

1 John 2:1-2 Saved from what?

December 7, 2008

unless otherwise stated, all scripture references are from the English Standard Version (ESV)

This morning we are continuing our study in 1 John and I would like us to read together the verses we have covered so far, beginning from chapter 1.

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1 John 1:1-10

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life--

2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us--

3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

As I said last week, this morning I want to expand a little further upon what it means to be saved. If you were to ask a non-believer would you like to be saved, they would more than likely ask "saved from what"?

We will get to that topic in a little while, but let's read our first text for this morning.

1 John 2:1-1

1 My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an **advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

One of John's goals in writing this letter is that we would live holy lives. It is one of the hallmarks of the Christian life that we desire to LIVE HOLY LIVES. If someone calls themselves Christian and does not want to live a holy life, then something is wrong, they are deceiving themselves and cannot truly carry the name Christian.

Believers are pained & troubled when they sin because they know that in their sin they are not living to please Jesus but they are living to please themselves.

Sin is pleasurable for a short period of time, let's not make a mistake about that, but it also has an eroding or corrosive quality to it, in that it eats away at our intimacy with Jesus, our fellowship with each other and our own well-being.

While our goal is to live holy and pleasing lives for Him, there will be times when we do sin and John is saying in this passage that if any one of us does sin, that we should not panic or fear that Jesus has rejected us. He goes on to say that in Jesus we have an advocate with the Father.

The advocate mentioned here in Greek is the *parakletos*, which comes from another Greek word *parakaleo*. This is a compound word meaning *para* to the side of and *kaleo* to call. It's sort of like saying to someone "quick - come alongside me, I need your help"

This advocate is someone who we call alongside us to comfort, encourage or exhort. In the context of this passage of scripture it is used of a legal advisor, pleader or proxy, someone who comes forward on behalf of and as the representative of another. One who pleads another's cause before a judge, a counsel for defense, or a legal assistant.

Jesus is for us and not against us.

If we sin we have someone who will plead our case as we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Let's now move onto verse two and close by looking at the topic of this message "saved from what?"

Before we do most of us would probably say that we are saved from Hell and in a sense we would be right, but toward the end of this message I want to put forward a slightly different way of looking at this phrase "saved from what"

1 John 2:2

He is the **propitiation** for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.

Now what is this strange word propitiation and what does it mean?

The King James, New King James and New American Standard versions all use the word propitiation. The New International Version says that he is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, but even this needs some explanation.

It would be very easy to skip over difficult biblical words like this one and there will be many more that we come across over the years that lie ahead, but that would be

to our own detriment as they are there for a reason and carry a wealth of meaning if we are prepared to do some work in understanding them.

Every discipline or profession has their own terminology and to be able to communicate effectively in a chosen field you need to know what the technical terms mean.

The Christian faith is no different. So what is propitiation?

Simply put propitiation in the biblical sense is an act performed to turn away or appease God's righteous anger from repentant sinners and to bring peace between the holy and just God and sinful man.

Jesus dying on the cross is this propitiation for our sins.

Let me put it another way by using an analogy.

Suppose you owed someone a very large sum of money that you had borrowed and you foolishly gambled it away until there was nothing left. You realise the terrible mess you are in and know that you must face the person who you owe the money to. You confess the wrong things you did with the money and acknowledge that you cannot possibly pay it back as you are now bankrupt. You are incredibly sorry for what you have done and wish that somehow you could pay the **DEBT** back if it was at all possible for you to do so. Then a close friend of yours and the son of the person you owe the money to, hearing of your situation steps in and gives every last cent he has to **COVER** your debt. You are completely humbled by this enormous act of generosity and you throw your arms around this person in deep gratitude. The person you owe this money to having seen your desperate condition and being willing to receive this money from your friend, forgives you of the foolish things you had done and is prepared to cancel **ALL** record of debt against you.

This is essentially what it means when it says that Jesus is the propitiation for our sins.

He paid the **debt** that we could never pay and in turn removed the justified anger God had toward our sin.

Isaiah 53:3-12

3 He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

4 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

5 But he was **wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our**

iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed.

6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned--every one--to his own way; and the **LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.**

7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

8 By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people?

9 And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth.

10 Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.

11 Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

12 Therefore I will divide him a portion with the many, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he poured out his soul to death and was numbered with the transgressors; **yet he bore the sin of many,** and makes intercession for the transgressors.

In the Bible there are two more aspects that are closely related to propitiation and they are reconciliation and adoption.

Not only is God's anger turned away from us by Jesus dying in our place, God removes the enmity between us and Him and then goes a step further and adopts us into His family as His very own children.

The Judge becomes our Father

So, what does all this mean in regard to being "saved from what?"

As I said earlier, most of would say that we are saved from hell, but I want to put to you that we should really be asking "saved from whom?"

And from what we have seen in the scriptures this morning it is very clear that by Jesus being our propitiation, we have been saved from God's justified and righteous anger against our sin.

Death and hell are the results, the final outcome for the person who refuses to acknowledge their sin and throw themselves on the mercy of Jesus.

We have been saved from God, by God and for God.

Being saved is about our reconciled relationship with the Father through Jesus. Heaven and hell are simply the destinations we face depending upon whether Jesus is the propitiation for our sins or whether we want to go it alone.

God has made a way, are we prepared to take it?

I want to finish off by reading one more scripture that highlights what it truly means to be saved.

Luke 18:9-14

9 He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt:

10 "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.

11 The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: 'God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.'

13 But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, a sinner!'

14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."