

# **Satan's Spawn and God's Seed**

## **1 John 3:1–10**

Ravi Zacharias was born in India and migrated to Canada with his family twenty years later. He is a nationally known apologist. He defends the Christian faith in universities like Harvard, Dartmouth, Johns Hopkins, and Oxford.

While reading about Ravi, I came across his Christian testimony. He came to Christ on a bed of suicide when he was seventeen. His father had just finished telling him that he was a total failure in life. He told him he was born a failure. In the darkness of that moment full of desperation and hopelessness, Ravi picked up a Bible by his bedside and came to Christ.<sup>1</sup>

Because we live in a fallen world, some biological fathers are not a reflection of our Heavenly Father. God has broken images of Himself; they are fathers. In fact, all the images God gives us of Himself in Scripture are flawed.

There are an estimated seventy million fathers in America. That is a lot of fathers: everywhere you turn there is a father! Fathers are on the golf course, in the hardware store, on a tractor, in an office, fishing by the lake, driving a car; the real issue is not where fathers are, but where they are not! Do you know where it is hard to find a father these days? In a home! One out of three children will grow up without a biological father in the home. I am not here to play the blame game; I am here to bring the facts.

I could say a lot about biological fathers, but I want to draw your attention to your spiritual father. There are seventy million fathers in America, but there are only two spiritual fathers. Spiritually, there are no orphans! Everyone has a father. Whether you acknowledge he is your father does not change the fact that he is.

Notice the phrases found in verse 10: “children of God” and “children of the devil.” You either look to God and say, “That’s my Father!” or look to Satan and say, “That’s my father.” There is no middle ground or middle way. We are either traveling with our Father on the

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<sup>1</sup> Ravi Zacharias, “National Day of Prayer Address,” Ravi Zacharias International Ministries, June 9, 2008, accessed April 4, 2016, <http://rzim.org/just-thinking/national-day-of-prayer-address>.

highway to heaven or traveling with our father on the highway to Hell. Maybe I could put it this way: “You are either Satan’s Spawn or God’s Seed.”

**Transition:** Let’s uncover some truths about our relationship with our spiritual fathers. First, we must understand . . .

### **1. We are children by birth (1 John 3:1).**

How do we enter into a relationship with our father? Only by birth! When you are born, you are born as Satan’s spawn. Yes, you have a biological father, but your spiritual father is Satan. You and everyone around you were born in sin. This is an important theological truth for you to understand: You sin because you’re a sinner. Why do we naturally have a bent to lie, exaggerate, or want something someone else has? Because we are sinners. That is why the first words that most children learn is “no.” Mothers like to think it is “mommy,” but that is because they do not count the word “no” as a legitimate first word.

You see, this is in stark contrast to the belief that we sin and, therefore, are sinners. This is a complete contradiction of Scripture. The fact that you sin does not make you a sinner; it reveals you are a sinner. The first time you lie, cheat, or steal does not move you into the category of sinners.

- How many times do you have to lie to be a liar? One time.
- How many times do you have to kill to be a murderer? One time.
- How many times do you have to steal to be a thief? One time.
- How many times do you have to sin to be a sinner? Zero times. You are born a sinner.

Let’s summarize it this way: we are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners. Or maybe saying it this way is more pertinent to this text: we are not Satan’s spawn because we sin; we sin because we are Satan’s spawn. No one starts off pure and then learns bad behavior. We are born with a sin nature, and that nature manifests itself in our actions.

You may be thinking, “Well, what about a child that dies early? What will happen to that child?” I believe the Bible speaks clearly to the fact that children who die before coming to the time of accountability are in heaven. I never say an age of accountability, but a time of

accountability. That time comes at different ages for different people. I have a great article on the subject if you are interested.<sup>2</sup>

Charles Spurgeon spoke to this issue when he said, “I rejoice to know that the souls of all infants, as soon as they die, speed their way to Paradise. Think what a multitude there is of them!”

So, if you are born Satan’s spawn, how can you become God’s seed? The same way—by birth. By birth you become Satan’s spawn, and by birth you become God’s seed. Nicodemus came to Christ and wanted to become God’s seed, and Jesus told him, “You must be born again.” Not physically of course, but spiritually. You must be born into the family of God. When you repent of your sins, believe Jesus is who He said He was, and come to Him by faith through grace, you are born spiritually.

At that moment, you are spiritually adopted by an out-of-this-world kind of love. Paul expounds on this adoption process in the books of Galatians, Ephesians, and Romans. If you are a child of God, you came by adoption because that is the only way.

Do you know why God adopted you? Not because of your attractive looks, but because of His amazing love (verse 1). If you are not a child of God, you can be by coming to Christ in His love. Some versions add a little phrase after the text says, “Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the children of God.” Some versions add, “So we are!” That’s what love does. It takes you from Satan’s spawn to God’s seed.

And before we move on let me add this little footnote. Satan has more children than God. The Bible says in Matthew 7:14, “For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few.” A broad gate leads to Hell because more people are going through that gate. A narrow way leads to Jesus because few people comparatively are coming to Him.

Of course, Charles Spurgeon would disagree with me. He said, “I believe there will be more in Heaven than in hell. If anyone asks me why I think so, I answer, because Christ, in everything, is to ‘have the preeminence,’ and I cannot conceive how He could have the

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<sup>2</sup> R. Albert Mohler Jr. and Daniel L. Akin, “The Salvation of the ‘Little Ones’: Do Infants Who Die Go to Heaven?” *Albert Mohler*, July 16, 2009, accessed April 4, 2016, <http://www.albertmohler.com/2009/07/16/the-salvation-of-the-little-ones-do-infants-who-die-go-to-heaven>.

preeminence if there are to be more in the dominions of Satan than in Paradise. “ He also said, “Moreover, I have never read that there is to be in hell a great multitude, which no man could number.” The Book of Revelation does give us an account of an innumerable crowd of believers in heaven. Spurgeon does not see how God could win if He does not numerically have more seed than Satan has spawn. However, God’s ways are not subject to our sensibilities. Our logic says that, in order for God “to win,” He needs more people. No! in order for God to win, He just has to be God. Did you know that God will have preeminence over those who are in hell too? Everyone will one day bow before our Creator as Lord of Lords and King of Kings.

**Transition:** Not only are we children by birth, but also . . .

## **2. We look like our father (1 John 3:1–3).**

If you’re a Christian, the world does not understand you, just like it did not understand Jesus (verse 1). What if you picked up your family and moved to the center of New York City? The way you look and the way you speak would be unusual to these people. It would be difficult to carry on a conversation about tractors or cattle. Do you know why? Because that is not the New York City culture. They do not understand you.

We are not only from a different state, but from a different country. We are from a heavenly country. So people may struggle to understand why you attend church every week, why you keep certain things from your children, or why you refuse to do certain things for testimony sake. It is all right if they do not understand you; they didn’t understand Jesus two thousand years ago (verse 1). Satan’s spawn has never understood God’s seed.

Notice verse two: “Now we are children of God.” Do you see the word *now*? That means we were not always children of God. I love this promise. We will be like Jesus. We will favor our Father. This does not mean we will be Jesus, but it means we will be restored to our original image before the Fall. We are made in the image of God, but that image was marred by the Fall. When we see Jesus, it will be marred no longer. Our resurrected bodies will be like His resurrected body.

When Jesus resurrected from the dead, He had an actual body with ten toes, ten fingers, two legs, and two arms. He showed His hands and feet to His disciples (Luke 24:39). He also ate some fish and bread (Luke 24:40–43). He could even be touched. His body will also bear the marks of the cross in heaven (Zachariah 12:10).

He also looked like a man, not some mysterious beast. You will have the same thing in your resurrected body. It is a new body. If you have any problems with this body (sickness, impairments, pain), you will leave that behind. You will not cease to be you. You will be more you than ever before. It will not be less you, but more you.

William Alexander tells the story of when native converts came to this phrase as they were translating the Bible into their language. He said they laid down their pens and explained, “No! It is too much. Let us write that we shall be permitted to kiss His feet.”<sup>3</sup>

**Transition:** Let’s look back over verses 1–3 and connect them to verses 4–6. Verse 1 tells us *what we are*: God’s children. Verses 2–3 tells us *what we will be*: like Jesus. Verse 4–6 tells us *what we should be*: a reflection.

### **3. We act like our father (1 John 3:4–6).**

From time to time, I will meet someone who knows my dad. Sometimes they say, “You look just like your dad,” or, “That sounds like something your dad would say.” They see a resemblance between me and my biological father. My behavior is consistent with my dad’s behavior. My mannerisms, my phraseology, and my quirks are similar to his. I am like my father.

These verses do not mean that you will never sin again if you’re a Christian. Many great men in the Bible sinned while being believers: Abraham lied about his wife (Genesis 12:1–10); Moses lost his temper and disobeyed God (Numbers 20:7–13); Peter denied the Lord three times (Matthew 26:69–75). But the sin was not a settled practice for these men. It was an out-of-character indicant in their lives—totally contrary to their normal behavior. And this is really important. When they sinned, it bothered them. They felt a tremendous desire to confess that sin to Christ and to flee from it in the future.

This is not the case for a non-Christian. They sin and may or may not feel remorse. They live in perpetual sin. Sin (especially the sin of unbelief) is a habitual pattern in their life.<sup>4</sup> Even if they do a good deed, they do it in sin. You see, when a non-believer sins, he sins against his Creator. When a believer sins, he sins against his Father. A non-believer sins against the law, and

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<sup>3</sup> Daniel Akin, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in 1, 2, & 3 John* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2014), 61.

<sup>4</sup> Warren Wiersbe, *Be Real: Turning from Hypocrisy to Truth* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 1972), 106.

the believer sins against love. Our sin is lawlessness—living without God’s laws. A new birth precedes new behavior. The phrase “has been born” is the perfect tense verb speaking of abiding results. Our practice is proof of our parentage. Being a child a God and practicing sin are incompatible. The two simply do not go together. They are enemies to the death.<sup>5</sup>

Thabiti Anyabwile, a former Muslim, points out that the apostle John addresses basically four groups of people in his letters. They are fully assured Christians, Christians struggling with assurance, falsely assured non-believers, and known non-believers. John is especially pointing to the third group here.

If I am a Christian, I have experienced a definite and decisive break with sin. It no longer rules me; Christ does! A life of living in sin and living in the Savior is oxymoronic. It is spiritual nonsense.<sup>6</sup>

**Transition:** We are children by birth, we look like our father, we act like our father, and, finally . . .

#### **4. Our Father can take their father (1 John 3:7–10).**

Two little boys were arguing over whose dad was stronger. The first little boy said, “Have you heard of the Atlantic Ocean? Well, my dad was the one who dug it.” The other little boy, not about to be outdone, said, “That’s nothing! Have you heard of the Dead Sea? Well, my dad is the guy who killed it.”

Two fathers are in an epic battle for glory. This fight has been ongoing for thousands of years. On the cross of Calvary, God delivered a knockout punch to Satan. The empty tomb is an eternal tribute to His victory.

God is coming in a big sweeping victory in the future, but until then He has “destroyed” the works of the devil. This does not mean He has annihilated them. It means He has rendered them ineffective. Satan is no longer your spiritual father, and you do not have to listen to him. John’s logic is clear. If a man is God’s seed, he will obey God; if he is Satan’s spawn, he will obey Satan.

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<sup>5</sup> Akin, *Christ-Centered Exposition*, 65.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 67.

If a man says he is a Christian but is continually practicing sin, he is deceiving you. It is a big satanic lie. He cannot help but to practice sin, because he is Satan's spawn.

**Conclusion:**

"You're just like your father. You're a chip off the old block. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree." Frequently, this is said as a critique instead of a compliment. Jesus said to a group of men one day, "You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires" (John 8:48). If He is saying that to you today, you need to run from your old father and run into the arms of your new Heavenly Father. You do this by turning from your sin and believing that Jesus is who He says He is.

Before I leave you, I want to tell you that God has no grandchildren. You cannot live on the faith of your parents, and your children cannot live on your faith. You need to make sure you have a personal relationship with Jesus.

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