

Reading: 1 John 3:1-10

Theme: He has taken Away Our Sins.

We've noted John is not straightforwardly logical, but uses circular logic, spiral staircase logic - visiting themes, ideas many times and yet as we get a closer view or it see from further way, there are logical applications of different intensities. In 2:28-3:10 we return to the 1st test, the moral test of obedience, of righteousness, if we are Christians then we are to show such, demonstrate such by living righteous lives. John in this 2nd cycle of tests emphasises them from the position of those who are children of God.

We have seen that as believers we are children of God, yet sadly we can so easily ignore or forget this fact, this glorious truth. We are to lay hold of it, grip onto it in all the situations of life we find ourselves - whether we are going through dark, trying, heartbreaking distressing times or going through bright, sunny, heady, giddy, delightful and prosperous times. We are never to forget that as believers we are the children of God. With such an awareness of who we are, we are to live it out, workout such truth in our daily lives. We saw something of all this in v1-3 - what we are, what we shall be and therefore what we should be.

Twice since 2v28 John has referred us to the awesome truth of Christ's **future appearing** (2:28; 3:2). The return of the Lord Jesus in glory at the end of time is a wonderful incentive for holy living in this world. To be able to see Him and face Him "*confident and unabashed*" (2:28) should be our aim and we are to desire and strive to live righteously and to please Him. Jesus' future appearing is a great motive and stimulus to righteous living. Now in v4-10 John opens up further on what it means to live in this way. Things in these verses are not easy to explain, to

open up, to apply and work out and commentators all agree these are difficult verses!

Yet the thing to note is that in v4-10 there are another 2 references to the appearing of Jesus, but these here refer to His **past appearing** (v5 & 8). I feel these are the keys to help us unlock, grasp and understand what John says in this section and these verses also provide us with further motivation and stimulus to live righteously. Now in John's writing we are not only faced with the great things **God will do for us**, but also the great, glorious and wonderful things **God has done for us** in the Lord Jesus - on our behalf to make it possible to be children of God. In the light of all these staggering things we are given every reason to live righteously and obediently to Him.

Whichever way we look at God's dealings with us, in us and for us, we see reason upon reason to live lives that please Him, to show we appreciate what He has done, is doing and will do. As Christians we cannot justly give any failure on the part of God as an excuse for our not living for Him. In this section I want to see 2 main things our Saviour accomplished at His 1st appearing and we will look at the 1st under 4 subheadings:

1. Our Sins Removed. (v5)

We have sung [MP 757v3] *“My sin - O the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin, not in part but the whole. Is nailed to His cross and I bear it no more, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord O my soul.”* They are lovely words to sing, but even more so if they are true for us, as we can sing them from the heart because we know and experience the truth of those words. This is one of the reasons John says Jesus appeared, was manifested (AV).

There were the false teachers - denying sin, denying they had sin or could sin. These believers were hurting, struggling with sin, weaknesses and John wants them to live holy, righteous and obedient lives. Yet he does not say “*Do this or else...*” John points them to what the Lord Jesus had already done for them, so to encourage them - I aim for the same. John points us to:

A. Who Appeared: again John reminds them the Lord Jesus came to earth, was manifested, appeared in a real human body (1 John 1:1-2) and He came to do, achieve and accomplish much. It wasn't a public relations exercise on a cosmic scale; or to say “*Look this is how you should live*”, or to mock us in our frailty. All He came to do, all He did and achieved had a far greater aim and purpose. Yes He did reveal the Father to us. Yes He did teach us of God and His ways as no one else ever did. Yes He did give an example of a wonderful, amazing life. Yes He did all these things and more beside.

Yet if we leave His life at that level, we miss so much and may slander Him, deride Him. Jesus came to be our Saviour - His name Jesus means “Saviour” or “Rescuer” or “Deliverer”. We needed to be saved, rescued and delivered from something that was so awesome it took God the Son to become a man. The angel told Joseph to name the child Mary was carrying “*Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins.*” (Matthew 1:21) If we leave that mission statement and purpose out of our view of Jesus' life, ministry and work we will not have a Saviour - maybe just an example, a teacher, a good man, a prophet, but not a Saviour. Then John points us to:

B. Why He Appeared: they and we need to be reminded that the human race, including ourselves, were in a right old mess. Mankind had been made by God - Adam and Eve were perfect

and righteous, but blew it. They were given Paradise, given an express command from God, given God's presence every day in the Garden and yet they deliberately and wilfully disobeyed God and did the wrong thing. Sadly Adam was our representative and in him we all fell and have his guilt upon us. Since then all born of a man and woman are sinners by nature, inclination and bias. We may be moral, good people, but we're still moral, good sinners and we still do, think, say and are wrong in God's sight. We still have a bias toward sin, a magnetic or gravitational attraction and we still have a nature with sin in it. Sin separates us from God. The Bible says the wages of sin is death - the biblical thought of death is in terms of separation; spiritual death is to be separate from God; physical death is separation of body and soul and eternal death is to be separated from God in hell for ever.

Sin not only separates us from God, but keeps us away from God, affects our very nature, our desires and motives. Sin has consequences in life and eternity; it has guilt and deserves punishment. Sin ensnares and affects our lives in every area even as we try to resist it. The Lord Jesus appeared to take away, to remove our sin and sins - all our sins, all their consequences and its effects, its ensnaring power and influence. Now we see we are faced with a work of enormously awesome proportions. It would be a huge job to deal with my or your sins as an individual, but the Lord Jesus came to effectively deal and take away the sins of all throughout history in this world, effectively for those who believe in Him.

That is why He was manifested, appeared. God the Son really took human nature to Himself - conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary by the mysterious power, the overshadowing work of the Holy Spirit. His human nature was kept free from sin by

such a miraculous supernatural conception as He had none of Adam's original sin and guilt. As He grew and lived in this world from birth to death He was without sin, in Him was found no sin and this is vitally important to note and remember – as we will see later.

If we get this point wrong, then we miss out on true salvation. Here is a salvation truth and if we dismiss it, ignore it then we are left with a mere man and we are back in 2:22 ff. Sadly people deny this and they do not have the Father or the Son. If we are wrong on the very person and work of the Lord Jesus then we will be wrong everywhere else. That is why it is tragic to hear people wanting to get to the real Christ of history, as often they mean they can't accept the Bible accounts and often dismiss them as myths that have grown up and say there is no supernatural, no miraculous, no resurrection. Saying we need to get to the man - but only a man, Jesus. If that's the case then forget it; stuff Christianity and its claims in a suitcase and drop it into the deepest ocean as all we have is a moral code based on a myth! We are to note that John here tells us the reason why the Lord Jesus came and it is so that He might take away our sins and John points us to:

C. How He Accomplished This: you and I need a real Saviour who has something real to offer to us. This one needs to be like us and yet so different from us. In the Lord Jesus that is what we see - one who was perfectly and really a man, a human being; one who was touched with all the same feelings and experiences as us: He was tempted in every way just as we are; but is One who was at the same time really and truly God and was perfect, sinless in His complete life. All His life long He perfectly kept God's law, obeyed God and pleased God. That's the type of perfection we need to be with God forever - to have no original

sin, to live a life completely honouring and pleasing to God, but we cannot and could not and so naturally we have no hope of being with God and deserve His punishment - being in hell for ever. God's holy demands cannot be met by us mortals, but One came who met all the demands of God's holiness and in Him was no sin and He actively and positively fulfilled the demands of all the Law of God and did it on our behalf and in our place.

In the salvation most of us here have received, we are not merely forgiven, but are credited with the positive, active righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ - see Romans 8:3-4 *“For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so He condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.”* The hymn we quoted earlier misses that positive part. When the Lord Jesus is our Saviour, His positive Law keeping righteousness is also credited to us - all He did is ours and God is satisfied legally and justly.

This came about in the death of the Lord Jesus. Our sin and its guilt were dealt with on Calvary's tree. In OT, the sacrifices etc. were the grace means provided by God for people to draw near to and maintain a relationship with Him. The sacrifices were bloody - blood had to be shed and was a picture reminder of what sin deserved. The sacrifices offered had to be without blemish. When God was going to take away our sins, the sin of the world, He sent His own Son to take not only our sins, but the guilt and the punishment they deserved in our place. He swapped with us and He became the sin bearer. The word John uses *“take away”* is a word picture which means *“to pick up and carry away”*. What a picture - all our sin, its guilt and its punishment

has been picked up and taken away from us by Jesus when He died in our place there on the cross under God's punishment.

The sinless Son of God was the only one who could be the sin bearer. If He wasn't sinless, He would have had His own sin to be dealt with. He was the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world (*as John the Baptist said*). This meant He had to be blemish free i.e. no sin. Here is the main work, the glory of the person and work of the Lord Jesus - He took away our sins. That was one of the glorious reasons why He was manifest, why He appeared, why the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, why He allowed Himself to be maltreated, be burdened with a cross, be nailed to the cross on Calvary and hung there "*Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned He stood, sealed my pardon with His blood - Hallelujah what a Saviour!*" [MP 458v2] He took up, placed upon Himself and then took away all our sin, its guilt, its power, condemnation and punishment.

Realise all the amazing, awesome and incredible things the Saviour has done; for in the light of all that, John is going to argue, reason, conclude, deduce and apply that sin is serious in God's people and we are to avoid it like the plague it is. Sin is lawlessness says John - we ignore, break, excuse or go against God's Law and the demands of the Law. The Christian is not to be lawless. Yes we know we do not keep the Law to earn our salvation, we keep it to show our salvation. Sin is serious in those who have no love, knowledge or relationship with God in the through the Lord Jesus. Yet sin is much more serious in believers, God's children, for we sin against His love, grace and mercy. That is why John will encourage us and urge us not to live to sin and sinful desires.

Jesus' taking away all our sins has made us dead to sin and its ruling, dominating, tyrannising reign. We are to say, when sin beckons us, that we are no longer that type of man or woman. Sin's power is broken as the all reigning, all pervading influence in our lives. Now we are to be conformed to the image of God's Son - the Lord Jesus and are not to keep on continually, habitually, unthinkingly and unresistingly doing sin - as John will argue in the verses as we will see. Finally John points us to:

D. How We Live It Out: when we become a Christian we are justified, but we are not to stop there, for that is to be lived out, shown and this is the process of sanctification as we work out - with and through the help of the Holy Spirit - the great work of God in our lives and so we become more Christ-like. We are never to separate justification and sanctification and must not confuse them either. We are in Christ, we are His children, we have our sin is taken away by the sinless Saviour. Because His positive law keeping righteousness is credited to us and as new creatures we are to live holy and godly lives to please Him and so we do not keep on sinning (v6). Our Saviour has accomplished a miraculous work in our lives which we are to delight in it and also delight to live it out in our daily lives and in our every thought and affection (*which we can so easily hide from view*).

This evening we've seen **Our Sins Removed** in His 1st appearing and next time we will see that also in His 1st appearing **Satan's works are destroyed (v8)**! What an encouragement such things should be to us to live righteously for this wonderful Saviour.