

## 1 John 2:1-6 Answers Talking the Talk & Walking the Walk

**Introduction:** In 1:5-2:6, John deals with the subject of false professors versus true possessors. Four times he raises and refutes false claims of salvation. One of his goals was obviously to help his readers determine if they were really saved or not (2:6, 5:13).

### Review:

\*\*\*\***What is the first lie, the first false profession, John exposed (1:6)?** It is a fact that those who walk in darkness cannot be in fellowship with God.

**Reality:** This (1:6) shows us that not everybody who talks about heaven is going there. There are those who say they walk with God, but in reality do not. They are either self-deceived or wolves in sheep's clothing who knowingly lie about it.

\*\*\*\***What second lie did John expose in 1:8?** The second lie of false professors is stated in 2:8 ("we have no sin").

ESV **Matthew 7:23** . . . will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

The worst form of badness is human goodness, when human goodness becomes a substitute for Christ's righteousness (Adrian Rogers, "The Final Judgment" sermon on Revelation 20:11-15). Such people think salvation is for the thief or the murderer or the wife-beater, but not for them. They are not out and out sinners. They are nice people, they drive nice cars, they wear nice clothing. They treat their neighbors fine. They think they are too good to be damned. They think they are heaven bound. "What a good boy am I".

**Example:** A saw mill can take an old crooked log and shave off one side of it, then turn it over and shave off the other side, and keep on turning and cutting that crooked log until it becomes a perfectly straight piece of wood. But if you examine the end of the beam, you'll see its heart is still crooked.

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\*\*\***How may we know that we are truly in Christ (2:1-6)?** Those who are in Christ keep his commandments and walk in the same way Jesus walked.

**1. According to 2:1, why was John writing these things?** He wrote "so that you may not sin." Some might warp his John's previous statement that none of us are without sin (1:8-10) into a license to sin. Thus John went on to clarify that even though it is true we are all sinners (1:8-10), our goal, our desire, ought to be to live sin free (2:1).

ESV **Romans 6:1-2** . . . Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

The lost man leaps into sin and loves it, the saved man lapses into sin and loathes it (Adrian Rogers).

Recognize your sin (1:8), confess it (1:9), then seek to live without it (2:1).

**According to 2:1, if anyone does sin, what advocate does he have?** Jesus is our advocate, speaking to the Father on our behalf.

**2. What is an advocate (2:1)?** A judge advocate is a military attorney who represents an accused soldier in a court marshal. The Greek word is *parakletos* and fundamentally means helper. It literally means one called alongside (to help). Rienecker points out that it could indicate one who offers legal aid or one who intercedes on behalf of someone else (p. 786). In a legal context it means a counsel for the defense; a defense attorney.

**3. Why did John think it important right here to describe Jesus as “the righteous” (2:1)?** Unlike the rest of us, who sin, Jesus is sinless. Jesus’ righteousness qualifies him to be our advocate.

God’s justice demands punishment for violated holiness. Jesus the righteous serves as our advocate and through His blood took the punishment for our sins.

— 2:2 —

**What big word did John use in 2:2 to describe what Jesus did to our sins?** Jesus is the propitiation for our sins.

**4. What does propitiation mean (2:2)?** The NIV renders this as “atoning sacrifice”. It means “satisfaction.” The idea is of placating the wrath of God, in this case with respect to our sins (Rienecker, p. 786).

ESV **Ephesians 5:6** . . . the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

ESV **Romans 1:18** . . . the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men . . .

ESV **Romans 5:9** Since . . . we have . . . been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

**5. What is the difference between propitiation and expiation?** Propitiation is the turning away of wrath by the offering of a sacrifice. Expiation is similar but does not involve God’s wrath; expiation is a payment made for sin, a neutralizing sin. In light of the above texts about God’s wrath, it would seem that propitiation is the better word choice.

**Trinity:** There is no difference in disposition between God the Father (wrath for sin) and Jesus (dying to save us from wrath). God is not some unwilling judge from whom Jesus has to wrestle a pardon. The Bible says God so loved the world, not God so hated the world. God simultaneously has both love for man and wrath toward sin. When it comes to salvation, all three Persons of the Trinity are involved: we are selected by the Father, saved by the Son and sealed by the Spirit. The only other time propitiation is used in the New Testament is in 1 John 4:10 and it shows God the Father's love:

ESV **1 John 4:10** In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

**6. What did John mean when he wrote that Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world (2:2)?** Of course it is true that Jesus' blood is sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world, every man, woman and child. It is sufficient for all but efficient only for believers.

It is likely John was writing to Jewish Christians. From a Jewish perspective, world refers to non-Jewish believers. The idea is that Jesus came not only to save the lost sheep of Israel, but also to save lost Gentile sheep.

ESV **John 11:51-52** . . . being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but also to gather into one the children of God who are scattered abroad.

It is a fact that propitiated sin cannot be punished. Heretics say Jesus died for all of the sins of all of the people. Every orthodox believer limits the atonement in some way. Some say Jesus died for some of the sins of all of the people (the one sin he did not die to forgive was unbelief). Others say Jesus died for all of the sins of some of the people.

— 2:3 —

\*\*\*\***What litmus test for truly knowing Jesus does John lay out in 2:3-6?** Those who know Jesus keep his commandments. It is just that simple!

NAS **John 14:21** He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me . . .

**7. Based on 2:3, how can you know for sure you have come to know Jesus?** You can know for sure you belong to Jesus if you keep His commandments. This, not a warm feeling, not a religious experience, is the ultimate assurance of salvation.

ESV **1 John 5:13** I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life.

God does not want us to merely have a "hope so" salvation; He wants us to have a "know so" salvation! The best way to know for sure is to look at both your beliefs (do you believe in Jesus for forgiveness) and your behavior (has Jesus' forgiveness changed you for the better?).

ESV 2 Peter 1:10 . . . be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure . . .

**8. John as already declared that none of us can say we are without sin (1:8). So how absolute is the obedience 2:3?** The issue is whether or not a person desires to and generally succeeds in keeping God's commands (Marshall, p. 124).

— 2:4 —

**9. What third false profession did John deal with in 2:4?** The one who says he knows God but does not keep God's commandments is a liar.

**Easy Believism:** Salvation is clearly by grace through faith alone. Good works do not and cannot save you. "Easy Believism" is a term used to describe the idea that a person can have genuine, saving faith but not keep Jesus' commands. According to John, a saving faith always leads to a changed life, as clearly taught here in 2:3.

— 2:5 —

**10. What type of people have God's love perfected in their lives (2:5a)?** God's love is perfected in those who obey His word.

**Insight:** Love for God is most sincerely expressed not by a feeling but by an ethical response (*ESV Study Bible*, p. 2431).

"True love for God is expressed not in sentimental language or mystical experience, but in moral obedience." (Rienecker, p 786-787).

**11. What is the difference between sinless perfection and perfected love (2:5)?** Sinless perfection is a worthy goal but practically impossible (1:8-9). Perfected love is keeping God's word. The thought of pleasing God should be supreme in the Christian's motive and conduct (Marshall, p. 125).

— 2:6 —

**12. If you claim to abide in Jesus, what ought you to do (2:6)?** Those who say they abide in Jesus ought to walk as Jesus walked. *If you talk the talk you gotta walk the walk!*

**13. Remember the song: "I walked today where Jesus walked"? John did not say to walk where Jesus walked, but as Jesus walked. What does it mean to walk in the same way as Jesus (2:6)?** Jesus walked in obedience to God the Father and so should we. Jesus submitted to the Father's will. God has made His will know to us very clearly regarding our finances (give sacrificially, pay what you owe), moral purity (be faithful to your spouse, no pornography, don't lie, don't steal), our family (wives submit, husbands love, children obey), etc.

"The test of our religious experience is whether it produces a reflection of the life of Jesus in our daily life; if it fails this elementary test, it is false" (Marshall, p 128).

## So What?

**14. Based on 2:1-6 upon what should a person base his assurance of salvation?**

**15. John wrote so that we may not sin (2:1). What should we do if we do sin?** He should remember that his salvation is based on the fact that Jesus' blood cleanses us from all sin (propitiation, 1:7, 2:2) and that Jesus is our advocate. He should confess his sins to the Father. The proof that he truly has repented and believed will be that he keeps Jesus' commandments (2:3).

**Small Group Discussion Questions:** Ask everyone to divide up by gender into groups of three and discuss the following two questions for 15 minutes, based on 1 John 2:1-6:

- 1. What should a person do when he sins?*
- 2. What test of salvation did John give?*
- 3. What should a person do if he flunks the test?*

\*\*\*\* = ask this question before reading the text aloud. Doing so will cause focus.

- These lessons are designed for a 45 minute session (30 minutes teaching, 15 minutes small group discussion) and are based on the text of the ESV.

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