

1 John 3:8 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[INDEX FOR ALL VERSES ON 1 JOHN](#)

- [1 John 3:1](#)
- [1 John 3:2](#)
- [1 John 3:3](#)
- [1 John 3:4](#)
- [1 John 3:5](#)
- [1 John 3:6](#)
- [1 John 3:7](#)
- [1 John 3:8](#)
- [1 John 3:9](#)
- [1 John 3:10](#)
- [1 John 3:11](#)
- [1 John 3:12](#)
- [1 John 3:13](#)
- [1 John 3:14](#)
- [1 John 3:15](#)
- [1 John 3:16](#)
- [1 John 3:17](#)
- [1 John 3:18](#)
- [1 John 3:19](#)
- [1 John 3:20](#)
- [1 John 3:21](#)
- [1 John 3:22](#)
- [1 John 3:23](#)
- [1 John 3:24](#)

FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND HIS CHILDREN
 Click chart to enlarge
 Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
 Another Overview Chart - [1 John](#) - [Charles Swindoll](#)

BASIS OF FELLOWSHIP		BEHAVIOR OF FELLOWSHIP	
Conditions of Fellowship	Cautions of Fellowship	Fellowship Characteristics	Fellowship Consequences
Meaning of Fellowship 1 Jn 1:1-2:27		Manifestations of Fellowship 1 Jn 2:28-5:21	
Abiding in God's Light		Abiding in God's Love	
Written in Ephesus			
circa 90 AD			
From Talk Thru the Bible			

1John 3:8 The one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil:

- **The one who practices sin is of the devil** - 1Jn 3:10, 5:19 Mt 13:38 John 8:44 Eph 2:2
- **for the devil has sinned from the beginning:** 2Pe 2:4 Jude 1:6

- **purpose to destroy the works of the devil**- 1Jn 3:5 Ge 3:15 Isa 27:1 Mk 1:24 Lu 10:18 Jn 12:31 16:11 Ro 16:20 Col 2:15 Heb 2:14 Rev 20:2,3,10,15
- [1 John 3 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

GREEK - ho poion (PAPMSN) ten hamartian ek tou diabolou estin (3SPAI) hoti ap arche o diabolos hamartanei (3SPAI) eis touto ephanerothe (3SAPI) o huios tou theou hina luse (3SAAS) ta erga tou diabolou .

ESV - 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.

NLT - But when people keep on sinning, it shows that they belong to the devil, who has been sinning since the beginning. But the Son of God came to destroy the works of the devil.

Wuest - The one who is habitually doing sin is out of the devil as a source, because from the beginning the devil has been sinning. For this purpose there was manifested the Son of God, in order that He might bring to naught the works of the devil.

A LIFE THAT BEARS THE MARK OF THE DEVIL

Having given them a clear marker that one is truly a child of God (practices **present tense**] righteousness in 1Jn 3:7) John now continues the other side of the warning "**Little children, let no one deceive you**" specifically be on the alert for the one who "practices (**present tense** - as their lifestyle) sin" for they are "of the devil" regardless of what they say with their lips (their life speaks louder than their lips!). They may say "I raised my hand in church 20 years ago and ask Jesus into my heart. John is saying if they practice right living toward God and man, that is proof that their *profession* is indeed *possession* (so to speak). But if they continually **practice (present tense) sin** as the bent of their life, with reckless abandon and no grieving over sin or desire for repentance, then the evidence is clear that their profession of faith is false and they are deceived! From Jesus' warning in Matthew 7 sadly it is clear that **many** (not just a few) will in fact be deceived, thinking they can live like the devil and still have heaven! This reminds me of the Devil's old lie "*You surely shall not die.*" (Ge 3:4+) And yet we find men perpetrating this old lie today, saying you can make a profession of faith and live like the devil the rest of your life and still have Jesus when you die! (e.g., [see note](#) or [here](#)) Some have rightly referred to this false teaching as "**cheap grace!**" Jesus' words could not be much clearer...

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does **present tense** the will of My Father Who is in heaven. **Many** will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' "And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; **DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE (present tense** - as their lifestyle) **LAWLESSNESS.**' (Mt 7:21-23-note)

The one who practices sin is of the devil - This is the "reverse" of 1 Jn 3:7+ statement that "The one who practices righteousness is righteous." **Ligon Duncan** explains that "A life which is bent towards sin, a life which is characterized by the rejection of God's word, by refusing to seek after the holiness of God in Christ (**Ed**: cp sanctification = holiness in Heb 12:14-note)—this life is a life which bears the mark of the devil. So John here says, '*You do what you are.*' But he also says that 'you do whose you are.' Not only do you do what you are, you do whose you are. (**1 John 2:29-3:10 The Test of Righteousness**)

David Smith on **practices sin** - "he that makes sin his business or practice." ([Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

George Findlay - Being, negatively, an un-Christian, anti-Christian thing, verse 8 affirms that sin is positively diabolical. The righteous Son of God stands forth as the leader of the sons of God, cleansed by His blood and abiding in His righteousness. For the doers of sin there is another leader; they choose another patron and pattern: "He that commits sin is of the Devil." The reason St John gives for ascribing this shameful complicity to sinners is that "from the beginning the Devil sins." There sin, so far as revelation indicates and according to the Apostle's theory of evil, took its rise,—from that most wretched and wicked being whom Scripture names "the Devil" ("the slanderer"), and "Satan" ("the enemy" of God and man). Satan was the first to lapse from God; and he has continued to sin all along—he "sinneth from the beginning." From this personal source the law of sin and death first proceeded and "the darkness" spread over the world, even as Christ's law of love and all the light of the Gospel were "from the beginning" in God the Father (1Jn 1:1, 2:7, 13). Sin is Satan's domain, his sphere, his work; and every sinner is his ally and instrument. The committer of sin makes himself of the Devil's party, of the Devil's spirit, and finally—according to the fearful words of Jesus (Matt. 25:41)—of the Devil's doom. He is engaged in building up those "works of the Devil," which "the Son of God came that He might destroy." Every such man is abetting the enemies of God and goodness; he aids the captain of rebellion to maintain that fortress of evil, that huge rampart erected in the universe against the holy and almighty will of God, which we call "sin."[\(1 John 3:4-9 Commentary - scroll down to page 252 \)](#)

Henry Mahan -A man who practices sin, dishonesty, drunkenness, malice, envy, lies and disobedience to the commandments of Christ is not of God, but takes his character from the evil one, for Satan has violated the way and laws of righteousness from the beginning. He imitates Satan, not Christ, and resembles his parent as children do their parents (John 8:41-42). Christ came not only to put away our sins in regard to the **penalty** of them and the **curse** of the law, but to deliver us from the **power** of Satan and the **practice** of ungodliness (Romans 6:12-18). ([1 John 3 Commentary](#))

H A Ironside - All through his fearful history the devil has been characterized by rebellion against God. He practiced sin from the beginning. Those who are children of the devil exhibit the moral characteristics of their father, while those who belong to the family of God exhibit the moral characteristics of their Father. They delight in holiness even as the others roll sin as a sweet morsel under their tongues.

Be wary of teaching (and beloved it is out there in pulpits that call themselves evangelical) that says John is describing believers who can practice sin and be of the devil and still be believers. Yes, believers sin but I like the way **Spurgeon** explains it - "This is not the course, and habit, and tenor of his life; there is sin in much that he does, but he **hates** it, **loathes** it, and **flees** from it."

The one who practices (present tense) sin is (present tense) of the devil - If a commentary or sermon has been interpreting the phrase **practice sin** in the **present tense** (1Jn 3:4, 9 = **practices sin** and 1Jn 3:6 = **sins** -- all 3 in **present tense**) as simply a reflection of what **every** believer does (because we all sin and we do so everyday), **THEN** 1Jn 3:8 confronts this interpretation with a problem.

In simple terms, John is saying in 1Jn 3:8 that whoever **practices sin (present tense)** is **of the devil**. **How could this possibly describe a believer?** Perhaps one might say "Well, when a believer sins, he is acting like the devil and in that sense might be described as **of the devil**." While that sounds potentially plausible, again we must return to the context to let it guide our interpretation. And in the context of 1Jn 3:10 John clearly delineates two families, one **of God** and the other **of the devil**. With this revelation to guide us, the most natural interpretation of the phrase **of the devil** in 1Jn 3:8 is that these are individuals who are **children of the devil**. And how can we discern they are children of the devil in 1Jn 3:8? By their actions, where their practice of sin in the **present tense** speaks of sinning as their lifestyle. Yes, believers commit sins, but that is not the natural leaning of our heart as new creatures in Christ (2Cor 5:17-note). Dear reader, I beg you to be a Berean (Acts 17:11-note) when reading any commentary or sermon on 1John (including the one you are reading)!

Hiebert agrees that "The practice of sin reveals family identity. One who **practices** "the sin," as marking the realm of **the devil**, thereby reveals his diabolical nature. John did not say such a one is "*born of the devil*" (contrast 1Jn 2:29), but "*is of the devil*." The "**of**" (ek) denotes *source*, not of his *existence*, but of the *evil* that dominates his life and practice (John 8:41-44). ([1 John 2:29-3:12 Online](#)) ([The Epistles of John- An Expository Commentary](#))

Spurgeon is quite blunt in his comments on this passage - Well, labor under no mistake, sir. 'He that practices sin is of the devil.' It is no use making excuses and apologies; if you are a lover of sin, you shall go where sinners go. If you, who live after this fashion, say that you have believed in the precious blood of Christ, I do not believe you, sir. If you had a true faith in that precious blood, you would hate sin. If you dare to say you are trusting in the atonement while you live in sin, you lie, sir; you do not trust in the atonement; for where there is a real faith in the atoning sacrifice, it purifies the man, and makes him hate the sin which shed the Redeemer's blood. (**Ed**: And all God's people say "Amen!")

Wuest - "Commits" (KJV) is poieō, in a present tense participle, "He who is continually doing sin." Smith suggests, "He that makes sin his business or practice." ([Word Studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

Cole - John divides all people into two camps: those who practice righteousness (1Jn 3:7) and those who practice sin (1Jn 3:8). There is no third camp for those who do not believe in Jesus, but are decent, good people who never hurt anyone. You may protest, "Surely, my grandmother who was sweet towards everyone and who believed in the basic goodness of human nature, was not of the devil!"

Charles Ryrie on "**practices sin**" = "continually practices. I.e., sins as a regular way of life."

Disciple's Study Bible - Habitual sinners are under Satan's control and are his children. Satan's existence is and always has been characterized by sin, rebellion against God.

Who practices sins - present tense = as the general direction of their life. Notice that John contrasts children of the Devil with the children of God by their actions (practicing or not practicing sin). What they do, how they behave, reflect to "whom" they belong. There is no "middle ground"- one is either safe in Christ or in the family of the Devil and under his (or his minions') diabolic influence. Paul summarizes the estate of every unregenerate man or woman...

And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this

world, according to **the prince of the power of the air** (the **Devil**), of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our **flesh**, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. (Eph 2:1-3-note) (Note the **evil triumvirate** arrayed against us = the **world**, the **flesh** and the **devil**).

Vine on practices sin - John's use of the **present tense** of the verb **poieo**, "to do," expresses the meaning of the alternative verb **prasso**, "to practice." The manner of life which is marked by continuing to do sin is described by the phrase "doeth (practices) lawlessness," which is constant disregard of the law of God. As, then, doing righteousness is an evidence of the new birth, so doing lawlessness is an evidence of not being born of God....Again, the apostle does not give the exact contrasting parallel with what he has just stated, which would have been "he that doeth sin is unrighteous even as the devil is unrighteous." He goes further and expresses definitely the evil spiritual relationship, in contrast to the divine relationship of his readers. Not that the devil is the source of anyone's existence, for, as **Augustine** says, "The Devil made no man, begat no man, created no man." The devil is the source of sin, and therefore the one who leads a sinful life is spiritually connected with him. Not that man is helpless in his continuance of evil, as if he were void of responsibility in the matter, but that, inasmuch as the habit of his life is the same as that which characterizes the devil, a spiritual relationship exists between them. (Collected Writings)

Is (continually) **of the devil** - The idea is not that one is "born" of the devil (he never gave birth to anyone), but that this individual draws from him the ruling principle and power of his life much like a son does from his father. Jesus so accused the hypocritical Jews - "You are of you] father the devil" (Jn 8:44). When one habitually acts like the devil he shows who is "*father*" really is. At the same time he also shows that he is not a true child of God.

Augustine put it this way - The devil made no one, he begot no one, he created no one; but whosoever imitates the devil, is, as it were, a child of the devil, through imitating, not through being born of him.

Puritan Thomas Manton - "How unbecoming it is for them that profess themselves Christians to have the gospel in their mouths and the devil in their hearts."

MacDonald - Some children are so like their parents that you couldn't lose them in a crowd. This is true of God's children and of the devil's children. He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. Here again the thought is, "He who practices sin is of the devil." The devil has been sinning (continuous, characteristic behavior) from the beginning, that is, from the first time that he did sin. All his children follow him in this broad way. It should be added here that men become children of God through the new birth, but there is no birth in connection with the children of the devil. A man becomes a child of the devil simply by imitating his behavior, but no one is begotten as a child of the devil. (**Ed**: I would say that there is a birth involved - physical birth is an entrance into the kingdom of darkness because we are born sinners.)

Spurgeon lamented that "It is to be feared that too often the Name of the Lord Jesus has been dishonored among the heathen by the vices and cruelties of **those who call themselves Christians**; may this fact excite **true believers** to greater diligences in causing the gospel to be proclaimed as with a trumpet in all quarters of the habitable globe."

John Calvin on the one who practices sin is of the devil - It is like saying that it belongs to the devil to entice people to sin. Hence it follows that his members, and all who are ruled by him, give themselves up to commit sin.

Of the devil - These "sin practitioners" are in the family of and under the authority of the devil; they are children of the devil, as it were, in that they take after the "family likeness!" There are only two "families" on earth since sin entered the world (Ro 5:12-note) = the family of God (contrary to popular opinion only believers can truly call God "Father") and the family of the Devil, respectively the kingdom of light and the kingdom of darkness (Col 1:12-13-note). The only way to be transferred out of the kingdom of darkness is to behold and receive the glorious light of the Gospel (2Cor 4:4, 6-note) which will open (just as Jesus taught Paul) "their eyes so that they may turn from **darkness to light** and from the **dominion of Satan to God**, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me." (Acts 26:18)

Wuest on of the devil - "**Of**" is ek, "out of," used with the ablative case, gives us the ablative of source. He who continually does sin is **out of the devil as a source**. That is, his sinful propensities, issuing from his totally depraved nature inherited from Adam, find their ultimate source in the devil who brought about the downfall of our first parents. **Habitual actions again are an index of character**, and here, of source. ([Word Studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

For - Always pause and ponder this **term of explanation**, asking "**What is the author explaining?, etc**" In this case, John explains why a child of the **devil** continually **practices sin**. Why? Because like "father," like "son" and sinning was the nature of their father from the day he fell and it was their nature from the day they were born. As Jesus said "You must be born again" to reverse the curse! (Jn 3:7)

Devil (Latin *diabolus*) ([1228](#))(**diabolos** from **diá** = through, between + **ballo** = to cast, throw) means a **false accuser, slanderer**

(one who utters false charges or misrepresentations which defame and damage another's reputation), **backbiting** (malicious comment about one not present), one given to malicious gossip or a **calumniator** (one who utters maliciously false statements, charges, or imputations about, this term imputes malice to the speaker and falsity to the assertions). Notice how the root words (**diá** = through + **ballo** = throw) picture what the devil does. He constantly throws between seeking to divide whether it be between a husband and wife, a child and parent, a church, etc. Resist his divisive, condemnatory accusations firm in your faith. **Diabolos** is applied some 34 times to Satan, the god of this world, and in each case has the definite article in the Greek ("the" = defining a specific entity) and is never in the plural (the three uses below in the pastoral epistles are all plural) as when applied to men who, by opposing the cause of God, may be said to act the part of the devil or to side with him.

Sinned (264)(hamartano) literally means to miss the mark (and so not share in the prize). Hamartano means to act contrary to the will and law of God. **Hamartano** means to err (err is from Latin *errare* = to wander or to stray!) which means to wander from the right way, to deviate from the true course or purpose and so to violate an accepted standard of conduct. **Hamartano** means to swerve from the truth, to turn aside from the straight course charted by the Word of Truth.

Vincent on the devil has sinned - The **present tense** indicates continuousness. He sinned in the beginning, and has never ceased to sin from the beginning, and still sins.

Wuest - **Sinned** is a present of duration which speaks of that which has begun in the past and continues into the present. The translation could read, "The devil has been sinning from the beginning..." Smith identifies the words "the beginning" as "the beginning of his diabolic career." ([Word Studies from the Greek New Testament](#))

Vine says the stress is "upon the phrase **from the beginning.**" Sin began when Satan first sinned. The use of the **present tense** in the statement, instead of the past "has sinned," marks the fact that he himself is sinful and his course is unceasingly one of sin. By his misrepresentation of God, which is implied in the title "**devil**," he has ever sought to attack the soul of man, endeavoring to instill reasons for doubt and distrust of God. That is the evidence of Scripture from the first to the last, cp. John 8:44." (Collected Writings)

Beginning (746)(arche) refers to the commencement of something as an action, process, or state of being. Arché refers to what is first or has primacy (the state of being first). Beginning most likely refers to Satan's initial fall from God's favor (Isaiah 14:12-14 - note the "**I will's**", Ezekiel 28:12-17)

How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations! "But you said in your heart, '**I will** ascend to heaven; **I will** raise my throne above the stars of God, And **I will** sit on the mount of assembly In the recesses of the north!**I will** ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will** make myself like the Most High.' (Isa 14:12-14)

Ezek 28:12 "Son of man, take up a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.13 "You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering: The ruby, the topaz, and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx, and the jasper; The lapis lazuli, the turquoise, and the emerald; And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared. 14 "You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you [there.] You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire. 15 "You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created, Until unrighteousness was found in you. 16 "By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence, And you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane From the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub, From the midst of the stones of fire. 17 "Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I put you before kings, That they may see you.

Cole comments on Isaiah 14:12-14 - Notice that five times the devil said, "I will," in opposition to God. He was not content with where God had created him. He wanted his own way. As we saw in verse 4, which is parallel to verse 8, the essence of sin is rebellion against God. The sinner says, "I will! I want my way! I will not submit to the Most High God." So whenever a person acts in line with his own will, without submitting to God's will, he is committing the original sin of the devil. Whether it manifests itself as the humanly respectable, "I will be nice to others, so that people will think highly of me," or as the reprehensible, "I will kill others to get what I want," it all comes from the same source: the devil. Any action that originates in the human will that is not in submission to God is devilish, even if outwardly it is a nice, humanitarian, seemingly "good" action.

Jesus described the Jews who had **professed** belief in Him (Jn 8:30) but who by their actions (e.g., Jn 8:37-38, Jn 8:58-59) proved they were not genuine believers -- "You are of [your] father the **devil**, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning (this would refer to the Garden of Eden), and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own [nature;] for he is a liar, and the father of lies." (Jn 8:44)

A SECOND REASON FOR THE FIRST APPEARING

The Son of God (same phrase 7x in this epistle - 1Jn 3:8, 4:15, 5:5, 5:10, 12, 13, 20) - Notice that this title emphasizes Christ's deity. In 1John 3:5-note **He appeared** in order to **take away sins** and John says He appeared to **destroy the works of the devil**. In a word, the Son crushed the power of sin (1Jn 3:5) and Satan (1Jn 3:8).

John Piper says, "Christmas is because God aims to destroy something ... [it is] God's infiltration of rebel planet earth on a search and destroy mission" ([The Son of God Appeared to Destroy the Works of the Devil](#))

Appeared (has been revealed) ([5319](#))(**phaneroo** from **phanerós** = manifest, visible, conspicuous in turn from **phaino** = give light; become visible in turn from **phos** = light) means God was brought to the light and made clearly visible as the God-Man. John uses **phaneroo** 7x in this epistle - 1Jn 1:2, 2:19, 2:28, 3:2, 3:5, 3:8, 4:9.

For this purpose - Whenever you see this **term of purpose or result**, take a moment to ponder "**What is the purpose or result of His appearing?**" To destroy the works of the devil.

W E Vine on **The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil.**— The full title, "the Son of God," is mentioned here for the first time in this epistle. Previously He has been spoken of as "the Son." While, in this epistle, as the Son He is made to stand out distinctly from the children of God, here in the full title He also stands out as the one who, being possessed of essential, unoriginated relationship with the Father, came forth from the Father and came into the world in order to destroy the works of God's opponent. Further, in the mention of this title Christ is set in contrast to those who in their deliberate habit of evil-doing are spiritual children of the devil. While the verb **luo, to destroy**, literally means "to loose," the literal meaning must not be pressed here. The word is used of that method of destruction by which a thing is broken and nullified, and this is the effect of Christ's work on the Cross upon **the works of the devil**. These **works** are the operation of the Evil One upon the human heart, by which man, yielding to his suggestions and influence, has fallen into sin and continues therein. This verse does not provide ground for the assumption that all mankind will eventually be delivered from the effects of sin. What is stated is the means God has taken, the provision He has made, for the accomplishment of the end in view. The whole tenor of the passage stresses the fact that man by continuing in sin may refuse to avail himself of the effects of the work of Christ. This statement in 1 Jn 3:8 resumes that in 1 Jn 3:5, setting forth the subjects as in connection with God's adversary, and not merely with sin, and thus preparing the way for the statements of 1 Jn 3:9,10. (Collected Writings)

Destroy ([3089](#))(**luo**) means to loose, release, break, to set free what is bound. Before we were born again, we were in bondage to sin and Satan. Jesus has set us free, *loosed* us from the diabolical works which bound us like chains. This is the same verb Jesus used when he raised Lazarus from the dead and said "**Unbind** (luo) him and let him go." (Jn 11:44). **Luo** is used in Revelation 1:5-note to describe how Jesus "**released** (luo) us from our sins by His blood." In Luke 13:16 Jesus asked "this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, **whom Satan has bound** for eighteen long years, should she not have been **released** (luo) from this bond on the Sabbath day?" Luke used luo to describe the stern of the ship being "**broken up** (luo) by the force of the waves." This makes me think of the "He breaks the power of cancelled sin and sets the prisoner free." ([O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing](#))

B F Westcott on the choice of the verb **luo** which means "**to loose**" - The works of the devil are represented as having a certain consistency and coherence. They show a kind of solid front. But Christ, by His coming, has revealed them in their complete unsubstantiality. He has 'undone' the seeming bonds by which they were held together.

Wuest adds that Jesus "has done more than that. By the blood of His Cross He has paid for sin, made a way of escape from the arch enemy of men's souls, defeated the purposes of the devil, and will finally bring about his complete downfall." (Word Studies from the Greek New Testament)

In a parallel passage the writer of Hebrews says that

Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that **through death He might render powerless (katargeo)** him who had the power of death, that is, the **devil** and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. (Heb 2:14-15-note)

But you might be saying "That sounds good, but it seems to me that Satan is alive and well on planet earth!" While that is true, John's point is that because of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, Satan is a defeated adversary and now all who are safe "in Christ" are released from his authority. The devil's defeat is describe by John in Revelation 20 after being released from his 1000 year confinement -

And when the thousand years are completed (cp Rev 20:1-3-note), Satan **will be released** (somewhat ironically also uses **luo**) from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations which are in the four corners

of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together for the war; the number of them is like the sand of the seashore. And they came up on the broad plain of the earth and surrounded the camp of the saints and the beloved city, and fire came down from heaven and devoured them. And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. (Revelation 20:7-10-[note](#)) (As an aside notice that very frequently when the devil is mentioned, the word deceived or deception is often mentioned in the same context -- clearly this is his great "*modus operandi*" to deceive! What's the point? The best defense against deception is to hold fast God's Word of Truth, so that in the day of trial or temptation or tribulation, that living and active word might hold your spirit, soul and body fast! This begs the critical question - **Are you memorizing the Word?** There is simply no better way to hold fast God's Truth than to treasure it in your heart! (Ps 119:9,11) Begin today -- write down a verse on an index card and carry it with you, meditating on it when you have free time and you will soon have it memorized. Then add another verse and index card, but keep the old card with you, because frequent review is the key to successful Bible memorization. **See related resources** - (1) **Meditate**, (2) **Primer on Biblical Meditation**; (3) **Memorizing His Word** (4) **Memory Verses by Topic**

The works of the devil - There are many "**works**" but as discussed above, one of his main "**works**" is to deceive. See Summary of the Methodeia of Satan See [Satan in Nave's Topical Bible](#)

John Piper on the works of the Devil - 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. The deadly virus in the Appalachian village is sin. The force to be conquered on the Western Front is sin. Christmas is God's invasion of enemy territory to rescue a people from the devil and destroy the sin in their lives. ([The Son of God Appeared to Destroy the Works of the Devil](#))

Daniel Akin - Seeing 1Jn 3:8 in parallel with 1Jn 3:5, we see that the works of the Devil, which our Savior came to destroy, are sins. By means of His atonement, sin's penalty has been nullified for the child of God. By means of the new birth, sin's power has been neutralized and dealt a death-blow. And, by virtue of His two appearances, sin's presence will soon pass away forever. Jesus delivered a knockout punch to the Devil on the cross. An empty tomb is an eternal monument to His victory and to ours! ([Exalting Jesus in 1, 2, 3 John Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary](#))

Cole - Truth of 1Jn 3:8b parallels 1Jn 3:5-[note](#), where John said that Christ **appeared to take away sins**. Here the focus is on Christ's coming to destroy Satan's **works**. This refers mainly to the devil's work of promoting sin in the human race. The word **destroy** is the Greek word, "to loose." It's as if we were bound by sin's chains, but Jesus freed us. He came to pay the penalty for sin that we justly deserved. By so doing, He broke Satan's power to accuse us before God (Rev. 12:10-[note](#)), and He broke sin's power in the lives of believers (Ro 6:10-13-[note](#)). Thus John is making the point that if we tolerate sin in our lives, we are siding with the devil and against Jesus Christ, who came to destroy the devil's works.

H A Ironside - Dear believer, there is not only deliverance from the judgment due your sin, but deliverance has been provided from the power of sin. He provides deliverance over sin that He might annul the works of the devil. He sets His people free from the power of sin and Satan that they might live in this world to the praise of His glory. ([1 John 3 Commentary - Ironside's Notes on Selected Books](#))

Jon Courson - In taking away our sin, Jesus paid the price for sin. In destroying the works of the devil, He destroyed the power of sin. That is, He destroyed the power of the Enemy to entangle us in those things that compromise our ability to impact the world for the kingdom.

Calvin on the Son of God appeared for this purpose - He repeats in other words what he had said before, that Christ came to **take away sins**. Hence two conclusions are to be drawn: that those in whom sin reigns cannot be reckoned among the members of Christ, and that they can by no means belong to his body; for wherever Christ exerts His own power, He puts the devil to flight as well as sin. And this is what John immediately adds; for the next sentence, where he says that those who do not sin are born of God (1 John 3:9), is a conclusion from what has gone before.

John Stott nicely sums up John's argument thus far: If the first step to holiness is to recognize the sinfulness of sin, both in its essence as lawlessness and in its diabolical origin, the second step is to see its absolute incompatibility with Christ in His sinless Person and saving work. The more clearly we grasp these facts, the more incongruous will sin appear and the more determined we shall be to be rid of it. ([The Letters of John by John R. W. Stott](#))

OUTWARD APPEARANCE AND INWARD CHARACTER. - The outward life of Christ was true to His inward character, but, alas, how many of us claim the Name of Christ while we are destitute of His Spirit. Like the peacock, which is famed for its beauty and gluttony, there be many that have an attractive appearance, but at the same time an insatiable desire for self-gratification. Self-

complacent boasting is just about as equally unpleasant as the horrid scream of the peacock. "As a man thinketh in his heart so is he" (Prov. 23:7).

J. C. Philpot. Daily Portions - "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John 3:8 - There will be no thorough destruction of indwelling sin, until the body drops into the grave, and the soul mounts aloft to be with the Lord; nor a full destruction of its effects in the body until the resurrection morn, when the body shall be raised from the sleeping dust and changed into the glorious image of the body of the Son of God, a fit companion for the immortal soul. Then will the victory be complete; then will Christ appear, shining forth with the luster of a million suns; then will be the glorious manifestation of the Son of God; and the works of the devil will be thoroughly destroyed. The theme of heaven's anthem, the grand theme of eternal adoration, will be the manifestation of the Son of God to destroy the works of the devil. The redeemed will look down from the battlements of heaven and see what works have been executed by the devil; they will see millions of fellow-beings consigned to eternal misery, weltering in hell, while they view themselves safe in the arms of eternal love. They will see the Son of God, without a veil between, manifested to their eyes in such heart-ravishing glory as the three disciples had but a feeble, dim view of on the Mount of Transfiguration. It will be their joy to see him as he is. He will always wear his human nature; he will never lay that aside. That will always shine resplendent with all the glory of Godhead; that will be the object of eternal admiration and love; and to that glory of the God-man all the saints in bliss will be forever looking and forever adoring, for sin will no longer have a being in them, but they will be conformed to the glorified image of the Son of God, and be celebrating forever the grand triumph of the cross. - J. C. Philpot. Daily Portions

Can A True Believer Continue in Sin and Persist in Sin?

"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. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God" (1 John 3:9-10).

"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not" (1 John 5:18).

The Teaching of Zane Hodges and Joseph Dillow	
The fruitful believer The partaker or heir The believing believer The overcomer	The barren believer The carnal one (non-heir) The saved person who stops believing The non-overcomer
This righteous saved person has a new nature that never sins. Moreover this saved person consistently walks in the Spirit and does not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.	This unrighteous saved person continues in sin and persists in wickedness. This carnal believer does not practice righteousness. He is born of God and has a new nature but he consistently walks in the flesh. He will not inherit the kingdom and will not reign with Christ.

There are three factors which prevent a true believer from continuing in sin, and they all begin with the letter "C."

(1) **CONFESSION**—The sinning believer need not continue in a state of sin because he may CONFESS his sins (1 John 1:9) and God is faithful and just to forgive his sin and cleanse him from all unrighteousness.

(2) **CONVICTION**—Spirit wrought conviction ought to lead to humble confession. If it does not, the conviction continues. The Holy Spirit makes His grieved presence felt (Eph. 4:30). The true believer can never be comfortable in his sin, even as righteous Lot's soul was vexed in Sodom (2 Pet. 2:7-8). We can thank God that He makes us miserable when we are not right with Him. When we are disobedient we are unsettled, unpeaceful, unhappy. Thank God it is so!

(3) **CHASTENING**—If the sinning believer does not respond in the right way to God's conviction in the heart, then the Father will chasten His child whom He loves (1 Cor. 11:31-32). Maximum chastisement can even result in the physical death of the believer (1 Cor. 11:30). As a good human father will not permit his child to continue doing wrong, so the Heavenly Father will not permit His

child to continue in wickedness. [Hodges teaches that it is possible for true Christians to be "bastards" (Heb. 12:8--KJV) or illegitimate sons, and even though they are saved, they will not be chastened of the Father and they will lose their inheritance!

See Hodges discussion of Hebrews 12:8 in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*. See also [The Teachings of Zane Hodges](#)]

A Key Question:

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Rom. 6:1)

Paul's answer:

"God forbid (Perish the thought!). How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:2)

Hodges/Dillow answer:

The believer should not continue in sin but many believers do. Many persist in sin and practice unrighteousness (even persisting in the sins mentioned in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). They will be saved but they will not inherit the kingdom.

Questions: Why are not these believers convicted? Where is the Father's chastening hand? Where is the heavenly restraint?

R. Gene Reynolds in his helpful book *Assurance—You Can Know You're A Christian* said the following on page 73:

- A person who is living sinfully, who knows he is living sinfully, who enjoys living in such a manner, who intends to continue that sinful way of living—that person does not have the Holy Spirit living within him. The very fact that he is 'comfortable' about his sin is proof of the Spirit's absence. His spiritual vital sign registers 'no life.' (From [Assurance: You can know you're a Christian](#) See also Gerald Borchert's book "[Assurance and Warning](#)")

Hodges teaches that righteous living proves that a person is saved but that unrighteous living does not prove that a person is lost (*Bible Knowledge Commentary*, p. 893). He says, "the converse does not follow" (p. 893). In other words, Hodges teaches that a person can give evidence that he is saved but he cannot give evidence that he is lost! His righteous living points to LIFE but his unrighteous living does not point to DEATH! He can have assurance of salvation but not assurance of damnation!

For more discussion of this dangerous, deceptive teaching of Hodges, Dillow, Wilkin, et al see [INDEX PAGE](#).
