

A STUDY OF 1 John 1:8-2:2

*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. **2** 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.*

John is writing to a church threatened by two wrong beliefs about Jesus. Some influenced by Jewish teachings can accept Jesus as a great human, even the Messiah sent by God, but not fully divine. Others influenced by Greco-Roman philosophy can accept Jesus as God, but cannot accept that He could be human.

In the first four verses, John asserts that Jesus is fully divine and fully human and that is the only way for Christians to have fellowship with God and with each other.

In verses 6-7, John addresses the first of several wrong beliefs of his opponents. The ones presented here all have to do with minimizing sin. The first is that how Christians live does not matter. All that matters is what they believe. John says this is wrong. People cannot live according to the world and be in fellowship with God and each other.

Verse 8 gives the second wrong belief. From what John writes, what appears to be the wrong belief?

When John writes the “the truth is not in” those who say they have no sin. What are some of the possible things he could mean?

In verse 9, John is not addressing the false belief. Instead, he is using his response to tell the church something important about God. What is that?

There is some discussion on why John says God is “faithful and just” in forgiving sinners. Why are both of these descriptions important to include here?

What is the significance of John specifying that God will not only forgive our sins, but also “cleanse us from all unrighteousness?”

From what John wrote in verse 10, what seems to be the wrong belief of his opponents? How could this be different from verse 8?

What is John implying when he says that to claim to have no sin makes God a liar?

John ends verse 19 with “his word is not in us.” How could this be different from “the truth is not in us”? Why would John use different words?

What does 2:1 tell us about John’s heart?

He again moves away from addressing the wrong belief to telling his readers something important about Jesus. What are those things?

Verse 1

Verse 2

In Greek, the word translated “advocate” is *paraclete*. Where has this word been used in the Bible and in what context?

What is the significance of John using “Jesus Christ” rather than just “Jesus” or “Christ”?

What is the significance of John describing Jesus as “the righteous”?

The word translated “propitiation” is a much discussed translation. The Greek word communicates two things – both of which are likely meant here.

- An offering made to appease an angry or offended God.
- A sacrifice made to atone for sins

Why is a fully divine and fully human Savior needed to fulfill these two meanings?

A flawed understanding of our Savior leads to a flawed understanding of salvation. What does having a fully human and fully divine Savior say about our salvation?

