’s use of the word “seed” in other passages.

John uses the term seed five times: 3 times in the Gospel; 1 time in 1 John; and 1 time in Revelation. In the Gospel, it appears in John 7:42, where it means lineage/descendants; it appears in John 8:33, where it means descendants; it appears in John 8:37, where it also means descendants. Thus in these three verses, it carries the meaning of descendants or offspring. In Revelation, John uses the word in 12:17, where it means descendants or offspring. Therefore, in every instance outside of 1 John 3:9, John uses the word to mean “descendant of” or “offspring of.” Thus, one should expect the same use of the word to occur in 1 John 3:9 unless John clearly breaks the pattern – which he does not.

If the “seed” is the offspring of God, that is the child of God, then what are the implications? First, the one who is remaining in Him is not sinning, which is exactly what the remainder of 1 John teaches. Secondly, it will coincide nicely with the second half of the verse, where the same point will be made in a different manner, namely that a Christian cannot sin while he is allowing the abiding consequences of the past, completed birth to affect him.

“and he is not able to sin” The “he” here must first be explicitly defined: it is the “one who has been begotten of God” from the first part of the verse. Therefore, John is making a slight contrast in his use of the perfect participle and the perfect verb in the latter part of the verse. Comment on this phrase will be delayed until the remainder of the verse is considered.

“since he has been born of God” Notice that the “he is not committing sin” is not predicated upon “Every one who is born of God,” but rather it is predicated upon “since His seed is remaining in Him.” Likewise, “he is not able to sin” is not based upon “Every one who is born of God,” but upon “since he has been begotten of God.” Thus, clearly, John is not questioning the birth, which is a completed action (permanent and cannot be undone!), but is emphasizing the absence of all sin in one is “is remaining in Him” and in one who is “past birth from God is still affecting him”!

Without doubt, the passage is difficult; but to make the *absence of all sin* into the *practice of sin* is completely out of line with the teaching of the New Testament and the nature of God. Imagine: fellowship with a perfect God being enjoyed by one who commits sin, but does not “practice” a certain sin. In truth, the concept is absurd. Only a perfect child can enjoy the fellowship of a perfect Father. Therefore, John is certainly teaching that all who are born of God and are remaining in Him (where ‘remain’ is equivalent to fellowship as in other 1 John passages) are not sinning; all who are born of God cannot sin while the new birth (a completed,

irreversible action) is still affecting them in their daily lives.

The above comments are in completely substantiated by 3:6, where it is only “while” one is remaining in Him that he is not sinning. **1 John 3:6, then, is the first key to understanding the passage.** 1 John 3:10a is the second, as will be emphasized in the following comments.

3:10a “By this the children of God and the children of the Devil are revealed” **The verse supplies the key to understanding the entire passage.**

“by this” is a reference to the principles and outline of 3:4 – 3:9.

“Revealed” is the key, for to whom is the new birth revealed? To God? Certainly not! Rather, the revealing is to the local church and to the world. The church cannot fellowship with one who claims to be a Christian unless that Christian reveals by his actions that he is a Christian in fellowship with God. The church cannot understand the uniqueness of the Christian unless the Christian reveals by his actions that sin is to be abstained from completely if fellowship is to be had with God.

Remember this: the true nature of both the Christian and the sons of Satan can be concealed! Notice the following verses concerning the unsaved:

2Co 11:13 For such *are* false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ.

2Co 11:15 Therefore *it is* no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Mt 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Mt 24:24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

2Pe 2:1 But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Ga 2:4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

Jude 1:4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ac 20:29 For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Ac 20:30 Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

Furthermore, even the Christian can and does at times conceal his true nature:

2Pe 1:9 But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

1Co 3:1¶ And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, *even as* unto babes in Christ.

1Co 3:3 For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?

1Co 3:4 For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I *am* of Apollos; are ye not carnal?

Mt 16:23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

Mt 26:74 Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

Mr 14:68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

Mr 14:72 And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

Lu 22:60 And Peter said, Man, I know not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, the cock crew.

Joh 18:27 Peter then denied again: and immediately the cock crew.

Rev 16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

Rev 17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

Yet, though Satan's children can appear to be Christ-like and though Christians can appear to be Satan-like, God knows His own and does not need to have the “true Christian” reveal to Him who is His offspring. Therefore, the revealing is for the benefit of the Church so that it might discern who “the children of Go and the children of the Devil” for the purpose of **fellowship**! And for the benefit of the world so that it might understand the holiness of God as exhibited through the Christian lifestyle!