

“YOU NEED A LAWYER—BUT EVEN MORE A PROPITIATOR!”

I JOHN 2:1-2

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INTRODUCTION

John has dealt clearly with issues concerning sin and how they affect our fellowship with God (3):

- 1) Sin must be taken seriously—we can’t fellowship with God if we walk in darkness—walk in light and be cleansed from sin (6-7).
- 2) If we deny having a sinful nature we deceive ourselves and don’t have the truth in us; we must confess our sin to be forgiven and cleansed (8-9).
- 3) We must not deny having sinned, or we make God a liar and don’t have His word in us (10)

Well then, maybe sin is not such a bad thing? Maybe we should sin more freely, so that “where sin abounds, grace may all the more abound” (Rom. 3:8; 6:1 with 5:20). The answer is: “God forbid—may it never be!!” (Rom. 6:2).

- John writes here so that the believer may not sin—not even once! (v. 1).
- Sin should be a rare and unusual event in our lives.
- But when it does happen, we have an Advocate who pleads our case and stands up for us (1b).
- But even more, we have one who is the propitiation for our sins (2a).
- But not just for our sins—also for the sins of the world (2b).

YOU MUST NOT SIN EVEN ONCE—BUT IF YOU DO, KNOW YOU HAVE AN ADVOCATE AND PROPITIATOR [ONE WHO IS OUR PROPITIATION]

I. YOU MUST NOT SIN—EVEN ONCE! (1a)

- A. The tenderness of the appeal—“my little children”
- B. Don’t misunderstand—this is why I write these words in vv. 5-10 of chapter 1.
- C. I write that you might not sin—not even one time.

II. WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE (1b)

A. The Circumstances for an advocate

1. The uncertain and rare occasion that one may sin. Again it is a reference to a one-time sin—not a habit.
2. The uncertain person who sins—“someone” is indefinite; anyone could do so, but uncertainty is portrayed. He does not say “you.”
3. Note “we are having—continually; whenever needed.”

B. The Identification of the Advocate

1. Meaning of the term “Advocate” [Greek Paraclete]

- Passages in John refer to the Holy Spirit—who represents Christ on earth, and us to the Father—Jn. 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7.
- Note that He is “another Helper/Advocate (14:16)—in addition to Jesus.
- The word literally means “one who is called alongside of another”.
- It has been variously rendered “Helper, Comforter, Counselor, Strengthener, Intercessor, and Advocate.”
- The context here clearly shows it to mean Advocate, and the primary idea in the other passages is likely the same—yet the context opens a broader application there.

2. The need for an Advocate

- One has sinned; sin violates God’s righteousness; sin deserves judgment. God is just and righteous, and He must punish.
- Satan and his helpers oppose and condemn believers before God—Rev. 12:10; Zech. 3:1; Job 1:11; 2:5; I Pet. 5:8.

- Acts 7:56 gives a practical example of Stephen who, after making his good profession before men, saw the Son of Man standing at God's right hand—likely as Advocate for Stephen.
 - Of course Jesus even on earth prayed His “high-priestly prayer” in John 17 for His disciples, and told Peter in Lk. 22:32 that He had “prayed for” him.
3. The advantage of the Advocate—he is “with the Father.”
 - Could portray His turning toward Him and defending the believer.
 - Can picture His continual presence with the Father.
 - Note that it is “the Father” and not “the Judge” described here.
 4. The nature of the Advocate
 - a. “Jesus”—the real humanity of the Son come to earth—taking man's place.
 - b. “Christ”—the anointed one, but in I John mainly refers to His Deity.
 - c. “Righteous”
 - Not here a name as sometimes=“The Righteous one”; descriptive of His character.
 - He is innocent of wrong—sinless; He can thus represent the sinner. Hebrews 7:26 shows Him as a high-priest who is “holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners.” He was truly the sinless Man.
 - He will not lie or cheat in order to “win” His case.
 - He will not ignore the penalty that is due for sin—He is righteous
 - The term is very significant in this context. John has identified God the Father as “righteous” in 1:9, and also as “light” in 1:7. But man is full of “unrighteousness” from which he needs forgiveness and cleansing as may be seen from 1:9.

Then, how can he effectively defend the sinning believer? He must help enforce the divine Law and its penalty.

III. WE HAVE A PROPITIATION (2).

- A. What is Propitiation [Expiation or **Appeasement** of Divine Wrath]? [not after Pagan conceptions]
- B. What does propitiation concern?—“our sins”
- C. Who is our Propitiation?—“He Himself”; He not merely propitiates; He personally is the propitiation.
 - God the Father sent Him—he initiated the satisfaction of His own wrath—He did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all (Rom 8:32; Jn. 3:16).
 - See I John 4:10: “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”
 - God the Son voluntarily came—“He made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” “Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6; Rom. 8:34).
 - Note the present tense “is” our Propitiation—he is and continues to be so.
- D. How far does it extend?
 - Nor for Ours only
 - But also for the whole world.

The propitiation is as broad as the sin is wide. John's word give no basis for universalism—the idea that all persons will be forgiven and saved due to the propitiatory work of Christ. But these words do indicate that “no one is, by Divine pre-determination, excluded from the scope of God's mercy; the efficacy of the propitiation, however is made actual for those who believe” (Hiebert, p. 76). Burdick notes that “John is firmly denying any limited nature of the atonement and is affirming that it is applicable to the sins of all people” (132). Christ's work of propitiation has made it possible for all to be saved—but only for those who personally trust Christ as their Redeemer (I Tim. 4:10).

CONCLUSION

Jesus Christ Himself has taken our sin upon Himself, suffered for it, paid its penalty. He has appeased the just wrath of a holy God.

Therefore, He is able to be our advocate without violating God's justice: **Romans 3:25-26.**

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