



1 John

An Exegetical Series

**1 John 2:1-11: Sin, Forgiveness, and
Christian Authenticity**





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**1 John 2:1-2: Sin, Forgiveness, and
Theological Formulation**



Why Go Back Over What Was Taught?

There is a fun opportunity here to demonstrate the beauty and diversity of application of the text when two brothers read through it and teach on it!

This is not a “corrective” lesson nor is it meant to be redundant, but rather this lesson, and the lessons after this one, is meant to show the beauty of God’s Word and how the Spirit leads us toward faithful application among us in the church!

This week will be v. 1-2, next week will be v. 3-11!

Why Go Back Over What Was Taught?

The primary touch point of application Jeff touched on, which is encouraging is this:

1. On this side of heaven, we will sin, no matter what.
2. The command seems strong, but really, John is simply saying that we should, in our walking in the light of Christ, *sin less*
3. However, if and when we do sin, we have grace in abundance because we have Jesus who is both an *advocate* and *the Righteous One*
4. Therefore, we can rest knowing we do not have to be perfect, but we should do our best to sin less!

Why Go Back Over What Was Taught?

- ▶ What I want to press into in this lesson is diving a little further into Jesus being described as *advocate*, *Righteous One*, and *Our atoning sacrifice*
- ▶ From there, we will explore the assurance of forgiveness and grace we have in these descriptions, which provide a true reality for us, and then build a theological view point from the aspect of these verses in context for all believers (I am being vague here on purpose! I will not be vague as we go on!)

Dealing With the Ongoing Reality of Sin

Fellowship with God is on the line:

- ▶ First, John has strong affections for this church! The use of, “My Little Children,” is in what is known as the *vocative* voice. This implies strong affections toward his audience — God’s affection toward you!
- ▶ Second, the concept of God’s revelation is in play here since we see, “I am writing these things to you.” We must always keep dual authorship in mind here!
- ▶ Third, the issue of sin is very important, but so is its solution! which leads toward true fellowship with God

Jesus' Status as the Advocate

Jesus is the Assurance of Our Plea of Forgiveness:

- ▶ The term advocate comes to us by the Greek word “*Paraclete* (In Gk, *παράκλητος*).”
- ▶ The term generally refers to one who “giving support to someone making a claim, or settling a dispute, or rebutting a charge
- ▶ In other words, think of the “lawyer” in the courtroom setting who is arguing for your innocence—this is not the same concept as Jesus as substitute (Rep. & Judge)

Jesus' Status as the Advocate

Jesus is the Assurance of Our Plea of Forgiveness:

- ▶ The term “*Paraclete* (παράκλητος) is interesting in John’s writings because Jesus used it...
- ▶ Not for himself though...but for the Holy Spirit
- ▶ John 14:16, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever.”
 - Other versions use, “Helper,” or “Advocate,” or “Comforter,”
- ▶ Why does John use this term for Jesus, then?

Advocate Related to “The Righteous One”

Jesus is the Assurance of Our Plea of Forgiveness:

- ▶ The term *Paraclete* (παράκλητος), as John uses it, implies more than mere representation, supporting the accused!
- ▶ The advocate is tightly linked to the **second title *The Righteous One***
- ▶ That is, Jesus not only stands next to us by divine intercession and advocates for our innocence, he points to **his own righteousness** as the means and status by which he can bring about a good outcome for us (forgiveness!)

Harmonizing the Use of Paraclete

Paraclete Shared Between the Son and the Spirit:

- ▶ Christ secures the believer's standing before God through His finished atonement and heavenly intercession, while the Spirit sustains believers through His indwelling presence, guiding them in truth and obedience. Though John does not use the term *Trinity*, his portrayal of the Father, Son, and Spirit lays its foundation. Together, Christ and the Spirit work for the believer's security and sanctification.

Jesus, the Atonement for Sin

In the Greek, *hilasmos* (ἵλασμός)

- ▶ This term means, literally, Jesus *is* the atonement
- ▶ This is not the same as not the *hilastēr* (ἵλαστήρ), “*the one who offers the atonement*”
- ▶ The ESV uses “propitiation” (also NASB/LSB/KJV) as the English translation of *hilasmos*—the CSB, here, uses atonement (also NIV)
- ▶ Both terms do imply different aspects of *hilasmos*

Jesus, the Atonement for Sin

Hilasmos as Atonement in Love rather than Propitiation

- ▶ Propitiation implies the satisfaction of God's wrath against sin by Jesus' substitutionary death
- ▶ However, John does not use the term hilasmos in this way, it seems (cf. 1 John 4:10, "Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice [hilasmos] for our sins")
- ▶ John's focus is upon love, not satisfying God's wrath

Jesus, the Atonement for Sin

What does this mean?

▶ Putting verse 1 and 2 together, we can say this:

When believers sin, John points them not to despair but to **Christ**. Jesus Christ the **Righteous One** is our **Advocate** before the Father, whose loving **atoning sacrifice** cleanses us from sin and restores our fellowship with God. This sacrifice is the supreme expression of God's love—a love that sought us first. Because of Christ's cleansing work and ongoing advocacy, we can confess our sin with confidence knowing that God will be faithful to forgive.

Tension Point!

How does this theological point (previous slide) relate to “not only for our sins, but also for those of the whole world” (v 2b — CSB)? Well, it seems...

- ▶ The whole world cannot, in context, mean literally the world world or “all people.”
- ▶ This is because of the descriptions of who is receiving the benefits from Christ (cf. 1 John 1:7, 1:9, 2:1-2)
- ▶ Let me explain further...

Theological Formation

The descriptions of Christ are strong:

- ▶ Jesus “cleanses from all sin,” (1 John 1:7)
- ▶ If we confess sin, we are forgiven because God is faithful and just to forgive because of Jesus Christ, as we strive to walk in the light (1 John 1:9)
- ▶ If we do sin, we have Christ who is our advocate because his righteousness covers us and speaks for us, and his atonement is ours
- ▶ This can only be said of believers alone...

Theological Formation

Considering 1 John 4:10

- ▶ If it is true that Jesus is the atoning sacrifice, by God's love which loved us before we loved him, then the atonement is only for those who God has loved first...
- ▶ If we go back, then, to 1 John 2:2, the sins of the whole world cannot be an atonement literally for the whole world, but for all believers who are throughout the whole world

Theological Formation

The challenging point...

- ▶ If we say that the atonement is for the whole world, how can that be since that implies that all people, at all times, when they sin are cleansed of sin, Jesus advocates for them, and is their atonement—but this is not the case!
- ▶ Rather, we see a particular atonement for all who believe, whom God loved first, from all regions of the world
- ▶ The atonement of Christ is the only sufficient means of salvation for all people's and cultures in the whole world

Theological Formation

Putting it all Together:

- ▶ The sufficiency of God's grace through Christ is more than we could ever hope for—it is an everlasting, eternal hope by which Jesus advocates for all believers in the world in the same way: Through his atonement and intercessory ministry as the Righteous One, who's righteousness is mine through the confession of sin whereby I am cleansed and made a child of God!
- ▶ Have confidence, even when you sin, because all bases are covered with a unfading, eternal love in Christ!



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