



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

A Promise and A Person (1 John 2:1-2)

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Weekly Bible Study Schedule

- **Tuesday, February 12, 7 AM in HHR #5**
-Breakfast Provided
- **Tuesday, February 12, 8:30 PM in Office #301**
(Speaker Pro-Tem's office)

The mission of Capitol Commission is to carry out the Great Commission in the Capitol community. We are not a lobbying group trying to garner votes; we do not strive for changes in legislation but rather labor to see changes in the hearts of the legislators. We are a ministry of the church seeking to present the gospel message and help believers grow through the expository teaching of the Bible. Scripture reveals God's great concern for people, especially for those who have been placed in authority. This forms the foundation for our service to you.

INTRODUCTION

"Nothing that John has written thus far can be taken as an endorsement of sin."

This statement by James Boice is quite the understatement. In 1 John 1:5, the Apostle described God as light—that is, holy and pure—in whom there is no darkness—that is, without sin. He then proceeded to confront the false teachers and some of their views. If one says that he can live a life of sin and claim to be in relationship with God, he is a liar (1:6). If one says that he has no sin, he is deceived (1:8). If one says that he has never sinned, he is making God out to be a liar (1:10). Instead, when one sins, he should confess his sin to God and he will find forgiveness and cleansing (1:9).

The passage for today's study is the incredible conclusion of this section.

1 John 2:1-2 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

John transitioned from addressing the wrong headed views of the false teachers to tenderly writing to the people of God. "My little children" is a term of affection that he used through this letter.

Knowing his and "the children's" tendency to sin, the Apostle gave an exhortation to encourage them to stay away from sin. After his stinging rebuke of the false teacher's views, one could conclude that he or she could really do nothing about sin and therefore think, "Why try?" Instead, John gave glorious reminders to motivate his readers to stay away from sin.

GOD'S POWERFUL PROMISE

The first reminder concerns the "these things" of 1 John 2:1. What are the "these things" that John wrote in order that his little children would not sin? While it could be in reference to "God is light" and no darkness can found in Him, it seems best to connect this with the great promise of verse 9: *If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* Thus, the first truth is to remember God's great promise.

On the surface, this sounds like a great license to indulge further into sin. For example: If one knew that all his or her speeding tickets would be paid by someone else and no points would ever accumulate against one's record, the tendency would be to keep driving too fast, and even to go faster. This is the natural reaction if there is no fear of repercussions for wrongdoing.

But when we go beyond the surface, it is not a license to sin. Rather, it is truly a strong motivator not to sin against the One who has shown so much love and grace.

Donald Grey Barnhouse related this story as an illustration:

Some time ago, I dealt with a man...who lived a life of sin and had been converted under conditions similar to those existing in a rescue mission. He had then married a fine Christian woman to whom he had briefly told his sordid story. He said that, after he had told his wife this, she kissed him and replied, 'John, I want you to understand something very plainly. I know my Bible well, and I know something of the workings of Satan. I know that you are a thoroughly converted man, John, but I also know that you have an old nature to which Satan will certainly appeal. He will do all that he can to put temptations in your way. The day may come—I pray it never shall—when you shall succumb to temptation and fall into sin. Immediately, the devil will tell you that you have ruined everything, that you might as well continue in sin, and that above

CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS & STAFF: TUESDAYS @ 7AM, HEARING ROOM #5

LEGISLATORS: TUESDAYS @ 8:30PM, OFFICE #301

TRUMAN BUILDING: THURSDAYS @ 7AM, 4TH FLOOR CAFETERIA

PROCLAIMING THE GREATNESS AND GLORY OF GOD IN THE MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL

Missouri

A Promise and A Person (1 John 2:1-2)

all you should not tell me because it will hurt me. But, John, I want you to know that this is your home. This is where you belong. I want you to know that there is full pardon and forgiveness in advance for any evil that may come into your life.”²

It would have to be some kind of reprobate, ungrateful, unloving husband who would respond to this wife’s response by saying “Sweet! Its party time.” In the same manner, it would have to be some kind of reprobate, ungrateful, unloving man or woman who would respond to God’s great show of love and promise to forgive by saying, “Great, now I can dive right in to all my sinful passions.”

Remember this, friend: God knows every sin that people have committed and already knows every sin that people will commit—even the sins of those whom He has redeemed, cleansed and saved. Nothing that people do will take Him by surprise; and He will not look at His beloved children and say, “That’s too many, you’re gone. So, long!”

While His people are growing to be more and more like Jesus, He also knows that perfection will not come until one is in Heaven. Therefore, in His love and amazing grace, He provides the profound promise that He will forgive and cleanse when His people confess their sins.

Foolish is the one who takes this as a “free pass” to sin. Wise, and truly redeemed, is the one who embraces this love to stay away from those things which will harm the relationship. And blessed is the one who confesses when he or she fails (Psalm 32:1-2).

JESUS’ WONDERFUL WORK

The second truth John wrote in concluding this section takes us to the courtroom in explaining the role and work of Jesus, the Son of God.

Visualize the following courtroom scene: This is no jury trial, so the presiding judge will make the ruling. This judge is God, the sovereign, all-knowing, powerful King of the Universe (Hebrews 12:23). Taking on the role of the accuser is Satan who is continually making accusations concerning the defendant (Revelation 12: 10; Zechariah 3:1; cf. Job 1 & 2). The defendant is every individual person in the world, including you.

The Bible clearly reveals that every defendant in this courtroom is guilty beyond the shadow of any doubt. In fact, the all-seeing judge is really in no

need of any eyewitness testimony for He Himself has seen every wrong done by each defendant. The just sentence is obvious to all for “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23).

But not all is hopeless for the last person in the courtroom is the defendant’s attorney or advocate. This is the role that John described in 1 John 2:2. For the one who has been redeemed, whose faith and trust is in the work and role of Jesus Christ, he or she has an “advocate” when they sin.

To “sin” literally means to “miss the mark.” The mark set by God the Father is holiness. It is a standard set by God which all people in all times have missed. No one has lived a life of full obedience to God’s standard—all have sinned and turned away from God (Psalm 14; Romans 3:10-18, 23; James 2:10). No one can stand before the judge with his or her own record and claim “not guilty”.

THE ADVOCATE WAS “NOT MERELY THE AGENT WHO MADE PROPITIATION FOR SINNERS, HE IS THE PROPITIATION.” --JOHN MACARTHUR

But by God’s grace, there is an advocate for His people. The word translated advocate in 1 John 2:2 comes from the Greek term which means “to come alongside”. In legal terms, Jesus has come alongside as a defense attorney to plead on behalf of His client.

All acknowledge the depth of guilt in the defendant, in this scene. Even the Advocate knows that truth (even better than the defendant). But for those “who confess their guilt and their desperate need to receive Him as Savior and Lord (cf. Matthew 7:21-23; 25:31-46; John 6:37; 10:3, 14-15)...He becomes for them the incomparable intercessor who always gains acquittal for those who trust in Him.”³ I. Howard Marshall wrote, “We have nothing we can plead before God to gain us forgiveness for our sins, but Jesus Christ acts as our advocate and enters his plea for us.”⁴

How can He plea for His people? Why should the judge listen to Him? He has done no wrong. Jesus has not sinned against God the Father who is presiding over these cases. John called Him “Jesus Christ, the righteous”. In other words, He is in a “right standing before God”; we are not. The judge will not hear our worthless plea, but He will pay attention to the One who

Missouri

A Promise and A Person (1 John 2:1-2)

has lived life, and “committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in his mouth” (1 Peter 2:22).

But even this plea would not be sufficient in itself. The defendant’s sin and guilt are still on his or her record. Sufficient justice needs to be served considering the wrongful deeds done. And the Apostle John addressed this in calling Jesus the “propitiation for our sins.”

Propitiation is not a word used often in the course of one’s life. It is translated from the Greek word *hilasmos* in 1 John 2:2 and it carries the meaning of “appeasement” or “satisfaction.” In the case of biblical redemption, it is “Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross satisfied the demands of God’s justice, thus appeasing His holy wrath against believers’ sins.”⁵

Some do not like this picture of God—that He is angry and must be appeased by those who have angered Him. It sounds too much like the incredible egos of the ancient world deities who handed out harsh demands and expected lavish sacrifices from its people. But Scripture does reveal that God has a wrath; sin has stirred up His anger and that there is a price to be paid due to those sins.

In the Old Testament, animals were sacrificed and blood sprinkled upon the mercy seat of the Ark of the Covenant to stand between God and His people (Exodus 25:10-22). But these were only pictures of a future sacrifice which would fully satisfy God (Hebrews 9:6-28; 10:1-18). That sacrifice would be provided by God Himself in the sacrifice of His only Son (John 3:14-18).

Romans 5:6-11 For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For one will hardly die for a righteous man; though perhaps for the good man someone would dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only this, but we also exult in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

The Advocate can stand alongside of those who have repented and trusted in Him because He Himself was offered as a sacrifice to pay the debt of sin which was owed by the defendant. The Advocate was “not merely the agent who made propitiation for sinners, He *is* the propitiation” (Isaiah 53:5-10).⁶ Therefore, in light of the work of the Advocate, the defendant can now be declared “righteous” or “right with God.”

2 Corinthians 5:21 God made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf so that we can become the righteousness of God in Him.

John further explained that this propitiation was not solely for his sins or the sins of his readers, but also “for the sins of the whole world.” Some have wrongly used this verse to promote “universalism”—the idea that God is going to save everyone. But this thought is contrary the general teaching of Scripture; as well as John’s other statements in this letter (1 John 2:28; 3:14-15; 5:12, 16).

The idea is that the atoning sacrifice of Christ is universal in its provision. It is the only sacrifice needed and the only sacrifice acceptable unto God. People in one nation do not need to add to or should look to another while people of a different nation work through something totally different. The propitiation of Christ is the only one for all people. This provision, though, should not be understood as “application.” While it is enough for all, it is only applicable to those who believe and trust in Jesus. *For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony given at the proper time.* (1 Timothy 2:5-6).

Jesus serves as the Advocate for the guilty defendant standing in court of the Judge, His Father. And the Advocate’s voice is heard for He is in a right standing before the judge. He Himself has paid the debt due by the defendant; and that debt was paid by His very own blood shed on the cross. Therefore, the defendant (all those who believe and trust in the Advocate) can stand before the judge in right standing with Him.

CONCLUSION

Sin is serious. Even though our culture has a tendency to call evil “good” and good “evil”, God’s view of “missing the mark” has not changed. Sin is still an affront to Him and His nature. Sin still separates people from God.

Missouri

A Promise and A Person (1 John 2:1-2)

Sin is still the reason why people will be judged and punished. Sin still corrupts a person and destroys a society.

The entire section of John's letter teaches the reader that sin is still evil and will not be tolerated by God. Sin and the one filled with sin cannot stand before God in right standing; and John has harsh warnings for those who make foolishly statements about sin. John wrote these things so his readers will not be involved in sin.

But God, knowing our nature's bent toward sin, will still fall to it, even while those He has saved grow in holiness. Therefore, He has promised and provided for His people forgiveness when they confess and believe.

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, then take this passage as a reminder that you have been called to turn your back on sin. Do not engage temptation, but flee from it. But also know that when you do, you can confess it to God and find forgiveness—that is His promise. He has given you an Advocate, who will plead your case; who also has already paid the debt due to your sin. The foolish thing would be to hold on to your sin; the freeing thing is to confess and turn from it.

If you are not a follower of Christ, then friend, let this passage (if you have read this far) convict you of your need for a savior. You cannot stand before the judge on your own merits—for you have no merits. Take Christ as your Advocate. Trust in His work for your merits. Turn also from your sin, confess and you will also find forgiveness. You have nowhere else to turn; you have no other to whom you can turn.

Through Christ, God can truly forgive all your sins--are you interested?

¹As written by James M. Boice, *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1979), 35.

²Boice, 36-37.

³John MacArthur, *1-3 John* The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 2007), 46.

⁴I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John* The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1978), 116.

⁵MacArthur, 46.

⁶MacArthur, 48.