**I John 3:9 – the “Habitual” view**

KJV: “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin”

NASB: “No one who is born of God *practices* sin”

Living Bible: “The person who has been born into God’s family does not make a *practice* of sinning”

Amplified: “No one born [begotten] of God [deliberately and knowingly] *habitually* practices sin.”

NIV: “No one who is born of God will *continue* to sin, because God’s seed remains in him. He cannot *go on sinning*, because he has been born of God.”

1. The habitual view is not justified by Greek grammar. The idea of continuous action is not inherent in the present tense, but is only one of several possibilities!

Normally, helping words are needed to specify the idea of continuance –

1. dia pantos (: “continually” Luke 24:53; Hebrews 9:6; 13:15;
2. eis to dienekes (: “continually” Hebrews 7:3; 10:1
3. The habitual view wreaks havoc elsewhere in the Bible. If we translate the present tense as continual/habitual action here, then we need to do it in I John 1:8 to be consistent: “If we say that we are not CONTINUALLY OR HABITUALLY having sin, we deceive ourselves:” – ends up totally contradicting 3:9!

Observe the problems it would generate with other uses of the present tense in Greek N.T.:

I Jn 5:16 “if any man see his brother CONTINUALLY sinning a sin which is not unto death?”

Matt. 5:32 “Everyone that CONTINUALLY/HABITUALLY divorces his wife?”

Luke 3:16 “I CONTINUALLY/HABITUALLY baptize you with water?”

John 6:33 “For the bread of God is he which HABITUALLY cometh down from heaven?”

Acts 25:11 “I CONTINUALLY/HABITUALLY appeal unto Caesar?”

1. The habitual view is hopelessly subjective, therefore not logical – are we saying that if I’m saved, I will only sin intermittently? Or only for a while, then I will stop? Just HOW intermittently? How long is “continually?” Throws us into a sea of subjectivity.
2. The habitual view does not follow John’s flow of thought – does not fit context

* I John 3:5 – “IN HIM IS NO SIN” = absolute statement!
* I John 3:6 – “whosoever abideth in Him SINNETH NOT” = absolute statement.
* I John 3:9 – same kind of absolute statement – “DOTH not commit sin – PERIOD.”

If we make v. 9 “does not continually sin,” what do we do to the other absolute statements? We’re saying they sin, but not a lot? They can choose NOT to abide, but not very much?

In this series of absolute statements, John is trying to show us that the distinction between TRUE, ETERNAL LIFE AND SIN AND DEATH IS ABSOLUTE!

True Life in Christ is PURE RIGHTEOUSNESS/NO SIN whatsoever – outside of His Life there IS NO POSSIBILITY OF TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS!