

Ouachita Baptist University

Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita

Vaught Sermon Notes: John

W.O. Vaught Archive

11-1-1978

A Line That Divides All Mankind

W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/vn_john



Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), and the [Liturgy and Worship Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Vaught, W. O., "A Line That Divides All Mankind" (1978). *Vaught Sermon Notes: John*. 22.
https://scholarlycommons.obu.edu/vn_john/22

This Sermon Notes is brought to you for free and open access by the W.O. Vaught Archive at Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. It has been accepted for inclusion in Vaught Sermon Notes: John by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Commons @ Ouachita. For more information, please contact mortensona@obu.edu.

THE LINE THAT DIVIDES ALL MANKIND

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF 1 JOHN
NUMBER 19
1 JOHN 3:9-10

Dr. W. O. Vaught
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

1 JOHN 3:9-10 "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, neither he that loveth not his brother."

When you first read 1 John 3:9 immediately the question comes to mind, can a man sin if he is born of God? The English of this verse says that he can't. But you and I have been born again and we know from experience that not only born again people can sin but they do sin. Therefore we need to understand exactly what this language in verse nine means.

Let Experience Speak

I am sure you have observed that born again people sin. So it is a verse like this that throws a monkey wrench into the machinery and causes you to say, "Well, maybe after all I am not converted. Maybe this conversion I have is not the genuine thing and maybe I need to be converted over again so I can get the genuine thing." So, when you take this statement, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin" and look at it by itself, you realize that this is not true to experience. Every born again person of all time has sinned both before they were born again and after they were born again.

Beware Of False Teachers At This Point

Please let me remind you that you need to beware of false teachers at this point. There are legalistic, self-righteous, religious purdes who will pick up this verse and quote it and say to you, "Look, this verse says that if you are born again, you cannot commit sin. Since you have committed sin, evidently you are not born again, and you need to be genuinely saved." Again this brings us to the place where we must distinguish between principle and practice. No one can read this verse and properly understand it unless he realizes that there is more here than the English reveals. All through this chapter, John has been stating principles that lie at the foundation of the truth of scripture. We are here in the study of the principle of spirituality as an absolute. Remember, spirituality is an absolute. When you are under the control of the Holy Spirit, which you are at the moment of your conversion, quite obviously you cannot sin. The Holy Spirit is God and when God is in control of your life, you cannot sin. God cannot sin and he does not solicit us to sin and he does not condone our sin. It is inconsistent with God to have anything to do with sin. Therefore, when the Holy Spirit controls your life, it is quite obvious that you cannot sin. If the Holy Spirit is not in control of your life, then the old sin nature is in control. Therefore, in verse 9 we have the principle of the Holy Spirit controlled life. In verse 10 we have the principle of human good versus divine good.

"Whosoever" in this verse refers to the believer in fellowship, the believer under the control of the Holy Spirit. This is one of the reasons why Jesus never sinned, he was constantly under the control of the Holy Spirit. This whosoever here in verse nine is a believer

under the control of the Holy Spirit. This is a spiritual believer, and as long as the believer is in this condition, he cannot sin.

This verse says, "Whosoever has been born out from the source of God." The word for "born" is a perfect, passive, participle of gennaō used with ek which means out from the source of. This is the new birth we are facing in this verse. The perfect tense of this verb refers to something that happened in the past and therefore is a principle for all believers. This perfect tense carried the idea of eternal security. You are born again in the past with the idea that you can never become unborn. This is the meaning of this perfect tense. Your new birth is never cancelled. This birth can't even be cancelled by physical death. Your physical birth can be terminated by physical death, but not your spiritual birth.

The passive voice of this verb means that you receive this new birth from God and you don't earn it or deserve it. It has no human merit in it at all. Neither can a believer maintain his salvation. This too is a grace work and a work God performs.

The participle of this verb denotes that this is the plan of God, the law of God, and faith in Christ always results in eternal life. Then we have ek plus Theos and these words mean "out from the source of God."

Principle Not Practice

From this perfect, passive, participle of the word "born" we immediately see that we are here dealing with principle. This verse is here stating the condition under which you cannot sin. The only time you cannot and do not sin is the time when you are under the control of the Holy Spirit. God the Holy Spirit cannot have anything to do with sin, and when you sin, you snatch yourself out from under the domination of the Holy Spirit. James 1:13-15 brings out this very same idea. JAMES 1:13-15 "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Does Not Do Sin

Therefore this verse before us says this--"Whosoever has been born of God does not do sin." The word translated "commit" is poieo and it means to do. If this were the word prasso, it would mean "practice." But poieo refers to a principle. This is a very rare present tense in Greek and we call it an aristic present and it is used to describe the status quo of a person in principle. Once you are converted the Holy Spirit is in control and in that state there is no sinning. To sin this believer must become involved with an act of negative volition and that sets the pattern for all subsequent sinning.

Can't Sin Apart From Volition

When a person says he sinned apart from an act of his volition, he is actually not telling the truth. A person is disoriented and is actually abnormal to make such a declaration. All sin involves volition.

in negative volition you were working on something that was contrary to the will of God and that adds up to human work. The active voice of this verb poieo indicates that his own volition is involved in the act. He did the sin himself. It was an act of negative volition. Once you move from the control of the Holy Spirit to the control of the old sin nature, you are in an area of weakness and all sin is committed in this area of weakness. Then while you are in that condition from your area of strength, you will do some things and these are called human good.

"His Seed" means The Holy Spirit

This phrase "for his seed" actually means "because his seed" and the word "seed" is a technical name for the Holy Spirit. The word for "abides" is meno and this word is often used in John for the filling of the Holy Spirit. Abides means a spiritual state, it means the time when the Holy Spirit is in control. His Spirit keeps on abiding, and this is a present, active, indicative and it means a constant state. Next we have "in the sphere of him." En plus the locative means in the sphere of something. The Holy Spirit keeps on abiding in this individual.

What Temptation Does

Temptation does for us what the forbidden fruit did for Adam and Eve. Every temptation is a challenge to free will. No temptation means no free will. You recall that there is a form of theology that says there is no free will and everything is determined by the sovereignty of God and that free will does not really exist. Well, if there were no free will, then there would be no temptation, and if there were no such thing as temptation, then we would have to say that God is the author of sin. But God is not the author of sin and has nothing to do with the act of sin in man. Temptation is where the volition is tested. It is negative volition which makes the believer the author of his own sin. This makes the individual responsible for his own acts of sin. David understood this doctrine, and after his great sin with Bathsheba, he said to God, "Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned." He knew that though others were involved, he was guilty toward God and he was willing to take the responsibility of his own act of sin. So, whether you like it or not, you always deliberately sin. All sin is deliberate. People who will not accept the responsibility for their own sins are abnormal and are not willing to face reality.

Mental Attitude Sins

The easiest sins for us to excuse and rationalize are mental attitude sins. Mental attitude sins are actually used to suppress other mental attitude sins and shove them down into the subconscious. There is a close connection between the mind and the conscience. It is very easy to shove mental attitude sins down that pipe and then you begin to rationalize. Those sins down in the subconscious begin to produce all kinds of abnormal responses and can even lead to mental illness. So, the principle is this--if you are under the control of the Holy Spirit, you do not and cannot sin. But if you are under the control of the old sin nature, you do sin every time. This principle is an absolute and it always works this way.

The Way Out

Once out from under the control of the Holy Spirit, the old sin nature moves into the driver's seat. The old sin nature is in control. The

only way out from this condition is rebound, and this comes about by confession. This is a grace process and a grace achievement, and we get no credit for it at all.

"He cannot sin" is the present, active, indicative of dunamai and it means he is unable to sin. When the Holy Spirit controls the life, the individual does not have the ability to sin. The word "to sin" is the present, active, infinitive of hamartano. This is the word used in connection with the principle of sin. There is no sin in God and when God the Holy Spirit fills your life, there is no sin in you. Therefore, whether the believer sins deliberately or in ignorance, he makes a decision in his volition to do something. Every time sin comes, volition is involved. This pattern was set in the Garden of Eden.

Next we have "because he is born out from the source of God." Every time we go on negative volition we do something. Negative volition toward God is always legalism, self-righteousness, and this is human works. But when we do something like believe or confess, those acts are non-meritorious, it is the work of God and his work is always divine good.

1 JOHN 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." In this verse we move to the relative concept. We had the absolute concept in verse 9, now we have the relative concept. "In this" is en plus the instrumental so it should read, "By means of this." This is referring to the filling of the Holy Spirit. The filling of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary for us to develop in our spirits as we should. This is how we take in the Word of God and inhale it and the truth becomes deposited in our human spirits. From this reserve we can live and live victoriously. The real you is what you think. When you open your mouth and speak, you are revealing what is in your mind. It is impossible to commit a sin with your tongue without first committing that sin in your mind. Mental attitude sins are always the motivating force of sins of the tongue. Quite often we think that the real bad sins are the overt sins, but far worse are the mental attitude sins which underlie all other sins. From your mental attitude sins (which people cannot see) come the overt sins which are visible to all.

Therefore we see from this verse that by means of the filling of the Holy Spirit or the lack of the filling of the Holy Spirit the children of God and the children of the devil are revealed.

Children Of God Are Manifest In This Way

When the believer is filled with the Holy Spirit and is positive toward Bible Doctrine, then he is manifest to be a child of God. When the believer is out of fellowship and not controlled by the Holy Spirit and is not responsive toward Bible Doctrine, then he lives just like a child of the devil lives. The filling of the Holy Spirit and the taking in of doctrine is absolutely necessary in maintaining the victory over sin. "The children of God are manifest" and this "are" is the present, active, indicative of eimi and this means that it is always this way, it keeps on being this way. The word manifest is phanaros and means conspicuous, apparent. Doctrine in the mind always makes the children of God manifest.

"The children of the Devil" is the next statement, and in both these statements, the word for "children" is tekon. This is the word used for lineage, posterity, relationship in posterity. We are born into the Devil's family and only the new birth removes this relationship. The new birth deposits the believer into the family of God in an instant.

This next "whosoever" is referring to the unbeliever. This is an absolute principle for the unbeliever. The unbeliever lives exactly like the carnal believer. This unbeliever "doeth not righteousness." This is a present, active, participle of poieo and the word for righteousness is dikaiousune, and this means being oriented to grace. So the unbeliever here can do morality, can do sin, can do human good, but he cannot do dikaiousune, he cannot do anything of divine good. This unbeliever is not of God and cannot love his brother. Mental attitude sins have blocked out the possibility of the production of any divine good. This is the person who will never have a relaxed mental attitude and will never be able to have any fellowship with God.