

**Christ Community Covenant Church**  
**The Reason the Son of God Appeared**  
**1 John 3:1-10**  
**Pastor Dave Scherrer - March 2, 2014**

We are going to follow up our conversation of last week:

There is evil and evil has a name – Satan, the Devil, Lucifer

He is a liar and a thief and a murderer

The lies he tells kill and maim and destroy and we hate him for what he does

But we can take heart – we have a rescuer! And He has a Name, Jesus Christ and He is Light and Life and Truth and we love Him for what he has done and for what he does!

This is kind of a Christmas message – the idea of Christmas is “God with us” – Emmanuel!

***Discussion: Why did the Son of God appear?***

***Jesus came to destroy something***

Unless you welcome Jesus as a destroyer in your life, you can't have him as a Savior.

The point of this morning's message is taken from 1 John 3:8, "The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil." This says that the reason Christ appeared is to destroy the works of the devil. So the reason there is a Christmas, the reason Christ entered our world laying aside his heavenly form is because God aims to destroy something. Or if you like the imagery of contemporary space sci-fi, picture this as God's infiltration of rebel planet earth on a search and destroy mission. The spaceship has landed, mission: search and destroy the works of the devil.

***Art Greco: God Kills***

***'Oh dear Holy Assassin: Be loving enough to eliminate what pollutes my heart and erodes my soul. And when the day comes that I attempt to annul this contract, to withdraw the permission I now give, listen instead to the instructions of Your own headstrong mercy. Swallow hard, breathe deep, take aim, and pull trigger. Amen.'***

**1 John 3:1-10**

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. <sup>2</sup> Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. <sup>3</sup> And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. <sup>5</sup> You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. <sup>6</sup> No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. <sup>7</sup> Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.

<sup>8</sup> 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.***

<sup>9</sup> No one born of God makes a practice of sinning, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. <sup>10</sup> By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.

***Three questions about Christ's mission on earth:***

- 1. What did the Son of God come to destroy?***
- 2. How did he destroy it?***
- 3. How can we participate personally in his victory?***

## **What Did the Son of God Come to Destroy? - The "Works of the Devil"**

### **1 John 3:8b**

"The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil."

So that now begs another question - What are the works of the devil?

Remember the spiral? Let's work out in concentric circles from the term "works of the devil" in verse 8. The closest concentric circle is the sentence before in verse 8a and the sentence after in verse 9. Verse 8a: **"He who commits sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning."** Then comes our text that the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil. Then Verse 9: **"No one born of God commits sin; for God's nature abides in him and he cannot sin because he is born of God."**

We could put the word "therefore" at the beginning of verse 9. **"The Son of God appeared to destroy the works of the devil. Therefore no one born of God commits sin."** When people commit sin, it is a work of the devil. Remember the old line, "The devil made me do it" - Not so far off.

The work of the devil is to tempt people to sin. When they sin, his work is accomplished. So what the Son of God came to destroy is not just the guilt of sin (which might enable us to stay like we are and go right on sinning into heaven) but actually sinning. The Son of God came to destroy sinning. The enemy on the rebel planet is sin. Christmas is the celebration of God's invasion of enemy territory to rescue a people from the devil and destroy the sin in their lives.

What is sin? Verse 4: **"Everyone who commits sin is guilty of lawlessness. Sin is lawlessness."** The law in John's mind here is not the U.S. Constitution. It is God's law. It's the expression of God's revealed will for his creatures.

- Lawlessness is living as though your own ideas are superior to God's.
- Lawlessness says, "God may demand it, but I don't prefer it." Lawlessness says, "God may promise it, but I don't want it."
- Lawlessness replaces God's law with my contrary desires. I become a law to myself.
- Lawlessness is rebellion against the right of God to make laws and govern his creatures.

Sin is **lawlessness**. And lawlessness is rebellion against the right of God to rule over us. The work of Satan is to tempt us to reject the authority of God and become like God ourselves. Satan works to nurture and cultivate the pride that puts its own desires above the law of God. This is lawlessness; this is the essence of sin; and this is what the Son of God came to destroy in you and me.

## **2. How Did He Destroy It? - Two Answers—His appearing and the new birth**

First, verse 8 says the Son of God **appeared** to destroy the works of the devil. In other words, the way Christ destroys sin is **by appearing**—that is, by **coming** from heaven and **being born** in the form of man.

(Illustration) - Lion Witch and Wardrobe: The coming of Aslan brought the beginning of the end of the witch's rule by bringing the end of winter.

The second answer is in verse 9. "No one **born of God** commits sin." Sin is conquered; the work of the devil is destroyed, when a person is born of God.

So there are two ways the works of the devil are destroyed in this text. One is by the appearing of the Son of God and the other is by new birth. Why are both necessary and not just one? It's not enough for Jesus to come and die and rise again. People must be born of God. We call it within our denomination 'the necessity of new birth.' Otherwise the works of the devil are not destroyed. Sin goes on reigning. Nor is it possible that God should just cause people to be born anew without the appearance of the Son of God. Both are necessary.

To answer this we need to see what it means to be born of God. Verse 9 tells us: "No one born of God commits sin; for God's nature (literally: God's seed) abides in him and he cannot sin because he is born of God." Now anybody can sin who *wants* to sin. So when John says that a person born of God *cannot* sin, he must mean that a person born of God has new wants, new desires. It's like a birth; something new has come into existence. **Paul calls it a new creation** (Ephesians 2:10; 4:24). **Jeremiah calls it a new heart** (24:7). **Ezekiel calls it a new spirit** (36:26). Being born of God is being changed by God so that the dominion of sin is broken.

How is it broken? Verse 9 says that when a person is born of God, God's seed abides in him. That's why he cannot sin. The image is taken from ordinary human birth. When a father begets a child, the father's seed abides in the child. There is a new being, a new DNA something of the father is in the child and it makes him like his father. God's character is the very opposite of sin, therefore the child of God will be like his Father—he will not sin. I know this sounds like John is teaching sinless perfection, but that is not the case. John is not teaching sinless perfection.

### **Why John isn't teaching sinless perfection**

There are several reasons we know he isn't. First is that the Greek verb "commit sin" or "sin" in verse 9 implies continuous action. It would be well translated, "No one born of God *is content to keep sinning*, for God's seed abides in him, and that person cannot be content to keep on sinning because he is born of God."

Besides we know John isn't teaching sinless perfection because earlier in the book he says in **1:8 and 10**, **"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us . . . if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."** So John goes so far as to tell Christians that it is a sin to say you are sinless.

What we no longer have is the desire to sin; there is no longer the desire for lawlessness.

(Illustration) - Aaron's Lament

Well, if a person who is born of God does not become sinlessly perfect in this life (3:2) and yet (as 3:9 says) *cannot* be content to go on sinning, what is the Christian life? How should we describe it? How do we participate in this new truth? – John says we walk in the light.

### **3. How can we participate? The Christian life is walking in the Light**

1 John 1:7 gives a lot of help here.

#### **1 John 1:7**

<sup>7</sup> But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

The blood of Jesus will cleanse you from all your sin, *if* you walk in the light. So walking in the light is very different from walking in the dark, but it does *not* mean sinless perfection. Verse 7 teaches that if you walk in the light, the sins that you commit are cleansed—forgiven, swept away, blotted out—by the blood of Jesus. **Walking in the light is not about what we do, it is about what God has done! Walking in the light isn't the result of our hard work and our religious habits. It is simply maintaining the lifestyle of staying where God points the lamp.**

Walking in the light doesn't mean that you are sinless; it means you see your sins now in God's light and we respond to them the way God does. Verse 9 is a clear parallel to verse 7 and teaches this. "If we confess our sins (that corresponds to 'if we walk in the light'), he is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (that corresponds to 'the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin')." A person who walks in the light "confesses sin." That means he sees sin the way God does and agrees

with God. He hates sin, he is sorry for sin, he turns and flees from known sin. When sin is pointed out in his life, he does not bristle with self-righteousness; he confesses, admits, repents. Walking in the light means having your eyes opened to the truth about God and sin and Christ.

When the lights are off in a room, you might be there with a horrid black monster called sin, ready to devour you, and with a great knight in shining armor called Christ, ready to save you, but you can't see because you are in the dark. And in the dark the monster might have a warm, furry coat that feels attractive, and the armor of the knight might feel cold and forbidding. But when the light goes on, you can see sin and Christ for what they really are: sin is a horrible destroyer and Christ is a glorious Savior. When the light goes on, sin doesn't drop dead. The battle begins in earnest. You see it the way God sees it and you hate it and you confess it and you fight it.

**1 John 5:4**

<sup>4</sup>For everyone who has been born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.

Now what does this mean for us?

1 John 3:1 says, "***See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the children of God.***" The majesty and miracle of this statement cannot be fully fathomed! To even whisper such a claim takes our breath away! Imagine - heirs of God!

And Children of God are lights in the world – ***The light of the world has a new face on it.***

It means that you are different enough from the world that you shine like a light—like a little fragment of God's bright character of truth and righteousness and love.

Philippians 2:15 says that you are "***children of God . . . in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world.***"

To be a child of God is to be in one sense the most fully human that you can be—what God was aiming at in creating us in the first place. But in another sense being a child of God sets you off from the world of humans that are not born of God and do not have his Spirit. That's why 1 John 3:1b says that "the world does not know us." Our values and priorities have been so revolutionized by conformity to Jesus that we don't make sense to the world.

***The Communion Table***