

SEEMING CONTRADICTIONS

The Apostle John, in his Epistles, presents us with an interesting dilemma. On one hand he tells us that if we are born of God (Born Again) we will not commit sin. On the other hand he tells us that if we say we don't sin we make Him (God) a liar. Let's lay the verses out as they are written:

1 Jn. 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.

Pretty straight forward. Easy to understand. No really big words to throw us off, right? Well, let's read the next verse that comes to mind on this subject.

1 Jn. 1:8-10 - If we say that we have **no sin**, we deceive ourselves, & the truth is not in us. If we confess **our sins**, he is faithful & just to forgive us our sins, & to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. And if we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, & his truth is not in us.

Going out the gate, let me assure you, John has not 'blown it', or made a mistake. There is no "contradiction" as we will soon see. Turn in your Bible to Rom. 7. Paul is about to make a monster distinction here. We will notice that there is a distinction between the 'body' & what Paul refers to as 'I'. This will become clearer as we go on. So Paul says in Rom. 7:17-18, (the subject being 'sin'),

Now then it is **no more I** that do it, but **sin that dwelleth in me**. 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.

Rest assured, this is not 'the devil made me do it' defense! As I have said before, the act of being 'born again' is not just some whimsical, emotional formula that we repeat for the preacher. It goes to the very core of our spiritual being. It is on the level of a DNA or gene transformation. Jesus said we **must** be 'born again'. While we can understand & appreciate the miraculous result of the union of an egg & the seed in the physical realm, the transformation that takes place in our spiritual realm at that moment a person is being 'born again' is no less miraculous. Keep in mind - something - takes place in your body the moment you gave your heart to the Lord! Turn to Gal. 2:20,

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; **yet not I**, but Christ liveth in me: & the life I now live **in the flesh** I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, & gave himself for me.

Once again, Paul refers to a distinction between his body & the 'real him', that soul or spirit that resides within. Let's take another. We are told that we have been created in the image of God. What this means on a practical level we can't be sure (due to our limited understanding). But one obvious analogy is that of a triune being. God is one, with three manifestations: God the Father, God the Son & God the Holy Spirit. Three manifestations: body (Jesus), soul (Holy Spirit) & spirit (God the Father). We are in 3 parts also: body, soul & spirit. With this in mind let's flip over to 1 Thes. 5:23,

And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; & I pray God your whole **spirit & soul & body** be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So, here we sit. In 3 parts. Paul told us that he was 'crucified' with Christ (Gal. 2:20). Was that in the flesh? No. Then it must have been in some spiritual manifestation. He also told us that 'in his flesh' dwelt no good thing (Rom. 7:17-18). Now, remember back. John said something to the effect that he 'that is born' of God doth not commit sin. Was it the flesh born again? Or crucified? Or was it some other aspect of our 3-part being. Nicodemus back in John 3 already asked the question regarding our 'physical' rebirth & Jesus shot him down. "No, we do not enter into our mothers womb to be born again!" Ah, the clouds are beginning to blow away!

If we look in Col. 2:11 we will get a further insight,

In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made
without hands, in **putting off the body of the sins of the flesh** by the
circumcision of Christ.

Whoa, this is a biggie! And it goes to the heart of the matter. It starts to pull all the strings together. It explains Paul's dilemma back in Romans 7 & explains the crucifixion he referred to in Gal. 2. When we look at ourselves in 3 parts as explained in 1 Thes. we can see the various parts that take part in this warfare that we are engaged in. We see that the body is separate from the spirit & vice-versa. Jesus puts it into perspective when he is speaking to Nicodemus in Jn. 3:6,

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; & that which is born of
the Spirit is spirit.

Remember our first verse in this discussion? "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin". John is referring to that part of our 3 part being that is 'born again'. **That part** does not commit sin. **The flesh will**, however, till the day we die are raptured into His presence! That's why (in our 2nd verse) that John says that if we say that we have no sin we make Him a liar! There is no contradiction. We are referring to different elements in our being. The flesh (that does sin - constantly) & the spirit (which has been born again & does not sin, as far as God is concerned). That's why this is all tied in with the 'once saved always saved' doctrine. Well, let's look at one more verse & call it a night. Heb. 4:12,

For the word of God is quick, & powerful, & sharper than any twoedged sword,
piercing even to **dividing asunder** of soul & spirit, & of the joints & the marrow,
& is a discerner of the thoughts & intents of the heart.

Holy mackerel, there is that division or separation again! Something is separating the flesh from the soul & the spirit. There is a circumcision going on, if you please, at the moment of salvation. The body, which continues to sin ("if we confess our sins") is separated from the rest of us ("whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin").

Paul told us that the sin resided in his flesh. The flesh is cut away or circumcised from the spirit at the moment of salvation. So, in conclusion, there was no contradiction after all. In fact, had not both verses been in there truth would be compromised. Both verses are correct.

From the moment you were saved you were not your own, you were bought with a price. That price being the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver & gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish & without spot. 1 Pet. 1:18-19.

This precious thing that we call salvation. This 'born again' experience. This unbelievable 'gift of God'. This matchless privilege & promise that we have from God. To say that it all depends on 'our being faithful'. On our 'staying in touch with him'. Our 'enduring in to the end'. Our steadfastness, our faithfulness, our good works, our good intentions, etc. is all a slap in the face to the One who gave Himself & keeps us unto Himself for His glory & His good pleasure. It is **God** who is faithful, **not us**. **Ever!**

