



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Assurance Part II 1 John 2:3-6

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Last week we gave extended attention to the relationship of Jesus and Propitiation since in 1 John 2:1,2 the “he” referred to is Jesus

There are a number of considerations we ought to address as it concerns Propitiation: 1) Its **Nature**, 2) Its **Necessity**, 3) Its **Negotiator**, 4) Its **Motive**, and finally, 5) Its **Extent**.

Our interaction on the **Nature** of propitiation settled on the aspect of appeasement, satisfaction, or placating. By design, to propitiate is to appease, satisfy, or placate. A Sovereign, holy, righteous God has been offended by mankind such that He is “...angry with the wicked every day...” (Psalm 7:11) He demands to be satisfied.

The **Necessity** of propitiation is grounded in the reality of Sin both in terms of its nature and manifestations. Our first parents, Adam and Eve transgressed the only prohibition they were given and in so doing, sinned. The consequence of this act resulted in their death, spiritually, and in the passing on of this state of spiritual death to their offspring (Gen. 5:3).

The **Negotiator** of propitiation is Jesus, the God-Man (John 1:14) who offers himself as the propitiatory offering, thereby appeasing God on the behalf of those belonging to Jesus (in John’s audience, those who have not defected).

The **Motive** for this propitiatory action has its origin in the character of God. He took the initiative and sent His Unique Son to be both the propitiator and propitiation. John takes great delight in focusing on this reality.

Finally, the **Extent** of this propitiation. John says in verse 2 “the sins of the whole world” and I offered a reflection from a saint from centuries past:

The father imposed His wrath due unto, and the Son underwent punishment for, either:

- 1) All the sins of all mankind
- 2) All the sins of some of mankind
- 3) Some of the sins of some of mankind

We did not engage in any interaction on this. Anyone care to comment now?

We turn to verses 3-6 and John’s attention to the issue of one’s assurance. As we noted last week, the defection of some from the group undoubtedly raised doubts in the minds of some of those remaining.

And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar and the truth is not in him, but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him; whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

We gave brief attention to the type of knowledge John is referring to in this passage. It not simply intellectual apprehension, though it is that. It also includes a subjective element, that is, an experiential knowledge.

Throughout this epistle great stress will be laid on this issue of knowledge. In fact, the word “know” or a cognate is used in excess of 30 times. John considers knowing very important.

But, it seems John is stressing the experiential aspect here since the focus is Assurance.

An aspect of this experiential knowing lies in the physiological realm. Someone says to you, “I don’t like you” and one generally has a visceral response. The simple statement has an intellectual content, but it

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is reinforced physiologically. From that reaction, we can deduce additional knowledge behind the simple statement

What is Assurance?

In its nature Assurance is the absence of doubt and, correspondingly, the presence of confidence.

Why is Assurance important?

Assurance is the cornerstone upon which we begin to build our confidence, improve our skills, broaden our understandings, and strengthen our faith.

Assurance is of such importance to John it will be a continuing theme throughout the epistle. Time and again John will return to this concern seeking to deepen their confidence.

Insofar as it relates to the issue of one's personal relationship to God and one's eternal destiny, the subject is of the highest importance.

How is Assurance developed?

In verse 3 John points to the object of their assurance, God. In one sense, the object of one's assurance determines the validity of that assurance. To use a simple illustration: the water in a local pond freezes over and remains frozen for a good number of days. As you ponder the pond, you are convinced the pond will sustain your weight and venture out, only to discover the object of your assurance was only ¼ inch thick.

The believer's assurance is anchored in the character and promises of God. (Numbers 23:19 and Titus 1:2)

The tenderness of John is evident in the manner in which he seeks to instruct these folk. Rather than present them with a command or order, he uses what is

often referred to as a mitigated exhortation. You have probably used this many times without being aware of its technical terminology.

For instance, you say to someone "Did you close the door?" when you meant "Close the Door"! Or, "Did you turn out the light?" when you meant "Turn out the light".

In view of what these folk have gone through with the defection and their exposure to the defectors teachings, John wants to gently lead them along, hence the mitigated exhortation.

In verse 4 John mentions those who claim to know him, but leave little to no evidence. Sound familiar? Those who name the name of Christ and claim to be in fellowship with God will, if genuine, leave a discernible trail.

Verse 5 implies the impact of fellowship, that is, the love of God is brought to increasing maturity. Proverbs says, "he who walks with wise men will be wise, the companion of fools will be destroyed". I believe it was Aristotle who said, "when you walk with the lame you learn to limp". Therefore, as one walks in fellowship with God, one begins to acquire the characteristics of that association.

In verse 6 John relies on another mitigated exhortation. Here John uses another metaphor for fellowship, that of abiding, the thought of resting in or taking up residence.

When one strives to "walk as he walked" one's assurance and confidence in the faith will correspondingly deepen.

Summary

How is your assurance these days?