

1John 2:1-2 (READ 1:8-2:2)

Nothing John has written thus far can be called an endorsement to sin

But it is possible that some might misunderstand his statements

And come to the wrong conclusion

After all he did write that we would sin

And some might argue – “If sin is inevitable, why struggle against it? You will sin no matter what you do. So instead of struggling and failing, let’s just do it.”

Didn’t John say - that

There is forgiveness of sin through what Jesus did and continues to do

All right “Why worry about committing sin? If God forgives it, the outcome is assured. Why not sin more, so God can forgive more and get more glory.”

That way we are both happy

I think it was Voltaire who said, “I love to sin, God loves to forgive sin. It has been admirably arranged.”

John’s words do not say this of course,

Nor do his principles lead to those conclusions

In fact they lead in exactly the opposite direction

But in order to make sure there is no misunderstanding

John changes direction and begins a new thought

He addresses the problem of sin in the Christian directly

John issues a call to holiness that is based on two Christian certainties

The promise of God to forgive sin

The work of Christ

The Promise of God

The New Testament makes it clear that

Christians are no longer slaves to sin

Every one of us has been given the spiritual means to have victory over sin

Rom 6 – Do not let sin reign in your mortal body, so that you obey its lusts, and do not go on presenting the members of your body to sin as instruments of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God... For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace

The Law made the demands of holiness but provided no power to fulfill them

As a result the Law doesn’t save us – it actually condemns us

It sets forth the standard by which we are to measure our heart

And it gives us no help to change our heart to meet its standards
So the Law is a constant reminder of our inability to save ourselves
That is the magnificent aspect of grace
Grace doesn't show you how bad you are and leave you there
Grace meets you where you are saves you and then changes you
When you were saved you became a new creation
It will be contrary to your new nature to abuse God's grace
And revel in sin
John reminds us we are human - so we still have a sin nature
But his intent is to encourage us to consistent holiness
We are regenerate people indwelt by the Holy Spirit
And we have been given power over habitual sin
We are the only people in the world who can choose not to sin
Everything the unsaved does is sinful – even the nice things they do
They have no choice – they must sin – they are captive to it
But you have been given the power to choose righteousness over sin
So for you sin is not an accident – it is not a mistake – it is a choice
Now I want to stop here and explain something
When we are first saved we have sins that we do not know are sins
We think of them as personality flaws or rough spots
Then as we grow in grace and the knowledge of the Lord
The Holy Spirit begins to show us that that part of us we think of as rough
Is actually a part of us that is uncrucified flesh
It isn't a personality flaw – it is sin
That was one of the reasons I said last week - that
As we walk in the light we will have an increasing sensitivity to sin
And as the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, He gives us power over it
And then - if we live with unconfessed sin
Sin begins to uncontrollably pop up in other areas of our lives
Unrepentant sin in your life causes you to sin more and you can't stop it
That is one of the reasons repentance and confession is so important
Keep short accounts with God`
But generally speaking we know when we sin
And we sin because we choose to sin

John echoes in a concise way what Paul's writes in Romans 6

What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law, but under grace? May it never be!.. Thanks be to God, having been freed from sin, you have become slaves of righteousness

As the first chapter closes John gives us a dual test of true salvation

You must embrace God's forgiveness and you must be a confessor of sin

Embrace God's forgiveness means to reckon it to be true

And accept the freedom it brings

Embracing God's forgiveness will make a confessor of sin

Because the Spirit within you will convict you when you do sin

And you will want that peace and joy which comes from right relationship

Genuine believers are people whose sin debt has been paid

And yet are eager to confess their sins

For they desire the power of the new life in the Spirit

We were saved to live lives that glorify God and advertise Jesus

When we walk in the light we are able to rise above our old nature

In Christ and only in Christ we can conquer sin

The old nature will rise

So we will sin but God promises us forgiveness

I'm not certain but I believe that in every other religion

When they sin against their god they must atone for it in some way

Only in Christ has every sin you will ever commit already been atoned for

Jesus made atonement for your sin on the cross

So confess your sin to Him – He is there – He already knows

He is waiting for you to come so that He can freely forgive you

That is the promise of God

Let's consider the Work of Christ

John uses two phrases to describe the Person of Jesus

The first phrase is - Jesus Christ our advocate

If anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ

Jesus is our divine defense attorney

Advocate means one who speaks on our behalf

In the Greek it literally means one called alongside to help

It is the same word Jesus used for the Holy Spirit

Here it is used in a legal sense

Jesus is the one called in to help us in the courtroom of God

William Barclay – We are not to think of Jesus as having gone through His life on the earth and His death on the cross, so now He is finished with Men. He still bears the concern of men upon His heart.

Paul writes that Jesus is seated at the right hand of God interceding for us

There is a huge difference however between our concept of an attorney

And the activity of Jesus

We usually think of an attorney basing his defense

Upon the merits and character of his client

Consider my client - would he do something like that

Well that isn't how it works in heaven

Jesus pleads our case based upon His character and merit

If God's judgment of us was based on our merits

The outcome would be certain

It would be swift and it would be deadly

Ours is not a civil case – it is a felony trial

There are only two verdicts possible - not guilty - or the death penalty

God has the power - the authority - and the will

To condemn every sinner who has ever lived to hell

Jesus wasn't speaking casually when He said

Do not fear those who can destroy the body, but fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell

The great news is if you are born again you do not have to fear divine justice

You have been declared innocent because your Advocate has pleaded your case

And Jesus always gains acquittal for those who have placed their faith in Him – The outcome is 100% certain

Jesus is a unique Person because on the one hand He was human like us

Walked on the earth – he hungered thirst got tired – just like we do

But on the other hand He is God

Jesus Christ was the God-man

His is the second Adam come to this earth

And lived the life the first Adam was supposed to live

Because we were born in the first Adam's likeness

We have sinned like Adam

Jesus death paid the price for all born in the likeness of Adam

Notice He is not called the righteous Jesus Christ

He is Jesus Christ the Righteous – in the NIV – the Righteous One

Can you imagine this – your defense attorney is telling the judge that your ok – and the judge asks him – didn't I convict you – well yes – aren't you on death row – yes – and your now pleading his case

You know what the judges next words would be – guilty - next case

Jesus is sinless and so when He addresses the Righteous Judge

They are on the same ground – they are alike – each one is perfectly holy

And His testimony is always received

Jesus position as our advocate makes Him our great High Priest

And His priesthood is unique because of His righteousness

When the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies to sacrifice

Before he offered sacrifices for others what did he have to do

His first sacrificed an animal for himself

He was just as sinful as everybody else – He needed atonement

But Jesus is different – He is the Righteous One

Heb – We have a High Priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices for His own sins, and then the sins of the people: He died once for all when He offered up Himself. For by one offering He has perfected for all time those who are set apart. Having offered one sacrifice for sins for all time, He sat down at the right hand of God

In the Holy of holies where sacrifices were made there was no place to sit

The High Priest stood there hour after hour day after day – year after year

His work was never finished

But Jesus Christ the Righteous One made one sacrifice

An His one sacrifice paid the price for sins for all men for all time

That is what Jesus meant when He said – It is finished

So His work being finished forever, Jesus sat down

He is seated right next to the Father

Which of course is a perfect place to talk to God about you

That is Jesus Christ our Righteous Advocate

The second phrase John uses is Jesus Christ Our Propitiation

John writes - He Himself is the propitiation for our sins

The term propitiation is theological – it's a religious word

Propitiation means a sacrifice to appease an angry God

When John says that Christ is the propitiation for our sins

He means that

Christ's sacrificial death satisfied the demands of God's justice

And it satisfied His holy wrath

Because Jesus was eternal and infinitely holy

His death satisfied the Law for all men who believe – for all time

By His death Jesus brought peace between sinful man and angry God

That is propitiation

We don't have time to get into it but there is a direct link

Between what John is saying here and the Mercy Seat

The Mercy Seat was the cover of the Ark – the lid

It was between the Shekinah glory cloud above the Ark

And the tablets of the Law within the Ark

When the priests would offer a sacrifice

They would sprinkle the Mercy Seat with blood from the sacrifices

It was the place where atonement for sin occurred

The sprinkled Mercy Seat is a picture of the finished work of Jesus

It was where the blood was applied and sins forgiven

The blood was between the broken Law and the holiness of God

Now the blood of animals could only cover sin – it could never take it away

The sacrificing of animals was a picture

Of the true sacrifice of Christ which would fully satisfy the Father

If the OT system of sacrifice had been able to satisfy God

Two things would follow

First they wouldn't have had to do it over and over again

And God's Son wouldn't have left heaven for He wouldn't have needed to

But OT sacrifice didn't appease God and Christ came as the perfect sacrifice

Another term we use for propitiation is atoning sacrifice – NIV

An atoning sacrifice is necessary because of sin

God's justice must be satisfied

I watched the movie National Treasure. To find the treasure and save the Declaration of Independence, the hero was breaking every law in the land. When he had achieved his goal he turned himself in and said – I really don't want to go to prison

The FBI agent told him - Somebody has to pay

God told Adam that if he sinned he would surely die

The wages of sin is death – somebody has to pay

The sacrificing of animals was a foretype of the real payment of sin
That would be made by Jesus perfect sacrifice
Jesus death on the cross perfectly satisfied the justice of God
He paid the price of death for the sins of all who come to Him by faith
Every sin committed by every person will be punished in one of two ways
Either God's wrath will be satisfied when a sinner is in hell
Or it will be satisfied when –
Moved by the Spirit of God a person places his or her faith in Jesus
And Christ's death as payment for sin is credited to their account
God demanded an unblemished sacrifice
If Jesus had sinned - His death would have been for His own sins
But he didn't
He is righteous, undefiled, innocent and separate from sinners
Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for the sins of others
Now listen He was not just an agent who made atonement for sin
He wasn't just a High Priest who sacrificed a sin offering
Jesus is the High Priest but He is also the sin offering
Listen to Isaiah - He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities, the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him. The Lord was pleased to crush Him, if He would offer Himself as a guilt offering - an atoning sacrifice
The God-man Jesus in obedience to His Father
Offered Himself as a sacrifice to pay for our sins
The entire divine plan of redemption
Flows from the Father's love for unworthy sinners
In His Gospel John wrote – This is love, not that we love God, but that He loves us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins

Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world
The phrase but also for the whole world has caused a lot of misunderstanding
This phrase has been interpreted to mean unlimited atonement
That Jesus death provides salvation for all people without exception
Now the term world does means the entire earthly realm of mankind
But to make it mean every person in the world ignores other Scripture
Let me give just a few
But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who

believe in His name

If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved

For by grace you have been saved through faith

All of the verses I just gave relate to the gift of salvation

And every one of them mentions faith or belief

In the Book of the Acts you won't find one occasion where

When someone asks how to be saved the answer is - don't worry about it

Jesus sacrifice was enough to pay for every sin ever committed by men

So the death of Jesus was universal

It was sufficient

But the salvation of God is individual

If you receive Him, He gives you the right to become a child of God

If you confess that Jesus is Lord – if you believe in your heart, God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved

For by grace you have been saved through faith

Scripture is clear that the Savior's death satisfies fully and eternally

The demands of God's wrath for those who believe

And only those who believe

Jesus death had infinite value and could have covered all mankind

But it was designed by God to secure righteousness

Only for those who believe

Only for those whom God foreknew

What John meant by the whole world

Is that Jesus died for the Jews and Jesus died for the Gentiles

Not just Israel

But the whole of the world has been impacted by the Lord's death

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life

Propitiation is one of the great words of the Bible

It stands there with justification and redemption

Scripture tells us that God is angry with sinners every day

How could that anger be satisfied

Jesus took it all on Himself – Jesus suffered the wrath of God

So that you and I won't have to -

Charles Wesley

And can it be that I should gain in interest in the Savior's blood
Died He for me who caused His pain, for me who Him to death pursued
Amazing love, how can it be that Thou, my God should die for me
He left His Father's throne above, so free so infinite His grace
Emptied Himself of all but love, and bled for Adam's helpless race
'tis mercy all, immense and free, for O my God, it found out me
Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray, I woke, the dungeon flamed with light
My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose went forth and followed Thee
No condemnation now I dread, Jesus and all in Him is mine
Alive in Him, my living Head, and clothed in righteousness divine
Bold I approach the eternal throne, and claim the crown through Christ my own
Amazing love, how can it be that Thou my God should die for me
John's conclusion is obvious
Since Jesus has done so much for us it naturally leads us to praise Him
And we do that - should it not also lead us to holy living
Should it not cause us to want to fulfill John's desire that we not sin
That's also what Paul thinks
2Cor – For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;
and He died for all, that they should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again
on their behalf
Who are you going to live for