

Sin and the Sin Unto Death (vv. 16-17)

VERSE 16 **If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask and God will for him give life to those who commit sin not leading to death** (Ἐάν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἀμαρτάνοντα ἀμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, αἰτήσῃ καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζωὴν, τοῖς ἀμαρτάνουσιν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον [*part ean if + pro.indef.nom.m.s. tis anyone + aor.act.subj.3s. eidos see + d.a.w/noun acc.m.s. adelphos + pres.act.part.acc.m.s. hamartano sin + noun acc.f.s. hamartia sin + neg me + prep pros to + noun acc.m.s. thanatos death + fut.act.ind.3s. aiteo ask + conj kai + fut.act.ind.3s. didomi give + pro.dat.s. autos him + noun acc.f.s. zoe life + d.a.w/pres.act.part.dat.m.p. hamartano + neg me + prep pros + noun acc.m.s. thanatos death*]).

There is a sin leading to death; I do not say that he should make request for this (ἔστιν ἀμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον· οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἵνα ἐρωτήσῃ. [*pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + noun nom.f.s. hamartia sin + prep pros + noun acc.m.s. thanatos + neg ou + prep peri concerning + pro.gen.f.s. ekeinos this + pres.act.ind.1s. lego + conj. hina + aor.act.subj.3s. eratao ask, request*]).

VERSE 17 **All unrighteousness is sin, and there is a sin not leading to death** (πᾶσα ἀδικία ἀμαρτία ἐστίν, καὶ ἔστιν ἀμαρτία οὐ πρὸς θάνατον [*adj.nom.f.s. pas all + noun nom.f.s. adikia unrighteousness + noun nom.f.s. hamartia + conj kai + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + noun nom.f.s. hamartia + prep pros + noun acc.m.s. thanatos*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 16-17

1. In v. 16 John presents an example of intercessory prayer that we might engage in.
2. Things John has asserted about sin in this epistle: (a) those who advocated sinless perfection in believers are liars (1:8, 10); (b) when believers sin they are to confess it for forgiveness (1:9); (c) we are to avoid sinning (2:2); (d) Christ is our Advocate with the Father (2:2); (e) He is the propitiation for the sins of all humanity (2:2; 5:10); (f) sin is lawlessness (3:4); (g) the one who has an unbroken history of STA history not a believer (3:6b; 8:a, 9, 15);

- (h) sinning and the FHS do not coexist (6:a); (i) the overriding purpose of the 1st Advent was to take away sins (3:5a); (j) hate is a mental attitude sin that characterizes the unbeliever 24/7 (3:12f.); (k) fear is a sin and the FHS casts it out (48).
3. Here John makes mention of two categories of sin believers might commit.
 4. The first case is one of serious sinning leading to divine discipline.
 5. The second is even more serious as it leads to the sin unto death.
 6. John encourages prayer for the former but not the later of the two.
 7. There are sins that carry severe consequences but are not technically the sin unto death.
 8. If for instance, a believer commits a sin leading to sever DD we can pray for them provided they themselves repent of their sinning.
 9. An example might be that of a believer who has a health issue due to his sins (cf. Jam. 5:19, 20).
 10. This would be in connection with reversion recovery.
 11. This example is limited to some type of serious sinning as we see believers sinning regularly, but we are not required to pray for them.
 12. A possible example is that of Job's friends who were told to solicit his prayers or else!
 13. For this to work a believer must solicit the prayer, and another believer(s) prays for his physical and spiritual recovery.
 14. I am not saying that a believer who is under DD for a serious infraction must do this or God will terminate his Ph 2 with the SUD.
 15. Examples in the Bible of believers who had a close call with respect to the SUD include Isaac, Moses, and David.
 16. The SUD is reserved for all who repudiate doctrine taught to them.
 17. A dramatic example in terms of sheer numbers is the Exodus Generation (1 Cor. 10:5; Heb, 3:7-11).
 18. Hardening one's heart to what the Spirit says (-vol) opens the door to the SUD.
 19. Proof: Heb. 3:12 "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any one of you and evil, unbelieving heart that falls away from the living God."
 20. Certain types of unabated STA activity can lead to the SUD (Prov. 1:32; 9:6; 10:27; Num. 15:30ff.).
 21. The SUD is for all who fail to die honorably so as to inherit the prize (cf. 1 Cor. 9:27 "but I discipline my body and make it my slave, so that, after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified.").
 22. Believers can overcome all of evil, but repudiation of sound doctrine is not one of them.
 23. We are commanded to grow in grace and knowledge and adhere to a certain form of teaching that over time accomplishes the maturity adjustment (cf. Rom. 6:17 and see 2 Tim. 3:5).
 24. Those who have by their actions and words rejected truth we are not encouraged to pray for (v. 16b).
 25. As in 3:4 John provides another label for sin—unrighteousness (v. 17:a).
 26. Any action that falls short of +R is sin/lawlessness/unrighteousness whether known or unknown.
 27. All sinning is not a candidate for the SUD just DD.
 28. The manner and timing of death is not an issue.

Three Final Affirmations on Christian Doctrine (vv. 18-19)

VERSE 18 We know that no one who is born of God sins; but He who was born of

God keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him (Οἶδαμεν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει, ἀλλ' ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τηρεῖ αὐτόν καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς οὐχ ἄπτεται αὐτοῦ [*pf.act.ind.1p. oida know + conj. hoti + adj.nom.m.s. pas everyone + pf.pass.part.nom.m.s. gennao be born + prep ek + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. theos + neg. ouk + pres.act.ind.3s. hamartano to sin + conj alla but + d.a.w/aor.pass.part.nom.m.s. gennao be born + prep ek + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. theos + pres.act.ind.3s. tereo keep + pro.acc.m.s. autos him + conj kai + d.a.w/adj.nom.m.s. poneros evil + neg ouk + pres.mid.ind.3s. apto touch; harm + pro.gen.m.s. autos*]).

VERSE 19 We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power

of the evil one (οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν καὶ ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται [*pf.act.ind.1p. oida know + conj. hoti that + prep. ek + d.a.w/gen.m.s. theos + pres.act.ind.1p. eimi + conj kai + d.a.w/noun nom.m.s. kosmos + adj.nom.m.s. holos entire, whole + prep en + d.a.w/adj.loc.m.s. poneros evil + pres.dep.ind.3s. keimai lie, reside*]).

VERSE 20 And we know that the Son of God has come (οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ

θεοῦ ἦκει [*pf.act.ind.1p. oika + conj de and + conj. hoti + d.a.w/noun nom.m.s. huios son + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. theos + pres.act.ind.3s. heko have come*], **and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true** [*καὶ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν διάνοιαν ἵνα γινώσκωμεν τὸν ἀληθινόν, [conj. kai + pf.act.ind.3s. didomi give + pro.dat.p. ego + noun acc.f.s. dianoa understanding + conj. hina so that + pres.act.subj.1p. ginosko + d.a.w/adj.acc.m.s. alethinos real, genuine, true]*]; **and we are in Him who is true, in His**

Son Jesus Christ [καὶ ἐσμέν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ, ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. [*conj kai + pres.act.ind.1p. eimi + prep en + d.a.w/adj.loc.m.s. alethinous true + prep en + d.a.w/noun loc.m.s. huios son + pro.gen.m.s. autos + noun loc.m.s. Jesus + noun loc.m.s. Christ*]].

This is the true God and eternal life (οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος [*pro.nom.m.s. houtos + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + d.a.w/adj. nom.m.s. alethinous + noun nom.m.s. theos + conj kai + noun nom.f.s. zoe + adj.nom.f.s. aionios eternal*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 18-20

1. “We know” occurs 15x in 1st John in 14 verses.
2. It is used in connection with Christian assurance in 2:3, 5; 3:14, 24; 5:2, 15.
3. Also, it is used in connection with the proliferation of false teachers (2:18); our ultimate sanctification (3:2); the supreme example of love (3:16); our ability to distinguish between those who are of the truth and those who are not (4:6); our understanding of being FHS (4:13).
4. John asserts three doctrinal truths that these believers were apprised of in these three verses.
5. The first is a shocker as it appears to teach sinless perfection which clearly contradicts 1 Jn. 1:8-10 and 2:1.
6. The solution to this theological issue is to view that the present tense of the verb ‘to sin’ as durative or linear present.
7. Those who are unbelievers are ruled by the STA 24/7.
8. Note Rom. 6:17 in this regard (“But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you committed/delivered.”; and verses 18-23).
9. On the other hand, when a person believes in Christ the rule of the ISTA is momentarily interrupted
10. This concept is taught in 3:6b “no one who sins (pres.act.ind.) has seen Him or knows Him” (see comments in the notes).
11. Also, note 3:15b “and you know that no murderer (MAS) has eternal life abiding in him.”
12. Hate is the norm for those outside the plan of God.
13. I take 1 Jn. 3:9 as referring to the new man which is the human spirit acquired at salvation.
14. That part of our make-up never sins.
15. In addition to this fact, John affirms the doctrine of eternal security in the second line of v. 18.
16. “But He who was born of God” refers to the virgin birth of Jesus, and not to the new birth of believers.
17. “Keeps him” refers to the permanency of the salvation adjustment.
18. Jesus affirmed this in Jn. 17:12 “While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name which You have given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” (also, Jn. 10:14).

19. In that connection John asserts that Satan cannot overthrow our status as believers in v. 18c (“and the evil one does not touch him.”).
20. Note Jn. 17:15 “I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one.”
21. Unbelievers are under the power of the evil one based on spiritual death and the rule of the STA (Matt. 13:38).
22. References to the ‘evil one’ in 1st John include: 2:13, 14; 3:12; 15:18, 19.
23. Experientially believers can come under the influence of the evil one, but this cannot overturn their salvation (1 Tim. 5:15 “for some have already turned aside to serve Satan.”).
24. The verb “touch” here carries the connotation of ‘to harm.’
25. Salvation delivers the individual from Satan’s dominion (Col. 1:13 “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son.”).
26. God the Holy Spirit who indwells us in greater than he who is in the world (1 Jn. 4:4).
27. Saving faith delivered us from the doom of the cosmos (1 Jn. 5:4-5).
28. The unbelieving cosmos on the other hand resides in the kingdom of darkness.
29. John asserts that there are two broad categories of humanity in v. 19.
30. The recipients of this epistle knew that they were “of God” which refers to the doctrine of the new birth (3:2, 10; 4:7; 5:1).
31. The cosmos as we know it is passing away (1 Jn. 2:17).
32. John’s third declaration (v.20) informs the reader that there is another alternative for mankind under Satan’s power.
33. God’s Son came into the world to set captives free.
34. He (the Father) has given us understanding that has set us free from the evil system.
35. The result is that we know the One who is true and who is Deity.
36. The task of the coming of Jesus into the world was to bring to humanity the knowledge of the way of eternal salvation.
37. This is the true knowledge as over against the pseudo knowledge of the Gnostics.
38. Gnostics taught that ignorance was what Jesus came to save men from not sins as John insists in this letter (2:2; 3:5; 4:10).
39. The Gnostic knowledge was not true and He is the way the truth and the life.
40. For a person to find the way to God and eternal life, the individual needs revelation from God.
41. So God sent His Son and has revealed to those positive at God-consciousness the only true way of salvation.
42. John goes on to assert in v. 20 that those who have found the true understanding of eternal salvation are in union with the One who is true.
43. Positional truth is referred to at 2:5 and 4:15.
44. Positional sanctification occurs 2x in v. 20 (“and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ.”)
45. Those not in Christ are in Adam (1 Cor. 15:22 “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.”).

Final Warning (v. 21)

VERSE 21 Little children, guard yourselves from idols (Τεκνία, φυλάξατε ἑαυτὰ ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων [*noun voc.nt.p. Teknion child + aor.act.imper.2p. phulasso guard, keep + pro.acc.nt.p. heautou + prep apo from + d.a.w/noun abl.nt.p. eidolon idol*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSE 15

1. A final exhortation abruptly ends this letter.
2. In this letter John has warned believers not to love the cosmos (1 Jn. 2:15 “Do not love the world nor the things of the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”).
3. Here we have a different type of devotion along the same lines as the one in Col. 3:5 “Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, and greed, which amounts to idolatry.”).
4. Anything that interferes with the maturity adjustment (compliance with the commandments) constitutes an idol.
5. This includes material pursuits that undermine intake and application of BD.
6. But it also includes embracing human viewpoint systems of belief that undermine sound doctrine.
7. In the prophecies related to the US there are references to a land filled with idols (Jer. 50:2, 38; 51:47, 52).
8. Occult practices are rampant in America.
9. This is a land of materialistic greed.
10. There is celebrity devotion (as in teen idol).
11. We all must be ever diligent to not allow pursuit of the things of the cosmos to overthrow our devotion to God and His word.

END: 1ST JOHN CHAPTER FIVE
May, 2020
Jack M. Ballinger