

26-1-4- He Cannot Sin

1 John 3:8-9 He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. **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.

These verses have perplexed most Christians for years, and invariably Christians for years have set about to change them.

NIV (People's choice)

8 The one who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. **9** No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God.

So first, when we look at one of the worst translations that is still very popular, we see that the NIV changes just about everything in these two verses, making them completely a doctrinal mish-mash. If you read that in the way it is written, then no one was ever, or will ever be, born of God.

NASB (scholar's choice)

8 the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil. **9** No one who has been born of God practices sin, because His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin continually, because he has been born of God.

Next, the New American Standard Version, which according to the scholars is the most accurate Bible, adds in the word *continually*, trying to make this verse about habitual sin. This is a common reading of this verse, and it is totally foolish. In the flesh that all men were born into from Adam, sin will be ever present. Paul says in Philippians 3:12-13 that he hasn't attained sinlessness. Nor is he perfect. But he is striving ahead and forgetting those things behind. Most would say that what they mean by habitual sin would be something like doing the same sin over and over, not just casual sin. But God's most hated sin is pride, not drunkenness or fornication, so most of those who would hold to this doctrine would condemn themselves.

ESV (Evangelical's choice)

8 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^[b] seed abides in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God.

[b]1 John 3:9 - Greek - his

Again, the ESV translators do the same as the NASB translators, but they really emphasize “*that makes a practice of sinning*” to drive home the point. Now you notice something here that we will get to in a bit: Both the NIV and the ESV change the word “his” seed to God’s seed. This is reflected by the note in the ESV. The NASB doesn’t change the word, but capitalizes it, making the meaning the same. I believe that is incorrect.

NKJV (Evangelical’s 2nd choice)

8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. 9 Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

Now finally, the supposed “Updated Received Text” Version, the NKJV. You can see that this version, just like the rest, capitalizes the word he, making you understand it is God’s seed. It also changes “committeth sin” and “doth not commit sin” to “sins” and “does not sin.” Every other version does this in some form or another: practices sin, does what is sinful, makes a practice of sin, and so on. So every other version changes the language so that it has to be more than a single sin that is being spoken of here. I also believe that is incorrect.

Every one of these versions, in some form or another, even if you were to try to rightly divide them, is telling those believers in the remnant of the last days that if they are sinning, they are of the devil. If you don’t rightly divide, they are telling you and me that we are of the devil, because I don’t know anyone who doesn’t practice sin. Everyone is prideful. Everyone lies, even those little white ones.

And, in fact, there may be some, but very few of us that love the Lord with all our hearts, all our minds and all our souls. So changing these verses to try to soften them only makes them worse.

Now I am going to give you my take on these verses, and if we have time, I’ll give you some other takes that are less offensive to God’s Word than what those versions do with them.

If your Bible has paragraph markers in it, you will see that this paragraph begins in verse 4.

1 John 3:4 ¶ Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

In this verse we have the Hebrew definition of sin. Sin is transgression of the law. If you do something contrary to what was written in the law of Moses, that is considered a sin to the Jews.

But look closely at this verse. It says that whosoever committeth sin – not practices it or sins – but whosoever committeth sin ALSO transgresseth the law. Why is the word ‘also’ there? If sin is the transgression of the law, why would he have to say that he that committeth sin ALSO transgresseth the law?

Unless that sin wasn't spelled out in the law.

Let's go back to the beginning. When we looked at I John 1:9-10, what sins did we say they were confessing?

- The sins of their fathers
- Their sins

Remember that we went back to Ezra and saw how Ezra confessed the sins of the fathers and then the sin they were then guilty of, which was marrying strange women outside of the nation.

Do you remember what the sin is that the remnant has to confess? What is their transgression?

2 John 9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

When we looked at this, we easily identified the doctrine of Christ in:

2 John 7 ¶ For many deceivers are entered into the world, **who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh**. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

The doctrine of Christ is that Christ is come in the flesh in the form of Jesus Christ, and that he is the risen Messiah. We looked at many verses in I John that repeatedly presents this doctrine. In 2 John then, we can see the transgression that is being spoken of in I John, along with the many references to it in I John.

1 John 3:4 ¶ Whosoever **committeth sin transgresseth also the law**: for sin is the transgression of the law.

Is there any passage from the law of Moses that tells a Jew that Jesus is the Christ and the Messiah? Not that I can find.

What John is saying here is that he that committeth sin, the particular sin being that they reject that doctrine of Christ, is ALSO transgressing the law. But how could they be transgressing the law if Jesus isn't mentioned in the law?

1 John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Hebrews 1:8 But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, *is* for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness *is* the sceptre of thy kingdom.

The Son of God is God.

Deuteronomy 5:6-7 ¶ *I am* the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage. **7 Thou shalt have none other gods before me.**

If they are worshipping anyone other than Jesus their Messiah, they are breaking the first commandment.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 ¶ Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: **5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.**

If they aren't loving Jesus Christ as their Messiah and Lord, they are breaking this commandment.

This is why John is saying: "He that committeth sin transgresseth ALSO the law." The sin that has kept, and will be keeping, Israel from receiving the blessing of their kingdom is their denial of who Christ is. Even though Jesus wasn't mentioned in the law, he is God. Therefore when you treat him any differently than you treat Jehovah God, you are committing the sin that is keeping you from blessing.

But that isn't all. The whole context of the entire book is how to identify false teachers, false spirits and false miracle workers. This passage isn't any different. We're not reading about every individual Jew. We're reading about those who would seduce you.

1 John 3:7 Little children, **let no man deceive you**: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

Don't let anyone seduce you, chapter 2; don't let any man deceive you, chapter 3; try the spirits, whether they be of God, chapter 4; keep yourselves from idols, chapter 5.

Loving the brethren was one test of a true teacher from a false one. We looked at that one last week. This test is about those who do righteous works versus those that do not do righteous works.

The defining character of each is whether they commit sin or not. That sin is the sin that they have confessed – that they now acknowledge - that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, and ask forgiveness for their unbelief.

He that committeth sin is of the devil. What does John say about them?

1 John 2:22 Who is **a liar** but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? **He is antichrist**, that denieth the Father and the Son.

2 John 7 ¶ For many **deceivers** are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a **deceiver** and **an antichrist**.

These are little antichrists, deceivers and liars. What do we know about liars?

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and **unbelieving**, and the abominable, and **murderers**, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, **and idolaters**, and **all liars**, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

Last week we saw how those who hate their brothers are double murderers in the literal sense in those last days. Here we see the murderers – false teachers, and unbelieving, and idolaters – the last verse of I John, and liars.

In I John 3 he is speaking of those who work themselves into the remnant churches for the purpose of deception, and contrasting them with those true teachers that are in the churches and coming to the churches. And that brings us to the parable of the wheat and the tares.

You may be wondering why I made a big deal out of those bad Bible versions repeatedly making the seed that remains in him in I John 3:9 being God's seed. You are about to find out.

There are different seeds in the parables of Jesus. In the parable of the sower, the seed is the word of God. There are mustard seeds. And there is the seed in the parable of the wheat and tares.

Matthew 13:24-30 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: **25** But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. **26** But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. **27** So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? **28** He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? **29** But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. **30** Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

And the interpretation:

Matthew 13:37-43 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; **38** The field is the world; **the good seed are the children of the kingdom;** but **the tares are the children of the wicked one;** **39** The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. **40** As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. **41** The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; **42** And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. **43** Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

The good seed are the children of the kingdom that are sown by Jesus Christ. The tares are the children of the wicked one that are sown by the devil. Let's compare that with:

1 John 3:7-8 Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. **8** He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil

sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

Now, this is a thought that I have that may or may not be part of all this, but the good seed are the children of the kingdom that are sown BY Jesus Christ. There is one place that seems to be that event.

Revelation 7:1-3 ¶ And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. **2** And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, **3** Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.

I won't get into any long monologue on how I believe Revelation should be understood, but it is obvious that this event takes place before most, if not all, of the events in chapter 6. Otherwise there would be a whole lot of hurting to the earth, sea and trees. So this happens sometime before or relatively soon after the signing of the covenant with antichrist.

Revelation 7:4 And I heard the number of them which were sealed: *and there were sealed an hundred and forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.*

And this isn't the church of Latter-Day Saints. This could possibly be the beginning of the remnant church that have the seal of God in their foreheads that are sown by the living God. He is the living God because he was resurrected from the dead.

That is just an idea, but it certainly helps explain a lot of what we read here in I John. If this is actually the seed that is sown by the Son of man, then it would also explain:

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.

He cannot disbelieve because he has been sealed by God. He does righteousness because is sown as a child of the kingdom by Jesus Christ. The seed that remains in him is that seal of God that he received from the angels.

Going back to the parable now, it says quite plainly that the good seed are the children of the kingdom and the bad seed are the children of the devil.

1 John 3:10 In this **the children of God are manifest**, and **the children of the devil**: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

We looked at this verse last week concerning those that love not their brother. Here we see, just as in the parable, the children of God and the children of the kingdom, and then the children of the devil.

They are allowed to grow up together, and will be separated by the angels.

There is a lot to this, if you want to study it. You can start by comparing the chaff, the tares and the wheat. The chaff is burned up after the wheat is gathered into the

garner. The tares are gathered with the wheat. (Mt. 3:12; Mt. 13:30, 40-41; 24:30-31) If you start looking at these things first, you can better get a grasp on how the book of Revelation is laid out.

But back to I John 3. My belief at this point is that these who cannot sin are the wheat that is sown by the Son of man. They cannot be deceived because the seed of the children of the kingdom, whether it is the seal of Revelation 7, or some other type of seed, remains in them. They are absolutely undeceivable. The sin that they cannot commit is rejecting Jesus Christ, because they were sown by Jesus Christ. They do righteousness because they are in Christ and his righteousness shines through them.

The tares – the children of the devil have committed that sin of rejecting Christ as Messiah because they were sown by the devil. The most important part is that John is explaining – again to the little children – what to look for to discern between a teacher of truth and a teacher of lies. Those who teach lies usually have one central lie that is covered in random truths to make the lie believable. He is telling them to look for the rotten core and ignore all else.

1 John 3:9-10 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. **10** In this the children of God are **manifest**, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

If they love the brethren, if they do righteousness – if they walk uprightly by faith, with patience – if they are trusting that Jesus Christ is the Messiah and King, then they are of God and the children of the kingdom.

If they commit sin, first of all – deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh – if they don't walk righteously by faith, but show you signs and wonders or tell you to look at the testimony of men – then they are antichrists.

Matthew 24:23-24 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not. **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.

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Now, here are some other interpretations given by some Bible teachers to try to understand this passage:

We always make a big deal out of our position or standing in Christ as opposed to our actions in the flesh. In I Corinthians 6:9-11, Paul basically lists all of the states of sin that the Corinthians have been committing, and says that anyone in those states will not inherit the kingdom of God. Then he says: “And such were some of you.” So that shows the difference between position in Christ and sins of the flesh.

Some say that is what John is talking about. Those in Christ cannot sin in Christ.

This can be seen in

1 John 2:27-28 But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, **ye shall abide in him.**

That is the position in Christ, or standing.

28 ¶ And now, little children, **abide in him**; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

That is the reward part.

Just as Paul says in Philippians that he isn't perfect, but then says 'let us who are perfect,' the distinction is between who we are in Christ and who we attain to be as we are still in the flesh.

This seems to be reasonable until you look at the context. He doesn't exhort those who commit sin to forsake it – he condemns them. He doesn't tell those who hate their brother to come to Christ – he calls them murderers. This is hardly what one who is so full of love for his brethren would do, and it just doesn't hold up to scrutiny.

The second explanation given would also be blown up by all of the new versions who change 'commit sin' to 'patterns and practices of sin.' It proposes that the sin being committed here is actually taking the mark of the beast in the 2nd half of the 70th week of Daniel. That is bolstered by the verse we read in Matthew 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."

This seems almost plausible until you examine the context again: You would have to say that doing righteousness and loving your brother also equate to not taking the mark of the beast. You could probably do that on some spiritualized level, but I just don't think it fits.

In the context of I John, where there are no gray areas, I think we have to look at who he is talking to: little children – those most easily deceived.

What is he talking about: how to identify seducers, deceivers, antichrists, false spirits, false prophets, and so on.

1 John 2:26 These *things* have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

1 John 3:7 Little children, let no man deceive you:

1 John 3:10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil:

1 John 4:1 ¶ . . . try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Add to that the fact that the sin committed is never pluralized, except in the corrupt Bible versions. And that sin has to be shown that it is ALSO a transgression of the law, and I believe as far as I can see, that it must be the rejection of Jesus Christ as the Messiah.