

What About This Sin Thing?

Part 2

1 John 1:10-2:2

As we continue looking at what John is teaching us about sin and the believer, there is, I believe, something beneficial for us to remember. All sins of a believer whether past, present, or future were taken care of at the moment of salvation. When we, as a sinner, trust Christ as our Savior we are “washed from our sins in his own blood.” according to **Revelation 1:5**. From that point of time on, God stops dealing with us and the sins we commit on occasion *as a sinner*. Instead, He deals with us *as a son*.

In light of a believer’s position and relation with God the Father, sin in the life of a believer is no longer a matter between a lawbreaker and a judge but rather between a Father and His child. John told us God is “faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” **verse 9**. He does not do that to indulge us but He does that because He is faithful to His promise and He always does what is right, even when we do not.

I am afraid we sometimes forget that we do not become a sinner when we sin but rather we sin because we are a sinner. Sin is *always* bad business. It is worse when it manifests in the life of one professing to know Christ as Savior. Still, when it happens, and it will happen on occasion (**but should never happen as a habit**,) God the Father will deal appropriately with His child about his sin, whatever his sin may be.

READ **verse 10**

Verse 10 states something rather simple on the surface but very profound when it is considered closely. In this letter, the Apostle makes a difference in “sin” as it relates to our fallen, depraved nature and “sins” or those acts we commit on occasion because we have such a nature. Here John reminds us God has repeatedly told us about our fallen, sinful condition in His Word. For instance, **Romans 3:23** states “...all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” In fact, in the first three chapters of Romans we find God declaring the whole world guilty before Him. In **Romans chapter 1** we find the heathen guilty, in **chapter 2** we find the hypocrite guilty, and in **chapter 3** we find the Hebrew guilty. In fact, the last phrase of **Romans 3:22** reads “there is no difference.”

So, if man believes and states they are sinless, as did the Gnostics of that day, then John said they are guilty of calling a God a “liar.” Wow! The verse goes on the say “and his word is not in...” anyone who would be so bold and so foolish enough to say such an untrue thing in light of all the Scripture states about the fallen condition of mankind, is, truly, not wise. In fact, he is not only a liar (as has already been said) but none of God’s Word can be found in him.

I don’t know about you, but I believe the best thing for a person confessing Jesus as Savior would be to confess their sins when committed, get their fellowship with God taken care of as quickly as possible, and then continue walking in the light as we have been called and instructed to do.

Chapter 2 continues with the subject of sin and the believer began in **chapter 1**. Here we will find something wonderful about the provision God has made for His believing child. Look at how tender and endearing this chapter begins, “My little children...” Talk about being intimate and specific! It is the Father giving wise and loving counsel to His little children.

Through John, God is addressing His born ones, His children. Those that have been “born from above” as Jesus taught Nicodemus in **John 3:7**. Those who have become “partaker of his divine nature.” according **2 Peter 1:4**.

Remember, one the purposes for which John wrote is easily seen here. It is that “ye sin not.” Pretty simple to understand is it not? God the Father moved John the Apostle to write that because He knows man...all men. (**John 2:24-24**) God is not providing man a license to sin here!. No!!! Sin is not to be the habit of life for a believer! If it is, that person is a sinner and not a son regardless of what he professes or proclaims. But what God has done is to make provision for His children because He knew that, on occasion, they would sin. If anyone wonders what God thinks about sin, all they have to do is take another look at Calvary.

People who do not understand the doctrines of the grace of God and the security of the believer wrongly think a believer has a license or liberty to sin. Nothing could be further from the truth and we see that stated here. Yet, as already has been stated, God knew His children would at times sin, so He made provision for those times. One of those provisions is that He gave then an “advocate” who happens to be His only begotten Son.

Please take notice of the phrase “And if any man sin,…” in **verse 2**. Here we find it is not a matter of if but when. Remember what we learned about the word “if”? Here is any example of how context will enable us to determine whether or not something before us is an hypothetical situation or is an already fulfilled condition. Since God has made provision for those times when His child commits a sin, wouldn’t it make since to understand what John is saying by reading it “And *when* any man sin”? I thing so...we have “an advocate.” Please note it does not say “we go and have an advocate with the Father” but rather “we have an advocate with the Father” and John identifies Him as “Jesus Christ the righteous.” In fact, according to **Hebrew 7:25**, **Hebrews 9:24**, and **Romans 8:34** Jesus is constantly making intercession for us. Let’s not forget that we are not only saved by His death, but we are also saved by His life. He died to save us and He lives to keep us.

What is an advocate? It is someone that “comes along the side of another.” The word comes from the Greek word “*parakletos*” which refers to “one who undertakes and champions another’s cause.” I like that don’t you!? When the accuser of the brethren (which is one of the titles of Satan) brings an accusation about us before the Throne of God, He does not bring a lie. He brings the truth. When this happens, our advocate, the sinless one (Christ our Savior) stands for the sinful one (you and I) and pleads our case on behalf of His righteousness, and by the way, He’s never lost a case.

I can imagine, in my mind how this might be. I can see the enemy of man’s soul approaching God’s Throne of “grace and mercy” with his accusations about me: unfortunately, they are true accusations. I can imagine God the Father listening (although He already knows) and as He listens, He turns to His Son as if to say, “What about this? What are We to do?” In my mind, I can see the Son raise one of His nail pierced hands and hear Him say, “This is one of mine! I have taken care of this long ago at a place called Calvary” and then I can imagine the Father turning back to the accuser as I hear Him say, “Case dismissed!”

This wonderful truth is set forth in the Book of **Zechariah 3:1-7** where we find “Joshua the high priest,” (representative of the people of God, the nation of Israel) “clothed with filthy garments,” only to find “Satan standing at his right hand to resist (or accuse) him.” As Satan began to speak, we hear “The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan: (“the angel of the Lord “ is the Lord Himself appearing in a pre-incarnate appearance which is known as a Christophany) even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire? And he answered

and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. And I said, Let then set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by.”

Nothing could better illustrate what an “advocate” is, what an advocate does, and where an advocate stands. I don’t know about you, but this kind of thing puts me on shoutin’ ground! **Verse 1** ends with something we don’t want to miss. It is the grounds on which Christ can do this sort of thing. That fact is that He is righteous. John Phillips says “**When God forgives us, He has our sin in view; when He justifies us, He has His Son in view.**”

The good news continues with **verse 2** where we learn something marvelous about our Lord and Savior. Actually, we learn He is all we need! In this verse we see He is our “propitiation.” What’s that? Well, propitiation comes from the Greek word “*hilasmos*” which speaks of that which propitiates. That clears it up doesn’t it? I didn’t think so. The word means Jesus Christ is both our mercy seat and the one who provides mercy. It speaks of atonement which is made for our sin and the place of that atonement. We learn Christ is both of those things. He is both our mercy seat and the atonement that brings to a sinner the mercy of God.

Let’s be cautious, though, with the word “propitiation.” If you look the word up, you may find a definition that gives the wrong impression about God. The definition may read something like we find in pagan usage which states propitiation means “to appease (which means to pacify or placate,) to conciliate to one’s self, to make a god (notice the little ‘g’) propitious to one.” That may apply to the little gods of man but it does not apply to our God!

When the Holy Spirit inspired John to use the word propitiation, He changed its meaning in a radical way. Almighty God, the one true God, is not small and petty like the gods made and imagined by man which needs “appeasing.” **He, a Holy God, does not need to be appeased** but His holiness does need to be maintained and satisfied. And in His grace and mercy He has provided both the propitiator (the person doing the work of atoning) and the propitiation (that which propitiates) in the person and work of His Son. The word propitiation points to the ground by which God is able to show mercy to sinful man. That ground is the work Christ

completed at Calvary when He not only died for the sinner but also died as the sinner.

It may be said a little more clearly like this. In the Old Testament the priest offered a spotless animal for a sacrifice for sin but *never* offered himself as the sacrifice! In the New Testament Christ Jesus, our Great High Priest, not only offered a sinless sacrifice but is Himself the sacrifice. No wonder the song writer wrote, "Oh what a Savior!"

The great Apostle brings **verse 2** to a close by stating one more marvelous and praiseworthy thing. It is this, the work Christ completed at Calvary is not only sufficient for the children of God but also for the whole of man. We find that when Christ died He died potentially for all men. But we also find it only becomes effective for a man when he chooses to accept the work Christ did on his behalf by faith. I say it often without apology. In light of what Christ did at Calvary there is no reason for any man, woman, boy, or girl to die lost and go to Hell, but sadly, far too many will. Make sure you are not one that does!

The next time we get together we will begin learning about the fact God is love. Just for a little challenge. Can you find how many times the word love or one of its cognate forms is found in **1 John**? I wonder if it will surprise you when you do as it surprised me when I discovered how many times it is there...