

**Notes on the Greek New Testament**  
**Week 232 – 1 John 2:12-3:10**

**Day 1156: 1 John 2:12-17**

**Verses 12-17**

Some argue that these verses form an isolated section. Smalley, however, writes, "The passage 2:12–17 is thus closely connected with the thought of 2:1–11 by means of the repeated formula γράφω ὑμῖν. Furthermore, in vv 12–14, terms and ideas are used which also serve to link this passage with the earlier part of 1 John (for v 12 see 1:9 as well as 2:1; for v 13 see 1:1 and 2:3; for v 13c see 2:3; for v 14a, b see 1:1 and 2:3; for v 14c see 1:8, 10). "Apart from the literary links between 2:12–17 and the preceding sections of this document, there exists a unity in terms of general theological content. Thus the statements in vv 12–14, describing the spiritual condition of John's readers, recapitulate the teaching already given. (They also introduce new ideas which will be developed later in 1 John; note the thought of 'conquest' in vv 13–14, and cf. 4:4; 5:4–5.) But in addition these vv, with their carefully structured and emphatic form, show that what is true of the orthodox Christian was *not* true of the false claimants around John's church. The heterodox thought that they were in the light, whereas in fact they were existing in darkness (v 11). By contrast, it could be said of the genuine believers in the Johannine community that they truly shared God's forgiveness, knew God personally, and were victorious over evil."

**Verse 12**

Γράφω ὑμῖν, τεκνία, ὅτι ἀφένονται ὑμῖν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ.

γράφω see v.7

τεκνιον, ου n see v.1

The parallel with 2:1 (cf. 2:7) suggests that here John is addressing *all* of his readers rather than a particular class.

ὅτι could mean 'because' (so Westcott and Bultmann) or 'that' – a declarative sense (so Schnackenburg). Smalley writes, "These two senses of ὅτι, the causal and the declarative, are therefore both relevant to the context of 2:12–14. Furthermore, they are not mutually exclusive; and ὅτι may indeed have been used by John here (once again) with a consciously double meaning. He is writing to remind his readers about the nature of their Christian heritage (declarative). But, more than this, he is exhorting them to live responsibly in the light; and he is able to do so because certain facts are true in their experience (causal). If a choice between the two meanings of ὅτι has to be made, we incline to the causal ('because'), since the declarative by itself ('that') seems altogether too 'obvious' at this point in 1 John. But almost certainly both meanings are present, with perhaps an emphasis on the causal interpretation."

ἀφένονται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 pl  
ἀφιημι cancel, forgive

Cf. 1:9.

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin  
ὄνομα, τος n name

Smalley writes, "From a biblical standpoint forgiveness of sin is not only (and, indeed, not primarily) dependent on man's confession. God's grace is fundamental to the covenant relationship between God and man. In NT terms forgiveness is explicitly related to the 'name' of Jesus, through whom God's salvific work has become actualized (Matt 1:21; Acts 4:12; 10:43; cf. Titus 2:14)."

The 'name' of Jesus sums up all that is known of him, all of his authority and power. Cf. Matt 10:22; 24:9; Jn 15:21; Rev 2:3; Acts 4:30; 10:43; 1 Cor 1:10; 1 Jn 3:23; 5:13; Jn 20:31.

**Verse 13**

γράφω ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἄπ• ἀρχῆς. γράφω ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν.

Of the titles, 'children ... fathers ... young men' Smalley writes, "The variety of possible interpretations we have surveyed, combined with the literary character of this passage, indicates that we should perhaps avoid making exclusive decisions about the meaning of the terms τεκνία (παιδία), πατέρες and νεανίσκοι. Knowing the Johannine mentality as we do, it is quite possible that our author is at this point being deliberately ambivalent. Almost certainly he is referring to his whole church when he calls his readers 'children,' but within that group he is in one sense recollecting and addressing the young and old in physical age ...; while in another sense he is referring to the spiritual privileges of Christian youth and maturity which should belong to all believers... In either case he is pointing out the riches of orthodox faith belonging to the 'fathers' and 'young men' of his church, in stark contrast to the heresies which were being propagated by the other two groups within the Johannine community: those with too high a view of the nature of Jesus, and those with an inadequate understanding of his fully divine person."

The 'fathers' are therefore probably those older in years, more mature in the faith, and perhaps those looked to as leaders in the church.

ἐγνώκατε Verb, perf act indic, 2 pl

γινώσκω

ἀρχῆ, ης f see 1:1

"Some commentators believe that God the Father, the 'Ancient of Days,' is meant (cf. Dodd, 38; Stott, 97; Bruce, 58); but most accept that the reference is probably to the Word of God, 'brought near to us in the Person of Christ Jesus' (Westcott, 60; cf. also Brooke, 45; Bultmann, 32). It is true that τὸν ἄπ ἀρχῆς is a theologically accurate description of both God the Father and the Christ of God; but the primary allusion is fairly certain to be a christological one. (a) The phrase 'who has existed from the beginning' would have no particular significance in this context as a description of God; none of John's readers, presumably, doubted the eternity of the Father. On the other hand, several of his readers were evidently denying that the pre-existent Logos of God had become incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth... (b) Furthermore in v 14b, when the clause ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἄπ ἀρχῆς ('because you have known him who has existed from the beginning') is used again, it follows an explicit reference to knowing the Father in v 14a: 'I have written to you, little children, because you have known the Father' (ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα). If τὸν ἄπ ἀρχῆς means God the Father here, then we are left with a pointless repetition." Smalley.

νεανίσκος, ον m young man

νικάω conquer, overcome

"The image, based on John 16:33, is characteristic of the Apocalypse (2:7ff.; 12:11; 21:7) and of this Epistle: v.14; 4:4." Westcott. Smalley writes, "The idea of conquering evil is introduced for the first time in 1 John at this point. Here it leads into an appeal to resist worldliness (vv 15–17; cf. 5:4–5). But the next time victory is mentioned in this letter (at 4:4), the thought of resisting false *teaching* is included (καὶ νενικήκατε αὐτούς, 'you have defeated them'; that is, 'you have successfully resisted those who were propagating heretical doctrines'); and it is therefore not unreasonable to suppose that John was also anticipating this theme in the present verse. *All* wrong must be conquered by the genuine Christian believer, including wrong thinking and theology!"

πονηρός, α, ον evil, wicked

τὸν πονηρόν is replaced in κ 95 by the impersonal τὸ πονηρόν.

"The personal aspect of the Christian conflict on its spiritual side is naturally brought out now. Darkness has its prince: John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11." Westcott.

"The characteristic of 'fathers' is knowledge, the fruit of experience (ἐγνώκατε): that of 'young men,' victory, the prize of strength. St John bases his appeal to each class on that which they have severally gained." Westcott.

#### Verse 14

ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, παῖδιά, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα. ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι ἰσχυροί ἐστε καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν μένει καὶ νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν.

The change here to the aorist Westcott suggests to be a change of perspective, John is now looking at his letter as if already complete – an epistolary aorist. It may reflect a break in writing the letter followed by later resumption.

The TR follows some minor witnesses in reading γράφω.

παιδιον, ου n child

Again, addressed to all Christians. Westcott suggests that τέκνια (v.12) suggests kinship while παῖδια subordination. This corresponds with knowing the Father's love and submitting to him.

Westcott suggests that the lack of development in the way John refers to the 'fathers' is because "The knowledge of Christ as the Word, active from the beginning of Creation, includes all that we need to know."

ἰσχυρος, α, ον strong, mighty, powerful

B and cop<sup>sa</sup> omit τοῦ θεοῦ from the phrase ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ

μενω remain, stay, abide

Marshall writes, "Reception of God's word is a source of spiritual strength which goes beyond the force of mere teaching. If we are right in seeing a reference to the Father and the Son in the two earlier statements in the verse, we may well be tempted to associate the power of the Word of God with the Spirit (Eph 6:17) in an implicit reference to the three Persons of the Trinity. It is by this personal, subjective power that the objective victory of Jesus over the evil one becomes a reality for believers. Here is the basis for the important command which is to follow."

#### Verses 15-17

Smalley writes, "In vv 12–14 John has been describing, in very positive terms, the spiritual character of the true believer, as opposed to the heretic who falsely claims to have faith in God through Christ. Now, in vv 15–17, he turns from the Church to the world, and directly exhorts all his members to reject worldliness, as a condition of 'living in the light!'"

#### Verse 15

Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ·

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

In the writings of John, the 'world' generally signifies the world in its rebellion against God.

μηδε negative particle nor, and not, neither

τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ = the things which preoccupy this present age.

'love of the Father' "expresses primarily the love of 'the children' of God to God; but this love answers to and springs out of the love shewn to them by 'the Father' whom 'they know' (v.14.)" Westcott.

Love for the world and love for the Father are mutually exclusive (cf. Matt 6:24; James 4:4). Who or what is the object of our affections?

#### Verse 16

ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστίν.

ἐπιθυμια, ας f desire, lust, passion

σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh

ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς 'sinful desire' refers to fallen nature in general.

ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν 'a craving for what is seen,' that is to say, "every variety of gratification of which sight is the instrument." Law.

ἀλαζονεια, ας f pride, arrogance

βιος, ου m life, living, possessions

Marshall and Smalley argue that "The first example of 'worldliness' is a general one; and ... the following two instances ('a craving for what is seen,' and 'pride in one's life style') are to be regarded as further definitions of what is here described as 'sinful desire'."

**Verse 17**

καὶ ὁ κόσμος παράγεται καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ, ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

παραγω **pass by, pass away, disappear**

Marshall comments, "Now comes the climax to John's appeal. It is foolish to desire the world because the world and its desires are passing away. John has already reminded his readers that the era of darkness is coming to an end (2:8), and Paul also stated that 'this world in its present form is passing away' (1 Cor 7:31). The coming of the light is the sign of the new era and the end of the old." Cf. 2 Cor 5:17; Rev 21:4.

θέλημα, ατος *n* **will, wish, desire**

The contrast is between a passing world and the abiding believer. Cf. Heb 12:27.

**Day 1157: 1 John 2:18-23****Verses 18ff**

The spiritual warfare between the forces of Christ and of the prince of darkness is not a simple warfare between the church and the world: that warfare is to be found even within and among those claiming to be the people of God.

Smalley argues strongly (contra Marshall) that this section continues the themes of the preceding section.

**Verse 18**

Παιδιά, ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν, καὶ καθὼς ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται, καὶ νῦν ἀντίχριστοι πολλοὶ γέγονασιν· ὅθεν γινωσκομεν ὅτι ἐσχάτη ὥρα ἐστίν.

παιδιον, ου *n* see v.14

The relationship implied is that of a fatherly teacher to pupils who are childlike in their understanding, and in need of instruction.

ἐσχατος, η, ου *adj* **last, final**

ὥρα, ας *f* **hour, period of time**

The last period of time before the consummation of the purposes of God in the perfect establishment of his kingly reign. It is a period marked by conflict.

Smalley notes, "The eschatological associations belonging to the term ὥρα, 'hour', are familiar to us from John's Gospel: e.g. John 2:4; 4:23; 16:2; cf. also Luke 22:53. Nevertheless, the exact phrase ἐσχάτη ὥρα occurs in the NT only here."

ἀντίχριστος, ου *m* **Antichrist** (of one who claims to be Christ or is opposed to Christ)

Some witnesses introduce ὁ before ἀντίχριστος.

Westcott says that they had heard warnings that the last days would be marked by apostasy and false teaching (Mk 13:16ff; Matt 24:5,24; Acts 20:30; 1 Tim 4:1-3) and even that such false teaching would find its focus in a particular adversary to Christ (2 Thess 2:3). The use of the term 'antichrist' without an article shows it had "become current as a technical (proper) name."

Smalley comments, "The popular expectation of antichrist, marking the arrival of the end-time (ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἀντίχριστος ἔρχεται, 'you heard that antichrist is to come') has been realized, in John's view, by the 'appearance' of 'many antichrists'... Clearly John regards the heretical secessionists from his community as 'antichrists'; and he sees the erroneous christology of these professed believers (whose character has been in view since 1:5) as both dangerous for the life and unity of the church (cf. v 19), and a mark of the arrival of the end-time."

And Marshall writes, "It seems ... that he regarded the false teachers of his day as being possessed by the spirit of the antichrist, whose coming still lay in the future."

γεγόνασιν *Verb, perf act indic, 3 pl*

γίνομαι

ὅθεν *from where, therefore, for which reason*

**Verse 19**

ἐξ ἡμῶν ἐξῆλθαν, ἀλλ' οὐκ ἦσαν ἐξ ἡμῶν· εἰ γὰρ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἦσαν, μεμενήκεισαν ἂν μεθ' ἡμῶν· ἀλλ' ἵνα φανερωθῶσιν ὅτι οὐκ εἰσὶν πάντες ἐξ ἡμῶν.

ἐξῆλθαν *Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ἐξερχομαι*

"Till the moment of separation they were undistinguishable from the rest of the Christian society." Westcott.

μεμενήκεισαν *Verb, pluperf act indic, 3 pl μενω*

φανερωθῶσιν *Verb, aor pass subj, 3 pl φανερω reveal, make known, make evident*

"For this ellipse see John 1:8; 9:3; 13:18; 14:31; 15:25. The departure of these false teachers after a temporary sojourn in the Christian society was brought about that they might be shewn in their true character, and so seen to be not of it." Westcott.

Westcott argues that the construction means that 'they are not at all of us', rather than, 'they are not all of us'. Smalley favours 'none of them belonged to us.'

**Verse 20**

καὶ ὑμεῖς χρίσμα ἔχετε ἀπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου, καὶ οἴδατε πάντες,

Note the emphatic contrast, καὶ ὑμεῖς 'and as for you...' The force of the καὶ here is adversative. John moves from the marks of the false 'Christians' to the marks of the true believer (vv. 20-23).

Smalley comments, " In the passage which begins here (vv 20–28) there is an emphasis on three leading ideas: χρίσμα ('consecration'), ὃ ἠκεύσατε ἀπ ἀρχῆς ('what you heard from the beginning') and μένειν ('to abide').

Together these three motifs highlight the concept of God's indwelling word, in a context which deals with the eschatological benefits of the new covenant. Such a stress has already been anticipated in the forceful section 2:12–14."

χρίσμα, τος n anointing

"The readers of the Epistle had the power of discerning the real character of 'Antichrists.' 'Christians' are themselves in a true sense 'Christs', anointed ones, consecrated to God as 'prophets', 'priests', and 'kings' (1 Peter 2:5 (9); Apoc 1:6; 5:10; 20:6); and in virtue of that consecration endowed with the corresponding blessings." Westcott.

Smalley comments, "A play on words is apparent in this passage. Central to the apostolic preaching is the confession of Jesus as 'Christ' (χριστός, the anointed one). Those who deny this are his opponents (ἀντίχριστοι, 'antichrists,' v 18); whereas the faithful have received a divine 'anointing' (χρίσμα)."

ἅγιος, α, ον holy

I.e. they have received the gift of the Holy Spirit from Christ, the Holy One of God. By this gift they have Christ and remain in Christ (cf. John 14-16).

οἶδα know, understand

There are variant readings here. παντες (read by κ B P Ψ etc.) means 'you all know', whereas παντα (read by A C K Byz Lect etc.) means 'you know all things'. UBS cautiously favour παντες. This is followed by Smalley though Marshall prefers 'all of you know the truth'.

On the theme of knowledge, cf. John 16:13.

**Verse 21**

οὐκ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ὅτι οὐκ οἶδατε τὴν ἀλήθειαν, ἀλλ' ὅτι οἶδατε αὐτήν, καὶ ὅτι πᾶν ψεῦδος ἐκ τῆς ἀληθείας οὐκ ἔστιν.

γραφο write

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

ψευδος, ους n lie, untruth, that which is false/imitation

"The object of the apostle in writing was not to communicate fresh knowledge, but to bring into active and decisive use the knowledge which his readers already possessed."

Westcott.

**Verse 22**

Τίς ἐστὶν ὁ ψεύστης εἰ μὴ ὁ ἀρνούμενος ὅτι Ἰησοῦς οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός; οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀντίχριστος, ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν.

ψευστης, ου m liar

ἀρνεομαι deny, disown, renounce

Cf. 4:2f. "A common 'Gnostic' theory was that 'the aeon Christ' descended upon the man Jesus at His Baptism, and left Him before the Passion. Those who held such a doctrine denied that 'Jesus was the Christ'; and in so denying, denied the union of the divine and the human in one Person. This heresy then St John signalises here, the direct contradiction to the fundamental truth which he proclaimed, *the Word became flesh.*" Westcott.

Marshall comments, "For John the height of heresy is to deny that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God and Saviour. To reduce Jesus to the status of a mere man, or to allow no more than a temporary indwelling of some divine power in him is to strike at the root of Christianity. Modern thinkers may have more refined ways of stating similar denials of the reality of the incarnation. It may be doubted whether they are any more immune to John's perception that they take the heart out of Christianity."

The meaning of the phrase ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν πατέρα καὶ τὸν υἱόν is explained in the verse that follows.

**Verse 23**

πᾶς ὁ ἀρνούμενος τὸν υἱὸν οὐδὲ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει· ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει.

"If the heretics thought that they could 'have' God without believing in Jesus, they were completely mistaken. It is only through the Son that we know that God is Father, and it only through the Son and his propitiatory death that we can have access to God as Father." Marshall.

The second half of v 23 (ὁ ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱὸν καὶ τὸν πατέρα ἔχει) appears in the best MSS (x A, B C, et. al.), but is omitted in later texts (K L et al.). Such an omission was presumably the result of homoeoteleuton, as the scribe's eye traveled from the first τὸν πατέρα ἔχει to the second, and left out everything in between.

ὁμολογεω confess, declare

To confess and know the Son is to know the Father also (Jn 14:7ff.).

### Day 1158: 1 John 2:24-29

#### Verse 24

ὕμεις ὃ ἠκούσατε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἐν ὑμῖν μενέτω· ἐὰν ἐν ὑμῖν μείνη ὃ ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ἠκούσατε, καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν τῷ υἱῷ καὶ ἐν τῷ πατρὶ μενεῖτε.

ὕμεις 'as for you...'

Cf also 1 Tim 6:3; 2 Tim 1:13; 4:3f.; Tit 1:9; 2 Pet 3:2; Jude 17,20 for similar emphasis on holding to the apostolic message.

Westcott writes, "The Gospel is described both as a medium in which the believer lives (John 8:31), and as a quickening spirit which dwells in him (Col 3:16; 2 John 2)."

Again, there are echos of 1:1-4. The word of life, which became flesh in Christ, now animates the Christian.

#### Verse 25

καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἐπαγγελία ἣν αὐτὸς ἐπηγγείλατο ἡμῖν, τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον.

ἐπαγγελια, ας f promise

ἣν αὐτὸς 'which He himself'

ἐπηγγείλατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s  
ἐπαγγελλομαι promise

Some MSS (including B) read ὑμῖν in place of ἡμῖν.

ζωη, ης f life

αἰώνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

Marshall comments, "There is something to be said for the view that John is explaining that the experience of remaining in the Son and the Father is, precisely, eternal life – available here and now. This would fit in with the teaching of the Gospel where eternal life is a blessing which commences to be enjoyed in this present life (Jn 3:36; 6:40, 47); it also fits in with the definition of eternal life in John 17:3 as knowing the Father and the Son. Naturally the future dimension (cf. 2:17) is not lacking on this interpretation."

#### Verse 26

Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν περὶ τῶν πλανωντων ὑμᾶς.

ἔγραψα ὑμῖν refers back to vv 18-25.

πλαναω lead astray, mislead, deceive

Present tense = those actively engaged in seeking to lead you astray. Smalley, however, writes, "The present participle πλανωντων ('leading you astray') is conative in force. The heretics were *intent* upon leading others astray; they were *trying* to do this. But evidently the danger is present, continuing and real. Not only were the heretics attempting to win others to their heterodox views about Jesus; obviously (in view of the incipient schism alluded to in v 19, and given the increasing disintegration of the Johannine church to which 2 and 3 John bear witness) they were being successful in their efforts."

#### Verse 27

καὶ ὑμεῖς τὸ χρίσμα ὃ ἐλάβετε ἀπ' αὐτοῦ μένει ἐν ὑμῖν, καὶ οὐ χρειαν ἔχετε ἵνα τις διδάσκη ὑμᾶς· ἀλλ' ὡς τὸ αὐτοῦ χρίσμα διδάσκει ὑμᾶς περὶ πάντων, καὶ ἀληθές ἐστὶν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος, καὶ καθὼς ἐδίδαξεν ὑμᾶς, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ.

καὶ ὑμεῖς 'but as for you,' again in contrast with the false teachers.

χρισμα, τος n see v.20

ἐλάβετε Verb, aor act indic, 2 pl λαμβανω

Cf. v. 20 for χρισμα. Smalley writes, "Word and Spirit complement each other. The proclamation of the gospel is an objective exercise (cf. 1:1-3, 5); whereas the 'consecration' of the Spirit is received directly from him, 'from the holy one' (vv 20, 27). Such a balance, between the objective truth of the preached gospel and its subjective interpretation in the Spirit, must be maintained in any attempt to 'keep the faith.' Cf. the similar balance in 2:7 and 14 between 'hearing the message' (ὁ λόγος ὃν ἠκούσατε, 'the message which you heard') and God's word 'dwelling' in the believer (ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν μένει, 'God's word dwells in you')."

χρεια, ας f need

"The outpouring of the Spirit, the characteristic of the last days (Jer 31:34; Joel 2:28; Heb 8:11; Acts 2:17ff.), gave to each one who received it a sure criterion of truth. Christians needed not fresh teaching even from the apostles, still less from those who professed to guide them into new 'depths'." Westcott.

## διδασκω teach

The statement is to be understood corporately – not that each individual Christian is self-sufficient, but that the Christian community possesses sufficient resource in Word and Spirit.

Smalley comments, "As many commentators point out, this absolute declaration about the dispensability of earthly teachers appears in the course of a document which is heavily didactic! ... Teaching was obviously an important spiritual gift and form of ministry in the early Church (cf. Acts 5:28; Rom 12:7; 1 Cor 12:28–29; Eph 4:11). Yet the teachers themselves needed to be taught by the chrism of the Spirit, and their teaching had to be 'tested' for its truth (cf. 4:1, 5; 2 John 9–10...). The claim that the true Christian has no need of any further teaching may include a deliberately antignostic thrust.... It may be aimed precisely at those within the Johannine church whose gnostic inclinations had led them to suppose that they knew the truth about everything (cf. v 27b). In answer to this John may be saying that, on the contrary, it is the 'consecrated' Christian (the genuine initiate!) who has no need of (basic?) spiritual instruction. He is already 'set apart' for God's truth."

ἀληθης, ες true, truthful, honest, genuine

The Spirit bestowed is the Spirit of truth (Jn 14:17).

ψευδος, ους n see v.21

The implication of the false teachers was that the Gospel message preached by the apostles was a lie. Though Smalley interprets καὶ ἀληθές ἐστιν καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ψεῦδος as 'and it is real, not an illusion' – of the anointing they have as the genuine article as opposed to the pretended knowledge of the 'gnostics'.

Smalley writes, "The invitation to 'abide' in Jesus clearly harks back to the farewell discourse of John's Gospel (John 15:4–7); and the very words μέινετε ἐν ἐμοί ('remain in me') may well have been used as a catchword by heretical as well as orthodox adherents around and within the Johannine community (see the comment on 2:6). It would thus be natural for the writer to remind his readers of the true implications of this command. To 'abide' or 'dwell' in Jesus, as he instructed his disciples, is only possible when there is a genuine relationship with God through Christ (cf. vv 22–24); and this is guaranteed and confirmed by the indwelling knowledge of the truth imparted through the anointing Spirit."

## Verse 28

Καὶ νῦν, τεκνία, μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ, ἵνα ἐὰν φανερωθῆ σχώμεν παρρησίαν καὶ μὴ αἰσχυνθῶμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ.

ΤΕΚΝΙΟΝ, ΟΥ n little child, child

ἐν αὐτῷ = in Christ

φανερωθῆ Verb, aor pass subj, 3 s

φανερωω see v.19

σχώμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl ἔχω

παρρησια, ας f boldness, assurance

Cf. 3:21; 4:17; 5:14 also Heb 3:6; 10:19; Philemon 8. Cf. the lines from Charles Wesley, *Bold I approach the eternal throne, and claim the crown through Christ my own.*

αἰσχυνθῶμεν Verb, aor pass subj, 1 pl

αἰσχυνομαι be (made) ashamed

Cf. Mark 8:38 // Luke 9:26.

It is possible to understand the subject of these verbs to be John and the other apostles, cf. 1 Thess 2:19f; Phil 4:1. But it is more natural to understand that John simply identifies himself with believers generally, cf. 2 Thess 1:7-9.

παρουσια, ας f coming, arrival, presence

Of παρουσία Marshall writes, "This word was used for the visit of a ruler to some part of his dominions, an occasion for celebrating and rejoicing... It is this kind of atmosphere which is conveyed by this word. It conceives of the return of Jesus to this world in visible splendour, like a monarch."

## Verse 29

ἐὰν εἰδῆτε ὅτι δίκαιός ἐστιν, γινωσκετε ὅτι καὶ πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην ἔξ αὐτοῦ γεγέννηται.

Verse 29 is transitional: it "looks backward to vv 18–28 as well as forward to 3:1–4:6."

Smalley. The theme of new birth introduced here features prominently in the rest of the epistle, cf. 3:9; 4:7; 5:1, 4, 18; cf. John 1:12–13; 3:3–8.

εἰδῆτε Verb, perf/pres act subj, 2 pl οἶδα

δικαιος, α, ον righteous, just

δίκαιός the thought moves from judgment (v. 28) to the character of the judge – and from abiding in him to its outward evidence.

ὁ ποιων – present continuous, "who realises in action little by little the righteousness which corresponds with the Divine Nature." Westcott.

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness

γεγέννηται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s

γεννωω bear; pass be born

Is the reference in this verse to God (the Father) or to Christ? Continuity with v.28 (and the parallel with v.1) would suggest that it is Christ who is spoken of as the righteous one, but it seems strange to refer to believers as being born of Christ. It may be best to understand the thought to move from Christ to God. "When St John thinks of God in relation to men he never thinks of Him apart from Christ (comp 5:20). Again he never thinks of Christ in his human nature without adding the thought of His divine nature. Thus a rapid transition is possible from the one aspect of the Lord's divine-human Person to the other. Here the passage is from 'Christ' to 'God'." (Westcott). Hence the thought is that those who do what is righteous are born of God and are like his Son. "The presence of righteous action is the sure sign of the reality of the divine birth... It must be further observed that righteousness is not the condition but the consequence of Sonship." Westcott.

### Day 1159: 1 John 3:1-6

#### 1 John 3:1 ff.

Smalley writes, "The second major division of 1 John begins at this point... In the second division of this document (3:1-5:13) John concentrates on the developing spiritual life of his followers, rather than sustaining his attack on the heretics, some of whom have already seceded from his church (2:19). The latter, however, are still in view (cf. 3:4, 7; 4:1-6)."

#### Verse 1

ἴδετε ποταπὴν ἀγάπην δέδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ πατὴρ ἵνα τέκνα θεοῦ κληθῶμεν· καὶ ἐσμέν· διὰ τοῦτο ὁ κόσμος οὐ γινώσκει ἡμᾶς ὅτι οὐκ ἔγνω αὐτόν.

Marshall comments, "From the thought of the new birth ... John's thought moves to the great love shown by God, as a result of which we have become his children. The train of thought has an interesting parallel with John 3 where the conversation with Nicodemus about the new birth from above through which alone men can enter the kingdom of God is followed by the magnificent declaration of the divine love which sent God's only Son so that we might have eternal life."

ἴδετε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl ὄραω see

The word introduces a sense of excitement.

ποταπος, η, ον of what sort, what kind

Here, 'how lavish'.

δέδωκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s διδομι

Smalley writes, "The phrase ἀγάπην δέδωκεν (unique in the NT) suggests – in combination with ποταπὴν – the extent of God's love, which has graciously been 'showered' on believers as their 'inalienable possession'."

κληθῶμεν Verb, aor pass subj, 1 pl καλεω

καὶ ἐσμεν = 'and such we are.' Several later witnesses, including TR and followed by AV, omit these words.

ἔγνω Verb, aor act indic, 3 s γινωσκω

The world does not comprehend the Christian because it does not know God.

#### Verse 2

Ἀγαπητοί, νῦν τέκνα θεοῦ ἐσμεν, καὶ οὐπω ἐφανερωθη τί ἐσόμεθα. οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἐάν φανερωθῇ ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα, ὅτι ὁψόμεθα αὐτὸν καθως ἐστίν.

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

"The Christian has now, even in the present life, that which carries with it potentially infinite blessings, but the manifestation of his sonship is hindered by the circumstances in which he is placed. He will not be anything essentially different hereafter, but he will be what he is now essentially more completely, though in ways wholly beyond our power of imagination." Westcott.

οὐπω not yet

ἐφανερωθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s

φανερωω see 2:19

ἐσόμεθα Verb, fut indic, 1 pl εἶμι

οἶδα know, understand

φανερωθῇ see 2:28

When he appears in all the glory of his risen and reigning power.

ὅμοιος, α, ον like, of the same kind as

Cf. Phil 3:20,21.

ὁψόμεθα Verb, fut midd dep indic, 1 pl

ὄραω see

Cf. 2 Cor 3:18.

Smalley comments, "The thought which is voiced here with such vividness and simplicity has deeply influenced the tradition, and especially the mystical tradition, of the Christian Church (see further Underhill, *Mystic Way*, 257). As Dodd (71) says, John's 'serene certainty that we shall see our Lord and be like Him, is the model for all our thinking about the life to come.' But, as the next verse immediately reminds us, such a vision of heaven cannot be detached from Christian experience and responsibility here on earth."

**Verse 3**

καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἔχων τὴν ἐλπίδα ταύτην ἐπ' αὐτῷ ἀγνίζει ἑαυτὸν καθὼς ἐκεῖνος ἀγνός ἐστιν.

πᾶς ὁ ἔχων lays stress on the personal responsibility of every believer who is a true child of God.

ἐλπις, ἰδος f hope, ground of hope

ἐπ' αὐτῷ could mean 'in himself' or 'in God'

ἀγνίζω purify, cleanse

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/herself, itself

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο that (one), he, she, it

ἀγνος, η, ον pure, holy

"He who looks forward to becoming like God hereafter must strive after His likeness now: Matt 5:8; Gal 5:5." Westcott.

**Verses 4-9**

Smalley comments, "John now pursues the connection between Christ and the Christian, as the means for living properly within God's family, by dwelling first on the need to renounce sin (vv 4-9; cf. the reference to 'purity' in v 3). There is 'nothing sinful' in Jesus (v 5), and we are to avoid the constant practice of sin (vv 6, 9). We can do this because he 'appeared in order to abolish sins,' and to 'destroy the devil's works' (vv 5, 8). On the positive side, the Christian is to 'practice righteousness' in a way that echoes the activity of God in Christ (v 7). Both the renunciation of sin and right conduct are marks of divine sonship."

**Verse 4**

Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν καὶ τὴν ἀνομίαν ποιεῖ, καὶ ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἀνομία.

ἁμαρτια, ας f sin

ἀνομια, ας f wickedness, lawlessness, sin

"Sin and lawlessness are convertible terms. Sin is not an arbitrary conception. It is the assertion of a selfish will against a paramount authority." Westcott.

The believers to whom John is writing were being told that sin could be regarded as a matter of indifference. John tells them that it is rebellion against God.

For 'lawlessness' cf. 2 Thess 2:3, 7. To commit sin is to place oneself on the side of the devil and the antichrist and to stand in opposition to Christ.

**Verse 5**

καὶ οἴδατε ὅτι ἐκεῖνος ἐφανερώθη ἵνα τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἄρῃ, καὶ ἁμαρτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἐστίν.

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο that (one), he, she, it  
ἐφανερώθη see 2:28; 3:2

Some MSS (e.g. κ C K L Vg, followed by NIV) add ἡμῶν after τὰς ἁμαρτίας. The addition appears to be secondary.

ἄρῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s αἶρω take, take away

Cf. John 1:29; Heb 10:4. "As Westcott (103) says, the thought is not simply that of the self-sacrifice of Jesus, but of the *opposition* to sin which he expressed on the cross. He came to 'abolish' sins, and not only to 'bear' them (cf. 1 Pet 2:24)." Smalley. Cf. the parallel phrase in v.8. Sin opposes Christ's work and his person.

**Verse 6**

πᾶς ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει· πᾶς ὁ ἁμαρτάνων οὐχ ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν οὐδὲ ἔγνωκεν αὐτόν.

ἁμαρτανω sin, commit sin

Cf. 1:6. "It describes a character, 'a prevailing habit' and not primarily an act." Westcott. Cf. Tit 3:11; Heb 10:26. Most commentators understand the present tense as continuous in force, i.e. 'does not make a habit of sinning' (NIV, 'does not keep on sinning'). Marshall, however, prefers to understand the phrase as both an expression of what the Christian is called to be, shall be and therefore now ought to be: he argues that the language is eschatological. John, like Paul, is calling Christians to 'be what they are.'

Schnackenburg adds to this discussion a useful reminder that the eschatological tension between the 'is now' and the 'not yet,' typical of John's theology of salvation, is probably relevant at this point.

It may also be added that the intensity of John's language is shaped by the false claims of his opponents. Smalley expresses this view as follows, "Those who belong to God do right, and do not sin; while those who are children of the devil act wrongly (cf. vv 7-8, 10). The polarity is understandably exaggerated in such a context."

ὄραω see

ἔγνωκεν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s γινώσκω

**Day 1160: 1 John 3:7-10****Verse 7**

Τεκνία, μηδεις πλανάτω ὑμᾶς· ὁ ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην δίκαιός ἐστιν, καθως ἐκεῖνος δίκαιός ἐστιν·

τεκνιον, ου n little child, child  
μηδεις, μηδεμια, μηδεν no one, nothing  
πλαναω lead astray, mislead, deceive

John underlines and repeats the point. His comment 'let no one deceive you' is obviously directed against the heretical secessionists who were causing division in the church (cf. 2:19).

δικαιοσυνη, ης f righteousness  
δικαιος, α, ον righteous

"Righteousness is the sign of divine sonship (2:29). The 'doing righteousness' reveals the character and does not create it. The man who is righteous is recognised by his actions." Westcott. Cf. Matt 7:16 // Luke 6:44.

**Verse 8**

ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ἐκ τοῦ διαβόλου ἐστίν, ὅτι ἀπ' ἀρχῆς ὁ διάβολος ἁμαρτάνει. εἰς τοῦτο ἐφανερωθη ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα λύση τὰ ἔργα τοῦ διαβόλου.

διαβολος, ου m the devil

Cf. 2:16; Jn 8:44

ἀρχη, ης f beginning

"The force of the argument lies in the recognition of the state of things at the first dawn of human history. From the very beginning we see a power in action hostile to God. Between these two, as between light and darkness, there can be no middle term. He who does not belong to one belongs to the other... It will be noticed that as St Paul traces back sin to the act of the typical representative of mankind, Adam (Rom 5:14; 1 Cor 15:22), so St John traces it back yet further to a spiritual origin." Westcott.

λύση Verb, aor act subj, 3 s λυω loose,  
untie, set aside

"The works of the devil' are represented as having a certain consistency, and coherence. They shew a kind of solid front. But Christ by His coming has revealed them in their complete unsubstantiality. He has 'undone' the seeming bonds by which they were held together." Westcott.

Marshall thinks that the term also alludes to the devil's enslavement of mankind.

**Verse 9**

Πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἁμαρτίαν οὐ ποιεῖ, ὅτι σπέρμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ μένει· καὶ οὐ δύναται ἁμαρτάνειν, ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται.

"John concludes this section by reminding his readers that the true child of God is (like the Father himself) opposed to sin. Whereas the determined sinner (the heretic in John's church, perhaps, as opposed to the orthodox Christian) belongs to the devil (v 8), the spiritually reborn believer, being a member of God's family, cannot as a settled policy act lawlessly (cf. v 4). In other words, we reproduce in our lives a 'family' likeness, depending upon our spiritual parentage; and those who are 'born of God' do not sin (cf. vv 7, 8, 10)." Smalley.

γεγεννημένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s  
γενναω bear; pass be born

"The exact form is important. The perfect (ὁ γεγεννημενος) marks not only the single act (aor. ἐγεννηθησαν John 1:13; 5:18) but the continuous presence of its efficacy." Westcott.

σπερμα, τος n seed

"The principle of life which He has given continues to be the ruling principle of the believer's growth. God gives, as it were, of Himself to the Christian. He does not only work upon him and leave him...

"The instrument by which this vital element is conveyed is the 'word': James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23; Luke 8:12,15." Westcott.

Marshall and Smalley argue that the 'seed' is both the word and the Spirit.

δυναμαι can, be able to, be capable of

The presence of God and the presence of sin are incompatible. Smalley cites the new covenant promises of Jer 31:33-34 and Ezek 36:25-27 and concludes, "Against such a background, with which John would have been familiar, we may now understand σπέρμα to mean the word of God which is received in faith by the Christian, and which (through the inward activity of the Spirit) leads to rebirth, and the experience of increasing holiness by living in Jesus."

γεγέννηται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s  
γενναω

**Verse 10**

Smalley argues that v. 10 forms the beginning of a new section (3:10-24 – though he acknowledges it as a bridge verse) whereas Marshall thinks the verse concludes the present section.

**Verse 10**

ἐν τούτῳ φανερά ἐστιν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ  
καὶ τὰ τέκνα τοῦ διαβόλου· πᾶς ὁ μὴ  
ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ,  
καὶ ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ.

φανερος, α, ον known, evident, plain,  
visible

It is possible to determine who are the children of God and the children of the devil by how they live. John writes to encourage the faithful and make clear to them the parentage of the false teachers.

ἀγαπαω love, show love for

"Righteousness involves the fulfilment of all law, of relations to God and to man, both personally and socially. The love of Christian for Christian, resting on the sense of a divine fellowship (1:3) carries forward to its loftiest embodiment the righteousness which man can reach." Westcott.

Smalley writes, "The last phrase in this v clarifies what has been said in v 10a (and, indeed, in the last section), as well as leading into the theme of obedience (= love) which dominates the present passage. The connecting particle καὶ thus carries the sense of 'that is,' or 'namely'."