

# THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

John 8:31-36

Lesson #32

Freedom from Sin

03/13/2016

## Three different definitions of Christianity



It's about what we believe.

Redemption



It's about what we feel.

Rebirth



It's about what we do.

Reform

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## What changes

when a person becomes a Christian?

- ✓ Some things may change immediately, completely, and irrevocably. (our position in Christ, our direction in life)
- ✓ Some things may not change at all. (personality, physical body, formative circumstances, etc.)
- ✓ Some things may change gradually and incompletely. (wisdom, spiritual maturity, moral perfection, character, etc.)

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## John 8 (context)

“<sup>21</sup> I go away, and you will seek me, and will **die in your sin**,” . . .

<sup>24</sup> Therefore I said to you that you will **die in your sins**; for unless you believe that I am He, you will **die in your sins**.”

<sup>30</sup> As he spoke these things, many came to believe in him.”

**The context has to do with  
“dying in your sin”.**

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## John 8

“<sup>31</sup> Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; <sup>32</sup> and **you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**” <sup>33</sup> They answered Him, “We are Abraham’s offspring, and have never yet been enslaved to anyone; how is it that You say, ‘You shall become free?’” <sup>34</sup> Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. <sup>35</sup> And the slave does not remain in the house forever; the son does remain forever. <sup>36</sup> **If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.**”

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## Interpretive Paraphrase of John 8:31-36

“Jesus told those who were now believing he might be the Messiah, “**If you abide in me, then you are really my disciples**; and you shall be set free and not die in your sins.” They answered, “As God’s chosen people we are enslaved to nothing. We have sacrifices that free us from sin.” Jesus answered, “As long as you have to keep making sacrifices you are a slave (not a son). Your sins remain and keep you from being secure as God’s people.” **You will not be free and secure until you abide in me as the Son who is the final sacrifice for sin.**”

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### What freedom does not mean!

#### 1. Permissiveness - free from external moral standards

1 John 2:1a

"My little children, I am writing these things to you **so that you may not sin.**"

#### 2. Perfection - free from any wrong doing

1 John 2:1b-2a

"And **if anyone sins**, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he himself is the propitiation for our sins;"

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#### 4. Political - free from pain and injustice

John 18:12

"So the Roman cohort and the commander and the officers of the Jews, **arrested Jesus and bound him.**"

#### 5. Partial - free from the habit of sin

1 John 3:9

"No one who is born of God practices sin, because his seed abides in him; and **he cannot sin**, because he is born of God."

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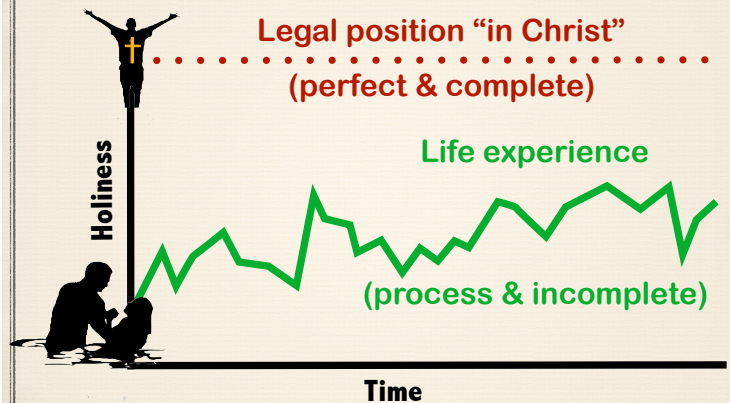
### In what sense does Jesus set true believers free?

#### ✓ He first frees believers from the PENALTY of sin.

- The curse of the Mosaic Covenant is satisfied at the Cross.
- While the Law continues to be a guide to Christian behavior it no longer is a covenant defining our standing before God.
- We may be disciplined for our sins but we are not condemned for them.
- **It is this freedom that I believe is in view in John 8:31-36.**

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### Two aspects of Christian Holiness

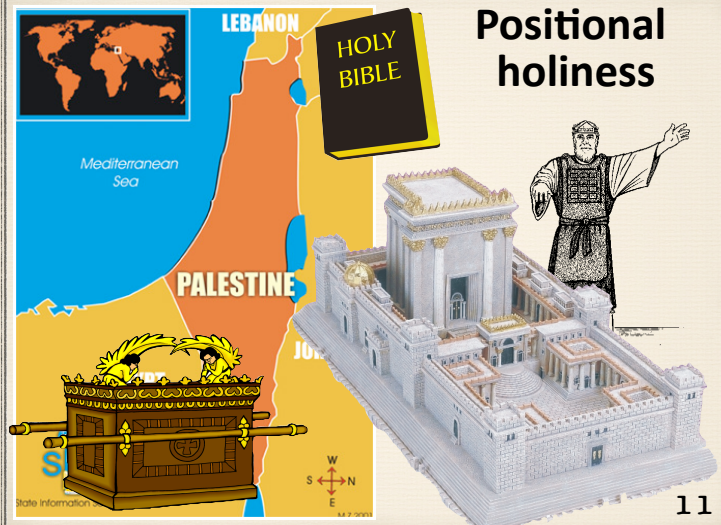


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### The Corinthian church

- ✓ "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, **saints** by calling . . ." 1 Corinthians 1:2
- ✓ "for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not **walking like mere men.**" 1 Corinthians 3:3

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The temple priest was ceremonially sanctified with water before he performed his sacred duties.



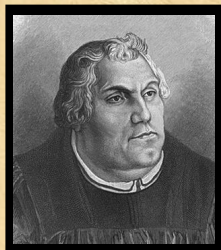
**This had to do with his official position not his personal character.**

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## Positional truth

- ✓ It is a legal declaration & not experiential.
- ✓ It is not progressive but perfect & complete.
- ✓ It fully satisfies the demands of a perfectly holy God.
- ✓ It is not related to human merit.
- ✓ It is not related to human moral reform.
- ✓ It must be learned through teaching.
- ✓ It is acknowledged through faith.

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**Martin Luther**

Luther made a distinction between:

“active righteousness”  
and  
“passive righteousness”.

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**Charles Spurgeon**



“Holiness is not the way to Christ; Christ is the way to holiness. Better still, Christ is our holiness.”

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**Don't confuse the ministries of the Law, the Son, and the Spirit.**

**Tutor  
(Mirror)**



**The Law**

**Surrogate  
(Substitute)**



**Jesus**

**Paraclete  
(Comforter)**



**The Spirit**

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**John R.W. Stott**



“Before we can begin to see the cross as something done for us, we have to see it as something done by us.”

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✓ He frees believers from the **POWER** of sin.

- The power of Christ's Spirit is given to us so that we need not be enslaved to our old way of life.
- Christ's Spirit comforts us when we fail, teaches us who we are and what we have "in Christ", and enables us to live lives of love as we walk in Christ.
- Our lives change from the inside out over time.

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**But what about  
1 John 3**

**"The one who is  
born of God  
cannot and does  
not sin!"**



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*1 John 3*

"<sup>6</sup> **No one who abides in Him sins; no one who sins has seen Him or knows Him.** <sup>7</sup> Little children, let no one deceive you; the one who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is righteous; <sup>8</sup> the one who practices sin is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, that He might destroy the works of the devil. <sup>9</sup> **No one who is born of God {practices} sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.** <sup>10</sup> By this the children of God and the children of the devil are obvious: **anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor the one who does not love his brother.**" <sup>20</sup>

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**Possible interpretations**

- 1. Christians cannot sin.**
- 2. Christians do not continue in (practice) sin.**
- 3. Christians do not willfully sin.**

- Our experience argues against these interpretations.
- The assumption behind the N.T. epistles argues against these interpretations.
- 1 John 1 argues against these interpretations.
- The Gospel message is centered on what Christ **HAS DONE FOR** us rather than on what his Spirit will do through us.



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## Life context

**Sinless perfection is not observed to be the experience of any, let alone every Christian.**

**Holiness sects claim that we need not sin but not that we cannot sin.**



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## Christian identity and sin

	Change mind about Christ and self	Be willing to turn from all known sins at conversion	Be willing to keep on turning from all known sins	Turn from all known sins	Keep on turning from all known sins
Holiness					
Arminian					
Calvinistic					
Lutheran					
Radical grace					

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## Literary context

*1 John 1:8-10; 2:1*

“<sup>8</sup> If we say that we have no **sin**, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us”

“<sup>10</sup> If we say that we have not **sinned**, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.” “<sup>1</sup> And if anyone **sins**, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;”



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## Historical context

( Some **Gnostic** sects were morally permissive - believing that what we do with our body is unimportant to God.)

*1 John 2:26*

“These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.”



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## Theological context

**The Gospel story emphasizes what God has done FOR us in Christ through faith (not IN and THROUGH us to fulfill the Law).**



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## A fourth possible interpretation

1. Christians cannot sin.
2. Christians do not continue in (practice) sin.
3. Christians do not willfully sin.

### 4. The Spirit of Christ cannot sin.

“Cannot sin” is the key to this interpretation.

That which is “born of God” is the Spirit of Christ in our “new man.”

“Abiding” (which is relative) is an emphasis in John’s writing.

This interpretation is consistent with the Biblical, theological, historical, and life contexts.

This interpretation is consistent with the Gospel.



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*1 John 3:2-10 Interpretive Paraphrase*

“As Christians we have Christ’s Spirit installed in us. The life of Jesus is manifest in His Spirit and will never sin because it cannot sin being the very nature of God. To the extent that we abide in, and yield to His Spirit we will not and cannot sin either. Therefore, strive to live in the light and power of His Spirit so that you have intimate fellowship with him and thereby avoid sin.

*1 John 1:8-10 Paraphrase*

“We cannot claim to be perfect or beyond the need for Christ’s blood which cleanses us.”

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## Two important truths.

### 1. Provision for salvation is completed at the Cross of Jesus.

- “Where I am going, you cannot go.” **Only Jesus could make atonement for sin.**

### 2. Procurement of salvation is completed through faith in Jesus.

- “Unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins”. **Only we can exercise faith so as to be saved.**

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