

1 John 2:2

by John Gill

John Gill's sermon on 1 John 2:2 explores the concept of Christ as the propitiation for sins, emphasizing its implications for believers and the distinction between Jews and Gentiles.

Scripture: Luke 2:1, John 3:16, John 17:9, Romans 3:25, Ephesians 2:8-9, Hebrews 9:26, 1 John 2:1-2, 1 John 4:10, 1 John 5:19

Topics: "Atonement", "Faith in Christ"

Description

John Gill expounds on 1 John 2:2, emphasizing that Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of believers, Old Testament saints, and Gentiles, thus highlighting the universal scope of Christ's atonement. He clarifies that the term 'whole world' does not imply universal redemption for every individual but rather signifies a broader inclusion beyond the Jewish community. Gill argues that the comfort of Christ's advocacy and propitiation is specifically for those who believe, as the benefits of His sacrifice are received through faith. He addresses misconceptions about atonement in Jewish thought, contrasting it with the Christian understanding of Christ's role as the ultimate sacrifice. The sermon reassures believers of their justification and glorification through faith in Christ's sacrifice.

Transcript

Ver. 2. And he is the propitiation for our sins,.... For the sins of us who now believe, and are Jews:

and not for ours only; but for the sins of Old Testament saints, and of those who shall hereafter believe in Christ, and of the Gentiles also, signified in the next clause:

but also for [the sins] of the whole world; the Syriac version renders it, "not for us only, but also for the whole world"; that is, not for the Jews only, for John was a Jew, and so were those he wrote unto, but for the Gentiles also. Nothing is more common in Jewish writings than to call the Gentiles amle, "the world"; and

Mlweh lk, "the whole world"; and Mlweh twmwa, "the nations of the world" {}; See Gill on "John 12:19"; and the word "world" is so used in Scripture; see Joh 3:16; and stands opposed to a notion the Jews have of the Gentiles, that hrpk Nhl Nya, "there is no propitiation for them" {m}; and it is easy to observe, that when this phrase is not used of the Gentiles, it is to be understood in a limited and restrained sense; as when they say {n},

"it happened to a certain high priest, that when he went out of the sanctuary, amle ylwk, "the whole world" went after him;"

which could only design the people in the temple. And elsewhere {o} it is said,

"amle ylwk, "the "whole world" has left the Misna, and gone after the "Gemara";"

which at most can only intend the Jews; and indeed only a majority of their doctors, who were conversant with these writings: and in another place {p},

"amle ylwk, "the whole world" fell on their faces, but Raf did not fall on his face;"

where it means no more than the congregation. Once more, it is said {q}, when

"R. Simeon ben Gamaliel entered (the synagogue), amle ylwk, "the whole world" stood up before him;"

that is, the people in the synagogue: to which may be added {r},

"when a great man makes a mourning, amle ylwk, "the whole world" come to honour him;"

i.e. a great number of persons attend the funeral pomp: and so these phrases, ygylp al amle ylwk, "the whole world" is not divided, or does not dissent {s}; yrbo amle ylwk, "the whole world" are of opinion {t}, are frequently met with in the Talmud, by which, an agreement among the Rabbins, in certain points, is designed; yea, sometimes the phrase, "all the men of the world" {u}, only intend the inhabitants of a city where a synagogue was, and, at most, only the Jews: and so this phrase, "all the world", or "the whole world", in Scripture, unless when it signifies the whole universe, or the habitable earth, is always used in a limited sense, either for the Roman empire, or the churches of Christ in the world, or believers, or the present inhabitants of the world, or a part of them only, Lu 2:1; and so it is in this epistle, 1Jo 5:19; where the whole world lying in wickedness is manifestly distinguished from the saints, who are of God, and belong not to the world; and therefore cannot be understood of all the individuals in the world; and the like distinction is in this text itself, for "the sins of the whole world" are opposed to "our sins", the sins of the apostle and others to whom he joins himself; who therefore belonged not to, nor were a part of the whole world, for whose sins Christ is a propitiation as for theirs: so that this passage cannot furnish out any argument for universal redemption; for besides these things, it may be further observed, that for whose sins Christ is a propitiation, their sins are atoned for and pardoned, and their persons justified from all sin, and so shall certainly be glorified, which is not true of the whole world, and every man and woman in it; moreover, Christ is a propitiation through faith in his blood, the benefit of his propitiatory sacrifice is only received and enjoyed through faith; so that in the event it appears that Christ is a propitiation only for believers, a character which does not agree with all mankind; add to this, that for whom Christ is a propitiation he is also an advocate, 1Jo 2:1; but he is not an advocate for every individual person in the world; yea, there is a world he will not pray for Joh 17:9, and consequently is not a propitiation for them.

Once more, the design of the apostle in these words is to comfort his "little children" with the advocacy and propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, who might fall into sin through weakness and inadvertency; but what comfort would it yield to a distressed mind, to be told that Christ was a propitiation not only for the sins of the apostles and other saints, but for the sins of every individual in the world, even of these that are in hell? Would it not be natural for persons in such circumstances to argue rather against, than for themselves, and conclude that seeing persons might be damned notwithstanding the propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, that this might, and would be their case.

In what sense Christ is a propitiation, See Gill on "Ro 3:25". The Jews have no notion of the Messiah as a propitiation or atonement; sometimes they say {w} repentance atones for all sin; sometimes the death of the righteous {x}; sometimes incense {y}; sometimes the priests' garments {z}; sometimes it is the day of atonement {a}; and indeed they are in the utmost puzzle about atonement; and they even confess in their prayers {b}, that they have now neither altar nor priest to atone for them; See Gill on "1Jo 4:10".

{l} Jarchi in Isa. liii. 5. {m} T. Hieros. Nazir, fol. 57. 3. Vid. T. Bab. Succa, fol. 55. 2. {n} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 71. 2. {o} T. Bab. Bava Metzia, fol. 33. 2. {p} T. Bab. Megilla, fol. 22. 2. {q} T. Bab. Horayot, fol. 13. 2. {r} Piske Toseph. Megilla, art. 104. {s} T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 90. 2. & Kiddushin, fol. 47. 2. & 49. 1. & 65. 2. & Gittin, fol. 8. 1. & 60. 2. {t} T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 48. 1. {u} Maimon. Hilch. Tephilla, c. 11. sect. 16. {w} Zohar in Lev. fol. 29. 1. {x} Ib. fol. 24. 1. T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 38. 2. {y} T. Bab. Zebachim, fol. 88. 2. & Erachin, fol. 16. 1. {z} T. Bab. Zebachim, ib. T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 44. 2. {a} T. Bab. Yoma, fol. 87. 1. & T. Hieros. Yoma, fol. 45. 2, 3. {b} Seder Tephillot, fol. 41. 1. Ed. Amsterd.

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