

Revelation 5:6-14—Jesus our Advocate

Revelation 5:1-14 NKJV

And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. ² Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?” ³ And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it.

⁴ So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it. ⁵ But one of the elders said to me, “Do not weep. Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed to open the scroll and to loose its seven seals.”

⁶ And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. ⁷ Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

⁸ Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. ⁹ And they sang a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll,

And to open its seals;

For You were slain,

And have redeemed us to God by Your blood

Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God;

And we shall reign on the earth.”

¹¹ Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice:

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain

To receive power and riches and wisdom,

And strength and honour and glory and blessing!”

¹³ And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

“Blessing and honour and glory and power

Be to Him who sits on the throne,

And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

¹⁴ Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever. Last week in Revelation chapter 5 we saw John before the throne. The Holy Spirit has transported the apostle John, a prisoner of Rome, from the penal island of Patmos into the eternal realm, into heaven itself, where John is seeing the things to come (Greek *meta tauta*), the things that will take place after the end of the church age (See Revelation 1:19, 4:1).

Introduction/Revision

In Chapter’s 4 and 5, the setting is the end of the church age. The rapture has just taken place (Chapter 4:1-2). At the time of the rapture the *bodies* of the dead in Christ resurrect and those who died during the church age receive their glorified bodies. Remember that their spirit and soul were already in heaven with Jesus (See 2

Corinthians 5:6, 8, where it says, “to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord”). Also, immediately after the resurrection of the dead in Christ, those who are alive in Christ, those true, born again believers, who are still alive on the earth, are caught up to meet Jesus in the air, and in the twinkling of an eye their bodies are transformed from mortal bodies to glorified, immortal bodies (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18, 1 Corinthians 15:51-52). So now the entire church is in heaven, all those who believed, from Pentecost to the moment of the rapture, all with their glorified bodies, before the throne of God. The 7 year tribulation is about to start in Chapter 6 when Jesus starts to break the seals on the scroll. What is this scroll? We covered this last week, but I’ll do a quick revision.

God the Father is holding a scroll in His right hand. It’s a very special scroll. It has 7 seals, and is written on both the inside and the back. As we learned last week, this represents ownership of the earth. Specifically, it is the title deed to the Earth which Adam forfeited to Satan when he chose to rebel or sin against God. The writing on the back of the title deed was the sin debt owed by the human race. When Jesus died on the cross, His death was the payment that was required to pay the sin debt we owed, and so He bought back the title deed of the earth from Satan. But ever since the cross, even though the earth belonged to Him since then, Jesus has been patiently waiting to come back and claim or take possession of His purchased possession in order to give mankind the maximum opportunity to repent. It is God’s desire that nobody perishes.

What we see in Heaven is Jesus, in His glorified body, complete with eternal scars, unchanged from the day He resurrected in His glorified body. This is why John described Jesus as the “a Lamb as though it had been slain, standing...” The fact that He is standing is proof of His resurrection. Also, Jesus is called the Lion because at this point in time, Jesus, as the conquering King, is preparing to reclaim the earth for Himself and rule for 1,000 years. This week we see Jesus, the Lion and the Lamb, take the scroll from the Father, and we see all Heaven break into glorious and spontaneous praise. Why? Because Jesus is both the Lion and the Lamb. He is the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world,” as well as the Lion, the conquering King, who has defeated sin and death and Satan. Jesus conquered Satan when He died on the cross as our substitutionary passover lamb. Now He is about to come back like a lion, to claim the victory that He won as the Lamb of God. Also last week we talked about why Jesus is the only one who is worthy, and why he is so worthy of praise, and why He will have the scars of His crucifixion for all eternity.

So now Jesus is about to claim what is rightfully His (the earth), and the treasure contained in it (mankind). In the next chapter, chapter 6, Jesus starts opening the seals and we see the judgements start to come upon the earth. What happens in Revelation 6-22, including the judgements that will come upon the earth during 7 year tribulation period, are what is written on the scroll.

Jesus our Advocate

What we will study today is the last half of Revelation chapter 5. We will Join Heaven in their praise of the Saviour who conveyed us from the power of darkness into His marvellous light (Acts 26:18, Ephesians 5:8, 1 Peter 2:9). We will also see why this picture of Jesus “as a Lamb that was slain, standing...”, gives us absolute confidence in our forgiveness and therefore we need never feel condemned. We’ll have a look at 1 John 1:8-2:2 to more fully understand this. Let’s start at verse 6.

Revelation 5:6a NKJV

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain,

Here we see Jesus, and He's standing in the midst of the 24 elders and the throne. And also with Him are the 4 living creatures. The four living creatures most likely represent the 4 gospels. You could call them the 4 living gospels, the four accounts of the life of Jesus, they are like the living word that will always be there to show what Jesus did.

Lion - Matthew - Representing Jesus as the King

Ox - Mark - Representing Jesus as the servant

Human - Luke - Representing Jesus in His humanity

Eagle - John - Representing Jesus in His deity

Also, the 24 elders represent the church in heaven. Remember that the number 24 is the number used with priesthood. The church is now fulfilling the role that God made us for, being priests of God. We will see more evidence for this as we go along.

Meanwhile, we see Jesus as the Lamb, who is at the centre of everything. All eyes are on Him.

Why is it so careful to say that Jesus stands as a lamb as though it had been slain? One very important reason is that Jesus will always be our advocate. He will always be our high priest. No charge can ever successfully be brought before the throne of God against anyone who believes in Him. That's what the bible says. We are going to spend some time now looking at what this means and why it is so important. Let's read:

1 John 2:1-2 NKJV

My little children, these things I write to you, so 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 [sacrifice or payment] for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world.

Now here is a defence lawyer, an advocate, who has never lost a case, and He doesn't rip you off when defending you. Jesus is our "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."

Propitiation means to satisfy God's justice by paying the penalty of all His laws that have been broken by all humanity. And that's what Jesus did. This is right after John says about Jesus, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." ***The only reason that Jesus can forgive us and treat us as being perfect or innocent is because He paid our fine for us.*** Due to our sin we all deserve to die, but Jesus died in our place.

Now after you have confessed your sins to God, and you simply believe that He has forgiven you, then you simply turn and walk with Him again, and you will have peace. Now, if after you have confessed your sin, you don't have peace, guess who's stealing your peace? Satan. Satan is accusing you, as he accuses the brethren. That's why immediately after that it reminds us that once we have confessed our sin, we no longer have to feel guilty. If we do feel guilty after confessing our sins, then it's Satan making us feel guilty, not God. This is condemnation. We need to understand that God does not hold our sins against us.

Often Satan will use condemnation to try to stop us from confessing our sin at all. Consider this scenario. Julie has had an abortion. She is a Christian. She knows that she is doing the wrong thing but she does it anyway. After, she feels shame and guilt and so she runs from God, thinking that God has rejected her because of her sin. She believes that God is angry with her and won't receive her or forgive her. So she tries to do good works to try to make up for her wrong and also subconsciously punishes herself for her wrongdoing, all the while running from God. Satan is telling Julie that God is angry with her and Julie is believing him. But is God actually angry with Julie? How is God actually thinking about Julie?

While I was thinking about this, I remembered a song that I used to listen to as a teenager, that really encouraged me to turn back to God when I wasn't doing so well in my Christian walk, when my life was a bit of a mess. I knew that God wanted me to confess and repent, but I often had this thought in the back of my mind that God was angry with me and that I had blown it once too often, that I was no longer worthy to be His child. That's why this song was so important to me and melted my cold and distant heart as it reminded me of my Father's heart. I've just included the first verse and chorus.

Song: *Walk with Me* by Whitecross

Julie, my child
Why do you run
Why have you turned away from me
You say it's hard
To live perfectly
And all you can see
Is how you fail me constantly
You fail me constantly

Chorus

My blood has cleansed you
Your sins are remembered no more
So come on, and walk with me

The chorus sums it up so well. I'm forgiven by the blood of Jesus, so come on and walk with me again. Once the sin is confessed, then there is no longer any break in fellowship—there are no waiting periods to get back into fellowship with God. Our sin may disqualify us from some service and eternal rewards, but once confessed, can never keep us out of fellowship with God.

How can it be possible that God isn't angry with us when we sin, as Christians. Remember that before we come to Christ we are under the wrath of God. He is very angry with us. Consider:

Psalm 7:11-13 NLT paraphrase
God is an honest judge.
He is angry with the wicked every day.
¹² If a person does not repent,
God will sharpen his sword;
he will bend and string his bow.
¹³ He will prepare his deadly weapons
and shoot his flaming arrows.

Why is God so angry with sin?

Because sin kills, steals and destroys His creation which He owns and loves. That is, when I sin, not only have I offended the Holy God, but also it affects those around me, hurting them, which means that it hurts God, because God made them and He loves them. God has a right to be angry with me when I hurt other people. It's just like I get angry when someone hurts my wife or children or my friend, anyone I love or care about. I also get angry with those so-called doctors who murder babies, because in my heart, I know that it's just so wrong, because I care for those defenceless children. If I think this way, because I am made in the image of God, then how much more must God hate not only abortion, but all other sins—even “white lies?”

How can God not be angry with forgiven sinners?

So, back to our question. Since God is very angry with unbelieving sinners, how can it be that God isn't angry with believers when they sin? The following scripture gives us the answer:

Hebrews 10:16-23 NLT paraphrase

¹⁶ “This is the new covenant I will make with my people on that day, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds.”

¹⁷ Then he says, “*I will never again remember their sins and lawless deeds.*”

¹⁸ **And when sins have been forgiven, there is no need to offer any more sacrifices.**

¹⁹ And so, dear brothers and sisters, **we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus.** ²⁰ **By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place.** ²¹ **And since we have a great High Priest who rules over God's house,** ²² **let us go right into the presence of God with sincere hearts fully trusting him.** For our guilty consciences have been sprinkled with Christ's blood to make us clean, and our bodies have been washed with pure water.

²³ Let us hold tightly without wavering to the hope we affirm, for God can be trusted to keep his promise.

The New Covenant is based on better or unconditional promises. The Old Covenant, the law, is based on conditional promises. God will only do His part if we do ours—but the problem is that we can't keep the law perfectly. Thus we need the new covenant where God does everything for us—it's all by grace. All we need to do is receive God's pardon, the forgiveness of our sins, as a free gift.

This sums up revelation chapter 5 in one sense, with the two groups of people. Firstly, there are those on the earth who, up to this point in time, have refused the gift of forgiveness and now find themselves going through the 7 year tribulation. Praise God that a multitude of them will be saved during the seven year tribulation period. How? By accepting God's gift of forgiveness, just like we have. Here we see a clear example of God demonstrating in mercy in the midst of judgement. However, for those who continue to stubbornly refuse to believe and accept God's gift of pardon, and instead take the mark of the beast, they will end up in hell.

The second group of people is us, the church, those who are born again into the new birth. We have been raptured and are now in heaven. Why? Because we are better than those left on the earth—no way! It's only because we have put our trust in Christ's sacrifice in our place. We have Christ as our advocate, our defence lawyer, who

always stands between us and the Father as our Mediator. His defence for us is simple—He is our propitiation, our substitutionary sacrifice, the full payment for the sins of the whole world. **Because Jesus died, paying the penalty for my sins, then I don't have to.** When Jesus died on the cross, all the wrath of the Father, not just for the sins of all who will believe, but also for the sins of the whole world, was poured out on Jesus (1 John 2:2). Jesus absorbed all the fury, anger, wrath and righteous indignation of the Father, even for those who would never believe in Him.

1 John 2:2 NLT paraphrase

He himself is the sacrifice (propitiation) that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

There is no longer any anger left for those who are in Christ. It has **all** been poured out on Jesus. So, as a Christian, when I sin, the Father says, “what sin.” My sins have been removed as far as the east is from the west. I am pure and innocent in God's eyes. Again, why? Because I am **in Christ**. Because I have, by grace through faith, accepted Christ as my passover lamb, as my substitute. Now, when the Father looks at me He doesn't see me, He sees Jesus. He sees Jesus perfect life which has been imputed or credited to my account. This is why we, as Christians, no matter how often we stumble and fall, can come boldly, yet humbly, to the throne of grace where we are promised to find help in time of need. **No matter how great or how often the sin, when we come to the throne, we will always find that our sin has already been forgiven.** This is the significance and meaning of:

Revelation 5:6

⁶ And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain,...

A study of 1 John 1:8-2:2—Why Jesus will always be “The Lamb that was slain”

I would like to take the time to quickly go through 1 John 1:8 to 2:2 just to make sure that we all understand the work Christ has completed or the price that was paid on our behalf, and also understand the difference between the Holy Spirit convicting us, and Satan condemning us.

1 John 1:8 - 2:2 NLT paraphrase

⁸ If we claim we have no sin, we are only fooling ourselves and not living in the truth.

⁹ But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. ¹⁰ If we claim we have not sinned, we are calling God a liar and showing that his word has no place in our hearts.

2:1 My dear children, I am writing this to you so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate who pleads our case before the Father. He is Jesus Christ, the one who is truly righteous. ² He himself is the sacrifice (propitiation or payment) that atones for our sins—and not only our sins but the sins of all the world.

These wonderful verses accurately describe the role that Jesus plays for us in the story of redemption, and why Jesus is still seen as “a Lamb as though it had been slain, standing [resurrected]...” in Revelation 5:6.

v 8 **If we say we have no sin:** To say that **we have no sin** puts us in a dangerous place because God's grace and mercy is extended only to those who humbly recognise that they are *sinner*s—not to “everyone makes mistakes” or “I'm only human” or “no one is perfect” type people, but *sinner*s. We need to realize the victory and forgiveness that comes from saying, “I am a sinner—dirty rotten sinner, a liar, a thief, a murderer and adulterer at heart, an idolator—but I have a Savior who cleanses me from all sin.”

v 9 **If we confess our sins:** Though I may sin, sin does not need to remain a hindrance to my relationship with God. I, and you, will find complete cleansing (**from all unrighteousness**) as we confess our sins. To **confess** means, “to say the same as.” When we confess our sin, we are willing to say (and believe) the same thing about our sin that God says about it. We see our sin as God does, as being vile and horrible and destructive. Jesus' story about the proud, self-righteous pharisee and the humble tax collector who prayed before God illustrated this; the Pharisee bragged about how righteous he was and all the good deeds that he was doing, while the Tax collector just said, “*God be merciful to me a sinner* (Luke 18:10–14). The one who confessed his sin was the one who agreed with God about how bad he was.

Luke 18:9-14 NKJV

Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: ¹⁰ “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee stood and prayed thus **with himself**, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ ¹³ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘**God, be merciful to me a sinner!**’ ¹⁴ I tell you, **this man went down to his house justified rather than the other**; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Notice Jesus' sobering conclusion to the story. The tax collector, the one who recognised and confessed that he was a sinner, went home justified. That means that in God's eyes, for the tax collector, it was just-if-I'd never sinned. He was justified, or declared “not guilty” in God's court. His fine had been paid. He was now free to enjoy a relationship with God and go to heaven when he died. However, the pharisee, the self-righteous religious person, the one who attended religious meetings each week, who did many good works, and was admired and respected in the community and religious institutions, was not justified. He was still guilty in God's heavenly court. When God judges him by the 10 commandments he will be guilty and will be given what he has earned, what he has spent his life working for; the wages of sin, which is death, eternity in the Lake of Fire.

v 9 Let's come back to the word **Confess** again in verse 9 of 1 John 1. **Confess** translates a verb in the present tense. The meaning is that we should *keep on confessing* our sin—instead of referring to a “once-for-all” confession of sin at our conversion. Some people call this “keeping short accounts with God.” As soon as we realise that we have sinned we should confess. Otherwise we let Satan have a foothold in our lives and hearts.

Remember that you don't have to go to a priest to confess your sin. Jesus is the only Mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). We confess our sin simply by admitting directly to God that what we have done is *sin*, and by asking for His divine forgiveness, based on what Jesus has done on the cross for us.

Some believe that if you die with unconfessed sin, you will not go to heaven. This is not true. We are forgiven of all our sins, past, present and future, the moment we are born again. So why **confess**? Confession is vital to maintain a *right relationship or fellowship* with God, and this is the context of this verse. It's all about walking in the light. As God convicts us of sin that is hindering our fellowship with Him, we must confess it and receive forgiveness and cleansing for our relationship with God to continue without hindrance.

Here is a practical example that may help to explain how sin affects our relationship with God. I am married to Merissa. My legal status is married. I am legally or positionally one with my wife—I have been joined to her and in God's sight we are one flesh. But one day I have an argument with Merissa. Now we aren't talking to each other, *but we are still married*. But once I confess, admitting my wrong, and ask Merissa for forgiveness, then we are on talking terms again. Our right relationship/fellowship is restored.

Did you notice that during the argument and the time when we weren't talking afterward, we were still married? Positionally nothing had changed. I was always "one" with my wife. My marital status was always "married." That never changed. What did change is the practical or relational or experiential aspect of my marriage—we weren't on good terms—we weren't talking. I wasn't "*walking in the light*" of my marriage to my wife. There was an unresolved grievance or issue, and until the grievance or problem was dealt with, there was a break in our relationship on a practical level—I was no longer enjoying communion and communication with my wife, even though I was still married to her. But the moment I apologised, confessed, and humbly asked her forgiveness, the relationship was restored, the hindrance was removed. Positionally, legally, the relationship was still intact, but on a practical, experiential level it was temporally broken. Remember that it's God's will for us that marriage be for life, one wife for life.

The same is true with the believer's relationship with God. Positionally, legally, I am a part of the bride of Christ, I am a son of God, I am adopted into His family. Once I'm in, I'm in. The scriptures say in Romans 8:38-39 that nothing can separate us from God's love. Once saved always saved. That's a certainty. Why can I be so sure? Because my salvation is based on God's unconditional promises, not my performance, good deeds or my own righteousness. Instead, I have Christ's perfect righteousness, the perfect life Jesus lived has been imputed or credited to me. My entrance into heaven is guaranteed because I am now, and forevermore, in Christ, and by grace I am accepted in the beloved:

Ephesians 1:6 NKJV

To the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.

What this means is, is that the day a person, from the heart, repents of their sin and puts their trust in God's provision of the Saviour, Jesus, who became the payment for their sins when He died on the cross, a new life begins. They become a new creation. They are a child of God. Unfortunately, the bible says that there are many who name the name of Christ, who profess to believe in Him, but have in reality never repented. They have never had a change of heart about sin, they have never truly turned away from sin and to God.

We must all come to the place of humility and brokenness the Tax collector did in the story we just read that Jesus told in Luke 18:9-14, where, like he, we recognise our vileness, our sin stained life, that we deserve hell, that we have in fact earned eternity in hell (Romans 6:23), and so we beat our breasts and cry out to God for mercy. When we repent from the heart, genuinely being sorry for our sin and turning from our sin, and also trusting that Jesus death on the cross was the payment for our sins, then we are truly saved, and nothing can change our position in Christ. The way we live our life as a Christian will determine how much of God's love we will experience, but we will always belong to God. It's just like some married people seem to fight all the time, but some get along really well. One couple enjoys their marriage more than the other couple, but both couples are still married.

Let's continue with 1 John 1:8-2:2

v 9 **He is faithful and just to forgive us:** Because of Jesus' work, the righteousness of God is our *friend*—insuring that we will be forgiven because Jesus paid the penalty of our sin. God is being **faithful and just** to forgive us because of Jesus sacrifice in our place.

2:1 **These things I write to you, that you may not sin:** 1 John 1:8 made it clear that sin is a fact (at least an occasional fact) in the life of the Christian—we will never attain sinless perfection while living in this mortal body because of our sin nature. However, it's God's will for us that, while we don't become sinless, we should *sin less*. 1 John 1:9 makes it clear that there is always forgiveness for confessed sin. Yet, John wants it also to be clear that the Christian **should be concerned about sin**. One reason in writing this letter was **that you may not sin**.

Now don't use this as an excuse for sin. "I can't help it, I have a sin nature, and God knows that we all sin." Even if sin is inevitable for us, it is not because God has made it so that we *must* sin. All the resources for spiritual victory are ours in Jesus Christ and they are always with us—see Romans 6-8 and 1 Corinthians 10:13. The main point here is our *right relationship/fellowship* with God (1 John 1:3), and the fact that sin can break our fellowship with God and other people (1 John 1:6). God knows that, because of our sinful nature, the weakness of our flesh, we do not consistently rely on Jesus for victory over sin. In other words, *the only reason we sin is because we choose to, because we want to* (See Romans 8:5-6). But remember that when we do sin, it hurts God and hurts those around us.

2:1 **We have an Advocate:** God's desire is that *you may not sin*. Yet if we do, there is provision made—an **Advocate**, a defence lawyer on our side. Our **Advocate** is Jesus Christ Himself. Jesus is our defender, even when we sin *now*. God is not shocked by human behaviour. He has seen it all in advance. He didn't forgive us at one time only to later say, "Look what they did now! If I would have known they would go and do that, I would have never forgiven them." No. His forgiveness is always available to us *now*. Picture this scenario:

It is as if we stand as the accused in the heavenly court, before our righteous Judge, God the Father. Our Advocate stands up to answer the charges: "He is completely guilty your honour. In fact, he has even done worse than what he is accused of, and now makes full and complete confession before You." The gavel slams, and the Judge asks, "What should his sentence be?" Our Advocate answers, "His sentence shall be death; he deserves the full wrath of this righteous court." All along, our accuser Satan, is having great fun at all this. We are guilty! We admit our guilt! We see our

punishment! But then, our Advocate asks to approach the bench. As he draws close to the Judge, he simply says: “Dad, this one belongs to Me. I paid his price. I took the wrath and punishment from this court that he deserves.” The gavel sounds again, and the Judge cries out, “Guilty as charged! Penalty satisfied!” Our accuser starts going crazy. “Aren’t you even going to put him on probation?” “No!” the Judge shouts. “The penalty has been *completely* paid by My Son. There is nothing to put him on probation for.” Then the Judge turns to our Advocate, and says, “Son, you said this one belongs to You. I release him into Your care. Case closed!”

As a Christian God is never against us, but only for us, even when we sin

2:1 **We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:** We may think that our sin sets God *against* us. But God’s love is so great that in His love, He went to the ultimate measure to make us able to stand in the face of His holy righteousness. Through Jesus, God can be *for us* even when we are guilty sinners.

Think of it this way. A human defense lawyer argues for the innocence of his client. But our **Advocate**, Jesus Christ, admits our guilt—and then enters His plea on our behalf, as the one who has made an atoning sacrifice for our sinful guilt.

We need Jesus as our **Advocate** because Satan accuses us before God (Revelation 12:10). We need to distinguish between the condemning accusation of Satan and the loving conviction of the Holy Spirit. We’ll come back to this.

v 2 **And He Himself is the propitiation (sacrifice or payment) for our sins:** This means that Jesus is the one who atones for and takes away our sins, and not only our sins, but also the sins of the **whole world**.

Propitiation: “The word implies that Christ has, as our sin-offering, reconciled us to God by nothing else but by His voluntary death as a sacrifice in our place. By this Jesus has turned away God’s wrath, His anger, from us” (Alford).

2:2 **And not for ours only but also for the whole world:** Though Jesus made His propitiation **for the whole world**, yet the whole world is not saved and in fellowship with God. This is because *atonement* does not equal *forgiveness*. The Old Testament Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16:34) demonstrates this, when the sin of all Israel was atoned for every year at the Day of Atonement, yet not all of Israel was saved.

Leviticus 16:34 NKJV

This shall be an everlasting statute for you, to make atonement for the children of Israel, for all their sins, once a year.” And he did as the Lord commanded Moses.

The words “**but also for the whole world**” announce to the world that God has taken care of everyone’s sin problem by the propitiation or payment or sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Sin *doesn’t have to* be a barrier between God and man, *if* man will receive the propitiation, the gift of forgiveness, God has provided in Jesus.

Think of it this way. I buy you all a brand new house, but not all of you receive the keys to your house because some of you are happy living where you are and don’t want to move. The house was still bought for you, but just remains vacant because it was never received.

I think it was Martin Luther who said something very similar to, “It is an obvious fact that you too are part of the whole world: so that your heart cannot deceive itself and think, The Lord died for Peter and Paul, but not for me.’ ” Jesus died for everyone. The gift of forgiveness is available to *all* people. Another verse that shows this is:

John 1:29

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

A summary of 1 John 1:8-2:2

As a Christian, my legal or positional standing is that I am perfect in God’s sight, no matter what I do, think or say. Why? I have been justified. It’s just-if-I’d never sinned. I have been declared not guilty in God’s court because Jesus paid the fine or penalty for all my sins when He died on the cross.

So, if you are a believer, don’t ever believe that God is angry with you. Yes, as believers we grieve the Holy Spirit when we sin, and we feel that practical separation and God’s Fatherly discipline. But this conviction of sin from is designed to make us want to come back to Him. Remember that in the New Testament God never punishes a believer. Punishment is getting even, its retribution. On the other hand, discipline is forward looking, its purpose is training us to be more Christlike, to walk closer to Him in the future. Think of how Jesus treated Peter after Peter denied Him. Jesus sought him out, restored him to fellowship, and gave him a job to do, even though Peter thought he was unworthy or condemned. Jesus is still doing the same today—restoring people to fellowship and reinstating to service.

In contrast to the conviction of the Holy Spirit which draws me to God, if I instead feel that God has rejected me, and that He won’t accept me or is angry with me or is punishing me—this is condemnation from Satan. This is Satan lying to me and deceiving me about how the Father thinks about me to try to keep me from confessing and repenting of my sin. Why would Satan do this? *Satan desire is to keep Christians out of fellowship with God on a practical level. I can be deceived. I am simply not believing God’s promise to me that I am justified or made righteous in His sight when I believe Satans lie that I am condemned by God.*

Think of it like this: the christian who sins but doesn’t repent right away is positionally still perfect, but practically not enjoying or experiencing their relationship with God. It’s like having an argument with my wife — I’m still married positionally, but practically I’m not walking in or experiencing that love relationship. Remember the chorus of the song I read out to you:

*My blood has cleansed you
Your sins are remembered no more
So come on, and walk with me*

**(Your blood has cleansed me
My sins are remembered no more
So I’ll come, and walk with You.)**

All Jesus wants us to do is walk with Him, to experience and enjoy a love relationship with Him. Therefore, if we sin, all God wants us to do is to deal with any sin by believing His promises, confess our sin, trust Him, depend on the Holy Spirit and move forward. Get up off the floor of the boxing ring and get back into the fight.

Remember that God is never disappointed in you or me. Why? Because when God accepted us as His child, He already knew all the sins that we would commit. God has no unrealistic expectations of us. He knows that we are dust, that we are frail and weak. What's important is that we recognise our weakness and frailty and therefore seek God's strength and power. Only then will we experience victory.

Back to Revelation 5:6

Jesus the Lamb is described

Revelation 5:6 NKJV

And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a **Lamb** as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth.

v 6 **Lamb**... this is the word for a little pet lamb. And this reminds of another Jewish custom. Even before the law was given, they were commanded to select the best of the flock as an offering for the Passover. A little lamb. And they were to take this little lamb into their home for at least a week, and the children and the family were to treat and to love it like a pet. And then it was offered as a sacrifice for sin. I personally would find that very difficult and heart-breaking to do. I think that I would get the point that sin must be punished, and that God would take the punishment for me, but it would cost Him dearly. The picture is that Jesus is God's treasured pet, His only Son who He loves and is pleased with. That's why this word is used. You see Jesus is God's treasured pet. God took Heaven's best, and sent Him to die for you and me. And so the little Lamb, as though slain, is standing before the throne and those He saved, with the witness of His whole earthly life, the four gospels before Him. What an amazing and moving scene.

The seven horns—Jesus is omnipotent (all-powerful)

v 6 **having seven horns**... horns in the Bible are used as a symbol of power. 7 is the number of perfection or completion. So what is this saying? This little treasured lamb that was slain now has omnipotence—He is all-powerful.

The seven eyes—Jesus is omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipresent (present everywhere at once)

v 6 **and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth**...

The seven eyes show both His omniscience (He knows everything), and His omnipresence (He is everywhere at once).

These three things, omnipotence—all-powerful, omniscience—all-knowing, and omnipresence—present everywhere at the same time, are essential attributes of deity. **This Lamb is God**. Jesus is the unique person of the universe. Jesus is both man and God. Eternally united in one person. Undiminished deity, and perfect humanity, united in one person. Jesus is unique, there is no one else like Him in all the universe. He's not like the Father and the Spirit, because He's also a man. He's not exactly like us, because He is also the God who created the world. How awesome. This is our Saviour. While Jesus walked on this earth, every breath He took was a sacrifice. Because every breath He took, every moment He lived here, He had to voluntarily

refuse to use His divine powers. Had He once used His own divine powers, He would have disqualified Himself as the son of man. That's why Jesus repeatedly says in the gospel of John, "I do nothing of myself, the Father who dwells in me does the works." And that's why He said, when He was about to depart this earth:

John 14:12 NLT paraphrase

I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father.

Meaning that He would send the same Holy Spirit that dwelt in Himself to dwell in each of us (for example John 14:16). What Jesus did, He did a man depending on the Holy Spirit, just as you and I have the Holy Spirit in each of us who believe. And we can depend on Him, moment by moment, to work in us what He wants. To overcome our weaknesses, to overcome our habits, to overcome our sin nature. But it's only the one who consistently depends upon the Holy Spirit (instead of depending on his own human strength), that will keep growing and maturing until God can do great things through him.

I know for myself that I don't always depend on the Holy Spirit. I know that there are certain times in my life where I know that I am weak, and I actively seek God's help and power. I'm quite successful in those areas of my life. However, there are areas in my life where I think that I can do it on my own. These are the areas where I fail.

Jesus takes the scroll

Revelation 5:7 NKJV

7 Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne.

Jesus takes the scroll, the title deed of the earth, from the hand of the Father. This marks the beginning of the end for Satan and the world system. The tribulation will soon begin and Jesus will come back at the end of the seven years, destroy His enemies with the brightness of His coming, and take over the world.

Revelation 5:8 NKJV

8 Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

All these things are priestly duties—the music, the incense, the prayers (intercession). All this happened as soon as Jesus took the scroll from the Father. This is a momentous occasion.

v 8 **Golden bowls full of incense:** In this we see how precious the prayers of the saints are to God. He regards them as a sweet smelling incense, as if set in precious **golden bowls**. The connection between prayer and incense is shown in:

Psalm 141:2 NKJV

Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

The song of redemption

Revelation 5:9-10 NKJV

And they sang a new song, saying:

“You are worthy to take the scroll,

And to open its seals;

For You were slain,

And have redeemed us to God by Your blood

Out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

¹⁰ And have made us kings and priests to our God;

And we shall reign on the earth.”

In the praise of Revelation 4:11, the emphasis was on God’s work of *creation*. Here, the emphasis is on His work of *redemption*.

- The song honours the *price* of redemption: **for You were slain**
- The song honours the *worker* of redemption: **have redeemed us**
- The song honours the *destination* of redemption: **have redeemed us to God**
- The song honours the *payment* of redemption: **by Your blood**
- The song honours the *scope* of redemption: **every tribe and tongue and people and nation**
- The song honours the *length* of redemption: **have made us kings and priests to our God**
- The song honours the *result* of redemption: **and we shall reign on the earth**

v 9 **They** refers to the 24 Elders in v 8. The 24 Elders represent the entire church. We know this because only the the redeemed from every tribe tongue and nation—the church—can sing this song.

We will soon reign upon the earth during Christ’s 1,000 year Millennial Reign because the scroll is about to be opened and Jesus will soon return to the earth with us.

v 9 **You are worthy**: In the days of the Apostle John, Roman Emperors were celebrated upon their arrival with the Latin expression *vere dignus*, which is translated **You are worthy**. Here the true Ruler of the world is honoured.

The song of victory

Revelation 5:11-14 NKJV

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands, ¹² saying with a loud voice:

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain

To receive power and riches and wisdom,

And strength and honour and glory and blessing!”

¹³ And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:

“Blessing and honour and glory and power

Be to Him who sits on the throne,

And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

¹⁴ Then the four living creatures said, “Amen!” And the twenty-four elders fell down and worshiped Him who lives forever and ever.

v 13 **Blessing and honour and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb:** “This combined worship of the Father and the Lamb is strong testimony to the deity of Jesus” (David Guzik).

v 14 **Fell down and worshipped Him:** “The ancient Greek word for **worshipped** is literally “to prostrate” or “to lay before another in complete submission.” The scene may be that the elders **fell down** to their knees, then laid themselves before **Him who lives forever and ever** as an expression of their total submission and worship” (David Guzik).

In conclusion, heaven’s court has spoken. The little treasured pet lamb that was slain, is now the Lion of Judah. And He now has taken into His hand the scroll with the seven seals. What does this mean? Well you see, that scroll with the seven seals contains everything from chapter 6, all the way to the end of the book. Because you see, the next chapter, chapter 6, describes the 7 seal judgements. In other words Jesus opens each seal so he can unroll the scroll. Each time Jesus breaks one of the seals, there is a new judgement. The seventh seal contains the 7 trumpet judgements, and the seven golden vial judgements. So it’s all written down in the scroll. And that’s why it could only be taken and opened by one who was worthy do such a thing, to judge the earth and take possession of it, one who was willing and able to pay the price required to redeem it. *Glory be to the Lamb that was slain.*

Old Testament vs New Testament forgiveness/atonement

John the Baptist said, “Behold the lamb of God who **takes away** the sin of the world.” It’s important that we understand that the Greek word for “take away” is not like the Old Testament word used for atonement. When the animals were offered for the people’s sins, they atoned for them, which means to cover. In other words the animal sacrifices just covered sin out of God’s sight. Until the Lamb of God came. And the Greek New Testament word does not mean “to cover.” It means to take out and remove. Jesus, by His sacrifice, removed sin as a barrier between man and God. The one thing that stands between man and God today is that if he is so foolish not to accept the gift of pardon that Jesus died to give Him, and simply invites Jesus to come into his life, and gives permission to God to change him to be like Jesus. You can’t do it, but you can ask Jesus to do it, and He will do it. All you need to is repent, which means to confess and forsake your sins, and ask to receive God’s gift of forgiveness, asking Jesus to come and live inside of you. Then He will begin to transform you, giving you a new heart with new desires, desires to love and obey Him and turn away from Sin.

Conclusion

Remember also another reason that we have to celebrate and rejoice and worship the Lamb that was slain — Jesus is our Advocate, our defence lawyer. As a believer we can never be condemned because Jesus has already paid our fine and He represents us before the Father. God convicts, Satan condemns. Don’t allow Satan to deceive you. Instead, trust in God’s promises.

1 John 1:9-2:2 NKJV

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 that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.

2:1 My little children, these things I write to you, so 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.