

**Call to Obedience #268**  
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Cain had nothing against God!

## **He That Hateh His Brother Is In Darkness**

**By Reimar Schultze**

"Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment...Again a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now." —1 John 2:7–9

If there are some difficult passages in the Bible, this is one. John, our question to you is: Do we or do we not have a new commandment; and if so, then what is it?

I believe the answer is both a yes and a no, exactly as John states it to be. And this play on the "old" and the "new" is all about our relationship with our brother.

God has always upheld the basic doctrine that you cannot be right with Him unless you are right with your brother. Indeed, in a sense, this is lesson number two in the history of mankind. Lesson number one is that if man sins against God, he is alienated from God and cast out of the paradise of God's presence. Adam sinned against God.

Lesson number two is that Cain sinned against his brother, which is related to Abel having presented a more acceptable sacrifice to God. Although Cain had nothing against God, the fact that he had something against his brother estranged him from God. Hatred for his brother estranged him from his Maker.

Yes, you heard me right, Cain had nothing against God, so far as he was concerned. He sacrificed, he worshipped, he prayed—he loved the Lord. And there are millions of us like him. Cain's intention and attitude was entirely positive toward God.

The problem with Cain was that, as good as his attitude was toward God, God was displeased with his attitude toward his brother. When Cain struck a match to light his sacrifice, God cried out, "Stop! Stop it, Cain! I don't want your prayers. I don't want your worship. I don't want your sacrifice. I will accept none of these because you have something against your brother."

I would like to bring this closer to home. Let's say we have a million worshippers whose attitude toward God is entirely positive. They would never miss a church service, a prayer meeting, a mission offering, etc. How many of these million worshippers do you think are entirely clear with their brothers and sisters? If you can give me that number I can tell you the number of how many give worship that is acceptable to God. In short, how many of them will go to heaven.

To think that any of us can go to heaven with a resentful, critical, judgmental attitude toward our brethren is making a mortal mistake. This, my friend, is lesson number two of human history and lesson number one outside of Paradise: there is no salvation without a right relationship with our brethren.

This, then, is affirmed by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount where he says, "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:15).

Accordingly, do you think that anybody has really ever gotten saved at an altar if they still have resentment toward their brother, sister, schoolteacher, youth counselor, pastor, Mother or Father, or anyone else? Everyone who has gone to the altar to be saved but left with resentment toward someone else has not been converted, even if they think they have. Again, we are not forgiven unless we have forgiven others and have love toward them. Without forgiveness, there is no new life.

Can you see how millions of "Christians" don't have the fire, nor the fruits, nor a passion for the lost, nor a desire for holiness? They were never truly born of God!

So this thing about the old commandment being a new commandment, and yet not really being a new commandment, is simply the teaching of our need to love our brother is as old as time (old commandment). This truth has become so much more clear since Jesus came as the Light of the world that it seems like a new commandment.

"Because the darkness is past, and the new light now shineth," we see now more than ever that "He that saith that he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now."

Jesus came as the Light of the World. John says so in his gospel: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness..." (John 1:4–5).

Scholars of church history talk about the Dark Ages reigning from about the 6th century to the 15th century. But the apostle John talks about the Dark Ages ranging from the fall of man until Jesus came. Before Jesus came, it was dark, very dark spiritually. Man, spiritually speaking, walked around with candles. But, now, since Jesus came as the light, he "lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9), and we, since the Holy Spirit came, can much more clearly perceive what Cain failed to see: there can be no coming to God without love for our brother.

You can be the greatest preacher in the world, but if you don't love your brother—yes, even one brother—you are in darkness.

"But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes." (1 John 2:11).

No one who hates (detests, despises) his brother is fit for leadership because he is blind, he walks in darkness. How, then, can he lead?

### **Which Brother Am I To Love?**

"He that loveth his brother abideth in the light..." (1 John 2:10).

Which brother am I to love so that I can abide in the light? Is it the one who goes to all the prayer meetings that I attend, or is it also the one who never goes to any prayer meeting? Is it the one who is kind to me, or is it also the one who despises me? Is it the one who gives as generously as I do, or is it also the one who is stingy with his money? Is it the one who likes the church music I prefer, or is it also the one who is into a different worship style? Is it the one who believes in the gifts of the Holy Spirit as I do, or is it also the one who differs on this subject?

Is there a permit anywhere to be found in John's writings that allows me to pick and choose which brother I am to love and forgive in order to stay in the light? Indeed, the answer is no. Anyone born of God is my brother. And since Jesus loves him, I have to—AS IS. Aren't you glad that Jesus loves you—AS IS? Have you reached perfection yet, or do you still have deficiencies, weaknesses, rough edges, or blind spots? Do you ever have to ask for forgiveness? Are you still there, needing further work in your heart and life? Does Jesus still love you—AS IS? Well then, what makes you think that Jesus does not love your brother—AS IS?

This does not mean, of course, that you should have fellowship with a brother who walks in disobedience. Paul makes that clear in 2 Thessalonians 3:14–15:

"And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother."

Yes, a brother who is not following the Word of the Lord is not an enemy; he is still a brother. Should you eat with him? No. Should you love him? Yes!

Oh, my friends, if I have any resentment toward anyone, I cannot walk with God anymore than Cain could. I cannot get saved, for Jesus said that I will not be forgiven unless I forgive my brother. I cannot walk in the light without loving my brother.

Finally, how much am I to love my brother? As much as Jesus did—and that is a whole lot!

So, is this an old commandment? Indeed it is. Is it a new commandment, also? Yes, for not only do we have Jesus' example in loving others, but we also have him living within us, and all his love is available to flow through us toward others. Truly, "the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." **Praise the Lord!**