

## WE HAVE AN ADVOCATE WITH THE FATHER

### I. 1 John 2:1-6

A. Last Sunday we launched into First John. This epistle differs from other NT letters. There's no named church recipient, formal greeting, or farewell remarks. Some believe it's akin to a sermon that was circulated among multiple churches. As we discovered last week, John illustrates with stark contrasts: light vs darkness; love vs hate; truth vs lies; faith & obedience vs sin & disobedience. More than anything, First John brings forth evidences that someone is a genuine believer vs a pretender. (Fake believers) True regeneration, without transformation, makes the authenticity of the supposed regeneration, suspect.

B. John is no pretender. He went from being a young redneck fisherman, *son-of-thunder* disciple, to the revered elderly *Apostle of Love*. John's testimony may appear less extraordinary than Paul's, but it's still a very remarkable story.

C. First John magnifies many "if-then" scenarios. 1 John 1:6 (ESV) last Sunday is an example: *6 If we say we have fellowship with Him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. (The word, walk, implies the willful practice of sin--sin that put Jesus on the cross in the first place! And walking in darkness implies the sin may also be hidden or concealed or treated as though it wasn't sin at all.)*

D. 1 John 1 addressed willful sinning by so-called Christians. Included were false teachers. Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, "You will know them by their fruits." While willful sinning is not the fruit of a genuine believer, all of us sin. But hopefully we're turning from it, not towards it! We also learned, admitting to sin isn't the same as confessing it. 1 John 1:8-10 (ESV) is our review: *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. (True confession implies: Conviction. (What I've done or am doing is wrong in God's eyes.) Implies contrition. (I must stop it, and I might need help in stopping.) Implies repentance. (Changing my mind about it, turning away from it, and turning to God.)*

E. 1 John 2:1-6 (ESV) continues our insightful trek...

1) V1: 1 My little children (An endearing term for people whom John deeply loved.), 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. (Jesus, as our Advocate, is One who stands before God on our behalf. He's like a defense attorney. He defends our case before God Almighty, even as the Accuser of the Brethren (Satan) points to our sin. The Accuser says, "You are guilty!" Jesus says, "Not guilty!" "This one has been justified by My blood!" (Just-as-if-they'd never sinned. Just-as-if-they'd always obeyed.) Jesus intercedes on our behalf. He's also called our *Mediator*. Listen to these additional Scriptures: 1 Timothy 2:5-6 (AMP) says: *5 For there is [only] one God, and [only] one Mediator between God and mankind, the Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself as a ransom [a substitutionary sacrifice to atone] for all, the testimony given at the right and proper time. Hebrews 9:15 (AMP) echoes: *15 For this reason He is the Mediator and Negotiator of a new covenant [that is, an entirely new agreement uniting God and man], so that those who have been called [by God] may receive [the fulfillment of] the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has taken place [as the payment] which redeems them from the sins committed under the obsolete first covenant. (If you are a believer and you sin, Jesus represents you to God the Father. If you are not a believer, He does not. Your guilt remains yours and you will face judgment and sentencing by God! But the next verse is our hope.)**

2) V2: 2 He (Jesus) is the propitiation for our sins. (The atoning sacrifice; the One who absorbed God's wrath on the cross, the all-sufficient and acceptable offering, securing for us God's favor.) and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. (World: people from every nation, tribe, and tongue. Are you among them?)

3) V3: Next another "if/then" statement: 3 And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. (Point of clarity: Not: "If we keep His commandments then we'll come to know Him." Rather: "We keep His commandments if indeed we truly know Him.")

4) V4-6: 4 Whoever says "I know Him" but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in Him, 5 but whoever keeps His word, in Him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in Him: 6 whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked. (Story: Doc and Mr. Ed.)

F. In July I'll celebrate my 50th birthday in Christ. During these past 50 years I've seen a lot of stuff. Like the Farmer's Insurance slogan, "We know a thing or two because we've seen a thing or two!" The saddest thing has been watching people profess Christ and then later walk away. I never get used to it. I've seen people have what appeared to be dramatic conversions with tears streaming down. I've heard people share compelling testimonies.

I've hung with people for years who I thought were solid, only to see them later depart. I've baptized people who went down dry sinners and came up wet sinners. Nothing is more grievous.

**G. When obedience is rendered to earn salvation, or gain promotion with God, or even as a practice of paying Him back, it eventually peters out. C.S. Lewis said: "No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good." No! Salvation cannot be earned! But if obedience results from genuine rebirth, when it flows out of faith, flows out of love, gratitude, and joy--then there's substance to it. It's because a person's "I know Him" is indeed an authentic profession of faith.**

**H. I want that for all of you. I want each of you to know that you know that you know--Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. I want you to know Him, love Him, and serve Him from the heart. I want you to know Christ and make Him known because you can't help but make Him known. I don't want the distinctions between those in the world and all of you to be scant or blurry. I want them to be crystal clear. If you're arrested for being a Christian, I want there to be so much evidence you don't stand a chance of getting off! I don't want any of you to be pretenders. I want you all to be the genuine article. I pray for you to be all in, sold out, and inundated in Christ! Question is: Do you want that too?**

\* Close with Prayer...

### **[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)**

#### **[1 John 2:1-6 \(ESV\)](#)**

**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. **2** He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world. **3** And by this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. **4** Whoever says "I know Him" but does not keep His commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in Him, **5** but whoever keeps His word, in Him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in Him: **6** whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked.

#### **[1 Timothy 2:5-6 \(AMP\)](#)**

**5** For there is [only] one God, and [only] one Mediator between God and mankind, the Man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave Himself as a ransom [a substitutionary sacrifice to atone] for all, the testimony given at the right and proper time.

#### **[Hebrews 9:15 \(AMP\)](#)**

**15** For this reason He is the Mediator and Negotiator of a new covenant [that is, an entirely new agreement uniting God and man], so that those who have been called [by God] may receive [the fulfillment of] the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has taken place [as the payment] which redeems them from the sins committed under the obsolete first covenant.

#### **[Quote by C.S. Lewis](#)**

"No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good."

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### **[Bonus Stuff](#)**

#### **[Romans 3:20-26 \(AMP\)](#)**

**20** For no person will be justified [freed of guilt and declared righteous] in His sight by [trying to do] the works of the Law. For through the Law we become conscious of sin [and the recognition of sin directs us toward repentance, but provides no remedy for sin]. **21** But now the righteousness of God has been clearly revealed [independently and completely] apart from the Law, though it is [actually] confirmed by the Law and the [words and writings of the] Prophets. **22** This righteousness of God comes through faith in Jesus Christ for all those [Jew or Gentile] who believe [and trust in Him and acknowledge Him as God's Son]. There is no distinction, **23** since all have sinned and continually fall short of the glory of God, **24** and are being justified [declared free of the guilt of sin, made acceptable to God, and granted eternal life] as a gift by His [precious, undeserved] grace, through the redemption [the payment for our sin] which is [provided] in Christ Jesus, **25** whom God displayed publicly [before the eyes of the world] as a [life-giving] sacrifice of atonement and reconciliation (propitiation) by His blood [to be received] through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness [which demands punishment for sin], because in His forbearance [His deliberate restraint] He passed

over the sins previously committed [before Jesus' crucifixion]. It was to demonstrate His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be just and the One who justifies those who have faith in Jesus [and rely confidently on Him as Savior].

### **Hebrews 12:22-25 (AMP)**

**22** But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels [in festive gathering], **23** and to the general assembly and assembly of the firstborn who are registered [as citizens] in heaven, and to God, who is Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous (the redeemed in heaven) who have been made perfect [bringing them to their final glory], **24** and to Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant [uniting God and man], and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks [of mercy], a better and nobler and more gracious message than the blood of Abel [which cried out for vengeance]. **25** See to it that you do not refuse [to listen to] Him who is speaking [to you now]. For if those [sons of Israel] did not escape when they refused [to listen to] him who warned them on earth [revealing God's will], how much less will we escape if we turn our backs on Him who warns from heaven?

### **Zechariah 3:1-10 (ESV)**

**1** Then he showed me Joshua the high priest standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to accuse him. **2** And the Lord said to Satan, "The Lord rebuke you, O Satan! The Lord who has chosen Jerusalem rebuke you! Is not this a branch plucked from the fire?" **3** Now Joshua was standing before the angel, clothed with filthy garments. **4** And the angel said to those who were standing before him, "Remove the filthy garments from him." And to him he said, "Behold, I have taken your iniquity away from you, and I will clothe you with pure vestments." **5** And I said, "Let them put a clean turban on his head." So they put a clean turban on his head and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord was standing by. **6** And the angel of the Lord solemnly assured Joshua, **7** "Thus says the Lord of hosts: If you will walk in My ways and keep My charge, then you shall rule My house and have charge of My courts, and I will give you the right of access among those who are standing here. **8** Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, you and your friends who sit before you, for they are men who are a sign: behold, I will bring My servant the Branch. **9** For behold, on the stone that I have set before Joshua, on a single stone with seven eyes, I will engrave its inscription, declares the Lord of hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of this land in a single day. **10** In that day, declares the Lord of hosts, every one of you will invite his neighbor to come under his vine and under his fig tree."

### **Justification Only Through Atonement**

For several generations the Edinburgh review has carried on its cover the Latin epigram, "The Judge is condemned when the guilty is acquitted." The guilty is sometimes acquitted in human courts, but this never happens in the Divine Court. There, if man is justified, or, to put it in plain present-day English, acquitted or found not guilty, it is in strict harmony with the law of right, of justice. How, then, shall mortal man be just with God? Man is a sinner. The penalty upon sin as announced by God is death, eternal death, spiritual death; and God will by no means clear the guilty. The only way whereby God can remain Just, and still become the Justifier of the guilty, is through the atoning death of Jesus Christ. - Author Unknown

### **The Agonizing Prayer** (Propitiation Explained)

By Dr. Jerry Bridges

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/agonizing-prayer/>

Isaiah wrote prophetically of Jesus that He was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief" ([Isa. 53:3](#)). Though those words were descriptive of His entire life, we see them coming to a climax in the garden of Gethsemane where Jesus prayed, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will" ([Matt. 26:39](#)). Luke tells us that Jesus was in such agony as He prayed that "His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground" ([Luke 22:44](#)).

What was it that caused Jesus such agony? Why did He pray that, if possible, He might not drink of the cup ([John 18:11](#))? What was in the cup that was so utterly distressing to Jesus as He contemplated drinking of it? We naturally associate Jesus' cup with the crucifixion and assume that He was praying that He might be spared the wretched and degrading death on the cross. The cup was indeed connected with the crucifixion, but we still have not answered the question: What was in the cup?

In both the Old and New Testaments, the cup is often used as a metaphor for the wrath of God ([Ps. 75:8](#); [Isa. 51:17, 22](#); [Jer. 25:15](#); [Hab. 2:16](#); [Rev. 14:9-10](#)). The cup, then, that Jesus found so abhorrent to drink was a cup filled with the wrath of God. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was staring intently into that cup — the one He would drink the very next day as He hung on the cross in excruciating agony.

But it was not the physical agony that Jesus so dreaded, as horrible as that was; rather, it was the spiritual agony He foresaw as He would drink to its last bitter dregs the cup of God's wrath, the wrath that we actually deserved. This brings us to a difficult subject of the Bible, one that is denied by many Bible scholars and ignored by most of us. We simply do not like to think about the wrath of God. Why?

Perhaps we shy away from the expression "the wrath of God" because of the violent emotions and destructive behavior that is frequently associated with the term wrath when used of sinful human beings. More likely, we don't want to think of our nice, friendly, but unbelieving neighbors and relatives as subject to the wrath of God.

If we take the Bible seriously, however, we must take seriously the subject of God's wrath. It is a theme that runs throughout both the Old and New Testaments. One theologian has stated that the number of references to God's wrath in the Old Testament exceeds 580. What about the New Testament? Some people teach that the subject of God's wrath disappears in the New Testament and that His love and mercy become the only expressions of God's attitude toward humanity.

Jesus clearly refutes that notion. In [John 3:36](#) He says, "Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever rejects the Son will not see life, but God's wrath remains on him." Paul wrote frequently of the wrath of God (for example, [Rom. 1:18](#); [2:5](#); [5:9](#); [Eph. 2:3](#); [Col. 3:6](#)). Finally, the whole tenor of Revelation warns us of the wrath to come (6:16–17; 14:10; 16:19; 19:15).

What is it that so provokes the wrath of God? It is our sin. Regardless of how small or insignificant it may seem to us, all sin is an assault on the infinite majesty and sovereign authority of God. God, by the perfection of His moral nature, cannot but be hostile to sin — all sin, be it ever so small in our eyes. It was God's wrath toward our sin that Jesus saw in the cup that night and from which He recoiled in such agony.

So Jesus drank the cup of the wrath of God in our place. He endured the unimaginable spiritual agony we deserve so that we would be saved by Him from the wrath of God. We will never appreciate Jesus' agonizing prayer in Gethsemane; we will never appreciate His sweating, as it were, great drops of blood, until we grasp in the depths of our beings that Jesus was staring at the wrath of God we deserve.

The theological term for Jesus' act of drinking the cup is propitiation. A modern dictionary will say that to propitiate means "to appease" or "to placate." I find these definitions unsatisfactory when applied to Christ because they suggest a soothing or softening the wrath of an offended deity. Jesus did not soothe the wrath of God — He endured it. He did not suppress or extinguish it as we would extinguish a fire; rather, He absorbed in His own soul the full, unmitigated fury of God's wrath against sin. To continue with the metaphor, He drank the cup of God's wrath to its last bitter drop. So for us who believe, the cup of God's wrath is empty.

We read the story of Gethsemane and the crucifixion so often that it has a tendency to become commonplace. If this is true of us, may we repent. And may we never again read Jesus' prayer of anguish without reminding ourselves that it was God's wrath against our sin that caused Him such unimaginable agony.

- The late Dr. Jerry Bridges was author of more than a dozen books, a popular speaker, and was a staff member of [The Navigators](#) in Colorado Springs, Co. He entered into glory in 2016 at the age of 86. To read a wonderful tribute to his life, go to: <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/justin-taylor/jerry-bridges-1929-2016/>

### **Sermon Excerpt from John MacArthur**

"To be the perfect Mediator, the perfect Anointed One who would bring God and man together perfectly and eternally, to be the One who is the Reconciler who brings unholy sinners into fellowship forever with holy God, requires a very unique person—not just anyone can do that. In theory, any man could be a king. In theory, any man could be a priest. Any man could be a prophet. But the final and ultimate King, Prophet, and Priest had to be more than man; he had to be unique. He had to be both God and man in order to fully represent man and fully represent God. He had to possess two natures, the nature of man and the nature of God, indivisibly united but not combined to form a third nature. In [John 1:14](#) it's described this way, "The Word"...the eternal God..."became flesh and dwelt among us." The Messiah/Mediator must then possess all the perfections, all the powers, all the prerogatives, all the attributes of the one true, living God. At the same time, He must possess all the attributes, all the powers, and all the features of humanity. He must be fully God and fully man. That is required of this Mediator, this Anointed One, the Messiah."

- John MacArthur, sermon titled, "*The Perfect Mediator*" Dec. 9, 2012. To listen to or read the full sermon, go to: <https://www.gty.org/library/sermons-library/80-401/the-perfect-mediator>

## **What Does it Mean that Jesus is Our Mediator?**

By S. Michael Houdmann

<https://www.gotquestions.org/Jesus-mediator.html>

Question: *"What does it mean that Jesus is our mediator?"*

Answer: A mediator is one who mediates, that is, one who acts as an intermediary to work with opposing sides in order to bring about a settlement. A mediator attempts to influence a disagreement between two parties with the goal of resolving a dispute. There is only one Mediator between mankind and God, and that is Jesus Christ. In this article, we'll see why God has a dispute with us, why Jesus is our mediator, and why we are doomed if we try to represent ourselves alone before God.

God has a dispute with us because of sin. Sin is described in the Bible as transgression of the law of God (1 John 3:4) and rebellion against God (Deuteronomy 9:7; Joshua 1:18). God hates sin, and sin stands between all of us and Him. *"There is no one righteous, not even one"* (Romans 3:10). All human beings are sinners by virtue of sin we have inherited from Adam, as well as the sin we commit on a daily basis. The only just penalty for this sin is death (Romans 6:23), not only physical death but eternal death (Revelation 20:11–15). The rightful punishment for sin is an eternity in hell.

Nothing we could do on our own would be sufficient to mediate between ourselves and God. No amount of good works or law-keeping makes us righteous enough to stand before a holy God (Isaiah 64:6; Romans 3:20; Galatians 2:16). Without a mediator, we are destined to spend eternity in hell, for by ourselves salvation from our sin is impossible. Yet there is hope! *"For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* (1 Timothy 2:5). Jesus represents those who have placed their trust in Him before God's throne of grace. He mediates for us, much as a defense attorney mediates for his client, telling the judge, *"Your honor, my client is innocent of all charges against him."* That is true for us also. Some day we will face God, but we will do so as totally forgiven sinners because of Jesus' death on our behalf. The "Defense Attorney" took the penalty for us!

We see more proof of this comforting truth in Hebrews 9:15: *"For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that He has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant."* It is because of the great Mediator that we are able to stand before God clothed in the righteousness of Christ Himself. On the cross Jesus exchanged our sin for His righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21). His mediation is the only means of salvation.

- While he is not the author of every article on [GotQuestions.org](https://www.gotquestions.org), for citation purposes, you may reference our CEO, S. Michael Houdmann.