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"WHOSOEVER IS BORN OF GOD DOTH NOT COMMIT SIN"

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INTRODUCTION

I John 3:9 is a very misunderstood scripture. Men have put a variety of interpretations on this verse. But, as with all other scripture, it has but one meaning. We will endeavor to prove that.

IT MEANS WHAT IT SAYS

"Whoever is born of God doth not commit sin: for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

There is a sense in which the one born of God cannot commit sin. The cause as stated, **because he is born of God**. I am aware of the interpretations given to this verse that say that a child of God cannot habitually practice sin; that the child of God cannot apostatize; and that the child of God is not under law, therefore where there is no law, sin is not imputed. All these are true; but, they are only the results of the truth. Some would even dare to say that the child of God, born from above, never sins at all. But this contradicts several other scriptures: I John 1:8, *"If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us."* See also I John 1:10. The Bible says in Hebrews 12:5-8 that God chastens every son that he receives and if a son (or those who claim to be a son) isn't chastened, he is a bastard and not a son. Therefore, every child of God is a sinner, or why else would God chasten his children?

This is not contradictory, not when we really study what Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:6, *"that which is born of flesh is flesh: and that which is*

born of spirit is spirit."

BECAUSE HE IS BORN OF GOD

As Jesus stated in John 3:6, a saved person has been born two times. In John 3:4 he told Nicodemus, *"Ye must be born again."* The first birth was by human parents--every person born of man comes into this world with a sinful nature. See also Psalm 51:5 and Psalm 58:3. Therefore, we see the Bible is very plain that we are born with a sinful nature and because of that nature we practice sin. Ephesians 2:1-3 describes the results of the sinful nature and its effect on the life, *"the lust of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind: and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."* The Apostle Paul describes this as being dead in trespasses and sins in Ephesians 2:1. See also Romans 8:7. These verses show us why Jesus said, *"Ye must be born again."* The first birth, which was received through Adam and our parents, is so depraved and corrupt that God must perform a totally **new birth**. Not a reworking of the old birth, but an entirely **new birth**.

YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN

The Bible is quite clear about these two births. Jesus himself set this truth forth in John 3:6 when he said, *"That which is born of flesh is flesh. That which is born of Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."* The Lord is placing the emphasis upon the corruption of the fleshly nature received in the natural birth. Since man has, by

birth, a sinful nature that is not subject to the law of God and neither indeed can be: then Jesus says there must be a spiritual birth from above. This birth would produce a nature that delights to do God's will--a person brought forth who cannot sin.

In Ephesians 4:22-24 Paul tells the saints in Ephesus to *"...Put off concerning the former conversation [behavior] the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts [speaking of the fleshly birth]; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind [the mind received in repentance, change of mind, which came through the new birth]; and that ye put on the new man [that which was born again from above], which [notice closely] after God is created [not worked over] in righteousness and true holiness."* That new nature is Christ in you, the hope of glory, Colossians 1:27. In Colossians 3:9, *"Ye have put off the old man [fleshly birth] with his deeds, and have put on the new man which [notice closely] is renewed in knowledge after the image of him [God] that created him."* The first Adam was created in God's image and likeness but he lost that when he sinned and partook of the forbidden fruit. Thus, when Adam and Eve had children, they were not born in the likeness of God, but they were like **Adam**. See Genesis 5:3. But when we consider the **new birth, a person being born again**, (from above), man has no part in this birth. It is the working of the holy spirit that performs this birth upon whom he will. See John 3:8.

James 1:18, "Of **his own will** begat he us with the word of truth." The same spirit that performed the birth of Jesus in the womb of Mary, and gave him a sinless nature is the same spirit that performs the New Birth in us. What kind of nature do you suppose the Holy Spirit gives a child of God? You guessed it--a **sinless nature**. That is the only kind he could give.

LIKE BEGETS LIKE

This is God's law. Like always begets like. In the book of Genesis this is proven over and over again, like begets like; such as trees, the herbs, the animals, the fowls, the fish. It is an established fact that this is right. Beans produce beans, corn produces corn, horses produce horses, robins produce robins, etc. When we were born of our parents we received the same nature our parents had (a sinful nature). **When we were born of God, we received the same nature from him by whom we were born--a sinless nature.** That's the only kind he could produce. Think on this awhile. There is no way that the Holy Spirit could produce a sinful person.

WHOSOEVER IS BORN OF GOD

Notice it says, "**Whosoever is born of God...**" The old man has never been born of God. It keeps on sinning after the Holy Spirit performs the New Birth. But the **new man**, the new nature received in the New Birth, does not commit sin, for "**His seed remaineth in him and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.**" This gives the reason why. He is not talking about the **old man**. The old man (born of flesh) has never been born of God. Remember what John 3:6 said, "*that which is born of flesh is flesh, that which is born of spirit is spirit.*"

TWO-FOLD NATURE

The **old man** is born of flesh. The **new man** is born of spirit. Every child of God has a two-fold nature. When born again, the old nature continues as before, and the sinner has the same desires and lust that he had before. Therefore, we have the exhortation to put off the old man, which is corrupt. But in the New Birth, the child of God receives a new nature that hates sin, that cannot sin. John says in I John

4:4b (speaking of the new man), "*Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.*" The Apostle Paul, in his letter to the Galatians, chapter 5:17, describes the battle of the two natures. "*For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.*" Paul, describing his own experience with the warfare going on within himself, describes it in Romans 7:15-25, "*For that which I do [old man] I allow not [new man]: for what I would [new man], that do I not [old man]; but what I hate [new man], that do I [old man].*" The new man hates sin, the same as God hates sin! Verse 16 says, "*If then I do [old man] that which I would not [new man], I consent unto the law that it is good.*" There is nothing wrong with the law of God. Its purpose was stated in Romans 3:19-20 to show our guilt and condemn us. This same law continues to do the same in every child of God. Paul says that the problem is with his old fleshly nature that he still has. See Romans 7:14. Verse 17, "*Now then it is no more I that do it [new man--notice that Paul just said, 'I don't sin'], but sin that dwelleth in me [old man]. For I know that in me, [that is, in my flesh] dwelleth no good thing [old man].*" This shows us that Paul realized he was very much a sinner. He states in I Timothy 1:15 that this is who Jesus came to save. Jesus himself said in Matthew 9:13, "*I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.*" In Romans chapter seven, Paul describes himself as a sinner. Verse 18, "*For to will is present with me [new man].*" Where did Paul receive this will to do God's will? Philippians 2:13, "*For is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.*" Does God ever work anything in us that is not perfect? Does he ever lead us to do anything that is not perfect? **NO....a thousand times NO.** Paul said in Philippians 2:12 to "*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.*" God has worked it in, now you work it out. Thus he says, make that old body of yours do God's will rather than fulfill your own lust. See

Galatians 5:16, "*Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill the lust of the flesh,*" even though the lust of the flesh is still there.

Romans 7:18, "*How to perform that which is good I find not [old man].*" Verse 19, "*For the good that I would [new man] I do not [old man]; but the evil which I would not [new man], that I do [old man].*" Verse 20, "*Now if I do that I would not [old man], it is no more I that do it [new man].*" Notice that he just said it again--**I don't sin**; referring to the new man that was born of God. It is the sin that dwelleth in me [old man], as in verse 18, that is in my flesh. Paul was still a sinner, yet he also had a nature that could not sin.

In verse 21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good [new man], evil is present with me [old man]. "*For I delight in the law of God, created in righteousness and true holiness,*" as Ephesians 4:24 states. The one who was made after the image of him that created him. Verse 23, "*But I see another law in my members [old man] warring against the law of my mind [new man].*" The mind received in regeneration through repentance (which is a change of mind) brings me [new man] into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members [old man].

Verse 24, "*O wretched man that I am [not was--old man]. Who shall deliver me from the body of this death [old man]?"* Romans 8:10, "*If Christ be in you [new man], the body is dead, because of sin [old man]: but the Spirit is life because of righteousness [new man].*" Paul is saying, I am a new man, through the new birth, that hates sin, that delights in the law of God. I find myself imprisoned in a body full of sin, with a fleshly nature that constantly wars against my heavenly nature. Oh! How I long to get out of this old body, so that I can serve God perfectly as I desire to do.

Verse 25, "*I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.*" Romans 8:1, "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus [because Jesus died for all the*

sins of the old man], who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

SINS STILL THERE

WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM?

These verses teach that the sins committed are the sins of the old man, the sins of the fleshly nature we were born with. We received this nature through our parents going back to Adam. When a person is born again, they are given faith to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour and Lord.

Ephesians 2:8, "*For by grace are ye saved [in the Greek translated, **have been saved**] through faith: and that not of yourselves; it is a gift of God.*" Faith is a gift from God. Every child of God receives the gospel into his heart. See Romans 1:16.

What is the gospel? Who has the power that can free us from our sins? How can God save and forgive us? I Corinthians 15:1-4, "*Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the **gospel** which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand: **by which also ye are saved**, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.*" We live by faith--Jesus Christ is as precious many years later as he was when we were saved. "*For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, **how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures. And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.***"

WHAT SINS DID HE DIE FOR?

"*Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin.*" He does not sin. Romans 6:6 says that Jesus died for the sins of the **old man**, that the body of sins might be destroyed (Greek: done away). This tells us that Jesus only died for the sins of the fleshly nature. **He did not die for any sins of the new nature because there are none. The new nature never sins.**

I 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.*" Jesus died for the sins of the old man only. He died for all of the sins of

the child of God--past, present, and future--that the body of sin might be destroyed.

NOT UNDER LAW BUT UNDER GRACE

All of the sins of the old man have been punished and laid on Jesus as he died. I Peter 3:18, "*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God.*" See also Romans 5:10 and I Peter 2:24. II Corinthians 5:21, "*For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin: that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*"

Romans 6:14b, "*We are not under law, but under grace.*" When a person is taken out from under law, even though the law is broken, it can never condemn that person. He is not under law, but under grace. If all the sins of God's children were not punished (past, present, and future), then God could not take us out from under law. God must punish sin--the transgression of the law. Since Jesus died **for all** of our sins, then he can receive us as a son: through the New Birth, we have received a nature that cannot sin and all of the sins of the body were punished in Jesus. Even though a child of God sins, as Paul says in Romans 7, God no longer deals with us as a lost sinner because we are one of His children. When a child of God sins, God deals with him as a son. Hebrews 12:5b-15, gives us the details of this. "*Despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, **whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons.***" Every one of God's children are still sinners, still in the flesh. God deals with his children through chastening and not through condemning them to hell. The child of God is not under law...He still sins, but grace has saved him, is saving him, and will continue to save him.

Galatians 3:24-25 also tells us that the child of God is not under law but

under grace. After teaching us that the law has never saved one person and was not given to give life but to show our guilt, verse 24 says "*wherefore the law was our schoolmaster [teaches us about our guilty condition] to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are **no longer under a schoolmaster.***"

BORN OF GOD

"*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.***" God has never performed an imperfect birth yet. Like always produces like. John 3:6, "*That which is born of spirit is spirit.*" What the child of God needs is this old body changed. Philippians 3:21, "*Who [Christ] shall change our **vile body**, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body.*" Then our new body will be the house of the new nature.

BORN OF FLESH, BORN OF SPIRIT

Who will be bold enough to say that the Holy Spirit in the New Birth doesn't produce a person the same as the fleshly birth did? The body is just the house that both persons dwell in. At death, the child of God goes to be with the Lord (see II Corinthians 5:8), but not the body. He must await a new body in the resurrection. The old nature ceases to be, at the death of the child of God. He is delivered from that. But when a lost person dies, he drops into hell. See Luke 16:22-23. Both the body of the lost and the body of the saved go back to dust.

At the resurrection of the just, the saved will receive a spiritual body, one like unto the body of our Lord. See Romans 8:11. But the lost will have the same body they had here on earth. The new man is greater than the old man. In fact, the new man cannot sin. But I must remind you that the old man is just as powerful and as wicked as he ever was. Every child of God has the old man to deal with. Although the sins are done away with, he has a daily battle to put the old man down in order to glorify God day by day. The fleshly nature is just as depraved and has the

same desires as it had before the person was saved. God did not change it when he performed the New Birth; but has given us the privilege of putting it off, or crucifying the lust and affections of the flesh so that we might live like him. I Corinthians 6:19-20, *"What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."*

WHOSOEVER COMMITTETH SIN IS THE SERVANT OF SIN

I John 8:34b, *"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin."* The Lord says that the servant abideth not in the house forever. Romans 6:16-18, *"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness. But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being made **free from sin**, ye became the **servants of righteousness**."* See also John 8:32 and 36. When a person is born from above, he is born by the Word of God. I Peter 1:22b, *"Obeying the truth through the Spirit."* It is the Holy Spirit that performs the New Birth by or through the Word of God. Jesus' dying on the cross is the cause of our **justification**. The Holy Spirit of God in us, bearing witness to the truth, is **re-generation** and **sanctification**.

I say again, he that is born of God doth not commit sin. The old flesh commits sin and never ceases to commit sin. But that new nature in a child of God, which is the Holy Spirit bearing witness with the truth, does not sin. Every child of God has these two natures. The child of God does sin and does not sin. This is not contradictory if you understand the two natures.

CONCLUSION

This condemns all who teach that salvation is by works. Ephesians 2:8-10 tells us that we are saved by grace through faith ... created unto good works. The old man is still sinful and

will be until death.

This condemns all who believe that you can live above sin. Certainly the new man does. He cannot sin, but it is not a second work of grace that puts him into this condition, but every child of God received this sinless nature by the first work of grace (New Birth).

It condemns those who say you can be lost after you are saved, because they do not understand that when you are saved it is a new birth and not the working over of the birth of the flesh. It is a nature that cannot sin, and yet the old flesh is no better years later. The only good thing in a child of God is what grace has done. Paul said, *"I am what I am by the grace of God."*

Therefore, I 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..."* **means what it says!**