

## 1 John 3 – Part K

### 1 John 3:8 (B)

[1 John 3:8](#) reads as follows,

**1Jn 3:8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.**

In our last study, we looked at the first part of this verse. The second part of v8 speaks of the second great thing that John declares Christ has done for the believer – He has “**destroyed the works of the devil**”. The first thing that John stated that Christ did was in v5 where He “**takes away our sins**”. So, at the very beginning, it is important to recognize that when Jesus came, it was with purpose. He came and He was manifested, or appeared and made visible, so that he might utterly “**destroy the works of the devil**”. It is the idea that His coming had a tremendous objective and target. However, to make that purpose more meaningful to us, it must be understood that the reality of every believer’s salvation is completely dependent on what Christ did. We have nothing to offer God relative to salvation or relative to maintaining that salvation. It is all a work of God. So, exactly what does John say in this verse that Jesus did? He says that He “**destroyed**” something.

The Greek word for “**destroy**” is “*lyo*” and literally means to loosen, to break up, to dissolve, or to melt something.<sup>1</sup> A very strong meaning of the word is found in [2 Peter 3:10-12](#) which is talking about the re-creation of the new heavens and the new earth,

**2Pe 3:10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up. <sup>11</sup> Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved (destroyed), what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, <sup>12</sup> looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved (destroyed), being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?**

It is a word that speaks of God loosing Satan at the end of the Millennium in [Revelation 20:7](#),

**Rev 20:7 Now when the thousand years have expired, Satan will be released from his prison.**

[Ephesians 2:14](#) says,

**Eph 2:14 For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation,**

So, exactly what are the “**works of the devil**”? Well, if we could summarize it in one idea, it is to destroy people’s lives and to do whatever has to be done to keep them from being saved. He wants everyone to go to hell, and unfortunately, he often appears to be very successful in his efforts. [John 10:10](#) puts it this way,

**Jn 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.**

The particular Greek word for “**destroy**” in this verse is the Greek word “*apollymi*” and means to destroy fully and to cause to perish. It means to destroy utterly. It is not the idea of extinction (and

that is very important to understand), but it is the idea of causing ruin in your life, of causing loss, not of being, but of well-being.<sup>2</sup> It is the word that is generally used in the New Testament to convey the idea of eternal destruction and ruin.<sup>3</sup> What someone loses cannot be quantified by words or even ideas. God’s final judgment and punishment is eternal and irrevocable. The reward of righteousness and the punishment for sin will never be fully realized in this life, but will be fully realized in the world that is to come.<sup>4</sup> The punishment of the wicked will never be fully experienced in this life, but what happens the moment that the lost person dies is indescribable. No one ever becomes extinct as if they no longer exist. Obviously everyone dies physically, but no one dies eternally. Everyone lives forever – either in the Lake of Fire with Satan, or in heaven with Christ and God the Father. For instance, [2 Corinthians 4:3](#) says this about those who die without Christ.

<sup>2Co 4:3</sup> **But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,**

[2 Thessalonians 2:10](#), speaking about what happens after the rapture to those who knowingly and willingly continue to live in sin prior to the rapture, says this about their fate,

<sup>2Th 2:10</sup> **and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish, because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved.**

The antidote to spiritual death is simply entrusting your life to Christ. [John 3:15-16](#) says,

<sup>Jn 3:15</sup> **that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. <sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.**

The word “**perish**” is the same Greek word “*apollymi*” and refers to an eternal destruction. If a person does not want to perish, they must “believe” or entrust their life to Christ. There are no other options!

[John 10:28](#) says,

<sup>Jn 10:28</sup> **And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish (*apollymi*); neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.**

Obviously, there are many other “**works of the devil**” that Jesus came to destroy. It would be impossible to identify and name each of them. In a general category, it would include tempting people to both live and engage in sin and rebellion against God. One of Satan’s greatest works is to devise and create various religions that draw men into an illusion that they are saved or will spend an eternity without punishment. Nothing could be any further from the truth. He creates vain speculations, demonic philosophies, satanic ideologies, and false beliefs that lead men straight into hell. I am always amazed at how miserable so many people seem to be, but yet entrusting their life to Christ seems both absurd and meaningless to them. The only One who is able to give them life seems to be the only One that they are not willing to even consider. All the time we see people who seem to not understand that if you always do what you have always done, then you will always get what you have always got. They have not yet figured out what the word “insanity” actually means. The definition of “insanity” is to keep doing the same thing, but to keep expecting different results.

It is critically important to understand that Satan will never ask your permission as to whether or not he can destroy your life. He does not need your permission. His tool is deception, and he baits and

entices people with his lies, with his false promises, and with the illusion that he has something much better to offer than God. Satan has nothing to offer but physical death, spiritual death, and eternal death. If anyone believes that those three options are viable alternatives to what God has to offer a person, that person has been greatly deceived by the devil. He will never ask anyone if he can ruin their life, but will simply and relentlessly move ahead with his plans, his devices, his subtle strategies, and his ongoing lies to destroy your life.

It must be appreciated that the devil's ability to persuade men and women to accept his lies about life, eternity, happiness are all means of destroying the person's life. It seems that the ultimate lie that he has utilized is the lie about God himself. He utterly hates God and everything that he does is based on that hatred of God.<sup>5</sup> So whatever Satan does is designed to convince someone that the will of God is not good. It is to convince someone that if they obey God and follow Christ that ultimately their life will be miserable. He makes God to appear to be oppressive and demanding and unfair. Men seem to hate the fact that God only has one means of salvation and not many options. Men resent the fact that God calls on them to repent of their sins before they can be saved. All of this is an incredible lie. Sin will always corrupt and contaminate a person's life. The Bible says that **“the wages of sin is death”**. The Bible teaches that whatever a man sows, that that is exactly what he will reap. If he sows to the flesh and to his personal desires, the Bible declares that that man or woman will be brought into a lower and lesser state. If what consumes a man is some form of disobedience to the word of God, then that is exactly what the devil will utilize to destroy that man's life. And to make all things even worse, somehow and in some mysterious way, the devil seems to convince men that there really are no serious consequences to either their sin, their unbelief, or their outright disobedience to the Word of God. The devil has convinced men that they somehow will be the exception to God's judgment on a life of continued sin and rebellion to God's Word. Trust me, but that will never be the case. Every man, lost or saved, will stand before God and give an account of their life, and every person who has chosen to ignore Christ and has been unwilling to entrust their life to Him will be judged at the Great White throne Judgment, and an angel will come and cast them into the Lake of Fire where they will remain forever and forever and forever with absolutely not one single opportunity to ever leave or escape from that judgment. Now, if you believe anything else, then you have been deceived by the devil and he is currently in the process of continuing to destroy your life in ways that you do not even recognize and certainly do not understand.

Now I know that what I am about to mention will in some ways seem a little out of place, however, in the overall content of this passage, I believe that it has a message. I was thinking about John the Baptist and Herod the other day and some of the details that surrounded their relationship. This is a picture and a story of two completely opposite individuals. One was divinely saved and fully committed to the will of God for his life. The other man, Herod, had no interest in the things of God and no intent of ever entrusting his life to God. On the surface it does not appear that things really worked out that well for John the Baptist because he was ultimately beheaded.

Now, what is important about this story in [Mark 6](#) and [Luke 3](#) and how it relates to [1 John 3:8](#) is the character of John and how that character was displayed in his life, as well as what it actually cost him to be godly. Godliness is much more than just sitting around talking about being a Christian. Godliness is a way of life. Often times what God calls on believers to do is to confront those things in

other people's lives that are outside of the boundaries of God's will – and that is exactly what John did. He confronted Herod who was having an immoral affair with his brother's wife. It was wrong and John did not hesitate to address the issue in Herod's life. Keeping this story in perspective however, it is critical to realize that John the Baptist was not killed because he was just a nominal Christian – not at all. Those kinds of Christians generally lack the courage to confront someone with the truth of God's Word. To the contrary, they would most likely shun it simply because they realize that their own life lacks any real, genuine spiritual depth. The very reason why John was killed was because he was **NOT** a “nominal” Christian (whatever that is), but he was a deeply committed believer. Just think about this for a moment. If John the Baptist had been an average American Christian, Herod would never have paid any attention to anything that he would have said to him. John, though, was not just any typical church member, but rather a mouthpiece that God had mightily used to bring men to a place of conviction and repentance, and Herod was in his target sight as well.

[Mark 6:20](#) says the following,

**Mk 6:20 for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.**

So, from that verse, why did Herod actually fear John? Well, it was because he was a “**just man**” and he was a “**holy man**”. Herod actually heard John “**gladly**”. If you ever want to be able to reach people with the message of the gospel, then you must be a godly man or woman. There are no exceptions. Nothing else will provide God's blessing for your life. Eddie was in the Manila airport this past weekend waiting to go to Jakarta. He was studying and reading his Bible at one of the Internet cafes and a woman professor from the Christian University in Jakarta saw him reading his Bible, struck up a conversation with him, and invited him to come the next day to the University to speak to the students. Eddie spoke on Galatians 1 and 1 Corinthians 15, and 43 students gave their lives to Christ in the most populated Muslim country in the world. God uses godly men and women to accomplish His work.

God does not and will not bless those believers who live in sin or practice sin, or those men and women who are half-hearted about their spiritual life and walk with God. God will not bless those people who are satisfied with spiritual mediocrity. He will not bless those who take His Word lightly or His church lightly. God will not bless those believers who are always complaining about what they do not like about someone else. God is sovereign, and one of the worst things that any of us should find ourselves doing is always complaining about what we do not like. Some people just never seem satisfied. If that characterizes a believer's life, then most likely that believer is afflicted with an overinflated view of themselves and most likely are impacted by a self-serving pride about themselves and their personal value to the kingdom of God. My understanding of Scripture is that God places situations before us that are not to our liking in order to test the reality of what we claim that we really have and who we really are. Generally a spiritual test is just God's way of highlighting that we do not possess a quality that God wants to be developed in our lives. It seems that other “people” are His primary tool for revealing our personal deficiencies.

However, the real insight into what was really happening with John the Baptist is found in [Mark 6:18](#) which says,

**Mk 6:18 For John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife."**

That passage is supplemented in [Luke 3:19](#) speaking of the same incident, and says of Herod,

**Lk 3:19 But Herod the tetrarch, being rebuked by him concerning Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,**

The Greek word for “**being rebuked**” is in the present tense which indicates that John did not just rebuke Herod once, but the verb is a continuous action verb which means that John kept on rebuking Herod for his continuing sin. I would not doubt that every time that John spoke with Herod that he rebuked the sin in his life. No wonder Herod killed John at the age of about 31. I wonder if it would be better to die at 31 for being willing to speak boldly for the name of Christ, or to die at 91 and never have confronted anyone about sin in their life. If someone who is practicing sin and living in open sin is not reproved for their lifestyle, then why should we ever expect that they will come to Christ? The prevailing methodology is to never be confrontational, but rather just be gentle and pacifying while the individual continues to live in their sin. Most likely the result will be that we never make any kind of meaningful impact on that individual and they never come to Christ.

So, what is the lesson in all of this? Well, it really seems to be a very simple message. It is the message that Jesus Christ has completely, utterly, totally, and eternally destroyed all of the works of the devil, but you never receive the benefit of that work until you entrust your life to Him. That is the simple message, and it is a life transforming message that will set a person free from the bondage of sin and Satan in their life. I remember in my own personal life what happened on the day that I was saved. Everything that at that moment was completely destroying my life was itself destroyed and I have never engaged in those evil things since that day. In one simple moment of time, I was transferred from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of light and God’s precious Son. [Colossians 1:13](#) says,

**Col 1:13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,**

That is the reality of what actually takes place in a person’s life when they are saved. Immediately, in a simple moment of time, Jesus completely changes everything about a person’s life. They go from living in darkness, deception, and lies to living in marvelous light, truth, and life itself. The very thing that they were created for becomes a reality in their life, and they know it and embrace it.

Jesus Christ in one moment completely removed every desire that I had to engage in sin of every conceivable type, and He replaced it with new desires, new strength, and new wisdom that I had never had before in my life. He gave me new friends. He gave me a new heart, and I learned for the first time in my life that God never takes anything out of your life without replacing it with something much better. Jesus completely destroyed everything that the devil was doing in my life, and He breathed His very life into my soul and I have never been the same. His destruction of Satan’s work was not only a broad and divine work against Satan himself, but it was also a deep and personal work in my heart that completely changed and transformed everything about my life in just one simple moment of time. This is salvation, and it is what God has provided for everyone who is willing to come to him on His terms. Christ draws us, we believe Him, and immediately Satan’s work against us

is nullified in our life. Why? It is because of [1 John 3:8](#) and the fact that “**Christ was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil**”.

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Strong, 1217.

<sup>2</sup> Strong, 978.

<sup>3</sup> Harris, *apollumi*, electronic page.

<sup>4</sup> Harris, *apoleia*, electronic page.

<sup>5</sup> Lloyd-Jones, 319.

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