



The Agape

Class 2 • 1st John 2 • Part 1

• 1st John 2:1-14

- 1) My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:
- 2) And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.
- 3) And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.
- 4) He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.
- 5) But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.
- 6) He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.
- 7) Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.
- 8) Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.
- 9) He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.
- 10) He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.
- 11) But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.
- 12) I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.
- 13) I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.
- 14) I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

- We ended last week with five **IFS**
- There were three basic themes:
 - 6) **IF** we have fellowship with Christ, we cannot “deport ourselves” with wickedness
 - 7 & 9) **IF** we have Fellowship with Christ, then our sins are forgiven
 - 8&10) **IF** we focus on self-made righteousness you can begin to persuade yourself that just because you can't find anything wrong, then God can't either
- We were proceeding forward with a theory:
 - All of the epistles of John should be read against the background of the Breaking of Bread
- As we looked at these verses, we saw reference to:
 - The forgiveness of sins
 - The fellowship we share with Christ
- We continue this week with two more **IFS**
 - 1) **IF** we sin, Jesus is the atoning sacrifice for all the sins of the world
 - 3) **IF** we obey his commandments, then we know that he know Christ
- He starts out with, “Little children, I am writing to you so that you will not sin.”
- How would you respond to a sentence like that?
- Is John being overly idealistic?
- If we remember what the focus of the letter is, that he is trying to encourage the Brethren to avoid the encroachments of Judaism, then maybe we can read it differently
- It would appear that John is counseling against THE SIN of a return to Judaism and it's doctrine of justification by works
- But, look how he continues...
- Christ's Law of Grace is remarkably different than the Law of Sin and Death..
- Even if you do return to Judaism, you can be forgiven if you repent and come to Jesus

- We have an “Advocate” with Jesus
- Advocate is *parakletos* - Comforter or Helper
- It can also be used in the technical sense of one who argues a case before a judge
- But, even then, it carries the loving, comforting help of someone looking out for you
- Verse 2 brings out the big words... Propitiation... Any other words come to mind?
- Propitiation is the Old Testament word for Atonement

- Psalm 130:3-4

- 3) If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?
- 4) But *there is forgiveness* with thee, that thou mayest be feared.

- Romans 3:23-25

- 23) For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
- 24) Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:
- 25) Whom God hath set forth *to be* a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

- And not only for us, but for the whole world
- But, you have to know Christ before you can be saved by him...
- What does it mean to know him? How can you tell?
- 3) And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.
- What is the connection between “knowing him” and “keeping his commandments”?
- What “commandments” are we talking about?
- Chris introduced several principles, but what actual commandments do you recall?
- Love one another, repent and be baptized, and do this in remembrance of me
- 4) If we know him, we have to keep his commandments
- 5) If we keep his commandments, the love of God is perfected

- The Love of God
- The Agape Feast
- The Memorial Feast
- The believers' love of God is expressed by his presence at the Memorial Service
- John never uses the phrase "In Christ" like Paul does, but look at what he does use:
 - "we are in him" - vs. 5
 - "abideth in him" - vs. 6
 - "walking as he walked" - vs. 6
- John seems to stress this over and over
- We can obviously apply this to the greater overall picture of our life
- Staying in the Truth
- But, again, think in terms of the Memorial Feast
- Regular participation in the Memorial Feast is the most obvious way a believer can show that they are continuing in Christ
- John 6:56
 - 56) He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.
- But, what about sincerity?
- Just showing up for Memorial Service doesn't necessarily prove anything
- John continues to imply that you can judge a believer's sincerity by kind of life they live
- *"ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked"*
- *peripateo* - Very popular with the Rabbi's to refer to your lifestyle
- He's not saying that we should walk according to the Rabbi's rule, but like Christ

7) Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

- The allusion seems simple enough...

- John 13:34

34) A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

- How would "*Love one another*" be considered a "*new commandment*"?

- Leviticus 19:18

18) Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I *am* the LORD.

- The key phrase is "*as I have loved you*"

- The allusion is again to the Agape - The Love Feast - Which they had just shared

- Jesus lays down the Memorial Emblems as a commandment - A clear token of true discipleship

- Look at the next verse in John 13

- John 13:35

35) By this shall all *men* know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

- Seen in this light, several verses in John make more sense:

- John 15:12-14

12) This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13) Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14) Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

- John 14:21

21) He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

- It was a new commandment because unlike every other Jewish feast, none ever celebrated the death of a man
- 8) Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.
 - 9) He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.
 - 10) He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.
 - 11) But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.
- This new commandment is true - Just as the Passover reinforces in all Jewish minds that God DID deliver Israel out of Egypt, so the Agape Feast reinforces in the minds of all Christians that Christ did for their sins and DID rise again
 - Again he talks about Darkness and Light
 - You would think that Darkness and Light are easy to interpret - What are the options?
 - Again these would be references to being in Judaism or in Christianity for them
 - And in the way of Sin or in the way of Christ for us
 - They could refer to ignorance and knowledge
 - In what sense is the Darkness passing away, and true light now shining?
 - Probably most closely represented in the decline of Judaism and growth of Church
 - But, just like Israel passing out of the darkness of Egypt, you always take some with
 - Like hating your brother...
 - In what sense of Darkness would hating your brother be the result?
 - Notice how sincere love goes a long way to avoid any stumbling?
 - The Judaists hated Paul, and tried to spread that spirit to others
 - Even though they were highly learned Brethren, they were in Darkness
 - 12) I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.
 - Again a reminder of the Agape Feast

- Matthew 26:28

- 28) For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.
- 13) I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.
- 14) I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

- You fathers knew him from the beginning
- Most people put 1st John between 60 and 65, so this was probably very true
- But, they were getting old, and probably marginalized
- The young have overcome the “wicked one”
- Was this an actual allusion to a Judaist who had tried to turn the young men?