

I John 3:4-10

- Intro.**
- Can you explain the polemic context in which this epistle was written?
 - How does “doing righteousness” (2:29) and “purifying oneself” (3:3) provide the lead-in to these verses?
- 3:4**
- Is John thinking of specific persons when he refers to “everyone...”? Who?
 - What does it mean to “practice sin”?
 - habituated expressions of sinfulness?
 - particular acts contrary to acceptable norms of behavior?
 - expressing character in one’s behavior that is contrary to the character of God?
 - What does it mean to “practice lawlessness”?
 - to act contrary to the Old Testament Law?
 - to disobey governmental statutes?
 - to engage in iniquity or evil?
 - to participate in antinomian or licentious behavior?
 - to act contrary to the inner law of Christ within?
 - When John states that “sin is lawlessness”, is he...
 - defining sin as a violation of God’s Old Testament Law?
 - describing sin as failure to express God’s character?
 - identifying the actions of the false-teachers with “the mystery of lawlessness” (cf. II Thess. 2:7)
- 3:5**
- How did the readers “know” that Jesus had come to “take away sins”?
 - they were taught by Paul?
 - they were taught by John?
 - they were taught by the Holy Spirit?
 - When John states that “He appeared in order to take away sins...”, does he mean that...
 - Jesus was historically incarnated in order to die redemptively for the sins of mankind? (cf. John 1:29)
 - Jesus lived and died in order to counteract the power of sin in people’s lives?
 - Jesus came to earth in order to do away with sinful behavior in man?
 - Does “in Him there is no sin” mean that...
 - the historical Jesus was sinless during His life on earth? (cf. John 8:46; 14:30; II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15; I Peter 2:22)
 - the risen Lord Jesus is essentially incongruous with all sin? (cf. John 7:18)
- 3:6**
- Does the incompatibility of Jesus and sin imply that the Christian is free from sin?
 - Is John indicating that...
 - the Christian cannot sin?
 - the Christian should not sin?
 - the Christian will not sin?
 - What is the conditional contingency whereby sins will not be expressed in Christian behavior?
 - What does it mean to “abide in Him”?
 - to have Christ’s presence abiding in us?
 - to positionally dwell in the efficacious work of Christ?
 - to derive from the dynamic of Christ’s function?
 - By contrast, what does Jesus mean by “no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him”?
 - anyone sinning cannot be considered a Christian?
 - anyone sinning is an atheist?
 - those deriving character from other than Christ are out of fellowship with God?
 - the false-teachers who persist in sinfulness evidence that they do not know God?

- 3:7**
- Who was trying to deceive John’s readers? (cf. 2:26)
 - What is required to “do righteousness”?
 - How is it that “the one doing righteousness is righteous”?
 - the doing of righteousness evidence that we are essentially righteous?
 - the doing of righteousness makes us righteous?
 - the doing of righteousness is a result of having become (II Cor. 5:21) or having been made (Rom. 5:19,21) righteous?
 - How is it that we “are righteous, just as He is righteous”?
 - there is essential equivalency between the Christian and Christ?
 - His righteousness is our righteousness?
 - because He is righteous, we are identified as righteous?
- 3:8**
- Who does John have in mind when he refers to “the one doing sin...”?
 - When John writes that “the one doing sin is of the devil”, does he mean that...
 - the one sinning is associated with the devil?
 - the one sinning belongs to the devil?
 - the one sinning is influenced by the devil?
 - the one sinning is empowered by the devil?
 - the one sinning derives what he does from the devil?
 - Does “the devil has sinned from the beginning” mean that...
 - the devil has sinned from eternity?
 - the devil has sinned from the time when Lucifer fell into sin?
 - the devil has sinned from the creation of the world?
 - the devil has sinned from the time when he influenced man to sin in the Fall?
 - the devil has sinned from the time he led Cain to murder Abel? (cf. 3:12)
 - the devil sins because it is his reason for being, and he cannot do otherwise?
 - Why did Jesus “appear”?
 - to annihilate the devil?
 - to render powerless the power of the devil’s death and destruction? (cf. Heb. 2:14)
 - to counter and put an end to the sinful expression of the devil?
- 3:9**
- When John states that “no one who is born of God practices sin”, does he mean that...
 - spiritual regeneration makes sinning an impossibility?
 - being brought into being spiritually with the life of Christ is incongruous with sinning?
 - Christ’s life and nature in the Christian will never generate sinful behavior?
 - What is meant by ‘His seed abides in him’?
 - the latent seed of Christ’s life dwells in the spirit of the Christian?
 - the life-generating seed of Christ’s character functions in the Christian?
 - the Holy Spirit is the seed that bears character fruit in the Christian?
 - “he cannot sin, because he is born of God.” – Does this mean...
 - it is impossible for a Christian to sin because he has been regenerated?
 - it is incongruous for a Christian to sin because the dynamic of Christ’s life does not sin?
 - it is possible for a Christian not to sin because Christ lives in the Christian?
 - it is impossible for a Christian to be made to sin by Satan, because the devil has no right to those who are in Christ?
- 3:10**
- What is it that obviates the either/or differentiation of “the children of God” and “the children of the devil”?
 - differing character expressed in their behavior?
 - differing derivation of such behavior?
 - differing spiritual condition and identity?
 - the difference in John’s readers and the false-teachers is evident in their behavior?

- Who is John thinking of when he writes of those “not doing righteousness”?
- “the one not doing righteousness is not of God” – Does this mean...
 - anyone not living perfectly righteously doesn’t belong to God?
 - anyone not deriving the righteous character from Christ is not deriving what they do from God?
 - anyone not striving to live righteously is an atheist?
 - everyone of the false-teachers who are not doing righteousness are not deriving what they do from God?
- Why is “the one who does not love his brother” not of God?
 - because loving one’s brother is part of doing righteousness?
 - because God is love (cf. 4:8,16), and when the Christian derives character from Him there will be love for others? (cf. Rom. 5:5; Gal. 5:22)
 - because the false-teachers didn’t love their fellow Christians enough to seek unity in the Truth of Christ, and such evidences that they were not dependent on God.
- How does the last phrase of this verse set-up the transition to what follows in the remainder of this epistle?

- Conc.**
- Why is it so important not to detach or abstract these verses from the polemic context of this epistle?
 - Can you identify some of the results of detaching these verses from their context?
 - What are some personal applications that you can draw from these verses?