

# 1 John Chapter 2

The chapter divides itself into the following sections:-

1. Verses 1-2 The advocacy of Christ
2. Verses 3-4 Proof that we know God
3. Verse 5 Proof that we love God
4. Verses 6-11 Proof that we abide in Him
5. Verse 12 Our past sins dealt with
6. Verses 13-27 Evidence of spiritual maturity
7. Verse 28 Living in view of His appearing
8. Verse 29 Proof of others being born again

## 1. Verses 1-2 The advocacy of Christ

John begins this chapter with the words "little children". This expression occurs 5 times in chapter 2, but in fact two different Greek words are employed.

0. TEKNION – "that which is born" (literally "a bairn")

This occurs in verse 1, 12, and 28

When John uses this word, he is including every believer in the Lord Jesus, regardless of his age or level of spiritual maturity. It is a word he heard from the lips of the Lord Jesus in the upper room in John 13. In verse 33, He said, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me, and as I said unto the Jews, whither I go, ye cannot come". These were words reserved for the 11 disciples, not just the 12, for He spoke only after Judas had gone out of the room. It was to the 11 believing disciples that He said, "Little children". The Lord had already spoken many of these things in John chapter 7 when He was speaking to unbelieving Jews in Jerusalem. On that occasion, however, He did not begin with "Little children". He says to these men, "Ye shall seek Me and shall not find Me", but to the 11 in chapter 13, He says only, "Ye shall seek Me". TEKNION is therefore a term of endearment used by the Lord for His own, and used likewise by John in this epistle.

0. PAIDION – a little or young child, an infant.

This occurs in verses 13 and 18

This word means "young children". It is a family term, for in this chapter, John is writing to the fathers, to the young men, and to the young children. But he is thinking, not of physical age, but of levels of maturity in the Christian faith.

**For verse 1, see notes on the end of chapter 1 for the work of our Advocate.**

An important question to ask before passing on from verse 1 is "Why the Father?" Why not an Advocate towards God? The answer is that God has already dealt with our sins once and for all when He laid them upon Christ at Calvary. Before the cross, the Lord said to His disciples, "He that sent Me is with Me; the Father hath not sent Me alone, for I do always the things that

please Him". On the cross, He prayed twice to His Father, once at the beginning when He said, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do", and a second time at the end when He said, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit". Thus before and on the cross, He is still in touch with His Father. But after those three hours of darkness, He cried out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" It is God who forsook Him, not the Father. One might say, "But they are the same person surely?" But God speaks of His righteousness and holiness while Father speaks of family feelings and communion. God has dealt with our sins, as to eternal judgement. But sin in the life of a believer hinders his fellowship with the Father, so we need an advocate with the Father.

Finally, in verse 1, we learn that the name of our advocate is "Jesus Christ, the righteous". Our restoration to fellowship is still done on a righteous basis. God does not have double standards – one for the sinner, and one for the saint. The standards which will prevail at the Great White Throne are the same standards which prevail when the Father deals with the sins of the saints. In II Timothy 4, Paul speaks about a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day. Men had passed judgement upon Paul – "All they in Asia be turned away from me" – but Paul found solace in that the righteous judge would make a true assessment of his life in that day. The word righteous is used also in I John chapter 1:9. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness". And what is this righteous basis? It is the blood of Christ. Chapter 1:7 says, "If we walk in the light, as He is the light... the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin".

Verse 2 tells us more about our advocate. "And He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world". We are thus told that the One who keeps us in fellowship with the Father is the same one who brought us into fellowship with the Father in the first place, for He is the propitiation for our sins. Propitiation is the translation of the Greek word HILASMOS. The Septuagint uses hilasmos to translate the word for atonement in Leviticus 25:9. "In the day of atonement, shall ye make the trumpet sound throughout all your land". It occurs also in Numbers 5:8 where it speaks of the ram of atonement. Christ, in other words, is the atonement for our souls. Mr Bullinger wrote that Christ is the one "by whom, as by a sacrifice, sin is expiated". It is the covering of sin by means of a sacrifice. Hilasmos is also translated propitiation in I John 4:10. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son a propitiation for our sins. Propitiation then is all of God and all for God. It is God who is propitiated, as He has sent His Son to be a sacrifice for our sins.

A similar word to hilasmos is HILASTERION, which occurs in Romans 3:25. Says Paul of the Lord Jesus, "Whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God". Hilasterion denotes the place of conciliation ie the mercy seat, while hilasmos denotes the sacrifice itself. Hilasterion is translated as mercy seat in Hebrews 9:5. "And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat".

So what does this mean for us. It means that the one who gave Himself as a sacrifice for sins in order to bring us to God has a great interest in keeping us

close to God as our advocate. We get the same two thoughts in Ephesians chapter 5. Verse 25 tells us that "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it." Verse 26 goes on to say, "That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word". The one who brought us to God desires to keep us near to God. Eph 5:26 is preventive ministry – I John 2:1-2 is corrective ministry. Eph 5:26 is designed to keep us from sinning – I John 2:1-2 is for recovery when we sin.

Our AV continues in verse 2 – "and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world". We understand that the words "the sins of" should be omitted. Christ is the atonement for the world but not for its sins. Had He atoned for the world's sins, then all the world would be saved but we know that this is not true. But His sacrifice has made it possible for God to reconcile all things to Himself, and this will be true in a day to come. Christ as an atoning sacrifice is available to all in the world, but it is only appropriated by those who believe. Thus we have it in Romans 3:22. "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe". The righteousness of God is available to all, but obtained actually only by those who believe in Him.

## **2. Verses 3-4 Proof that we know God**

Fellowship with the Father implies of course that we know the Father. But John is now posing the question, "How can we be sure that we know Him?" We might be quick to reply, I was converted in a gospel hall on a certain day in a certain year", But John is not interested in a time when or a place where or a manner how. He gives us another reason how we know that we know Him – if we keep His commandments. The tenses of the verb in this verse are important. Hereby we do constantly and presently know that we have come to know Him. To know is GINOSKO, to know by experience. We have this assurance that we indeed have come to know Him, by keeping His commandments ie by our obedience. John therefore links hands here with James in showing that faith is linked with works. James says in chapter 2:18, "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works". James then goes on to give two examples of people who proved their faith by their works.

1. "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?"
2. " Was not Rahab the harlot justified by works when she received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?"

This then is a most challenging statement in I John 2:3. We must ask ourselves, "Do I know that I know Him, because I am keeping His commandments?"

The opposite is stated in verse 4, as John would test the reality of our profession. "He that saith, "I know Him", and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him". A man who is disobedient is behaving as if he was not a Christian at all. His life is a lie, and he himself is a liar. Paul has a similar thought in II Timothy 2:19. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are His, and, let every one that

nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity". These are the two sides to the coin. The Lord knows His own but we do not. All that we can see is how a man lives. Those who know God should show it by their obedience to His commandments.

### **3. Verse 5 Proof that we love God**

Verse 5 now goes on to show the link between love and obedience. "But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him." Not for the first time in the Bible is there a link between love and obedience. In John 14:23, The Lord said, "If a man love Me, He will keep My words". Paul writes to the Philippians in chapter 1:9, "And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more, in knowledge and in all judgement". In that great discourse on love, Paul says that love "rejoiceth not in iniquity but rejoiceth in the truth". Then John himself writes to the elect lady in II John 4, "I rejoiced greatly that I have found of thy children walking in truth". Again in verse 6, "This is love that that we walk after His commandments". All these examples go to prove the great link between love and obedience in the scriptures. We cannot have one without the other. There is no love without obedience – there is no obedience without love.

### **4. Verses 6-11 Proof that we abide in Him**

Now in verse 6, we prove that we abide in Him by walking as He walked ie by seeking to imitate Him. The versed is another test of our profession. "He that saith".

We prove that we know Him by our obedience, and we prove that we love Him by obedience. Next we prove that we abide in Him by walking as He walked. Paul defines the walk of Christ in Ephesians 5:2. "And walk in love, as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour". Christ's love therefore was sacrificial ie it was for others. He proved His love for us by giving Himself for us. This attitude of loving others is brought out by the old commandment and the new commandment in verses 7 and 8. One assumes this refers back to John 13. The old commandment was that contained in the law of Moses. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself". But the new commandment was this. "That ye love one another: as I have loved you, that ye love one another". Christ loved us, even though He knew all about our failures and weaknesses. So often we find it hard to love another because we can see his faults. Our Lord knew us through and through, yet loved us just the same. Perhaps this is the reason why light and love are joined here also in I John 2. Chapter 1 has said, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another". There ought to be nothing hid between brethren. All should be out in the light. Only then can we have true fellowship together. John says it is an incongruous thing for us to say that we are in the light, yet to be hating our brethren.

Love is one of those things that is better felt than telt. Often it is spoken of most frequently where it is least practised. We are taught of God to love one another.

## **5. Verse 12 Our past sins dealt with**

Now in verse 12, John returns again to his use of the word TEKNION for "little children". The three instances of the word are most interesting. In verse 1, the subject is that of the advocacy of Christ. This has to do with the present sins in our life. Verse 12, however, has to do with our past sins. But then in verse 28, the thought is rather the consequences of our present life upon our future appearing with Christ. "That when He shall be manifested, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming". It is not only true that one day Christ shall be manifested before a wondering world, but so also shall we.

## **6. Verses 13-27 Evidence of spiritual maturity**