

**Notes on the Greek New Testament**  
**Day 335 – December 1<sup>st</sup> – 1 John 2:1-17**

**Works frequently referenced in these notes on John's Epistles**

Marshall, I Howard	<i>The Epistles of John</i> , The New International Commentary on the New Testament, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1978
Smalley, Stephen S	<i>1, 2, 3 John</i> , Word Biblical Commentary, Vol 51, Word Books, Dallas, 1984
Stott, John R.W.	<i>Epistles of John</i> , Tyndale Commentary, IVF, London, 1964
Westcott, B.F	<i>The Epistles of St John</i> , MacMillan & Co, Cambridge & London, 1886

**Verse 1**

Τεκνία μου, ταῦτα γράφω ὑμῖν ἵνα μὴ ἀμάρτητε. καὶ ἐάν τις ἀμάρτη, παράκλητον ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν δίκαιον,

τεκνιον, ου n little child, child

A tender form of address.

γράφω write

ἀμάρτητε Verb, aor act subj, 2 pl ἀμαρτανω

Smalley writes, "John's teaching in the preceding vv (1:6–10), with its emphasis on purification and forgiveness, may have been interpreted as an encouragement to be sinful: both by the secessionists, who regarded sin as unimportant anyway (cf. vv 8, 10), and even by some orthodox members of the Johannine community (cf. Rom 6:1). So the writer seizes this chance to call upon all his followers to repudiate sin entirely. John is not suggesting by this the possibility of a completely sinless existence; rather, he is pleading for a renunciation of the disposition toward sinfulness which issues in specific acts of wrongdoing. The use of the aorist subjunctive, ἵνα μὴ ἀμάρτητε, 'in order that you may not sin,' supports this interpretation, since it refers to 'definite acts of sin rather than the habitual state' (Brooke, 23). In other words, John wishes his readers to recognize the fact and seriousness of sin, and also to 'walk in the light' by living, so far as is possible, blamelessly."

παρακλητος, ου m Helper, Intercessor

Cf. John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7.

One aspect of the Advocate's office was foreshadowed by the entrance of the High Priest into the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement (Heb 9:11f.,24; 7:25).

On the intercession of Christ cf. Isa 53:12; Matt 10:32; Lk 22:32; 23:34; Jn 17:11; Rom 8:34. Marshall writes, "We have nothing that we can plead before God to gain forgiveness for our sins, but Jesus acts as our advocate and enters his plea for us."

δικαιος focusses on Christ's perfect humanity which gives efficacy to his advocacy. Cf. 1 Peter 3:18.

**Verse 2**

καὶ αὐτὸς ἰλασμός ἐστιν περὶ τῶν ἀμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου.

John now describes the *basis* for his advocacy.

ἰλασμος, ου m means by which sins are forgiven

Smalley comments, "The term ἰλασμός occurs in the NT only here and at 4:10; although cognate words are used elsewhere: ἰλάσκεσθαι 'to propitiate' or 'to forgive' (cf. Luke 18:13; Heb 2:17); ἰλαστήριον 'propitiation' or 'expiation' (Rom 3:25; Heb 9:5); and ἕλεως, 'propitious' or 'forgiving' (Matt 16:22; Heb 8:12). Exact translation in the case of each of these terms is difficult because of the theological and attendant semantic problems involved."

The term, however, is used in the OT in connection with sacrifices, hence the NIV 'atoning sacrifice'. Smalley writes, "The setting of this language is sacrificial; and to that extent the appearance of ἰλασμός in this verse recapitulates and expands the reference to the 'blood' (αἷμα) of Jesus, which purifies us from every sin, referred to in 1:7b."

On the meaning, see particularly the two chapters on 'Propitiation' (chs 5 & 6) in Leon Morris's *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*.

ἀμαρτια, ας f sin

ἡμετερος, α, ον our

μονον adv only, alone

όλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

The focus here is not on universal atonement but on the largeness of God's saving purpose. Cf. Jn 3:16-17; 4:42.

**Verse 3**

Καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐγνώκαμεν αὐτόν, ἐὰν τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν.

The phrase 'in this' is characteristic of 1 John, cf. 2:5; 3:24; 4:13; 5:2; 3:16; 3:19; 4:2.

γινώσκομεν Here is a test which distinguishes true knowledge of Christ from empty words. Here is how we can be sure of knowing him.

ἐγνώκαμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl  
γινώσκω

Note the perfect = 'we have come to know him' "Knowledge of a person involves sympathy (3:1); and in this particular case involves striving after conformity with Him who is known." Westcott.

" 'Knowledge' of God in the biblical sense is not intellectual and speculative, but experimental and dynamic." Smalley. John presents an answer to the gnostic tendencies of the false teachers. Smalley writes, "Apparently the majority of the secessionists had been attracted by gnosticizing tendencies in some form (see on 1:6). The background to this group, like that of Gnosticism itself, may have been either Greek or Jewish (cf. Col 2:8, 16). But the predominant character of Christians who would have been drawn to such speculative religious thinking in first century Asia Minor is likely to have been Hellenistic, and therefore (in this case) docetic. The error of these people was twofold. Theologically they were pursuing intellectual 'knowledge' for its own sake; and ethically they regarded sin as unimportant. (Gnosticism in any form is seldom concerned with moral behavior; redemption for the gnostic involves a release from ignorance, not sin.) In both respects, the theological and the ethical, John's teaching provides an orthodox counter."

ἐντολή, ης f command, order, instruction  
τηρῶ keep, observe, maintain

The present tense suggests habitual obedience. Obedience is not the *condition* of knowing God but is rather *characteristic* of the knowledge of God. Cf. 2 John 4-6.

**Verse 4**

ὁ λέγων ὅτι Ἔγνοκα αὐτόν καὶ τὰς ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ μὴ τηρῶν ψεύστης ἐστίν, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἐστίν·

This is the first of three claims John examines, cf. vv. 6, 9. Each claim is linked with a test. On this verse, cf. John 17:3 and Matt 7:21.

ἔγνοκα Verb, perf act ind, 1 s γινώσκω  
ψεύστης, ους m see 1:10  
ἀλήθεια, ας f truth, reality

"The truth is said to be in a man as an active principle within him regulating his thoughts and judgements (1:8; John 8:44; comp John 8:32); and again a man is said to be in the truth, as a sphere in which he moves (2 John 4; 3 John 3,4; John 8:44; comp John 17:17)." Westcott.

**Verse 5**

ὃς δ' ἂν τηρῇ αὐτοῦ τὸν λόγον, ἀληθῶς ἐν τούτῳ ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ τετελείωται. ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ ἐσμεν·

ἀληθῶς adv truly, in truth

"The phrase, which occurs in the Epistle first here and henceforth throughout it, is ambiguous and may mean, according as the genitive is taken *subj.* or *obj.*, either (i) the love which God shews [the undoubted meaning in 4:9], or (ii) the love of which God is the object [the probable meaning in 2:15 and 5:3]. It may also mean more generally (iii) the love which is characteristic of God whether it is shewn by God or by man through His help. Generally the genitive after ἀγάπη in the NT is *subj.*, and defines those who feel or shew love...

"It appears therefore most probable that the fundamental idea of 'the love of God' in St John is 'the love which God has made known, and which answers to his nature'. This love communicated to man is effective in him towards the brethren and towards God Himself. But however it may be manifested the essential conception that it is a love divine in its origin and character is not lost. Comp. John 15:9f." Westcott.

Marshall argues that in the context of obedience the primary thought is love *for* God. Love for God finds its proper end in glad obedience.

Smalley thinks that a sharp distinction should not be drawn between the objective and subjective senses. He writes, " 'Love' in John defines the nature and activity of God (4:8–9; cf. John 3:16), describes the way in which men turn to him (4:16; cf. John 14:21), and – being grounded in God's own love – should determine the (loving) relationship of believers to each other (4:21; cf. John 13:34). The verb τελειόω (literally, 'to perfect') here (ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ τετελείωται, 'God's love has really reached fulfillment') may have been selected by John deliberately, to balance speculative gnostic claims to 'perfection' with a reference to Christian *certainties*. The perfect passive τετελείωται ('has reached fulfillment') has the force of a present tense: in other words, the process of fulfillment has already begun. For the use of τελειόω in John, to mean (ongoing) fulfillment rather than (static) termination, see 4:12, 17–18 (note the adjective τέλειος, 'complete,' in 4:18; also John 4:34; 5:36; 17:4; 23 (19:30). Cf. further Matt 5:48 (using τέλειος)."

τετελείωται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s τελεω complete, finish, fulfill

### Verse 6

ὁ λέγων ἐν αὐτῷ μένειν ὀφείλει καθὼς ἐκεῖνος περιπατήσεν καὶ αὐτὸς περιπατεῖν.

"The sign of union with God is found in the imitation of Christ." Westcott.

μενω remain, stay, abide

Cf. John 15:4ff. The verb "presupposes an intimate and committed relationship with him [God], through Jesus, which is both permanent and continuous." Smalley.

ὀφείλω owe, ought, must, be obligated  
ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that (one)

'even as he', i.e. Christ.

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

Cf. 1:6.

οὕτως thus, in this way

Some MSS (including C) include οὕτως. Because of its resemblance to αὐτός the word may have been dropped (as by A B Vg, et al); but the probability is that it was introduced later, perhaps to balance καθως.

"The pattern of Christ, as set before us in the New Testament, is in every case a pattern of humiliation, suffering, sacrifice. Comp Matt 11:29; John 13:15; Rom 15:2f.; Eph 5:1ff.; Phil 2:5ff.; 1 Pet 2:21; Heb 12:2." Westcott.

Marshall comments, "John can assume that his readers were familiar with the picture of one who 'went about doing good' (Acts 10:38), although he gives no concrete description of the life of Jesus in his Epistle."

### Verse 7

Ἀγαπητοί, οὐκ ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω ὑμῖν, ἀλλ' ἐντολὴν παλαιὰν ἣν εἶχετε ἀπ' ἀρχῆς· ἡ ἐντολὴ ἣ παλαιὰ ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος ὃν ἠκούσατε.

ἀγαπητος, η, ον beloved

Some MSS, followed by TR, read ἀδελφοί rather than ἀγαπητοί. Smalley comments, "The address ἀγαπητοί arises naturally from the context here; and it is characteristic of John's style (he uses ἀδελφοί only at 3:13)." He adds, "The fact that Paul also uses this expression (cf. Rom 12:19; 2 Cor 7:1) indicates that it was apparently a common form of homiletical address in early Christianity."

ἐντολη, ης f see v3

καινος, η, ον new

Cf. Jn 13:34. The commandment to love.

γραφω write

παλαιος, α, ον old, former

εἶχετε Verb, imperf act indic, 2 pl ἔχω

ἀρχη, ης f see 1:1

Westcott thinks that 'old' here means a commandment that *these believers* have heard from the beginning – from their first hearing of the gospel. He sums up the contrast with the following verse thus: "The commandment, which is the rule of the Christian Life, is as old as the first message of the Gospel and yet as new as the latest realisation of its power. It lies included in what we first hear, and is illuminated by the growing experience of life." However, it may be better to understand it of a command of God which has been there from the beginning of his revelation but which is now revealed in a new way in Christ. The thought is then similar to that in the opening verses of the letter.

After ἠκούσατε a number of MSS add ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, clearly in imitation of the phrase earlier in the verse.

### Verse 8

πάλιν ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω ὑμῖν, ὃ ἐστὶν ἀληθὲς ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ἡ σκοτία παράγεται καὶ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ἤδη φαίνει.

πάλιν again, once more

ἀληθης, ες true, truthful, genuine

ὁ ἐστὶν ἀληθὲς – 'this is realised'. That commandment has been realised or made concrete in the life of Christ himself and is being realized in the life of the Christians to whom John wrote. Marshall comments, "It remains new in that it remains true and is continually being realised and actualised in the life of Jesus and his followers in the new age."

Some few MSS read ἐν ἡμῖν in place of ἐν ὑμῖν.

σκοτία, ας f darkness  
 παραγω pass by, pass on; pass. (and sometimes active) pass away, disappear  
 φως, φωτος n light  
 ἀληθινος, η, ον real, genuine, true  
 ἤδη adv now, already  
 φαινω shine, give light

Cf. Jn 1:5,9; 8:12; 12:35-36. "Before the Incarnation 'the Word,' 'the true Light' was ever 'coming into the world.' Now by the mission of the Holy Spirit, sent in His name, He was shining with a steady beam. The darkness had not eclipsed it. In the Christian Society, seen in the midst of the world, there was an evident manifestation of the light defining the lines of Christian conduct." Westcott.

Marshall comments, "The newness of the commandment lies in the fact that it is being fulfilled in a way that had not happened previously. To put it differently, the darkness of the old age, in which men did not love in this sort of way, is disappearing, and the light of the new age, in which Christian love is shown, is already shining." This is τὸ ἀληθινὸν – the real thing.

### Verse 9

ὁ λέγων ἐν τῷ φωτὶ εἶναι καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ μισῶν ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστὶν ἕως ἄρτι.

Smalley comments, "The believer who 'exists (εἶναι, 'to be,' constantly) in the light' shares the life of God in Christ; he must also meet the daily challenge, as well as the opportunity, to develop in Christian character and (loving) conduct (cf. v 10; also John 11:9-10, and the description of the believer as 'the light of the world' in Matt 5:14; note further Eph 5:8; Phil 2:15)."

μισεω hate, despise, be indifferent to

The sense here is 'fails to love'. John leaves no room for middle ground.

ἀδελφον = fellow Christian – "those who are united together in Christ to God as their Father (Jn 20:17; 21:23)." Westcott.

ἕως conj until, while

ἄρτι now, at the present

### Verse 10

ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ μένει, καὶ σκάνδαλον ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν.

ἀγαπαω love, show love for  
 μενω remain, stay, abide

Not a momentary state but a general and continuing mode of life.

σκάνδαλον, ου n that which causes sin/offence, obstacle

Westcott says, "It is at first sight doubtful whether the occasion of *stumbling* is that which may be in the way of others or in the way of the believer himself. A man may cause others to fall through want of love or he may by the same defect create difficulties in his own path." Westcott suggests that the ambiguity is deliberate and that both senses may be included. Smalley also thinks that both meaning may be encompassed in John's words. Marshall thinks the sense is that nothing will make him (the one loving his brother) to stumble. "The person who loves his brother is not going to succumb to temptation because he has his principles right and will not be deflected from them by the attractions of a self-centred existence; he recognises temptation for what it is and says 'No' to it." Thus the last phrase is parallel to remaining in the light – he sees clearly where he is going, cf. John 11:9.

### Verse 11

ὁ δὲ μισῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ ἐστὶν καὶ ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ περιπατεῖ, καὶ οὐκ οἶδεν ποῦ ὑπάγει, ὅτι ἡ σκοτία ἐτύφλωσεν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτοῦ.

περιπατεω walk, walk about, live

"Lack of love implies lack of God." Smalley.

οἶδα know, understand

Such a person has lost his way.

ποῦ interrogative adverb where

ὑπαγω go

"On the other hand that which was true of Christ (John 8:12; 13:3) is true also of the believer (comp. John 14:4,5). He knows what is the end of life." Westcott.

τυφλωω blind, make blind

**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 ἀφέωνται 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."

ἀφέωνται 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 ἀπ' 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 (παῖδια), 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 ἀπ' 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 ἀπ' 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 ἀπ' 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, παῖδια, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα· ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς· ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι ἰσχυροὶ ἐστε καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν μένει καὶ νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρὸν.

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.

παῖδιον, 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, ἀλλὰ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστίν·

ἐπιθυμία, 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.

ἀλαζονεία, ας f pride, arrogance

βίος, 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.

παρᾶγω 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.