

**1 John 2 (NKJV)**

1. My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an **Advocate** with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.
2. **And He Himself is the propitiation** for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.
3. Now by this we know that we **know Him, if we keep His commandments**.
4. He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the **truth is not in him**.
5. But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of **God is perfected in him**. By this we know that **we are in Him**.
6. He who says he **abides in Him** ought himself also to walk just as He walked.
7. Brethren, **I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment** which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.
8. **Again, a new commandment I write to you**, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.
9. He who **says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now**.
10. He who **loves his brother abides in the light**, and there is no cause for stumbling in him.
11. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.
12. I write to you, little children, **because your sins are forgiven** you for His name's sake.
13. I write to you, fathers, **because you have known Him** who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because **you have overcome the wicked one**. I write to you, little children, because you have **known the Father**.
14. I have written to you, fathers, because you have **known Him** who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, **because you are strong**, and the word of **God abides in you**, and **you have overcome the wicked one**.
15. **Do not love the world or the things in the world**. If anyone loves the world, the love of the **Father is not in him**.
16. For all that is in the world the **lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life** is not of the Father but is of the world.
17. And the **world is passing away**, and the lust of it; but he who **does the will of God abides forever**.
18. Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that the Antichrist is coming, even now **many antichrists have come**, by which we know that it is the last hour.
19. They **went out from us, but they were not of us**; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.
20. But you have an **anointing from the Holy One**, and you know all things.
21. I have not written to you because you do not know the **truth**, but **because you know it**, and that no lie is of the truth.
22. Who is a liar but **he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?** He is **antichrist who denies the Father and the Son**.
23. Whoever **denies the Son does not have the Father either**; he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also.
24. Therefore let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you **heard from the beginning abides in you**, you also will **abide in the Son and in the Father**.
25. And this is the promise that He has promised us eternal life.
26. These things I have written to you concerning those who **try to deceive you**.
27. But the anointing which you have received from **Him abides in you**, and you do not need that anyone teach you; but as the same anointing teaches you concerning all things, and is true, and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you will **abide in Him**.
28. And now, little children, **abide in Him**, that when He appears, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before Him at His coming.
29. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

**DICHOTOMY**

We learned a major theme starting in chapter one, was BALANCE. There is a second major theme that is closely related which is DICHOTOMY. That is; John presented the structure of the Christian faith in a clear, either/ or fashion: He spoke of:

- Light and dark; we live in one or the other.
- People live IN God, or not in God.
- If we live in God, there will be proof, or we show no proof.
- We embrace the truth, or we are a liar.
- We are Christ or antichrist.

That is the setting in which John places the jewels of God's teaching. This morning, we looked at one of those jewels, the concept of, "TO KNOW."

This evening we look at one of the most foundational concepts of Judeo-Christian faith; the works of the Cross.

If we look at the words of what Jesus did at the Cross, we will find different translations use different words. One will speak of "atonement", another uses the unfamiliar word, "expiation", and yet another will use the equally strange word, "propitiation."

These aren't words we'd want to throw out to a novice, or nonbeliever; but as students of God's Word, we need to understand these words to lay roots in our faith. First, the reason we see three words used to describe the same thing is because, no single word adequately translates what was originally said. The words might be used interchangeably, but each subtly highlights a different work down by the Messiah's sacrifice.

In the beginning, the Hebrew used the word "kappar" ("kaphar", "kipper") and by the New Testament, the Greek used the word, "hilasmos." There are actually three great works going on in the Cross; atonement, expiation, and propitiation. In straightforward terms, this is what we must know about "hilasmos" at the Cross there was...

### **The first is the act of appeasement. (Expiation)**

This would be common ground with the Greco-Roman religions at the time. The divine must be appeased at the faults of imperfect humanity. Like Judaism, pagan religions understood the concept of a "scapegoat." The goal was to offer a substitute for one's own (or group's) punishment.

However, that's where the similarity ends. To the pagans, the gods were always angry about something. The reasons were often unknowable so a worshipper would do a variety of things hoping to hit the issue. The goal of appeasement was not to gain relationship with the god in question, but actually quite the opposite. Now that they are appeased, hopefully they'd go away and stop punishing them.

The work of the cross is certainly to avert the wrath of God. But it is very different than the pagan idea. For one thing, God doesn't become angry for arbitrary reasons. He has laid down His standard very clearly in advance. The New Testament explanation was given to the Romans like this:

**Romans 1: 18**

**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.**

The Law would tell you what wasn't right. The Torah would tell you what wasn't godly; and Christ fulfilled both. Moral clarity is a step forward, but beyond that, there is an alternative way of seeing God's wrath. There is a deeper meaning, than; *we do wrong, and God gets angry.*

For the sake of analogy, consider this picture [Shock hazard sign]. Electricity is powerful, but it really doesn't get angry. It does wonderful good, but if one's contact is not right, the result is a given. As the sign says, "Not only will it kill you, it will hurt the whole time you are dying."

Bring gasoline in contact with an open flame, bring water in contact with a grease fire, the fire does not evoke emotion, but all the same, the consequence is a given.

The same concept can pertain to contact with God. Bring a fallen nature in contact with a holy God, bring guilt in contact with perfect justice, imperfection with perfection, carnal with holy glory, and the result is a given... the ungodly is vaporized!

To come into contact with pure righteousness when we have no insulation, no manner of appeasement can only have one outcome. Revelation is a vision based on this very truth. There must be appeasement and on the Cross, Christ was our appeasement.

2. And He Himself is the **[expiation- appeasement]** for our sins,

The second work of the long foretold Messiah, on the Cross is...

## The work of forgiveness (atonement)

Here's an interesting bit of research, looking at a transliterated version of Scripture (*word for word*), the word "**atonement**" is used repeatedly in the Old Testament, but never appears in the New Testament. The word "expiation" is actually used, and in other translations "propitiation" is often used.

The highlight or emphasis of atonement is not so much appeasement, as to **make reparation** for a wrong so it can be **forgiven**. You break your mom's favorite cup, so you buy a new one and leave a note saying, "I'm sorry." There's a simple example of atoning.

The pagan religions understood appeasement, but forgiveness was getting into unfamiliar territory. The idea of forgiveness predicates a relationship once existed. Greco-Roman gods were not knowable, and never considered "friends."

Judaism, and then Christianity were completely unique. Humanity once had a relationship with God. We want a relationship with God. And even wilder, God wants a relationship with us! So in both Judaism and Christianity, a substitutionary sacrifice is offered on our behalf. It allows God to forgive, for the purpose of restoring the relationship. As "atonement" is sometimes described, it allows "at" "one" "ment."

Although this is lost on pagan worship, it was a pillar of the ancient Jewish faith, so engrained, that it is still the major pillar of that faith to this day.

"Atonement" in the Hebrew is "kaphar" or "kippur"; as in the major religious day of Judaism "Yom Kippur", "Day of Atonement." Even Jews who don't observe any other holy day, do not miss the tenth day of the seventh month, the "Sabbath of Sabbaths", Yom Kippur. The [Rabbi would explain](#) it as "the holiest day of the year- the day which we are closest to God and to the quintessence of our own souls."

Yom Kippur was the only day that the High Priest could enter the Holy of Holies and the presence of God. How different that the pagan who would appease the gods so they would leave them alone! The nature of God must be appeased, but more than that, there must be forgiveness to open the door for reconciliation, and then there's one more work that sustains this restored relationship...

## The work of purification (propitiation)

The Greek word "hilasterion" equates to the Hebrew word "kapporeth", which means "covering." It was used to identify the lid of the Ark of the Covenant, which contained the Mercy Seat. On the Day of Atonement, the High Priest would sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice, on the Mercy Seat. There is the concept of **reconciliation through the blood**.

The idea was to **cover, or purify the taint of guilt**. God is not simply *perfect love* who offers unconditional forgiveness, He is also perfect justice, and **guilt cannot be reconciled with justice**, only **removed or purified**.

**Yom Kippur was for this purpose, but it must be repeated every year**, the sacrifice offered was temporary. The great thing that Yom Kippur did, was point to the future of what the coming Messiah would do:

Hebrews 10

10 The **law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming**—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the **same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year**, make perfect those who **draw near** to worship.

2 Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins. 3 But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins. 4 It is **impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins**.

5 Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:

"Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,  
but a body you prepared for me;

... 10 And by that will, we have been made holy through the **sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all**.

John reduces that thought to one sentence:

1 John 2:2

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

The work of the Cross is a three-part work, packaged in the one Greek word, "hilasmos"; *appeasement, forgiveness and reconciliation, and ultimately, purification*. The words "atonement", "expiation", and "propitiation" are used somewhat interchangeable, but each one subtly highlights a different work of the Cross. To have a ***relationship with God demands all three***.

## KNOWING HIM

That brings us full circle to the focus of this morning. John explains from the point of the Jewish Law but goes beyond it by bringing in a revolutionary new thought to the Jewish mind, we are not just "reconciled" with God, through the Messiah, we are IN Him, and Him IN us. It is God's intention that we KNOW Him.

And if this is actually true, there WILL be change. That visible change is evidence that He is in us. There will be fruit, and there will be empowerment or *gifts* of God.

The work of the Cross sits on the "dichotomy" that John has set up:

- We are in God, or we are not.
- We are reconciled, or we are not.
- We have whole-heartedly given ourselves to God; or we have not.
- We are Christ or antichrist.

And there lies a disturbing line of thinking. The prefix "anti" comes from the Greek, meaning; *to oppose, to be against, or instead of*.

One is not *anti-anything* by simply being ignorant of it or undecided. Being "anti" is an *intentional* choice. So, it makes sense when John says:

**1 John 2:**

19. They **went out from us, but they were not of us**; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but they went out that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

20. But you have an **anointing from the Holy One**, and you know all things.

21. I have not written to you because you do not know the **truth**, but **because you know it**, and that no lie is of the truth.

22. Who is a liar but **he who denies that Jesus is the Christ**? He is **antichrist who denies the Father and the Son**.

***The antichrist to worry about, isn't some distant mysterious figure, it is the possibility of ourselves!***

**Here is one last ancient word to consider, "deny"; "ar-neh'-om-ahee."** It has meanings we'd expect; *to disavow, reject or renounce*. We might sigh in relief because *we'd* never do such things. But "arneomai" has one more meaning; ***to contradict***.

Can we breathe so easy about that one?

## DISCUSSION

- WHAT POINT(S) WERE MOST SIGNIFICANT TO YOU?
- HOW WOULD YOU EXPLAIN THE WORD "HILATMOS" TO SOMEONE?
- IN WHAT WAYS MIGHT WE "AMONG THE CHURCH" "CONTRADICT" GOD?