

1 JOHN 2:1-2 | A PLEA TO COME TO JESUS AS MESSIAH

- Verse 1 –
 - We have previously established that the recipients of the letter were *not* in fellowship with the author (1 Jn. 1:3), therefore the phrase **my little children** should not be taken to be “my children in the faith.”
 - There are times when the term is used literally (Mt. 10:14), but most of the time the phrase is used of adults.
 - While it is usually spoken of as a “term of endearment,” the phrase is not necessarily used of those “within the faith” and certainly not to those who are in good fellowship.
 - It is used in John 13:33 to those who are Jesus’ disciples, encouraging them to excel in love.
 - Paul uses it in Galatians 4:19 while speaking harshly to the Galatians.
 - This epistle uses the phrase nine times (two with a different Greek word).
 - In the Old Testament, the term is used in 2 Kings 6:23 in a sarcastic manner, demeaning those who are likely young men (see sermon #27 in the *30 Amazing Bible Stories You May Not Know* series).
 - The phrase **these things write I unto you** are, in my interpretation, things which are *about to be* written in the following verses.
 - The author concludes this section in 1 John 2:26, saying **These things have I written**.
 - With this interpretation, 1 John 2:1-26 will be giving information to Israel on what it means to **sin not**.
 - The content of chapter 2, therefore, has to be tailored for Israel and not for the Body of Christ.
 - The content begins with the good news that **if any man sin, we have an advocate...Jesus Christ the righteous**.
 - The Jewish law required an **advocate** between man and God, but only Jesus **the righteous** is able to be that advocate.
- Verse 2 –
 - The **advocate** (v. 1) for Israel is **the propitiation for our sins**.
 - The word **propitiation** is translated from the Greek ἱλασμός [hilasmos].
 - The Greek is only used here and 1 John 4:10.
 - The English word is also used in Romans 3:25, where God has put forth Jesus as a **propitiation through faith in his blood**. In Romans the word is ἱλαστήριον [hilasterion], or *the place of propitiation* and is translated in Hebrews 9:5 as **mercy seat**.
 - The Greek has a very Jewish flavor, and the usage of the Greek in Jewish documents also carries a very Jewish flavor, centering on Temple sacrifice, and especially the Day of Atonement, in which the nation went (vicariously) to the *mercy seat for expiation* of national sins.
 - In the past I have used **propitiation** as the New Testament fulfillment of *atonement*. Deeper study reveals that this assumption may not have been correct. Rather,

propitiation is the *national cleansing from sin at the Temple* while *atonement* is the *individual removal of a particular sin*.

- All of this is still worthy of further study. However, in the use of the term here, it appears to convey the fact that Jesus is the final *Day of Atonement sacrifice* for the nation.
- The same thought is conveyed in other Hebrew epistles, such as 1 Peter 2:24.
- The epistle broadens the Day of Atonement (which was only for Israel) to **the sins of the whole world**. While this is a great truth, the content of the chapter is for Israel.

1 JOHN 2:3-7 | SIN NOT: BY KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS

- Verse 3 –
 - How does a Jew *know that he knows* that Father? He will **keep his commandments**.
 - The word **know** is γινώσκω [ginosko], to *know in the personal/experiential sense*.
 - The first use is in the present tense, the second in the perfect tense.
 - Perfect tense is used for “an action which is viewed as having been completed in the past, once and for all, not needing to be repeated.”¹
 - The standard for this knowledge is to **keep his commandments**.
 - Using the principle of scripture as its own interpretation, **his commandments** (i.e.: the commandments of the Father) can only be *the commandments of the Law*, for what other commandments are there?
 - Can we in any way say, “you are not a Christian if you do not keep Torah?” This would be a ridiculous and works-based theology, so devoid of Pauline truth that it simply *should* be unacceptable to Christians. However, it is prevalent in all corners of Christendom.
- Verse 4 –
 - Can a Jew claim to know the Father and yet ignore the commandments of Torah? Such an idea would be preposterous.
 - Works are inherently required in the Jewish faith, and no argument could be made that it was a system of *faith without works*.
 - This is the reason that Paul had such an uphill battle convincing people that the age of Grace could be “works free.”
 - If one says, “this is behavior after and not a requirement for salvation” one is still left out of the ability to say that salvation is *not of works*, for *works are required in the equation*, simply moved places in the equation.
 - In Revelation 12:17 the believing Jews are those who **keep the commandments of God**, along with the **testimony of Jesus Christ**. See also Revelation 14:12.

¹ Larry Pierce, Tense Voice Mood (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, n.d.).