

## Lesson Two: 1 John 2

## Verse 1

*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; <sup>2</sup>and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.*

## 1. Verse 1

- a. **While it will always be debated to whom John was speaking in chapter 1, there can be no doubt that here John is clearly addressing believers.** He calls them “my little children” because he had been instrumental in either leading them to Christ or in teaching them. This might also be a reflection of his age, now approximately 90 years old.
- b. **It is important to note here the change of audience.** While addressing the Gnostics among the church in verse 1, appealing to them to believe in the real Jesus who came in human form and that sin exists and thus needs forgiveness in order to have fellowship with the Father and the Son, now John gives a different instruction for what his “little children” are to know when they sin. He does not tell them to DO something if they sin, but to KNOW and BELIEVE something if they sin.
- c. **John is clearly stating that he is writing so that the believers not sin. We must ask ourselves, if this is his purpose, shall it not also be a possibility (to not sin)?** What purpose is there to instruct someone not to sin if they still have a supposed “sinful nature”? (*This is important because MANY teachers claim that believers still have a sinful nature. There is no such term in the Greek. It is falsely used to translate the word for “flesh”. The NKJV, the NASB, the KJV don’t even use the term “sinful nature” even once.*)
- d. **John wrote this so that they may not sin, the truth that John wrote was that if they would walk in love toward each other, and believe that they themselves were loved by God, they “may not sin”.**
- e. **The other important point is believers are not supposed to sin.** It makes no sense for a believer to practice sin. We are dead to, freed from, and not under the dominion of sin due to grace (Rom. 6).
- f. **Believers still have free will just as Adam and Even had before the fall. This means that even though we have died to, been freed from, and are not under the dominion of sin, we can still choose to sin.** So, John tells the believer what happens when a believer sins. Notice this is in complete conflict with what some believe about 1 John 1:9. **If we choose to sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.**
  - 1) **What does “Advocate” mean?**  
*paraklētos (par-ak'-lay-tos)*  
*An intercessor, consoler: - advocate, comforter.*
  - 2) **This is stunning.** Instead of the idea that we need to get our sins forgiven to restore right relationship with God, we see here a completely difference scenario. If we sin, we can rest knowing that Jesus is our Parakletos—our intercessor before the Father, our Comforter and Consoler. Can you see how beautiful this is? When we choose to SIN, He comes along side of us to comfort and console.

3) The word *parakletos* is found 5 times in the Bible. Every time John was the user of the word. Every time *parakletos* is translated as comforter/helper, except here in 1 John. Advocate (lawyer) is an unfortunate translation, which implies that God the Father is angry at our sin and wants to punish us, but Jesus stands between us and the Father and stops the punishment.

a. The “Advocate” view assumes that our sin separates us from God, and that our fellowship is broken with God, and that our lawyer re unites us with God.

b. In John 14:16, Jesus calls the Holy Spirit “another” helper (16 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever). This verse clearly demonstrates that Jesus was their Helper, and that He’d pray that they would have “another” Helper. “Another” does not imply that the Holy Spirit would REPLACE Jesus, but that the Holy Spirit would be one more Helper. In verse 2 we see Jesus still in the role as our Comforter.

## 2. Verse 2

a. Some wrongly conclude that Jesus, as our Advocate, is somehow protecting us from the Father (holding off God’s wrath against us when we sin). This is not the case. He is our Advocate because He is the propitiation for our sins. God the Father has already received the sacrifice of God the Son. His wrath is not kindled toward us when we sin because our sins have all be forgiven for all time (Heb. 10). It is more likely that John is reassuring them that God is NOT angry with them because His is the propitiation for our sins. His one-time sacrifice satisfied the wrath of God and unlike the earthly priests, He remains a Priest forever. This is precisely how “the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, IS CLEANSING us from ALL sin.

### **Hebrews 7:20-27**

*And inasmuch as He was not made priest without an oath <sup>21</sup> (for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him:*

*“The LORD has sworn*

*And will not relent,*

*‘You are a priest forever*

*According to the order of Melchizedek’”),*

*<sup>22</sup> by so much more Jesus has become a surety of a better covenant.*

*<sup>23</sup> Also there were many priests, because they were prevented by death from continuing.*

*<sup>24</sup> But He, because He continues forever, has an unchangeable priesthood. <sup>25</sup> Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.*

*<sup>26</sup> For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; <sup>27</sup> who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people’s, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself.*

b. Propitiation is the Greek word *hilasmos*. And according to Wuest,

*Our Lord provided a satisfaction for the demands of the broken law. That satisfaction is the hilasmos. The Greek has it, “He Himself is a satisfaction.” The intensive pronoun is used. The point is that the Old Testament priest offered an animal sacrifice, but not himself as the sacrifice. This wonderful New Testament Priest is both the Priest and the Sacrifice. Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament - Volume 2.*

- c. “And not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world” There are three main interpretations of this verse.
- 1) The first is that John was saying that Jesus was not only the Propitiator of those who were reading this letter, but of all of those who have faith in Jesus throughout the whole world. The problem with this point of view is that it is too obvious that He is the propitiation of all believers. There would be no point to add this phrase.
  - 2) Another viewpoint, often referred to as “inclusionism” is that everyone in the world is born again, but not all have come to realize that they are born again. We completely disagree with this.
  - 3) “And He Himself is a satisfaction for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the whole world.” Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament - Volume 2.
  - 4) Our view is that Jesus died for the sins of sinners, and that this includes the whole world. This contradicts entirely the view of God only saving particular ones He predetermined to save, AKA “the elect”. It reaffirms that Jesus died for ALL who would believe in him—the whole world. HOWEVER, no one is born again until he/she BELIEVES in Jesus. The message of reconciliation—the good news we preach is that Jesus died for our sins, all of our sins, and that God is not holding our sins against us; THEREFORE, be reconciled to God! If a person refuses this grace of offered reconciliation, he/she is still condemned.

**2 Peter 3:9**

*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

**John 3:16-21**

*“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that **WHOEVER** believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. <sup>17</sup> For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the **world**, but that the **world** through Him might be saved.*

<sup>18</sup> *“He who **believes in** Him is not condemned; but he who **does not** believe is condemned already, because he has **not believed** in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

<sup>19</sup> *And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”*

**2 Corinthians 5:18-20**

*Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation, <sup>19</sup> that is, that God was in Christ **reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them**, and has committed to us the word of reconciliation.*

<sup>20</sup> *Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, **be reconciled to God.***

*Verses 3-4*

*By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. <sup>4</sup> The one who says, "I have come to know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him;*

## 3. Verse 3

The evidence to ourselves and to others is that we keep His commandments, but what does this mean exactly? John clearly defines "His" commandments later in His letter.

**1 John 3:23**

*And this is His commandment: that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another, as He gave us commandment.*

*The word "commandments" is not here nomos, "law," which John never uses for the rule of Christian obedience, and which is reserved by him for the Mosaic law, John using it 15 times in his Gospel for that purpose (Alford). It is entolē, another word meaning "an order, command, charge, precept." The precepts (commandments) are those given by our Lord either personally while on earth or through His apostles in the New Testament Books. Wuest's Word Studies*

*"Keep" is tēreō, "to attend to carefully, to guard, observe." Wuest's Word Studies*

## 4. Verse 4

John is leaving no room for error. Anyone who says that they know God but does not keep His commandments, is lying. The truth isn't in him (another expression for someone who is born again).

*Robertson says that "the Gnostics boasted of their superior knowledge of Christ, and John here challenges their boast by an appeal to experiential knowledge of Christ which is shown by keeping His commandments." Wuest's Word Studies*

*Verses 5-6*

*But whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him: <sup>6</sup>the one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked.*

## 5. Verse 5

Keeping His word is the same as keeping His commandments. Whoever does believe in Jesus and loves the brethren, in him God's love is perfected. This is how we know that we are in Him.

**John 13:35**

*By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

*"Whoso" (hos d'an) "whoever," destroys the religious exclusiveness of the Gnostics which limited such a knowledge as is referred to in 2:3, 4 to the intellectual oligarchy, the intelligentsia, and shows that a personal experiential knowledge of the Lord Jesus is open to all true believers. Wuest's Word Studies*

- a. In other words, if you keep the word that you believe He loves you, and therefore you love others, His love is perfected in you.
- b. Perfect love and the fullness of God is a true possibility.

*Ephesians 3:19*

*And to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.*

#### 6. Verse 6

If we abide in Him, we should walk as He did—in love for the brethren.

#### *Verses 7-8*

*Beloved, I am not writing a new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning; the old commandment is the word which you have heard. <sup>8</sup>On the other hand, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true Light is already shining.*

#### 7. Verse 7

By “old” commandment, John was not referring to the Old Covenant, but rather that the command to love each other. They were given this command from the beginning.

*The Greek order of words is, "No new commandment am I writing to you," the words "no new commandment" being first in the sentence and thus in the emphatic position. The word "commandment" is entolē, "a precept" as in 2:4, not in the sense of the Mosaic law (nomos law), but as an exhortation to the Christian, an injunction. Wuest's Word Studies*

*The beginning here is the beginning of the Christian experience of the readers. They had this commandment before them and with them constantly during their lives as saved individuals. The words "from the beginning" in the second sentence of this verse are not found in the best manuscripts. That commandment was to love one another (John 13:34). Wuest's Word Studies*

#### 8. Verse 8

In this verse, John is still speaking of the same commandment which is both old in the sense that all Christians have always had it, but also new in the sense that Jesus called it “new”. It is true in Jesus, and it is true in believers. Jesus is the true Light. He is already shining. Light dispels darkness.

*"Again" is palin, and Smith says: "again, i.e., in another sense, from another point of view, not in itself but in our recognition of it, 'it is a new commandment,' " Wuest's Word Studies*

*"I know," says the Apostle, 'because the darkness is passing away, and the light, the true light, is already shining,' i.e., my eyes are getting accustomed to the light of the gospel-revelation, and I have seen this truth which at first was hidden from me." Wuest's Word Studies*

**Verses 9-11**

*The one who says he is in the Light and yet hates his brother is in the darkness until now. <sup>10</sup>The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him. <sup>11</sup>But the one who hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes.*

**9. Verse 9**

When a believer hates his fellow believer, he is walking in darkness (as an unbeliever).

**10. Verse 10**

When we love fellow believers we are abiding in the Light—in Jesus, and there will be no reason to stumble.

**11. Verse 11**

- a. If a believer hates his fellow believer in Christ, he is both in darkness and is walking in darkness. Darkness is blinding his eyes and he can't see where he is going.
- b. This either implies that the person is not actually not a believer or that he is behaving as if he is not a believer and thus his judgment is completely impaired.
- c. Perhaps you have witnessed both scenarios—those pretending to be Christians, but their behavior shows otherwise AND those who are believers but who treat their fellow believers without love.
- d. We can observe in the life of such a person that it seems all he does is darkness. This is very sad indeed.

**Verse 12**

*I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake.*

**12. Verse 12**

- a. This verse is a stunning contrast to how many interpret 1 John 1:8-10 (that any “believer” who claims to have no sin is a liar). John is making it very clear. The sins of believers have been forgiven because of Jesus. This is exactly what Paul taught.

**Ephesians 1:7**

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*

**Colossians 1:14 (We HAVE redemption.)**

*In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.*

**Hebrews 9:12 (This redemption is eternal.)**

*Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.*

**Hebrews 8:12 (He remembers our sins no more.)**

*For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.”*

**Romans 4:8 (God is not keeping an account of our sin.)**

*Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin."*

"Are forgiven" is *aphiēmi*, "to send from one's self, to send away, to bid go away or depart." God's forgiveness includes the putting away of our sins, their guilt, defilement, and penalty, at the Cross. The verb is in the perfect tense, which tense speaks of a past completed action having present and in some instances, permanent results. Our sins were put away at the Cross, with the result that they are never more remembered against us.<sup>1</sup> *Wuest's Word Studies*

Our Lord cried on the Cross, "It is finished" (A.V.). The perfect tense is used here. The atonement, to which He had reference, was effected at the Cross and became forever the all-sufficient payment for sin. The translation should read, "It stands finished." *Wuest's Word Studies*

The words "the Name," are an Old Testament term expressing the sum of the qualities which mark the nature or character of a person, in this case, the Person of God. It refers to all that is true of God in His glory, majesty, and might. -*Wuest's Word Studies*

**b. We are forgiven for His Name's sake and according to the riches of His Grace. Ephesians 1:7-8**

*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us.*

**Verse 13**

*I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father.*

**13. Verse 13**

- a. If we only had the first sentence in this verse which addresses "fathers" (older saints in the Lord), we might believe what is commonly taught that we need to progressively "know" God as Christians. This idea results in some unhealthy conclusions—the first being that we don't "really" know God, and the second one being that because we don't "really" know God, we need to spend the rest of our lives getting to know God usually through a long list of spiritual disciplines.
- b. **HOWEVER...**in the last sentence of this verse, he addresses "children" and states that they also "know" the father.
- c. The truth of the matter is that "knowing" God is a benefit of the new covenant. Notice that it is to the "least" to the "greatest".

**Jeremiah 31:31-35**

*"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—<sup>32</sup> not according to the covenant that I made with their*

---

<sup>1</sup> However, it is peculiar to us that Wuest can make this observation and still believe that Christians need to get our sins forgiven. It appears he takes that view of most, that only our initial sins are completely forgiven, but that we must confess any new ones.

fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. <sup>33</sup> But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. <sup>34</sup> **No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.**"

- d. **No more shall every man teach...** "more" (ode ode) has an interesting definition in the Hebrew: *again, repeatedly, still, more*: - again, all life long. Under the Old Covenant, they continually encouraged each other to "know the Lord". Under the New Covenant that is not necessary because "they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them". Why is this? It is because he forgave our iniquity and our sin He remembers no more.
- e. **It's interesting to note** that when this verse is quoted in Hebrew 8:11, the word for "not" as in "not teach" is *ou me* (oo may) which is "a double negative strengthening the denial; not at all: - any more, at all, by any (no) means, neither, never, no (at all), in no case (wise), nor ever, not (at all, in any wise)."
- f. **To repeat:** Under the New Covenant we already know God, and we should NOT be teaching each other again, repeatedly, still, all life long (ode ode) to know the Lord—certainly not (*ou me*).
- g. **John writes a very strong statement to the young men.** He says that they HAVE overcome the evil one. How did they overcome, and is it only the young men that have overcome?  
**1 John 5:4**  
*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith.*
- h. **We are born again by grace through faith, and we overcome by grace through faith.**

### Verse 14

*I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.*

- a. John repeats that the fathers know Jesus. "Who has been from the beginning" refers again to Christ's deity.
- b. "Young men" can have reference to age. Strong's defines it as those under 40. "Strong" can refer to literal or figurative strength.
- c. Notice that the next word is "and". This verse does not say that the young men are strong "because" the word of God abides in them. It doesn't say that they are strong "because" they have overcome the evil one. This is a list of three things: 1) They are strong, 2) The word of God abides in them, 3) they have overcome the evil one. THIS IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE because many have falsely taught that we are strong BECAUSE the word of God (usually translated to mean "the Bible") abided in them and BECAUSE they had overcome the evil one.
- d. **Again, how have they overcome? By faith.**

- e. “Word of God” can refer to Jesus, though the translator did not choose to capitalize “word”. “Word of God” can also refer to the good news that was taught, the glad tidings of good things spoken of in Romans 10. Either translation would make sense because Jesus did dwell in them, and they understood the good news of God’s grace—so it abided in them too.
- f. “Abide” is the Greek word menō (*men’-o*) and is defined as: to stay (in a given place, state, relation or expectancy): - abide, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand,

*Translation: I write to you, fathers, because you have come to know experientially the One who is from the beginning, and are as a present result, possessors of that knowledge. I write to you, young men, because you are strong with endowed strength, and the Word of God in you is abiding, and you have gained the victory over the Pernicious One, and as a present result are standing on his neck. Wuest’s Word Studies*