

Born of Whom?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 19 March 2023

Preacher: Josh Johnston

[0 : 00] So we're going to turn now to our reading for this evening and Josh Johnson has been working through 1 John. So please do turn there. If you don't have a Bible with you, you have plenty around the building, on the side, at the back, do please grab one of the church Bibles.

But 1 John, and we're reading from chapter 2 and verse 28. I'll just give you a moment to turn that up. 1 John, chapter 2, and reading there from verse 28.

John writes, And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears, we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming.

If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him. See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God.

And so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared.

[1 : 20] But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness. Let me just say, that's probably better read like this.

Everyone who does sin practices lawlessness. Josh will explain that a bit later, but I think the NIV has it a little better. So everyone who does sin practices lawlessness.

Sin is lawlessness. You know that he appeared to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. No one who abides in him keeps on sinning.

No one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous.

[2 : 24] Whoever does sin is of the devil. For the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

No one born of God does sin, for God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God. By this, it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil.

Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother. For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

We should not be like Cain, who was of the evil one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his own deeds were evil, and his brother's righteous.

Amen. May God bless to us his words. Well, good evening.

[3 : 33] Do open your Bibles once again to 1 John at the end of chapter 2. Now, not everything is as it appears.

That is a truth that Christians ought to be most at home with. There are profound realities that have broken into this world from eternity and from heaven that will not be immediately obvious.

And so, Christians of all people will feel a tension between life here under the sun and ultimate things. We've seen this already in John's letter.

Chapter 1, verse 8, tells us that the darkness is passing away, but it is not yet fully passed away. And chapter 2, verse 17, the world is passing away along with its desires.

Passing away, but not yet fully passed away. The future is set. The outcome is secure. Darkness and the world will pass away.

[4 : 44] But they haven't yet. And we saw last time the first key implication that John draws out from this, the first key implication of this reality.

Until the darkness and the world have passed away, whilst they are still passing away, he told us that we will always be faced with deceivers in our midst.

The church in this gospel age will always face the threat of antichrists, of false teachers. Those who want to claim the name Christian, but who oppose everything that is of the essence of that name. Here in 1 John, the deceivers are those who have departed from the apostles. Chapter 2, verse 19. Those who have gone out from this church and from the apostles.

So John says there will always be deceivers with us. The world will impersonate and pretend to be the light. But another reality comes from living whilst the darkness and the world are passing away, and not yet passed away.

[5 : 54] And it is that what is true of us, and what is true of those who abandon or reject the gospel, is not yet fully obvious.

And so John wants to encourage his recipients by bringing some theological clarity to what is true of them, and what is true of the departed.

And this clarity is important. Because what we are is not obvious in this age. As we will see when we get into the detail of our passage.

But first, just a little note on structure here. 1 John's structure isn't always obvious on first reading. He doesn't write in the same kind of linear way to Paul.

And so often it's hard to pin down exactly how this letter fits together. The commentators certainly don't agree on how it fits together. And without getting bogged down in technical details, let me briefly show you why this section holds together.

[6 : 59] At first, it might seem that from verse 4, following might be a new idea, a new section, because suddenly we have an influx of language that talks a lot about sin.

But I think there are three good reasons to take this whole passage together that we read. First, Paul uses the same Greek phrase seven times throughout the passage.

For us, it's translated in verse 29 as everyone who... We see the same phrase again in chapter 3, verse 3, and 3, verse 4, everyone who... It's there twice in chapter 3, verse 6, translated as no one who...

And again in 3, 9. And then finally in 3, 10, whoever. So the same word all the way through. And the repetition of that phrase in this way is pretty unique to these verses.

John uses this kind of thing to highlight structural markers in his letter. Second, the idea of being born of God appears in 2, 29.

[8 : 07] And then it reappears in chapter 3, verses 9 and 10. And that idea carries through to 3, 11 and 12 with Cain being talked about as being of the evil one in the way that 2, 29, it talks about being born of him.

So the idea of being born of God or born of someone else. And third, notice at the start of the previous section that we looked at last time, 2, 15, a very strong imperative.

Do not love the world. And then look at chapter 3, verse 13. The start of the next section, I think. Do not be surprised.

And so the unity throughout the passage that we've read centers around the idea of birth, being born of God or of the devil. Well, that's enough on the structure.

Let's get into the detail. And the first thing we see in this passage is verses 2, 28 to 3, 3. A concealed birth. A concealed birth.

[9 : 17] When we receive the gospel word, when our eyes are opened to see Jesus as Lord and Savior, then we have undergone a truly glorious but unseen birth or rebirth.

All that we are now in Christ is not immediately obvious. Until the darkness and the world pass away, we cannot and will not see the full reality of what has happened to us.

There are two key ideas that are used throughout the passage. The idea of appearing. 2, 28. When he appears. Chapter 3, verse 2.

It's used twice. Has not yet appeared. And when he appears. And we see it again in chapter 3, verse 5. And chapter 3, verse 8.

That's the first key idea. Appearing. Appearances. And the second is being born. The picture of birth. Of children.

[10 : 20] Of lineage. See it as I've already mentioned in 2, 29. It's there again in 3, verse 1. Children of God. 3, verse 2. God's children.

3, 9. Born of God. We see it twice. And 3, 10. Children of God. Or children of the devil. And the key point that John makes is that those who continue with the apostles, well, they really are the children of God.

Adopted by him. Regenerated. Given new birth. Spiritual birth. To belong to the Father. Look at 2, 28. John says, Little children, abide in him.

That is, remain in Jesus. Continue with the apostolic gospel. So that when he appears, when he comes back, we might have confidence. Not confidence that's a subjective feeling.

Confident like before a sports match. You're confident Ireland are going to win the Grand Slam. Or an exam. You're confident you might do well. Which, of course, these things can be wishful thinking.

[11 : 27] No, the confidence here is confidence in the one in whom we abide. Real, grounded, and sure confidence.

Continue with Jesus. And at the last day, there will be no need to be afraid or ashamed. Because on that day, you will be received and welcomed as God's children.

For that's what we are. Chapter 3, verse 1. Now, look at chapter 2, verse 29. And notice John's point.

He's saying what is true of Jesus is true of his people. If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

Jesus is righteous. And as we are joined to him, as his spirit breathes life into us, we too live out righteousness. Righteousness is not possible outside of the spirit of Christ at work in his people.

[12 : 33] However, when we are born again in Jesus, it's not possible for us to not practice righteousness. It will happen. Because he is living within us.

Now, it's important to remember here in 1 John that the tone of this letter is one of reassurance. John isn't asking, do you have these things?

Are these things true of you? Okay, well then you are a believer. He's not giving the Christians a test to see, do they pass it? Are they really a Christian? No, he's making plain what is true of them. Saying, you are God's children. You are these things because you are believers, because you are with us, the apostles. You haven't departed the gospel of the apostles. You have remained and so these things are true of you.

Don't doubt them because of those who have departed. He's saying, verse 29, because you know the one who the apostles have seen, heard and touched, because you know that Jesus is righteous, you know that he produces righteousness in his people, in you.

[13 : 44] And so 3.1, John says, you are God's children. Notice, there isn't a question about whether this is true. John is asserting it.

See what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God. Note the tone of wonder in John's words. Spiritual rebirth, adoption as God's children, is awe-inducing. See what kind of love it is. It's divine love that would grant to mere men the indescribable nobility of being adopted into God's family.

Granted every privilege that belongs to his son. That is good news, wondrous news that cannot be but from eternity. News that breaks into this world and esteems us and transforms our aching anguish at life in this dark world.

It transforms it into happy hope. And look how emphatic it is. See what kind of love the Father has given to us that we should be called children of God and so we are.

[14 : 55] John doesn't just state it. He reaffirms it. Making sure we know that it isn't just a name or some sort of honorary title that doesn't really mean anything. It isn't just that we can be called children of God.

We are children of God says John. A truly glorious birth has happened to us. The people of God are adopted into his family and so receive the promise of an inestimable inheritance.

An inheritance that is imperishable and undefiled and unfearing kept in heaven for us. Blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms. Given everything.

But there is a reality to the birth that mustn't be missed. Remember the other key idea throughout this passage? Not just born of God but the idea of things that have yet to appear.

Look at the rest of verse 1. The words and so we are end the sentence in a hopeful and encouraging place but look at the next sentence. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

[16:10] Adoption into God's family means being joined to Jesus with all that that means. And one of the plain implications of being united to Jesus is that this world is not where we will be recognized for what we truly are.

and this world is not where we will receive and be all that we are. If God's son our older brother the Lord Jesus if he lived in obscurity in this world then obscurity it will be for us.

The family resemblance will engulf us too. So the wonder expressed by John in verse 1 about the magnitude of God's love for his people well that is a wonder that will only be recognized and appreciated by God's people.

And so verse 2 John says beloved we are God's children now there is no doubting that but he goes on and what we will be has not yet appeared.

And so the reality of life in this age where darkness and the world are passing away is that what we are is not yet obvious. We absolutely are God's children wonderfully and graciously adopted to our glorious inheritance but it doesn't look like it.

[17:38] Not yet. But the day is coming when faith will give way to sight when our likeness to him will no longer be by faith alone but by sight.

A day when we no longer need to behold him and his glory only by faith dimly but instead we'll look upon him and see him as he is.

And it is only then that we will be like him completely. Look carefully at chapter 3 verse 2 John says we know that when he appears we shall be like him because we shall see him as he is.

There is something about seeing Jesus at his return that will do something to us. It will make us like him fully finally and forever. But how?

Well look at verse 3 for now as we hope in Jesus we are enabled by him to become increasingly like him to become pure as he is pure to become holy as he is holy.

[18:44] And so a part of our progressive sanctification part of our progress in holiness is rooted in our comprehension of the character of Christ. Christ. And on the day of Christ's return we will see him in his full and undiluted glory and such a vision will be the means of perfecting us.

And I take it that on that day when the darkness and the world have finally passed away we will be able to fully comprehend him and see him as he is for we won't be spoiled anymore by the darkness and by the world.

But these things are not yet. Now I am sure that I am not the only one who finds the scriptures constant reminders of what life in this age is like to be a real help.

When we knew what it is like to be in the firing line to be acquainted with hostility the scriptures remind us again and again that that doesn't mean we are getting it all wrong.

When we knew the torturous battle and struggle with sin when we are brought to tears with how prone we are to wonder that doesn't mean that we are getting it all wrong.

[20:04] When we look around and see peers flourishing in work and in family life and seemingly having it all and it just feels like our time and our talents and our treasure are pushed to breaking point that doesn't mean that we are getting it all wrong.

The scriptures remind us of that again and again and it is a great encouragement. As we continue the apostles and their gospel we are God's children now and what we will be has not yet appeared so don't lose heart that is the way it is.

We haven't missed the main event and we aren't on the wrong path. Obscurity is the path we trod for it was the path of our older brother and it's a path to a glorious future.

So first a concealed birth but secondly verses 4 to 12 we see contrasting births contrasting births everyone who is not born of God is a child of the devil.

We either have the seed of God in us or the seed of Satan in us. There are two lineages in these verses two possible births children of God or children of the devil and which one we belong to makes all the difference in the world and it will only be at the last day that the full extent of whose children we are and what that means is made plain.

[21:45] It isn't possible to depart from the apostolic gospel and still be close to the family and fold of the Lord. That is not possible. Now looking at these verses that we read can appear to be somewhat confusing or perhaps even alarming to those with a tender conscience.

the difficulty here is that it can appear that John is talking about some kind of sinless perfection. For example verse 6 no one who abides in him keeps on sinning.

Oh dear we might think I'm in big trouble. Well before we look at the detail in these verses let me deal with that concern as an aside. The translators of the ESV have applied some interpretation to try and help us here.

So as Paul read look at verse 4 they translate it as everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness.

Same in verse 8 whoever makes a practice of sinning. Verse 9 whoever makes a practice of sinning. And also in verse 9 he cannot keep on sinning.

[23 : 03] sinning. The language we have in the ESV makes this sound like John is talking about habitual sin repeated regular ongoing sin. And I can understand why they've translated it like that.

I think it's to help the Christian understand that whilst we are to have no part with sin in this life that isn't possible because what we truly are in Christ has not yet been fully revealed.

But whilst it isn't possible to be absolutely free from sin's presence we are to make war with it. Not letting it be the habit of our lives to give in forevermore.

And those are important truths that I think the translators are wanting to uphold and that we need to wrestle with and understand those truths. But I'm not sure that that's what John's talking about here.

Before we do look at what John's talking about let me just say very briefly if you knew well the battle with sin and if you're reading these verses despairing here are three things to remember.

[24 : 09] Repentance brings reassurance. John has already said that if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess them then he is faithful and just to forgive.

We have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous. Friends being troubled by sin being grieved by it is a good sign not a worrying one.

Struggle is the sign of life. So repentance brings reassurance but resistance also brings reassurance. For the times we do give in to sin for the believer there will also be times that we don't. Every time temptation has put itself in your way and you've run from it or edged away from it or fumblingly resisted it that too is a sign of life.

So repentance and resistance and finally righteousness brings reassurance. The believer has God's spirit working within them and so the spirit will work righteousness in us.

[25 : 18] We won't just grow in resisting sin but also in doing right. And so there's reassurance for us when we see signs of growing maturity and godliness.

When we're more easily able to do the things that we are to do. And friends there will be times when it seems that our old nature our sinful nature will and is prevailing.

But listen to Calvin's words on this. He says when God regenerates his elect the seed that he puts within them is incorruptible.

it may sometimes be stifled but when all religion seems to be extinct in a believer a live coal is hid under the ashes and that coal cannot be extinguished for God's seed abides in the believer.

So I think whilst the ESV is trying to clarify us some of these things by using the language of habit I'm not sure that's actually where John is aiming at.

[26 : 26] The more accurate translation as Paul read in verse 4 is simply everyone who does sin does lawlessness verse 8 whoever does sin is of the devil.

And of course when read like that it can seem even more like what John is teaching here is beyond us all. But remember John is writing to soothe not to scrutinize.

He's writing to reassure a church that were shaken by those who departed from them not to examine them. And his pattern throughout the letter is to encourage those who remain and to expose those who have departed.

So I take it that chapter 2 verse 28 to 3 verse 3 is encouragement. He tells them you are God's children. And now from chapter 3 verse 4 onwards we see exposure.

He makes plain what is true of the departed. Remember the departed's claim back in chapter 1 verse 8. If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

[27 : 41] It's the kind of thing they were saying they had no sin. The departed had moved on from sin not by having left its presence behind. They moved on from it by wanting to pay no attention to its existence.

By denying its reality. And that can be done by diminishing sin, by making it no big deal. It's not really what God is interested in. Or it can be done by distorting sin, calling good what God calls evil.

And so in the midst of all of this, in verse 7, right at the heart of this section on sin, look at John's words. he's saying to the church, little children, let no one deceive you.

Don't buy what the departed are selling. And so John fleshes out what they are selling. Verses 4 to 7 run parallel to verses 8 to 10, giving us four kinds of pairs of phrases that go together that make clear what is true of the departed.

So the first pair clarifies the truth about the nature and origin of sin. And the pair is verse 4 and verse 8. Those who do sin are lawless, verse 4, and verse 8.

[28 : 58] Those who do sin are of the devil. We're familiar, aren't we, with those who want to mess around with the meaning of sin. We see national churches calling good what God calls wicked, claiming it's regressive and outdated to believe in certain sins.

We're told that progressive, sophisticated society can redetermine and reimagine what is the sin of our day. Well, the Bible won't let us do that whilst retaining the name Christian.

For John says sin is lawlessness. How do we know what sin is? We come to the law of God. A law derived from his very character and that is fixed.

It's revealed in history. It's objective. So John makes clear, sin is transgressing God's law, verse 4, and thus to do so removes any pretense of belonging to God.

And John says, verse 8, the departed are not born of God, like you are. No, they are born of the devil. Friends, when anyone claims to know better than God's law revealed in Scripture, when they claim to have an enlightened view of sin and righteousness, they are not a new prophet for our age.

[30 : 28] They haven't received a new word from the spirit, not the spirit of God anyway. No, they are the seed of Satan. in the same way that the church are joined to Jesus, becoming the children of God, purifying themselves as he is pure, while those who sin are of the devil, becoming more like him, who has been sinning from the very beginning.

John is making clear that there are two possible heritages, two seeds, two contrasting births. that's the truth about the nature and origin of sin.

And the second pair that we see shows us why being joined to Jesus makes all the difference. We read twice about Jesus appearing, verse 5, he appears in order to deal with sin, and verse 8, the second part of the pair, Jesus appears to deal with the devil.

Now, the typical assumption here about the use of appeared in verse 5 and verse 8 is that it's talking about the incarnation, that Jesus appeared by taking on flesh and coming to earth to take away sins and to destroy the works of the devil.

And of course, that's true, but I'm not sure that that is what John means here. One of the common readings of 1 John takes it that those who have departed, their big error, was denying in some way that Jesus came in the flesh.

[32 : 07] And so they take the prologue at the start of the letter, the first four verses, as being about the apostles testifying that they really saw, heard, and touched Jesus in the flesh.

And so that reading is carried throughout the whole letter focusing on Jesus' incarnation, the bodily Jesus. But we saw, when we looked at this at the start, that the language of the opening four verses speaks not only of Jesus' incarnation, but of his resurrection.

All the language is language used of those who had touched Jesus when he'd been raised. So it speaks of his resurrection and his ascension. The Jesus in view in 1 John is the glorious resurrected Jesus.

And where is this Jesus? where has he most recently appeared? Well, back to chapter 2, verse 1. John tells us he is with the Father there in the heavenly realms as our advocate and as the propitiation for our sins.

John's already assumed that that is where Jesus is by talking of his appearance that is to come in chapter 3, verse 2. And the Bible doesn't only speak of Jesus' appearing as being his incarnation and his return.

[33 : 35] Turn over to Hebrews chapter 9. Hebrews speaks of Jesus as the great high priest who makes propitiation for our sins.

The same language that John has already used. And look at Hebrews chapter 9 verse 24. For Christ has entered not into holy places made with hands which are copies of the true things but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf.

And verse 26. But as it is he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

God I take it that John isn't referring to Jesus appearing in the flesh instead John is referring to Jesus appearing at God's side in the holiest of holies to put away sin in Hebrew language or in John's language to take away sin so that in a very real way the children of God do not sin even though that isn't obvious right now and the works of the devil are dismantled so that he can lay no claim upon us for the resurrected Jesus in his high priestly role is advocating for us the whole time and it is as if we have Christ's perfect record the record of the one verse five in whom there is no sin true of Jesus and so true of all who are born of

God that's why John can say verse nine no one born of God does sin John is teaching sinless perfection but it's Jesus sinless perfection which becomes ours when we're born of God being joined to Jesus makes such a difference it removes the devil's claim on us the third pair the third pair exposes what is then true of the departed verse six and verse nine it follows from what Jesus appearing means that verse six no one who abides in him does sin and no one who does sin has seen or known him the departed claim greater spirituality and purity and knowledge but friends those who abandon the apostles prove only one thing that they have never seen or known [36 : 48] Jesus that's John's conclusion departing is surrendering the name Christian because there's no Christ for them John exposes the departed they have neither seen God nor known him and verse nine encouragement for those who remain no one born of God sins for God seed abides in him he cannot do sin because he has been born of God the live coal is lit and burning never to be extinguished so what is the key to greater purity the departed claim it but they don't have it so what is it John says that it's already ours how do we escape sin we continue in Jesus and what is true now by faith will one day appear by sight we are

God's children now and what will be has not yet appeared but it will for now we are without sin by faith in our union with Christ we're hid with him but then we will be without sin by sight through union with our bridegroom at the great wedding feast of the last day and so John lands his message with the last pair verse seven let no one deceive you whoever practices righteousness is righteous as he is righteous John's saying there's a family resemblance be clear about that whoever practices righteousness is righteous as he is righteous those who try and excuse away sin to redefine it who abandon God's law they're not righteous how could they possibly be the departed aren't righteous but the children of God are and verse so whose children are the departed are they the children of God or the children of the devil well John says look at the righteousness look at what they think about sin and look at how they treat the brothers do you see how John lands this when the departed broke fellowship with the apostles and when they went out from this church they were most assuredly not loving the brothers in fact chapter 2 verse 10 whoever loves his brother abides in the light and in him there's no cause for stumbling but whoever hates his brother is in the darkness

John is saying the departed hate and that only serves to expose that they are children of the devil and not of God that's why they've left if verse 11 they truly loved one another they wouldn't have departed verse 12 John finishes with a very pointed illustration Cain who was of the evil one a child of the devil Cain murdered his brother why because his brother was righteous and he was not being God's children now promises a wonderful future but we won't look like we have such an esteemed heritage and that brings temptations and trials doesn't it when there are people who abandon the faith and distort it and bid us to come with them on a journey to greater knowledge and prosperity and spirituality and all the rest that can be tempting can't it it can look like they're right in this world when bishops and archbishops tell you that a new path is the way to greater faithfulness they can sound convincing even as they abandon and reject the apostles very very often when a church is in danger from a false form of

Christianity the temptation to buy into the distorted gospel comes from the cost of sticking with the true one it's hard because we don't yet appear as what we are abiding in the true gospel is costly abandoning the true gospel can be very cozy and so we need to be prepared that the danger to us as a church from false teaching will probably not be in crass and overt rejections of the bible not at first anyway one of the classic traits of the liberal theology that worms its way into churches to spread its poison is that it casts itself as reasonable sensible positive and it will always lay claim to Christ and to being Christian but things are not always as they appear they'll make promises like enhancing your spirituality bringing life and vitality to it in a way that's not rooted in dusty old doctrine that was only really created by men and that stifles

Christian virtue and experience they'll promise let's get back to Jesus the very essence of him and his love and let's leave behind all the unhelpful paraphernalia constructed by men who like to seek power people like Paul join us to enjoy liberated religion greater knowledge that isn't confined to an age long past but is contemporary and understands the complexity and nuance of life in our sophisticated world join us for greater purity because we know what virtue really means today and so we're the ones who can reinterpret and redefine what sin is for such a people as us so join us to be freed from perpetually feeling guilty about sin we have the answer well those who departed in chapter 2 verse 19 made such claims offering and claiming something else something better but one thing will always be true with that direction of travel greater alignment with the world and so greater recognition by the world but friends remember the world did not recognize [43 : 27] Jesus and it did not align with him as it was for Jesus so it is for all of God's children and I think we can take it that the more we're actually like our older brother the more we're actually like the Lord Jesus then the more this world will be hostile to us like Cain to Abel the more we are like Jesus the less winsome we'll be to the world how we as a church are perceived by the world is primarily linked to the world's hatred of Jesus because we don't just have distinct and separate lineages but discordant ones lineages marked by strife John makes theological reality clear those who depart from the apostles are children of the devil but those who continue with the apostles are God's children now and what we will be will one day appear we don't need to be offered more we don't need to look for more everything will be ours when we finally see Jesus as he is John says little children abide in him so that when he appears we may have confidence let's pray oh lord help us we pray in this gospel age that we wouldn't be shaken or overcome by all that would assail us and grant to us the grace we need to abide in your son seeing reality always through the eyes of faith and so help us not to lose sight of the great unseen realities of eternity and of heaven and hell so that we would be pleased to walk as Jesus walked that we might be glorified as he was glorified and it's in his dear name we pray amen to he does it drops