

1 John
(Lesson 9)

Introduction:

1. In this lesson we are examining the information revealed in 1 John 3:4-12.
2. These verses contain some statements that might be challenging, but keeping certain things in mind will help us understand John's message.
 - a. John wrote this letter to Christians who were being influenced by "the Gnostics."
 - 1) John identified them as "*antichrists*" (2:22; 4:3).
 - 2) In addition to holding false views about Christ, they believed that a person could live as he pleased and be in good standing with God.
 - 3) John issued a strong warning against these people (2:26).
 - b. In the immediate context (3:1-3), John wrote about a special blessing and a special responsibility given to God's children.
 - 1) He first showed in vs.1 that we are called God's children because of His love.
 - a) We are shown in 4:9-10 how God showed His love toward us.
 - b) A dilemma: If Jesus is not the Christ and if He did not come in the flesh, then God did not show His love to us, and we cannot be His children.
 - 2) (vs.2) God's children enjoy a special blessing.
 - 3) (vs.3) God's children have a special responsibility.
 - 4) God's people cannot live as they please and be in good standing with God.
3. (3:4-12) John made a distinction between the children of God and Satan.
4. A person's approach to sin determines whether he is a child of God or a child of Satan.

Discussion:

- I. TO APPROACH SIN CORRECTLY, WE MUST UNDERSTAND WHAT IT IS
 - A. John showed in vs.4 that "*sin is the transgression of the law*" [lawlessness].
 - B. We are shown in Romans 3:23 who is guilty of sin.
 - C. The penalty for sin is revealed in Romans 6:23a.
- II. TO APPROACH SIN CORRECTLY, WE MUST UNDERSTAND WHY JESUS CAME IN THE FLESH AS GOD'S SON
 - A. John showed that Jesus "*was manifested*" for 2 reasons:
 1. "*to take away our sins*" (vs.5)
 2. "*that he might destroy the works of the devil*" (vs.8b).
 - B. When we understand why Jesus came in the flesh, how does God feel when His children sin?
- III. GOD'S TRUE CHILDREN APPROACH SIN CORRECTLY
 - A. Those who abide in the Lord do not sin (vs.6, 9a).
 1. This cannot mean that a Christian never sins (see 1:8, 10; 2:1-2).
 2. John is dealing with a "continual" practice of sin (1:6).
 3. The key to avoiding sin is given in vs.9 -- God's seed remains in His children (Luke 8:11).
 4. In addition to avoiding sin, God's true children practice "*righteousness*" (vs.7).
 5. While God's true children avoid sin and practice righteousness, . . .
 - B. The devil's children:
 1. commit sin (vs.8a; John 8:44)
 2. do not practice righteousness or love the brethren (vs.10).
 - C. Cain and Abel illustrate the principles John taught (vs.11-12; Genesis 4:1-8).
 1. Abel showed that he was a child of God.
 2. Cain showed that he was a child of the devil.

Conclusion:

1. The Gnostics were influencing Christians to be children of the devil.
2. John showed in his letter that:
 - a. Jesus came in the flesh to take away our sins
 - b. God has a code of conduct for His true children -- we must avoid making a continual practice of sin, and we must practice righteousness.