**Study Guide: Understanding 1 John and the Nature of God's Justice and Mercy**

**April 23, 2025**

**Quiz: Short Answer Questions**

1. What are some of the key characteristics of a true believer, according to the frequent repetition in 1 John?
2. What is the primary purpose of John writing his epistle, as stated in 1 John 5:13?
3. What does the statement in 1 John 2:1, "And if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," reveal about the possibility of believers sinning?
4. How does the speaker interpret the phrase "my little children" in 1 John 2:1?
5. What is the common Greek word for sin mentioned in the text and what does it metaphorically represent?
6. The speaker emphasizes that salvation is not only an act of grace, love, and mercy. What other divine attribute is crucial to understanding salvation according to the text?
7. How does the speaker address the apparent contradiction between God's mercy and God's justice?
8. What is the significance of 1 John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," in the context of understanding God's justice in forgiveness?
9. According to the speaker, what ultimately happens to every sin committed by anyone at any time?
10. What historical context is mentioned regarding the circulation and potential variations in the early copies of John's letter?

**Essay Format Questions**

1. Discuss the tension presented in 1 John between the absolute standards of Christian living (e.g., not sinning, loving others perfectly) and the reality of believers still struggling with sin. How does the concept of Jesus as our advocate resolve this tension?
2. Analyze the speaker's argument that salvation is an act of both grace and justice. Use scriptural references discussed in the text to support your analysis of how God can be both just and the justifier of sinners.
3. Explore the practical implications of understanding Jesus as our advocate. How should this doctrine impact a believer's daily life, self-examination, and sense of assurance?
4. The speaker uses the metaphor of a courtroom to illustrate the concept of Jesus as our defense attorney. Develop this metaphor further, incorporating other aspects of the divine judgment and redemption described in the text.
5. Discuss the significance of John's repeated emphasis on key themes throughout his epistle. What does this repetition suggest about the importance of these themes for believers?

**Glossary of Key Terms**

* **Advocate:** (1 John 2:1) - One who pleads another's cause, a defense attorney. In this context, Jesus Christ acts as the believer's advocate before God the Father.
* **Hamartino:** (Greek word for sin) - Meaning "to miss the mark." It represents violating God's standards or falling short of His perfect will.
* **Propitiation:** (1 John 2:2) - An act of appeasing or satisfying a deity, especially regarding sin. In a theological context, Christ's sacrifice is seen as a propitiation that satisfies God's justice and wrath for the sins of humanity.
* **Little Children:** (Used frequently in 1 John) - An endearing and intimate term used by John to refer to believers, emphasizing their spiritual new birth and familial relationship with God and other believers.
* **Justice:** A divine attribute of God that requires righteousness and retribution for sin. The text emphasizes that God's justice must be satisfied.
* **Mercy:** A divine attribute of God that involves compassion and withholding deserved punishment. The text highlights that God's mercy is shown in a way that is also just.
* **Overcomes the World:** (1 John 5:4) - Refers to the victory believers have over the world's systems and temptations through their faith in Jesus Christ.
* **Born of God:** (Used frequently in 1 John) - Refers to the spiritual regeneration or new birth experienced by those who believe in Jesus Christ, signifying a new spiritual life and relationship with God.

**Answer Key for Quiz**

1. Some key characteristics of a true believer include walking in light, confessing sins, obeying God's commands, loving fellow believers, rejecting the world, and practicing righteousness.
2. The primary purpose of John's writing is that those who believe in the name of the Son of God may know they have eternal life and continue to believe.
3. This statement reveals that sinning is a possibility, even a reality, for believers, but they have an advocate in Jesus Christ when they do sin.
4. The speaker interprets "my little children" as referring to believers, regardless of their age, emphasizing their spiritual infancy and their birth from God.
5. The common Greek word for sin is *hamartino*, which metaphorically represents missing the mark, like an archer failing to hit the target.
6. Justice is the other crucial divine attribute, along with grace, love, and mercy, that is essential to understanding salvation.
7. The speaker explains that while mercy and justice may seem contradictory from a human perspective, they fit together in perfect harmony from God's perspective. God's justice is not compromised by His mercy; rather, His justice is satisfied through Christ's sacrifice.
8. 1 John 1:9 shows that God's forgiveness is not only faithful but also just. His forgiveness is an act of both grace and holy justice.
9. According to the speaker, every sin committed by anybody at any time, known or unknown, will be punished, either by the individual or by Jesus Christ on their behalf.
10. The historical context mentioned is that early copies of John's letter were circulated among churches in Asia Minor, and sometimes men would add or subtract things, leading to potential variations in the versions.