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**A0422 -- May 30, 2004 -- 1 John 1:10-2:2 -- Our Advocate**

## **5. HVP GIMMICK #3: DENIAL OF PERSONAL SIN**

***10 If (ean; 5<sup>th</sup> Class Conditional Clause #5) we say that we have not sinned (amartano; Perfect), we make Him a liar (pseusteis) and His word (logos) is not (Present) in us.***

This is the third HVP Gimmick John predicts believers will try to deal with the tension between a Holy God and sinful believers. The first HVP Gimmick was in verse 6: The Carnal Lying Believer. This is where the believer pumps out human good and claims it is divine good. The second HVP Gimmick was found in verse 8: Denial of the Sin Nature. This is the believer who makes a claim to perfectionism. Finally we are looking at the last HVP Gimmick in v. 10: Denial of Personal Sin. ***If we say we have not sinned*** is the 5<sup>th</sup> and final conditional ***if*** clause. ***Sinned*** is *hamartano* (hamartiology = study of sin) and is in the perfect tense. This means that a personal sin was committed sometime in the past and is having effects in the present. The effect is that the believer is walking in the darkness, he's out of fellowship. He was in the light and the light revealed sin but the believer dishonestly says he has not sinned. This starts the downward road toward a potential sin pattern if the believer does not acknowledge the sin.

## **EXCURSUS ON PERSONAL SIN**

Don't forget that there are consequences to personal sin. What happens is you sin and the effects crop up later in your life. This is an important principle to remember. For whatever a man sows, this he will also reap (Gal. 6:7). In other words, we live in a created universe that is governed by *divine cause-effect*.<sup>1</sup> When most people sin they think they are getting ahead. What they fail to realize is that they are not free from the consequences of their actions. When you sin you are not getting ahead of the game, there are consequences down the line. When you sin you are not trusting that God has something better for you if you resist the temptation. When we sin we are acting as if *divine cause-effect* doesn't exist. IOW's we are acting as if God doesn't exist. So, when you sin

two things, at minimum, take place; 1) you have to deal with the consequences and 2) because of failure to live by faith you are missing out on what God would have provided had you not sinned.

John says that when the light shows us our sin and we claim to be without Personal Sin *we make Him a liar*. To deny personal sin is to attack the character of God. Has anyone ever accused you of being a liar? Has anyone ever told you to your face that you were lying? When we deny what the light has shown us we are accusing God, to His face, of being a liar. The word of God teaches that no man is without personal sin (Rom. 3:23). Only God is without sin. So, it is clear then that this 3<sup>rd</sup> HVP Gimmick fails to solve the problem. Denying your sin amounts to an attack on God's character. When you say this *His word is not* in you. This means that *His word is not* in you in a *dynamic* and *effective* way because if it was you would acknowledge your sin. His word would be directing your thoughts and behavior. This does not mean you're not a believer. The verb *is* is in the Present tense meaning that at that moment *His word is not* in you, not that you are an unbeliever. This is nothing more than what John has told us in verses 6 and 8.

In verse 6 John told us that if we claim fellowship but walk in the darkness *we lie and do not practice the truth*. In verse 8 John says that if we claim to have no sin nature, *the truth is not in us*. Now, in verse 10 he is saying essentially the same thing, if we claim to be without personal sin *His word is not in us*. All three of these conclusions are essentially equivalent. Notice that all Christians, including the apostles may not have the truth in them in a *dynamic* and *effective* way such that the truth is directing your thoughts and behavior. It is by the grace of God that He provided 1 John 1:9 to solve these human view point gimmicks.

### **1 John 2:1**

(Our Advocate)

*My little children (teknion), these things I write (vv. 5-10) to you so that you do not sin. But if anyone sins we have an advocate (parakletos) with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous (dikaios):*

The strength of John's insistence in vv. 5-10 that all Christians do sin might lead some to conclude that sinning is no big deal or that it is inevitable. This could result in believers not even trying to resist sin. This is far from John's intent! Notice how John addresses his readers; he uses the tender word *little children* (Gk. *teknia*). This is an endearing title for a fellow believer, these are probably John's spiritual children. John never doubts that his readers are believers anywhere in the book (cf. 1 John 2:12-14; 3:1, 2, 7, 18; 4:4; 5:13). However, John does not want his spiritual children to misunderstand his message. John's intention for writing *these things* is not to excuse or encourage sin as inevitable but rather *so that you do not sin*.

Let's review vv. 5-10 to see how this is so. Zane Hodges says, "In 1:5-10 John has stigmatized sin as something contrary to the very nature of God who is light. If a person takes a lenient view of sin, he can easily make the false claim to fellowship in 1:6. Or, he may not take seriously the need to receive cleansing from it, even as he walks in the light where God is (verse 7). Or, he may fall into the superficial view that since he is not *conscious* of sin, he therefore *has* none (verse 8). He may also take lightly his need for confession of sin (verse 9), or may rationalize his sin and deny it (verse 10). In fact everything the apostle has just written is designed to treat sin as a serious issue between God and the believer. It is an issue on which God demands full openness and honesty from anyone who wishes to have fellowship with Him."<sup>ii</sup>

John is therefore not encouraging Christians to cease resisting sin. The careful student of Scripture will realize that John is really encouraging them to realize the seriousness of sin and re-double their efforts to avoid it.

At the same time John does not leave reality. John realizes that although sin should be avoided believers can and still do sin. Therefore, John says, ***But if anyone sins we have an advocate (parakletos) with the Father.*** When we sin we are not left alone to wallow in our sin. When we sin we have an Advocate who will argue our case ***with the Father.***

#### WHAT EXACTLY IS AN ADVOCATE?

The Greek word for ***advocate*** is *parakletos*. It comes from two words, *para* meaning "alongside" and *kletos* meaning "called". So a *parakletos* is "one called alongside", "one summoned to another's aid". In the ancient world Paraclete was a legal term referring to an unpaid legal assistant. A Rabbi once said, "If someone is led to the place of judgment to be judged, he can be saved if he has great advocates."<sup>iii</sup> Philo understood "advocate" in a strict legal sense as the one who spoke before rulers on behalf of the accused. So, an advocate is very similar if not identical to a Lawyer. The only difference is that your Advocate doesn't get paid. Boy, wouldn't that be nice down here on earth, well, not for the Lawyers, but anyway. The usage here in 1 John 2:1 is one of 5 uses in the NT. It is used four times by John in his gospel, all in the context of the Upper Room Discourse which is, interestingly, the only section of John's gospel that is written to believers (cf. Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). Every time John uses Paraclete in his gospel it is in reference to the Holy Spirit. In 1 Jn. 2:1 however, John uses *parakletos* of Jesus Christ. Here the context makes it quite clear that what John has in mind is a trial in the courtroom of God. I want to show you what happens when you sin and how serious John says sinning really is.

SATAN, YOUR ACCUSER IN THE HEAVENLY COURTROOM: REV. 12:9-11

Turn to Rev. 12. Interestingly, this is the most symbolic chapter in the Bible and yet every symbol used in this chapter is explained either in the direct context or by comparing Scripture with Scripture. READ Revelation 12:9-11. The **first** thing we glean from this is that Satan has access to the heavenly courtroom of God located in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Heaven (2 Cor. 12:2) or what the Hebrews called “the Heaven of Heavens” (Heb. the *shamayim shamayim*; cf. Deut. 10:14; 1 Ki. 8:27; 2 Chr. 6:18). His activities there are two-fold; *first*, Satan gets permission to tempt people. We discover in the Book of Job that Satan asks for permission to tempt earth dwellers (Job 1:6-12; 2:1-8). God does not tempt nor can He be tempted (James 1:13-15), but God does grant permission under His permissive sovereignty for Satan to tempt people. *Secondly*, Satan accuses believers. He *accuses* believers **before God day and night**. The **second** thing we can gather from this passage is that Satan’s work of accusing believers will cease at the middle of the Tribulation. The Tribulation is where this world is headed. It is the worst time this world will ever experience. It will begin sometime after the pre-trib Rapture where all believers will be “caught up” (Gk. *harpazo*) in the air to ever be with the Lord. It is a common fallacy to think that the Rapture begins the Tribulation. The OT teaches that what we know as the Tribulation was known to Israel as the Time of Jacob’s Trouble and the 70<sup>th</sup> Week of Daniel (Daniel 9:24-27). The Tribulation is for Israel not for the Church. This is one reason we believe a pre-trib Rapture and not a post-trib Rapture. It is the Time of Jacob’s trouble not the Church’s trouble, it is for Daniel’s people. As for the beginning of the Tribulation, Daniel 9:27 teaches that it will begin not with the Rapture but when the Antichrist signs a mighty (Heb. *gabar*) covenant with Israel for 7 years. The Rapture could happen days, months, or even years before the signing of this covenant. But, as we saw in Rev. 12, at the middle of the Tribulation, Satan will be cast down out of heaven and will no longer be able to accuse believers. Then, according to Matthew 24:15ff, comes the abomination of desolation in Israel’s temple as prophesied by Daniel. When Satan is cast down Our Lord says of this time on earth: ***For then there will be a great tribulation, such as has not occurred since the beginning of the world until now, nor ever will. "Unless those days had been cut short, no life would have been saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.*** It is then that court will no longer be in session, Satan will no longer be able to accuse the brethren as he is presently doing. With great wrath and fury he will concentrate all his military might on destroying God’s elect, which in the context of Matthew 24 is Israel.

#### VISION OF THE HEAVENLY COURT PROCEEDINGS: ZECH. 3:1ff

Now you know that Satan is accusing you when you sin, but what exactly does this heavenly courtroom look like? Do the Scriptures ever have a vision of court proceedings in the heavenly court? Actually there is one such passage. Turn to Zechariah 3; it’s close to the end of the OT in your minor prophets. Zechariah is the most apocalyptic letter of the OT. Three elements accompany Apocalyptic literature; 1) high degree of symbolism, 2) highly visionary, and 3)

angelic visitation for interpretation. In Zech. 3:1ff we have a vision of the courtroom of God. Here we have Joshua the high priest, representing the whole nation of Israel. He's standing before the angel of the Lord who is the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ. To the right hand of the pre-incarnate Christ stands Satan. To be in the position of the right hand is to be in the *position of advantage*. So, Satan had the position of advantage because the nation had given the *position of advantage* to Satan by their sin. Satan was pressing this advantage, claiming his rights over man and creation as the result of man's Fall. See, at Creation man was given dominion over the entire creation. When man fell he relinquished his rights over creation to Satan, so Satan now has dominion over creation which includes men. When God saves an individual, He claims that now it is His property. This angers Satan. When that individual or nation sins Satan presses his rights as owner of the individual or nation by pointing out the sin of the individual or nation in the courtroom of God. In this instance the pre-incarnate Christ, identified here as YHWH, rebukes Satan on the grounds that YHWH had chosen Jerusalem by His unmerited favor. Therefore, "Satan's attack was exposed as utterly groundless and unreasonable".<sup>iv</sup> Notice in verse 3 Joshua's condition. He is clothed in filthy garments standing before the angel of the Lord. What the Hebrew really means by *filthy garments* is "excrement". Not only was Joshua vilely dirty but his odor was offensive. In v. 4 YHWH has the *filthy garments* removed symbolizing the removal of sin *away from* Joshua and replaced with *festal robes*. This is a picture that is similar to what takes place in the courtroom of God every time you sin. Satan is accusing you, he's saying look at this vile sin and smelly odor. Just look at this, God, do you really claim this? You can't just let him off the hook. If you can let them off the hook why won't you let me off the hook? See, Satan hates it that God has re-possessed you. Satan wants to re-claim you as His own.

#### OUR ADVOCATE: JESUS CHRIST THE RIGHTEOUS

But this is not going to happen because you, as a believer, have an Advocate in that courtroom. Your advocate, Jesus Christ, in whose blood you have been washed clean, rebukes Satan's accusations. He says, I paid for that sin, each and every one of them. So, sin is a serious thing. Every time you sin this thing has to go to court, court session are going on day and night John tells us. So, John wants us to seriously stray from sin, but he also realizes that the reality is that we can and still do sin, and so he comforts us with the truth that we have an Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous who is an unpaid legal representative for you (YOU BRING NO MERIT, HE IS UNPAID). The Apostle Paul says in his masterpiece to the Romans, chapter 8, "<sup>33</sup> *Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;* <sup>34</sup> *who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.* <sup>35</sup> *Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?* <sup>36</sup> *Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE*

**CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."** <sup>37</sup> *But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.* <sup>38</sup> *For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,* <sup>39</sup> *nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Your accuser Satan is stronger than any possible earthly accuser could ever be but your Advocate is even infinitely more powerful than your accuser.

The fact that we have an Advocate lifts a heavy burden. The Christian is never left alone. The non-Christian is not being accused in heaven by Satan. Satan has the unbeliever in his clutches, why bother. The unbeliever is always left alone. He is alone and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12). He doesn't have an Advocate, he's left to defend himself. And the book of Romans chapter 1, verse 22 says that he has no defense (anapologetos; another legal term that means *without a defense*). This means he's standing naked before God. He has no Advocate. Who would be so foolish as to take up someone's case who has no defense? But we have an advocate, one who comes to our side when we sin to take up our case and rebuke Satan for trying to charge those who are justified by faith alone in Christ alone.

John calls our Advocate Jesus Christ, **righteous** (*dikao*). The word righteous means that God's character is the standard for what is right and wrong everywhere in and out of the universe. What this means is that Jesus Christ is righteous when He represents you in the heavenly court. How is Christ righteous to forgive our *unrighteousness*? He is qualified to forgive our *unrighteousness* because His sacrifice met God's requirements. He paid the payment sin demanded and so He is qualified to forgive you and to ever live as your Advocate, interceding for you day and night in the heavenly courtroom of the Father

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<sup>i</sup> The term *divine cause-effect* is used to distinguish it from *natural cause-effect*. *Divine cause-effect* means that God is the source of cause-effect. *Natural cause-effect* means that nature is the source of cause-effect. By *nature* is meant some principle independent from and irreconcilable with the God of Scripture. The two are in conflict over whether the universe is Personal or Impersonal. A Personal Universe means ultimately that as humans we are responsible. An Impersonal Universe ultimately means that humans are victims. What is necessary to prove which universe is the actual state of affairs involves which system provides the preconditions for intelligibility. No proponent of an Impersonal Universe has ever provided the necessary preconditions for such a universe. In other words, their system of thinking does not inherently contain the preconditions for intelligibility. Such preconditions are a pre-requisite.

<sup>ii</sup> Hodges, Zane. C., *The Epistles of John* (Irving, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 1999) 68.

<sup>iii</sup> Kittel and Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament: Vol. V* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 802.

<sup>iv</sup> Unger, Merrill F., *Unger's Commentary on the Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2002), 1977.

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