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Letters to Dear Children, Part 3

We Need A Lawyer

Text: 1 John 2:1-2

Clearly, these people are precious to John. By the time he pens these words, John is advanced in years. He is possibly the last of those who actually walked with Jesus during His earthly sojourn. Some folks get more and more crusty and mean as they age. John, however, has nothing but affection and tenderness for these to whom he writes (2:1, 7, 12, 18, 28; 3:2, 7, 13, 18, 21; 4:1, 4, 7, 11; 5:21). Here, alone, he adds the possessive *my* little children*.* Perhaps John has learned to be affectionate from his Lord (John 13:33; 21:5)

1. John desires his spiritual children to live victoriously over sin. Here, he does not imply that these first century believers will not ever sin. That is impossible (1:8). No, John argues for a life in which sin does not have *dominion* over them. As the cliché goes, “Christians aren’t *sinless*; they just *sin less*.” True, our Lord commanded people to stop sinning (John 5:15; 8:11). However, we will not ever, on this side of death, live a completely sinless life. The gist of verse one, as John argues for the holy life, is that these beloved believers will not *live* in sin. Cf. Romans 6:1-8, especially v. 2 and 7. We occasionally commit the individual act of disobedience, of rebellion. What we avoid, through the keeping power of Christ, is the sinful lifestyle, the habitual wallowing in the cesspool of resistance to God. As we abide in Christ, the desire to *live* in sin is more and more removed (1John 3:6). We who were once dead *in* sin are now dead *to* sin.
2. When we *do* sin, we have Someone to represent us before our God, whom we have offended by our sin. **Illus.**

When you go on a cruise, one of the first activities is that every passenger must attend a briefing in which we are shown where the life jackets are and how to put them on. The ship never expects or intends that there will be a wreck. No, the life jackets are provided *in case.*

This passage addresses the goal of living a life that is not ruled by sin and the spiritual life jackets provided in Jesus, should we find ourselves in sin. What *is* sin? A simple definition is found in 3:4 of this epistle.

*Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.*

There it is. Sin equals insubordination, rebellion and resistance to God. Without a relationship with Jesus, the savior, the wrath of God rests on us (John 3:36).

1. The specific role of Jesus, in relation to our sin, is noteworthy.

A. He is our Advocate- Greek= paraclete. Jesus uses that word to describe the Holy Spirit (John 14:16; 15:26; 16:7). Here is the only time in the NT it is used to describe Jesus. Christ is the One who comes alongside the sinner and acts as the sinner’s attorney. He doesn’t declare us “not guilty”. That would be untrue. No, we are guilty, but we have a defense attorney who comes alongside us. We stand accused- by our own consciences and by Satan, the “accuser of our brethren” (Revelation 12:10).

Christ as lawyer (Romans 8:34; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:25, 9:24)

There might be millions of lawyers in heaven, but there is only one *practicing* attorney. Hallelujah!

B. He is Jesus- he is savior. His very name is savior (a*nd you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins-* Matthew 1:21)

C. He is Christ- God’s anointed one

D. He is righteous- He must be, in order to serve as our Advocate. If He were not righteous, He would be in as much need of forgiveness as we are.

E. He is the propitiation for *our* sins. Cf. 4:10. Christ died not only *for* us but *as* us. He died in our places.

Greek word for propitiation, *hilasmos.*

Expiation(RSV)= “to make amends”

Propitiation (NKJV)= “to make favorable”

In the OT, the same word is used of the mercy seat (Exodus 25:17-22).

F. He is the propitiation for the sins of the world also. Here, John addresses the heretical teaching that Christ’s sacrificial death is for a small, exclusive group. No, His sacrifice is for the whole world.

Sometimes, in order to explain the sacrifice of Christ in a simple way, people say, “we have been justified by Christ and it “just as if I’d” never sinned. The truth is we have sinned, and we are guilty. We need a lawyer!

We have one in Jesus, the Christ. Advocate. Intercessor.

Amen