

EXPECTATION vs EXPERIENCE

Challenges from 1 John 2:1-2

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Introduction

- Third in a series
 - What did we learn so far? (Ask S&S or get notes!)
- Only two verses ?!!!
 - *My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin, but if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world.*

□ **WOW !!!**

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Start at the beginning

- "My little children..."
 - *teknia mou* (τεκνια μου)
 - Affectionate diminutive = darlings
 - Relationship, intimacy

- Fatherlessness in society
- Do you have a "father in the faith"?



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Context: "I am writing **this** ..."

- What?
 - Previous section, 1 John 1:5-10
 - Light & dark
 - Truth & deception
 - Confession & forgiveness
- Why?
 - Interesting theory?
 - Or for a reason?



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Purpose: "... so that **you may not sin**"

□ WHAT ???

- Unrealistic, unachievable, unfair
 - A joke? John seems to mean it (does God?):
 - 3:6 "No-one who abides in him sins"
 - 3:9-10 "No-one born of God commits sin"
 - 5:18 "Anyone born of God does not sin"
 - But
 - 1:8 "If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves"
 - 1:10 "If we say we have not sinned we make God a liar"
 - [also Jeremiah 17:9, Romans 3:22-23 etc]
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How can both be true?



- Alternative meanings?
 - Habitual sin vs Occasional sin ?
 - "Sin" as principle vs "Sins" in practice ?
 - Character vs Behaviour ?
 - Salvation tomorrow vs Sin today ?
 - Take the plain meaning
 - [It's all Greek to me]
 - *ina me hamartate* (ινα μη αμαρτητε)
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Sin: *hamartano* (αμαρτανω)



- To miss the mark
 - Thrown spear, shot arrow
- Aim at the target, but fall short

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Not: *me* (μη)

- "... so that you may **not** sin"
- Two Greek words for "not"
 - *ou* (ου) = negative of fact and statement, absolute, objective
 - *me* (μη) = negative of will and thought, relative, subjective
 - *ou* denies, *me* rejects
 - *me* is about choice, intention, decision, will
- ***"The reason I wrote chapter 1 is so that you may choose not to sin"***

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Reality check! "but if anyone does sin"

- ❑ **PHEW !** John recognises reality
 - ❑ How likely is it? ("if" = not definite)
 - ❑ "if" = *ean* (εαν) = *ei* (ει) + *an* (αν)
 - = if + perhaps
 - very soft, <100%
 - followed by subjunctive "might"
 - ❑ "... but if perhaps anyone were to sin..."
 - ❑ High goal with possibility of failure
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EXPECTATION vs EXPERIENCE



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EXPECTATION vs EXPERIENCE

- Gap ⇒ struggle, tension, conflict ...
- Sense of failure ?

- How to resolve?
 - One extreme or the other
 - "Can't sin" or "Always sin"?
 - Can lead to arrogance or depression

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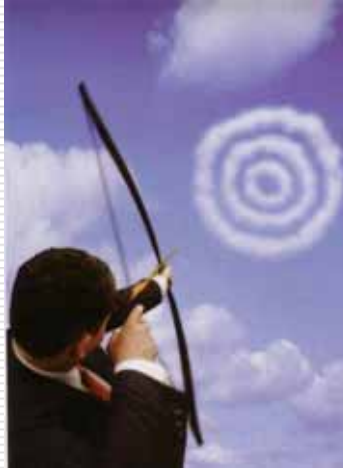
Resolving the gap

- *hamartano* (αμαρτανω)
 - sin = missing the mark
- What are you aiming for?
 - Aim for the ground ???
 - No, aim for target
 - Try to hit it, sometimes miss
- The target:
 - "... so that you may choose not to sin"



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What do you expect? **Aim high**



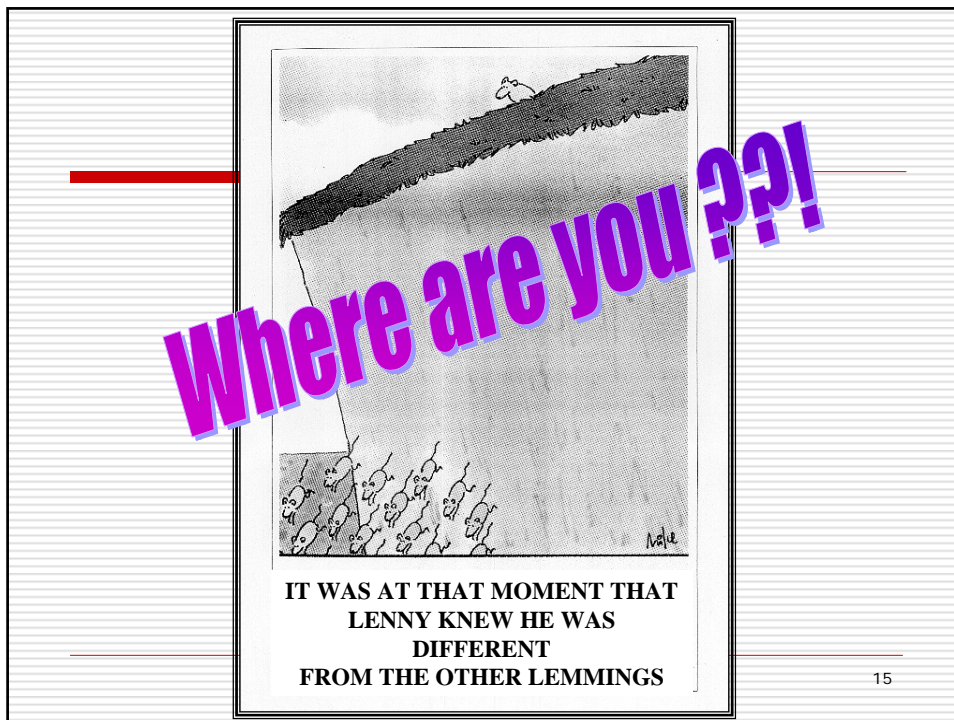
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Hitting the target

- In your experience: How often?
- Mostly success!
- Hundreds of daily decisions & actions
 - All sinful? **NO !!**
- Missing is the exception
- Driven by maturity
 - Hebrews 6:14



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Dealing with failure



- *"But if perhaps anyone were to sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins."*
- Not left to sort it out ourselves
 - **Jesus is the answer !**
- Advocate = parakletos (παρακλητος)
 - Legal representative, counsellor
- Focused towards the Father (προς τον πατερα)
- Propitiation = ilasmos (ιλασμος)
 - Appeasement, settling wrath of God

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One more thing

- **"He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."**
- A "problem verse"! [extent of atonement]
- Who are "the whole world"?
 1. *Generic.* "Us" = Christians, "TWW" = the rest
 2. *Geographical.* "Us" = Asia Minor, "TWW" = Christians elsewhere
 3. *Eschatological.* "Us" = Christians now, "TWW" = new heavens & new earth
 4. *Ethnic.* "Us" = Jewish converts, "TWW" = Christians from all races



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So what? (take-aways)

- Expectation vs Experience
 - Accept the challenge
 - Recognise the reality
 - Avoid extremes
 - Live in the tension
 - Aim for the target
 - Practice to improve
 - Celebrate successes
 - In failure, Jesus is the answer



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