

The Anthropology of Sin

Introduction

1. No discussion of sin as it relates to the believer and his position in Christ is more important than 1Jo 3:4-6.

KJV

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

1Jo 3:5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

1Jo 3:6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

2. The deeper meaning of these verses can only be understood when a distinction between the sins of regenerate men and unregenerate men is kept in mind.

Kenneth Wuest has written of the meaning of 1Jo 3:4-6; particularly verse six:

“Everyone who keeps on continually sinning, has not seen Him neither known Him.” This is an unsaved person. The verb “seen” and known” are in the perfect tense, implying that he has neither seen nor known God in times past, with the present result that He is still invisible and unknown to him. The particular word for “see” here means “to see with discernment.”

Wuest Translation

1Jo 3:6 Everyone who in Him is constantly abiding is not habitually sinning. Everyone who is constantly sinning has not with discernment seen Him, nor has he known Him with the result that that condition is true of him at present.

2.1 The active word here is “at present.” Transgression of the law-lawlessness, as used by John is the persistent contempt of divine protocol regardless of divine admonition and/or divine intervention. Intervention takes many forms. He will not let us harm His Kingdom.

3. In 1Jo 3:4 and in similar places in John's Epistle John uses a continuous present tense ... a continuous present in verse four denotes a person's habitual attitude toward sin as expressed in his practice of it.

4. John is not speaking of a state of perfection in which it is impossible to sin; but he is stressing that a Christian cannot keep on practicing sin, because God in some-way and some-how will intervene.

5. The most illuminating passage – 1Jo 3:4-11 is rendered somewhat obscure by the translation of the Greek word **anomia** as 'transgression' in Verse four.

6. The discussion of these Scriptures cannot be understood unless one considers the difference between the sin of a believer vis-à-vis an unbeliever. God corrects His children.

7. Only if one understands the specialized meaning of **anomia** can a serious student understand **anomia**—lawless sinning.

7.1 **Anomia** means "lawless sinning" or "habitual sinning." **Anomia** is used by John describes the condition of the unbeliever in time. The Psalmist describes this condition; in Psa 1:4.

Expanded Translation

Psa 1:4 The unbelievers are different for they are like chaff which the wind blows away.

8. Let's see how **Anomia** is used in 2Th 2:7; Heb 8:12; 2Co 6:14 and 1Jo 3:4

iniquity:

2Th 2:7 For the mystery of **iniquity** doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

iniquities:

Heb 8:12 For I will be merciful to their wickedness, and their sins and their **iniquities** will I remember no more.

unrighteousness:

2Co 6:14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with **unrighteousness**? and what communion hath light with darkness?

transgression:

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

9. Contrast this concept of lawlessness with that of righteousness which drives and motivates the believer. The believer has a new nature that is a product of God, and thus cannot go in the ways of lawless sinning for such would result in God's intervention.

10. The unregenerate prove their lost estate by their ability to sin lawlessly without pain of heart. This, in contrast to what David felt as a believer. Yes, it is that suffering to which David referred when he said, "when I kept silent, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer."

11. The child of God when sinning experiences, the grieving of the spirit of God, which experience will restrain him from that carelessness of a soul termed *anomia*-lawlessness.

Heb 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

12. 1st John 3:10 declares that this ability to sin lawlessly distinguishes the children of the devil from the children of God.

KJV

1Jo 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.

13. It is also true that no body of Scripture has prompted so many varied interpretations.

14. These passages set up a distinction between sin with its source in Satan and righteousness with its source in Christ.

15. Probably the key phrase in this context is, "Sin is the transgression of the law." John includes here all sin, not some sin. It is lawlessness against God and all that His holy character demands.

KJV

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

16. Sin in verse four most certainly refers to all sin and not merely to bad sins. The passage certainly asserts that the essential character of sin (as the Greek word *hamartia* implies) is lawlessness--lawlessness indeed, which is foreign to the Christian's redemption, new birth by the Spirit, and present position in Christ.

KJV

1Jo 3:5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

1. In verse five the Apostle John refers to the power of saving grace. This is made clear in verse six.

KJV

1Jo 3:6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

1. In verse six we find the unqualified assertion "Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him neither known him."

2. When abiding in Him, lawless sinning is excluded.

3. The one who practices sin neither sees nor knows Christ—this person's vision and understanding are dulled by the practice of sin. This truth could not be denied by any believer who knows from personal experience the effect of sin upon his own heart.

KJV

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

1. The statement of verse seven, addressed to the “little children” of God, is exceedingly forceful and vital.

2. It is there written: “little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.” The verse declares that the only one who practices righteousness is by his new birth a partaker of the imputed righteousness of God.

1Jo 3:8 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.

1. The believer is not only expected to practice righteousness, for he is righteousness according to his eternal standing in Christ. Similarly, he that practices lawlessness is of the devil.

KJV

1Jo 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.

1. There is no basis in this passage for the doctrine of sinless perfection on the part of some Christians – there are no such Christians. It will be remembered that John has warned here against such conclusion.

1Jo 1:8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1Jo 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1Jo 1:10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

2. Nor does the Bible teach here or elsewhere, that Christians do not sin. It does teach, however, that the Christian retains his Adamic, carnal nature until the day of his death.

3. The Bible also teaches that the Christian, being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, is possessed with a new standard of what is good or bad. His conduct either grieves or does not grieve the Holy Spirit.

4. Additionally the Christian himself is grieved. For example, David in Psalm 32:3-4 and Paul in Romans 7:18-25 describe the pain and sorrow of a believer under the convicting and intervening ministry of God the Holy Spirit.

Psa 32:3 When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.

Psa 32:4 For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.

Rom 7:18 For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.

Rom 7:19 For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

Rom 7:20 Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.

Rom 7:21 I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.

Rom 7:22 For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:

Rom 7:23 But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.

Rom 7:24 O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?

Rom 7:25 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.

5. It is to be concluded therefore that the child of God cannot sin lawlessly without great suffering and that suffering is due to the presence of God's divine seed or nature in him.

5.1 This reaction of the divine nature against sin in the Christian, could never be experienced by unregenerate men who have not the Spirit.

5.2 Jude 19 and 1Jo 3:10 describe the divisive ministry of unbelievers acting under the guidance and direction of Satan—they are unbelievers sinning lawlessly or habitually.

KJV

1Jo 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.

Jude 19 These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit.

6. Let's see how Matthew, Paul and the anonymous writer of the book of Hebrews translate **anomia** as a special force extant in the world and thus a cloak of iniquity worn by every unbeliever.

Mat 7:23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work **iniquity**.

Mat 13:41 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**;

Mat 13:42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Mat 23:28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and **iniquity**.

Mat 24:11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

Mat 24:12 And because **iniquity** shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

Rom 6:19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to **iniquity** unto **iniquity**; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

Rom 6:20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

2Th 2:7 For the mystery of **iniquity** doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

Tit 2:14 Who (Christ) gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all **iniquity**, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

Tit 2:15 These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.

Heb 1:9 Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated **iniquity**; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

Rom 4:7 Saying, Blessed are they whose **iniquities** are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

Expanded Translation

Psa 1:3 The believer shall be like a tree planted by the river who brings forth fruit in his season; his leaves shall not wither; and whatever he pursues will be successful.

Psa 1:4 The unbelievers are different for they are like chaff which the wind blows away.