

## **1 JOHN 3:4-4:6—CONTRASTS OF THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD**

1 John has, as one of its major themes, truth. If truth is relative or does not exist, then anything means everything and all is meaningless. If truth does exist, then it's possible to separate truth from error and live accordingly. Separating truth from error is a goal for John. Right off the bat, John proclaimed that God is light. Then he said that those who know God must walk in the light. He denied that one can know God and still walk in darkness. He denied that sin in a person can be totally eradicated. He also denied that it is possible for one to have never sinned. He then called all of God's people to holiness. The next week, we then looked at the three tests by which one may truly know if he is a child of God. These are righteousness, love, and truth. This week, in the next major section of the letter, he introduces the same three tests again, this time with contrasts. They are righteousness and sin, love and hate, and truth and error. By examining these, you can see there is a black and white difference between the church and the world.

### **1. RIGHTEOUSNESS AND SIN—THE MORAL TEST            3:4-10 CHRISTIANS CANNOT PRACTICE SIN**

Back in the 80's John MacArthur wrote a significant book called "The Gospel According To Jesus". That work exposed what some of the seminaries that had been Bible based in what their view of a Christian was. It was cheap grace. Here are some of their views as far as sin and repentance are concerned. These run totally against the grain of the Apostle John in 1 John and demonstrates we are in the same struggle for truth as the church was back in the first century.

Repentance is just a synonym for faith. No turning from sin is required for salvation.

Here's another one. Faith might not last. It is a gift of God but it might not last. A true Christian can completely cease believing and therefore can commit the ongoing great sin of willful unbelief and still be a Christian.

Here's another one. Saving faith is simply being convinced or giving credence to the truth of the gospel. It is confidence that Christ can remove guilt and give eternal life. It is not a personal commitment to Him.

Here's another one. Christians can lapse into a state of permanent spiritual barrenness.

Here's another one. Christians may fall into a state of lifelong carnality, born again people who continuously live like the unsaved.

Here's another one. Disobedience and prolonged sin are no reason to doubt one's salvation.

And another one. A believer may utterly forsake Christ and come to the point of not believing. God has guaranteed that He will not disown those who thus abandon the truth. Those who have once believed are secure forever, even if they turn away.

Here are some more that might even be more disturbing. Repentance is not essential to the gospel. In no sense is repentance related to salvation.

And another one. True faith can be subverted, overthrown, collapse and even turn into unbelief.

Here's another one. Spiritual fruit is not guaranteed in the Christian life. Some Christians spend their lives in a barren wasteland of defeat, confusion and every kind of evil.

Here's another one. Nothing guarantees that a true Christian will love God. Salvation does not necessarily even place the sinner in a right relationship with God.

Here's another. All who claim Christ by faith as Savior, even those involved in serious or prolonged sin, should be assured that they belong to God come what may. It is dangerous and destructive to question the salvation of professing Christians.

Here's another one. The New Testament writers never questioned the reality of their readers' faith.

And finally. Genuine believers might even cease to name the name of Christ or confess Christianity at all.

That's shocking stuff and you have to ask yourself, "Did they ever read the text I just read?" How in the world could biblical scholars, quote/unquote, come up with that? Sell it and have it bought? Perpetuated, re-taught so that it now pervades the soil of much of evangelicalism?

What they're basically saying is that saving faith is the experience of a moment and it is simply believing for a moment certain facts about Jesus and asking Him to save you based upon those facts. No necessary repentance, no necessary obedience, no righteousness, no turning from sin, no spiritual fruit is required. Pretty amazing to get people to buy into this, people who supposedly know the Scriptures.

A. SIN IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH GOD'S LAW

3:4

This deals with the nature of sin. This is a very accurate definition of it. The Westminster Catechism says, "Sin is any lack of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God." But what John says is even more profound. Sin is the spirit of lawlessness itself, which lies behind rebellion. Sin is lawlessness—Sin is the desire to have my own way. Isa 53:6 Lawlessness is what we were.

It is being opposed to the will of God. Man wants to defend those desires and minimize the seriousness of sin. John does not let anyone get away with this because he will then say that all sin is of the devil. The Gnostics underestimated sin and excused it. But John will have none of that and says sin is willful rebellion. God has an absolute standard and any kind of breaking of it is sin. Sin and God's perfect law can't coexist.

Commits sin---conveys the idea of habitual practice

B. SIN IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE WORK OF CHRIST 3:5-7

If one claims to be a Christian, he would not want to sin because he knows what Christ did for him at the cross. That is where Christ broke the power of sin in a believer's life. It is the nature of Christ to take away sin.

2 Cor 5:21, Eph 5:25-27

Abides (Meno) remain, stick around, live

If one does not abide, he does not know Christ.

Deceive (Planato) lead astray

Righteous Gal 2:20

C. SIN IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH CHRIST DESTROYING THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL

3:8

Satan sinned from the beginning, that is, his fall from heaven. He has been wreaking havoc ever since

When Christ went to the cross, He defeated sin, death, and Satan. Now, obviously, those are still very present, but the power of them was broken. Satan no longer has tyranny over us.

The claims were staked and when Christ returns the total fulfillment of them will take place.

Rev 20:10 Satan will be sent to hell forever.

D. SIN IS INCOMPATIBLE TO THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

This is speaking of the very nature of God in the believer. If God's nature is within one, and that is by the Holy Spirit who takes up residence in the new creature, there would be no reason to sin against Him. They are new creatures with a new nature. They now have the habitual character of righteousness.

Born of God-----Seed---Nature of God within the believer 3:9

E. SUMMARY

3:10

No one can belong to both families. If your nature has been changed, then you are of God.

1. CHILDREN OF GOD

They show they belong to God in that they don't continue to sin.

They will show evidence if they are of God's family.

But Edwards concluded that the accurate proof of salvation, summing it up, was the presence of religious affections, were...let's call them what he did...holy affections. Another way to say it is a passion for righteousness, a zeal for holiness. Edwards said that where true conversion takes place there is a new nature, there is a new inner man. And that new inner man has a driving passion

for holiness. He isn't always what he should be, he doesn't always say what he should say, doesn't always think what he should think, but his passion is toward holiness

The Reformed view presents the permanent nature of regeneration manifest in the reality of experience. The permanent nature of regeneration manifest in the reality of experience. In other words, you're saved, you're saved permanently and it shows up in your life.

The other view is the Arminian view, sometimes called the Wesleyan view. This is the view that affirms the temporary nature of regeneration, temporarily manifest in experience. So you have the permanent nature of regeneration, permanently manifest in experience, that's Calvinism or Reformed Theology. You have the temporary nature of regeneration manifest in temporary experience, that's the Arminian Wesleyan view that essentially says salvation is not forever, you can lose it, you're likely to lose it and therefore losing your salvation you would lose the ability to do good works and so the whole thing would disappear. And those were basically the options through history. You either believed in a permanent salvation that had permanent manifestation, or a temporary salvation that had temporary manifestation.

## 2. CHILDREN OF THE DEVIL

If your nature has not been changed, then you are of the devil.  
John's test dismisses the Gnostic teachers as unbelievers.

## 2. LOVE AND HATE-----THE SOCIAL TEST 3:11-24

We move to the second test which we covered last week. Again, he uses the test of love, only in a different package. Same principle, but a different angle.

### A. CHARACTERISTICS OF HATE

3:12-17

#### 1. Murder, the ultimate expression of hate 3:12-14

Cain, a child of the devil Jn 8:44 Jealousy

Cain is the only one who is named in these contrasts.

His heart attitude of hate and jealousy is the reason he murdered his brother. He then expressed what was in his heart.

The world hates Christians and Christians should not be surprised because it is natural for them to despise what the children of God believe. Cain is the prototype of this world. The spiritual seed of Cain continued to hate and persecute the spiritual progeny of Abel.

#### 2. Hate is equivalent to murder Mt 5:21-22 3:15

The attitude in the heart is the issue here. It's not just the act. True Murder is that which is conceived in the heart.. For from within out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, etc. All these come from the inside and make a man unclean. One is guilty before God in the inward as well as outward actions that flow out of the heart. Hate is as much as murder as is the very act.

#### 3. No concern for other's needs 3:16-17

Satan's children have a lack of love for others. They are indifferent to needs that people have.

Christians lay down their lives, Jn 15:13 Of course Christ is the supreme example. He gave Himself for our salvation.

Here is quite the contrast between Jesus and Satan.

We ought to be willing to give ourselves. We should sacrificially give.

James 2:15-17 If one refuses to help somebody who is in need, they could fail the social test and show they are not Christians.

### B. BENEFITS OF LOVE

3:18-24

The first component of religious affection, of holy affection that manifests true salvation is love for other Christians...love for other Christians

Jonathan Edwards said that this, in fact, was the chief holy affection. This was the chief sign in zeal for holiness and that is love toward the brethren, that this is the chief manifestation of the regenerating work of God. All of a sudden people who had no affection for, no interest in, people you saw as strangers, as odd, as outside your social structure, outside your interest, people you virtually wanted nothing to do with because you couldn't connect, all of a sudden you find yourself loving those people. This is the change, the alteration of the heart.

There are always some who still feel condemned in their own eyes. How can a believer deal with doubt? He has to start with knowledge. He must first look at God and His work. Don't look at yourself but look at

what the Holy Spirit has done and will do.

1. Assurance of salvation 3:19-21  
1 Jn 4:7  
God's acquittal regardless of doubts He is the one who has acquitted us. Look at the past acts God has done. Think of what Christ will do.
2. Answered prayer John 16:23-24 3:22  
Prayer's presence in a life evidences submission to God.  
The two requirements are obedience and doing what pleases God.  
God wants us to have great confidence when we pray.
3. Presence of the Holy Spirit 3:23-24  
The Holy Spirit is the one who effects this.  
Believing, loving, obeying are major evidences of true salvation.

### 3. TRUTH AND ERROR-----THE DOCTRINAL TEST 4:1-6

1. Test those who claim to be inspired.
2. There is a standard to be used in testing them.
3. Application of these ideas to the problem of distinguishing true and false.  
How are they to be tested?

What that means is to test what you're hearing to determine whether it comes from the Spirit of God or other spirits.

By the way, the word *dokimazō* was also used in a metaphoric sense for testing people before they were assigned to very prominent tasks or put in positions of rulership and responsible leadership. It should be a continuing practice then of every believer to put everything to the test.

#### A. JESUS IS GOD INCARNATE IN HUMAN FLESH 4:1-4

False prophets----What do they say about Christ?

The fundamental doctrine of Christianity is the Incarnation. The denial of the incarnate Christ is the chief of all errors.

You know, people want to say today, "Well, these other religions, they don't know Jesus, so they're trying their best to worship God, they're worshiping God as they know Him the best they can. You know, the Muslims have Allah, that's just their name for God and they're doing their best with God and people in other religions that have never seen a Bible or heard the gospel, they're looking up and seeing that there must be a Creator and they fabricate in their minds some idea of God, and that's the best they can do. And they're worshiping God." But it says wherever Jesus is not confessed, you can't know God. Every spirit that comes up with any religion, any spiritual teaching that leaves out Jesus, is not from God. Leaves out Jesus as the Jesus who is the only true one, any redefinition of Jesus or the absence of Jesus is not from God. In fact, in verse 3 it says, "This is the spirit of antichrist of which you heard it is coming and now it is already in the world." So wherever Christ in His true person is denied, you have demonic data. Any system that denies the deity of Christ, anything from Christian Science to Islam, any of it that denies the true nature of Jesus Christ is from demons, the spirit of error.

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Real false teachers who want to undermine the gospel, attack Christ, they attack the realities of regeneration.

And how do they do that? Well their system is always a work system. They're not so concerned about you being from God as a source, but somehow you finding God through your works and ceremonies and religion. It's that divine accomplishment verses human achievement thing that we talked about several times earlier in this gospel. So you test people by their view of Christ and you test people by how they live. Do they manifest, do they demonstrate the characteristics of regeneration? He says, "You're from God, you're His little children, you have overcome them. All of the things that attract them, all of the things that invite them, all of the things that motivate them, you've overcome all that. You've overcome the world," he says. And that's what moves them, controls them, attracts them, dominates them.

B. THE TRUE SPEAK GOD'S WORD

4:5-6

2 Cor 4:2

God's truth must be guarded very, very carefully. It is always under attack. It is relentlessly under attack.

When I sat for hours and hours with the leaders of the Mormon church from Salt Lake City, and they tried to tell me that they spoke the Word of God and they had an aberrant view of Christ and they were wrong in their doctrine of salvation, they had not been regenerated, they were simply speaking seductive doctrines of demons, I brought to bear upon them the Law of God. I pointed to Scripture after Scripture after Scripture and they would not listen. That's the test. When they come banging on your door, you confront them about their Christology.

The doctrine of incarnation, you confront them about regeneration. Have they become the children of God and are they indwelt by the Holy Spirit and is the Holy Spirit manifesting the evidence of His being there, which is love for the true Christ and love for the true Word? And, when you bring the truth of the Word of God to bear upon them, do they respond to it? Because if they possess the Holy Spirit, they will. And those are simple tests, but they're guaranteed to function. The

The evidence of their view of Christ, the evidence of manifest fruit of regeneration and the evidence of submission to biblical truth, that's what you're looking for in discerning a true teacher. The ones who are true, like the noble Bereans, will search the Scriptures to see what's really true. And when we use these tests, obviously the more we know about Christ the more we have seen the fruit of righteousness and the more of the Word of God we know, the better able we are to exercise these tests.

Before you accept any teaching, be sure of their view of Christ, their view of salvation, and their view of Scripture, summing it up. I mean, that's it. Do they acknowledge a biblical Christology? Do they manifest a regenerate life? And do they submit to the Word of God? Then verse 6 closes, "By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error."