

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 339 – December 5th – 1 John 5:1-21

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

Πᾶς ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται, καὶ πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν γεννήσαντα ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν γεγεννημένον ἐξ αὐτοῦ.

γεγέννηται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γενναῶ
be father of, bear; pass be born

The perfect tense indicates the present state of the believer. Marshall comments, "Faith is thus a sign of the new birth, just as love (4:7) and doing what is right (2:29; 3:9f.) are also indications that a person has been born of God." And Smalley comments, "The regenerate Christian (past) must constantly live out (present) his faith in Jesus as Messiah, and also give his sustained allegiance to the love command."

γεννήσαντα Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s
γενναῶ

καὶ is included by ⳨A K P Vg^{cl} cop^{bo}, et al., but omitted by B Ψ Vg^{ww} cop^{sa}, et al.. There is no certainty about the original reading from the MS evidence; but in this context the addition of an intensive enclitic ('also loves') is entirely appropriate.

γεγεννημένον Verb, perf pass ptc, m acc & n
nom/acc s γενναῶ

Augustine thought that the reference here is to Christ, but this does not fit the context. It is possible that the meaning is that 'Anyone who loves *his own* parent should also love other children of his parents.'

Verse 2

ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι ἀγαπῶμεν τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὅταν τὸν θεὸν ἀγαπῶμεν καὶ τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ ποιῶμεν.

Marshall argues that the train of thought in this verse demands that ἀγαπῶμεν here be understood as 'we ought to love.' Smalley disagrees – see below.

τεκνον, ου n child
ὅταν when, whenever
ἐντολη, ης f see 4:21

Love for one another is one of the central commands of God. "The one commandment of God (ἡ ἐντολή) is that we believe the Name of His Son and love one another." Westcott. Smalley cites Westcott and says, "We know that we love God's children when we love God.' John is then saying once more that love of others (including God's offspring) is grounded in the love of God (see 4:8, 16, 19...). The two loves are inseparable (4:12); we are to love others in God, and God in others. Moreover, when we love God truly we shall want to obey his orders, which are in any case summed up in the command to love other people (3:11; 4:7, 21). Thus we can recognize that we love God's children properly by loving God himself obediently."

Some MSS, including ⳨ K L P TR, read τηρῶμεν in place of ποιῶμεν. This would seem to reflect an attempt to conform the text to the more normal phrase. The expression τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ ποιῶμεν occurs nowhere else in the NT. Westcott suggests that the use of ποιῶ suggests the active and positive 'energy of obedience'.

Verse 3

αὕτη γὰρ ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ ἵνα τὰς ἐντολάς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν, καὶ αἱ ἐντολαὶ αὐτοῦ βαρεῖαι οὐκ εἰσὶν,

τηρεῶ keep, observe

"A continuous and watchful endeavour to observe them." Westcott.

βαρυσ, εια, υ heavy, hard, difficult

Cf. Matt 11:30; 23:4. Smalley comments, "When John claims that God's commands are not 'burdensome' (βαρεῖαι), he means that they are not oppressive, so as to crush the freedom and spontaneity of love (he will show *why* they are not thus oppressive in v 4)."

Verse 4

ὅτι πᾶν τὸ γεγεννημένον ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ νικᾷ τὸν κόσμον. καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ νίκη ἢ νικήσασα τὸν κόσμον, ἢ πίστις ἡμῶν·

ὅτι "The fact that the divine commandments are not a burden is not established by a consideration of their character. In themselves they are difficult (Acts 14:22; John 16:33). To love the brethren is not a light thing. But with the commandment comes also the power of fulfilment. Natural taste, feeling, judgement may check spiritual sympathy; but every faculty and power which is quickened by God is essentially stronger than 'the world' and realises its victory at once." Westcott.

γεγεννημένον see v.2

νικᾷ Verb, pres act indic, 3 s νικᾶω
conquer, overcome

"A struggle which is present and continuous... Under the title 'the world' St John gathers up the sum of all the limited, transitory powers opposed to God which make obedience difficult." Westcott.

νίκη, ης f victory

Occurs here only in the New Testament.

νικήσασα Verb, aor act ptc, f nom s νικᾶω
πίστις, εως f faith, trust, belief

Faith forms a vital link with Christ who has gained this victory. Marshall comments, "The fact that we hold the true faith from our hearts is the means whereby the power of the new world operates in us and enables us to overcome the world. It is striking that John says that we *have* overcome the world. Perhaps he is thinking of the completed victory of Jesus (Jn 16:33) which repeats itself in the life of the Christian."

Verse 5

τίς δέ ἐστιν ὁ νικῶν τὸν κόσμον εἰ μὴ ὁ πιστεύων ὅτι Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ;

To the words τίς ἐστιν, read by A L Vg et al., some mss (including \aleph B K P syr^{hcl}) add δέ. Such a particle is likely to have been dropped from the text, rather than added to it; but equally the connection between v 5 and its predecessor is not so close that an enclitic becomes indispensable. The measure of doubt surrounding the origin of δέ is reflected in the UBS text, where it is enclosed in square brackets.

Verse 5 forms a bridge between vv 1-4 and the verses that follow.

Smalley comments, "The shift from confessing Jesus as 'Christ' (5:1), to accepting him as 'Son of God' in this verse, is paralleled at 2:22–23. It may be that for John both titles indicated the exalted status of Jesus, with little basic difference in meaning between them. As Son of God and Messiah, Jesus is intimately related to the Father (cf. John 13:3). However, the title 'Son of God' is perhaps especially appropriate in the present context because John is thinking of 'the power of God revealed in his Son, Jesus' (Marshall...). God's Son shares God's power, which is greater than that of the devil (cf. 4:4). Thus the believer can draw on the resources which are in God, through his Son, in order to 'conquer the world'; and in this way the temptation to adopt a worldly attitude, and to be allied with worldly desires (cf. 2:17), can be overcome. Right belief leads to right behaviour (cf. 5:1–4)."

Verse 6

Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἐλθὼν δι' ὕδατος καὶ αἵματος, Ἰησοῦς Χριστός· οὐκ ἐν τῷ ὕδατι μόνον ἀλλ' ἐν τῷ ὕδατι καὶ ἐν τῷ αἵματι· καὶ τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν τὸ μαρτυροῦν, ὅτι τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἡ ἀλήθεια.

ἐλθὼν Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ἐρχομαι
ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

Instead of καὶ αἵματος, which is read by B K L Ψ Vg syr^p, et al., a number of mss (including 43 241 Ambrose) have καὶ πνεύματος. Other witnesses add καὶ πνεύματος to the text, either before the word αἵματος (e.g. P 81 88 arm [eth]) or after it (e.g. \aleph A syr^{hcl} cop^{sa,bo}). Some authorities (including 39 61) fill out the addition by appending ἅγιον το πνεύματος. These additions were probably introduced by copyists who recalled John 3:5 where Jesus speaks of birth 'from water and the Spirit'.

Suggests Jesus' baptism and his death, though Westcott sees in this a reference also to the water and the blood which John records as issuing from Jesus' side on the cross (Jn 19:34). Blood symbolises his life given as a sacrifice for others. Water symbolises the spiritual life (Jn 3:5; 4:14; 7:38).

μονον adv only, alone

Marshall comments, "The reason why John emphasised these two events in the life of Jesus is seen in the second part of the verse where he stresses that Jesus did not come by water only but by water and blood. If we read, as it were, between the lines, it is not hard to guess that John's opponents accepted that Jesus Christ came by water but not by blood. We have already seen who these opponents were (see 2 Jn 7; 1 Jn 2:22 ...). They were people who held that the heavenly Christ descended upon Jesus at his baptism but withdrew from him before his death, so that it was only the earthly Jesus who died and not the heavenly Christ. Over against this heresy John emphasised that it was Jesus Christ – not simply a human Jesus – who experienced both baptism and crucifixion."

Smalley comments, "Historically Jesus 'came' into his power and authority by the 'water' of his baptism, at which point he was declared to be God's Son (Mark 1:11; John 1:34); and he 'came' into his power and authority in an even more ultimate sense by the 'blood' of his cross, a moment which the fourth evangelist describes as the 'glorification' of Christ (John 17:1). Cf. 4:2."

μαρτυρεω bear witness, testify
ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

Marshall comments, "Since he refers to the Spirit's activity in the present tense, the most obvious interpretation is that the Spirit presently testifies to us, in our inward hearts or through the preaching of the Word, that the baptism and death of Jesus point to his being the Christ and Son of God."

Smalley adds, "As in vv 7–9, the theology of v 6 is fully trinitarian. John speaks of Jesus, God's Son, who came (from God) by water and blood, and to whom the Spirit bears witness."

Verse 7

ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες,

τρεῖς, τρια gen τριων dat τρισιν three

The present tense suggests a continuing witness.

Verse 8

τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα, καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν.

"The Spirit is the sign of the glory of the Risen Christ; John 7:39; 16:7; Acts 2:32f. Thus the Spirit, with the Water and the Blood, completes the witness to the Incarnation as a Fact no less than as an open source of blessing." Westcott.

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one

Marshall comments, "The implication of this last remark is that their witness stands or falls together; a person cannot claim that he is accepting the witness of the Spirit if he rejects the witness of the water and the blood to the character of Jesus."

Both Marshall and Smalley argue that 'water and blood' refer, as in v. 6, to Jesus' baptism and death – not, as some argue, to the sacraments. Smalley writes, "The basic subject in this part of 1 John is the need to keep faith in the revelation of God centered historically in Jesus (see the comment on v 6). The witness to this is provided above all by the Spirit who descended on Jesus at his baptism (John 1:32), and whom he gave to his disciples when, after his glorification on the cross (John 19:30; cf. 7:39), he empowered them for their mission (John 20:22 cf. 15:26–27). In each case the testimony of the Spirit himself is fundamental, and this is why he is called *first* as a witness here."

Verses 7-8 Textual Note

The short reading reproduced above is supported by the vast majority of mss., including the Byzantine. A longer reading is to be found in the Textus Receptus which appears to have been incorporated from the Latin versions, namely:

ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ πατήρ, ὁ λόγος, καὶ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα· καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἐν εἰσι. καὶ τρεῖς εἰσιν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν τῇ γῇ, τὸ πνεῦμα καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ καὶ τὸ αἷμα, καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἓν εἰσιν.

This longer reading is clearly an addition to the original text and may have arisen by a marginal scribal note having subsequently been incorporated into the text.

Verse 9

εἰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν τῶν ἀνθρώπων λαμβάνομεν, ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ θεοῦ μείζων ἐστίν, ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ θεοῦ ὅτι μεμαρτύρηκεν περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ.

μαρτυρια, ας f testimony, witness

Even in the human arena the testimony of three witnesses should be accepted. Cf. John 5:36-37.

μείζων, ον greater

The perfect tense suggests a historical testimony – the testimony of God at Jesus' baptism and concerning his death.

Verse 10

ὁ πιστεύων εἰς τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἔχει τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἐν αὐτῷ· ὁ μὴ πιστεύων τῷ θεῷ ψεύστην πεποίηκεν αὐτόν, ὅτι οὐ πεπίστευκεν εἰς τὴν μαρτυρίαν ἣν μεμαρτύρηκεν ὁ θεὸς περὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ.

ἑαυτος, ἑαυτη, ἑαυτον him/herself, itself

"That which for others is external is for the believer experimental. The witness of the Spirit and water and blood becomes an inner conviction of the life and cleansing and redemption." Westcott.

"To believe in the Son of God is to accept and keep God's testimony." Marshall. Smalley adds, "The inward witness of God's Spirit shows the Christian that he was right to believe in Jesus; and this 'internal testimony' (of the Spirit) balances and complements the external and historical witness of the 'water and blood,' the baptism and death of Jesus, which marked the limits of his earthly ministry (vv 6–8). Christian believing is subjective in character, but its origins are ultimately objective."

ψευστης, ου m liar

Cf. 1:10; 2:4, 22; 4:20

Verse 11

καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία, ὅτι ζωὴν αἰώνιον ἔδωκεν ὁ θεὸς ἡμῖν, καὶ αὕτη ἡ ζωὴ ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ ἐστίν.

ζωη, ης f life

αἰωνιος, ον eternal, everlasting

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δίδωμι

"The reference is to the historic facts by which this life was communicated to humanity." Westcott.

Verse 12

ὁ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν ἔχει τὴν ζωὴν· ὁ μὴ ἔχων τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν ζωὴν οὐκ ἔχει.

Cf. Jn. 3:16-18; 14:6. Smalley comments, "So absolutely is eternal life available to the believer in and through Jesus, the Christ and Son of God, as John has claimed in v 11, that to possess the Son is to have 'life' in its completeness. The reverse is equally true... As in vv 11 and 13 John's theology includes an exclusive note. It is *only* through Jesus Christ that God's life may be shared by believers... A practical call to decision is also implicit. Life-giving faith is possible, and therefore it should be exercised and maintained!"

Verse 13

Ταῦτα ἔγραψα ὑμῖν ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ.

Commences the epilogue. Cf. John 20:31.

γραφω write

Cf. 1:3,4.

After ὑμῖν, TR, following K L P et al. and most minuscules, reads τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα εἰδῆτε ὅτι ζωὴν ἔχετε αἰώνιον, καὶ ἵνα πιστεύητε εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ. It is possible that the longer reading (as in TR) was original, and that it was subsequently contracted in order to avoid the repetition of τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ... ἵνα πιστεύητε. But it is much more likely that the extended variant is secondary. It probably represents an attempt to straighten out the slightly awkward order of the clauses in this verse, together with a scribal assimilation to the statement in John 20:31.

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

Cf 2:29; 3:14. Eternal life may be possessed without having assurance of such possession.

ὄνομα, τος n name

Cf. 3:23. An afterthought, describing the character of those addressed.

John's primary purpose in writing was "not to persuade unbelievers of the truth of the Christian faith but rather to strengthen Christian believers who might be tempted to doubt the reality of their Christian experience and to give up their faith in Jesus." Marshall. The subject of the following verses is therefore confidence.

Verse 14

καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ παρρησία ἣν ἔχομεν πρὸς αὐτόν, ὅτι ἐάν τι αἰτώμεθα κατὰ τὸ θέλημα αὐτοῦ ἀκούει ἡμῶν.

"One important result of the believer's assurance of eternal life is that he can have confidence and boldness in relation to God. In particular this applies to the situation of making requests to God in prayer." Marshall.

παρρησια, ας f boldness, assurance

Cf. 2:28 and Heb 4:16.

αἰτεω ask, request

θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

Cf. 1 Pet 4:19; Gal 1:4; Eph 1:5,11 and Jn 15:7. Marshall comments, "It is as we freely yield ourselves to God that he is able to accomplish his will through us and our prayers. In a very real sense, therefore, the accomplishment of God's will in the world does depend on our prayers. Through prayer we make ourselves instruments of God's will, and at the same time, in a manner that lies beyond human comprehension, he is able to act powerfully to answer our prayers. When we learn to want what God wants, we have the joy of receiving his answers to our petitions."

Verse 15

καὶ ἐὰν οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἀκούει ἡμῶν ὁ ἐὰν αἰτώμεθα, οἴδαμεν ὅτι ἔχομεν τὰ αἰτήματα ἃ ἠτήκαμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ.

αἴτημα, τος n request, demand

Cf. Phil 4:6; Lk 23:24.

ἠτήκαμεν Verb, perf act indic, 1 pl αἰτέω

Cf. Mk 11:24.

Verse 16

ἐὰν τις ἴδῃ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ ἁμαρτάνοντα ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον, αἰτήσῃ, καὶ δώσει αὐτῷ ζωὴν, τοῖς ἁμαρτάνουσιν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον. ἔστιν ἁμαρτία πρὸς θάνατον· οὐ περὶ ἐκείνης λέγω ἵνα ἐρωτήσῃ.

"That boldness of access to God, which finds expression in prayer, finds its most characteristic expression in intercessory prayer." Westcott.

ἴδῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ὄραω see

ἁμαρτανῶ sin, commit sin

ἁμαρτία, ας f sin

θανάτος, ου m death

All sin causes separation from God and tends to death. The sin which is *unto death* may be the sin of utter rejection of Christ. John does not say that we may not pray for such a person, but such prayer is not dealt with here nor is it prayer to which this promise may be attached.

So, for instance, Smalley, following Marshall, writes, "On the basis of the teaching in 1 John itself ... we may argue ... that 'sin leading to death' alludes to such wrongdoing as is incompatible with walking in the light and living as a child of God. Against such behaviour John has been warning his readers throughout this letter, by showing them the conditions for a truly Christian existence: renunciation of sin, obedience to the love command, rejection of worldliness, and maintenance of the faith. A deliberate refusal to fulfill those conditions leads to the very opposite of light and life; it must end in darkness and death. Those who choose such a path are committing an unpardonable sin (cf. Mark 3:28–29 = Matt 12:31–32 = Luke 12:10); and by their basic denial of Jesus, and their lack of love, they are risking God's denial of them (2:22–23; 3:10–15; cf. Mark 8:38 par.). Deliberate sin of this kind leads inevitably to apostasy, a removal from the Church which is evidence of the presence and spirit of antichrist (cf. 2:18–19; 4:2–5).

"Sin which does *not* lead to death, on the other hand, is still possible for believers. They may genuinely have faith in God through Christ, and seek to love their fellow men and women; but they may also find that on occasions the battle is too strong, and that they yield to temptation. Such error is not a deliberate turning away from God, but the kind of inadvertent wrongdoing to which John refers elsewhere in his letter, and for which God's grace has made provision (2:1–2; 4:10)."

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that (one)

ἐρωτήσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s ἐρωτάω

ask, request

Verse 17

πᾶσα ἀδικία ἁμαρτία ἐστίν, καὶ ἔστιν ἁμαρτία οὐ πρὸς θάνατον.

ἀδικία, ας f wrongdoing, evil, sin

Cf. 3:4.

Verse 18

Οἶδαμεν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ γεγεννημένος ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει, ἀλλ' ὁ γεννηθεὶς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ τηρεῖ αὐτόν, καὶ ὁ πονηρὸς οὐχ ἄπτεται αὐτοῦ.

Marshall comments, "He takes up his keyword from verse 13: 'I write these things to you ... so that you may know.' In a series of three affirmations he declares the content of this Christian knowledge which should characterise his readers. It may be significant that the Greek word which he uses expresses a state of knowledge rather than the action of coming to know something. John is declaring what he and his fellow Christians know for certain, and his readers ought to be able to include themselves in the number of those whose Christian faith is a matter of certainty and assurance."

γεγεννημένος see v.1

The perfect participle suggests the abiding results of regeneration.

"While St John states this without reserve he yet recognises 'the brother' – brother as son of the one Father – 'sinning a sin not unto death' (v.16). The paradox remains unsolved." Westcott.

Marshall, referring back to 3:6 and 9, comments, "We saw that it describes the eschatological reality which should characterise the life of the child of God. It is, therefore, all the more significant that John's affirmation follows directly upon his warning about the need to pray for brothers who fall into sin... His statement that the child of God does not sin is at once a promise and a demand."

τηρεῶ keep, observe, maintain

Here the reference must be to Christ, the one born of God who keeps the believer. Marshall comments, "He will face satanic attacks and temptations, but he is defended by One who is stronger than Satan." Cf. John 17:12; also vv 11,15; Rev 3:10. Note also 1 Peter 1:5; Jude 24. Smalley comments, "Sin is a present and serious reality for all believers; but through Christ it may be overcome."

Of the αὐτόν in τηρεῖ αὐτόν Smalley writes, "If ὁ γεννηθεὶς is taken as a reference to Jesus, the reading αὐτόν ('him'), supported by A* B 330 614 it^f Vg syr^{hcl} cop^{bo}, et al., is to be preferred. Copyists who understood ὁ γεννηθεὶς as referring to the Christian naturally adopted the reflexive ἐαυτόν ('himself'), as in ΔA^c K P Ψ 33 81 1739, et al. The MS testimony is weighty on both sides; but John's use elsewhere of ὁ γεννημένος (never ὁ γεννηθεὶς) for the believer (cf. 3:9; v 18a; see also John 3:6) probably means that, quite apart from other evidence, αὐτόν is likely to be original. Furthermore, the use of the reflexive ('himself') appears to demand some explanation of that from which the Christian 'keeps' himself (as in 2 Cor 11:9; James 1:27)."

πονηρὸς, α, ον evil, bad, wicked
ἀπτω midd. take hold of

Verse 19

οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος ὅλος ἐν τῷ πονηρῷ κεῖται.

ὅλος, η, ον whole, all, complete, entire

Westcott compares the word order, ὅλος ὁ κοσμος in 2:2 and suggests that the meaning here is, "the world, the organisation of society as alien from and opposed to God, is wholly, in all its parts and elements, placed in the domain of..." The two thoughts of the world, and of the entirety of it, are given separately. The same form occurs Matt 16:26 and parallels." Westcott.

κεῖται lie, be laid; be exist

κεῖται suggests helpless passivity. Smalley comments, "Although the whole world lies at the moment in the power of the evil one, victory over the world and its evil is at hand (5:4–5), since Jesus is himself the offering for the sins of the whole world (2:2)."

Verse 20

οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἦκει, καὶ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν διάνοιαν ἵνα γινώσκωμεν τὸν ἀληθινόν· καὶ ἐσμέν ἐν τῷ ἀληθινῷ, ἐν τῷ υἱῷ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστῷ. οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεὸς καὶ ζωὴ αἰώνιος.

How can a world lying under the power of the evil one be redeemed? John gives us the answer by reminding us that Jesus, God's Son, has come into the world.

ἦκω come, have come, be present

After $\tau\iota\ \acute{\omicron}\ \upsilon\iota\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \tau\omicron\upsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omicron\upsilon\ \eta\kappa\epsilon\iota$ several Latin authorities (including Vg^{ms} Julianus of Toledo) add *et carnem induit nostri causa et passus est et resurrexit a mortuis; adsumpsit nos* ('[The Son of God has come] and was clothed with flesh for our sake, and suffered, and rose again from the dead; he adopted us...'). But this is clearly a doctrinal expansion; and it has no support from Greek witnesses.

$\delta\acute{\epsilon}\delta\omicron\kappa\epsilon\nu$ Verb, perf act indic, 3 s $\delta\iota\delta\omicron\mu\iota$
 $\delta\iota\alpha\nu\omicron\iota\alpha$ mind, thought, understanding
 $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\iota\nu\omicron\varsigma, \eta, \omicron\nu$ real, genuine, true

After $\tau\omicron\nu\ \acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\iota\nu\acute{\omicron}\nu$ a number of later witnesses added $\theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\nu$.

Smalley comments, "To make his non-gnostic position clear in the present context, moreover, the writer goes on to say that true believers are given insight "to know *him* who is the truth" (rather than simply "the truth"). The object of spiritual knowledge is personal, not abstract... The knowledge of God as the real God, to which the OT writers refer (e.g. 1 Sam 3:7; Jer 24:7; 31:34), is fully realized and revealed in Jesus Christ, to whom in the NT the adjective $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\iota\nu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ is also attributed (John 15:1; Rev 3:7; cf. also 2:8b; John 1:9; 4:23; Rev 3:14)."

$\kappa\alpha\iota\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\mu\acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \tau\tilde{\omega}\ \acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\iota\nu\tilde{\omega},\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \tau\tilde{\omega}\ \upsilon\iota\tilde{\omega}\ \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon\ \text{'}\eta\sigma\omicron\upsilon\ \chi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\tilde{\omega}$ cf. 5:11. Smalley comments, "We are in God and share fellowship with him inasmuch as, or because, we are in Christ... Jesus mediates both the knowledge of God and the possibility of intimate spiritual communion with him."

$\omicron\upsilon\tilde{\tau}\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \acute{\epsilon}\sigma\tau\iota\nu\ \acute{\omicron}\ \acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\iota\nu\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma\ \kappa\alpha\iota\ \zeta\omega\eta\ \alpha\iota\omega\nu\iota\omicron\varsigma$
 "Here, as in the Gospel (Jn 1:1; 20:28; cf. 1:18 NIV mg.), John declares that Jesus is the true God." Marshall.

Smalley, however, writes, "The most natural way of construing $\omicron\upsilon\tilde{\tau}\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ in v 20 ... is to take it as a reference to God: the God whom we recognize as genuine through the insight given us by his Son, and with whom we are in fellowship through Jesus Christ. '*This is the real God.*' It is precisely through knowing him, as the Gospel (17:3) maintains, that eternal life itself becomes a reality."

Verse 21

$\text{Τεκνία, φυλάξατε ἑαυτὰ ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων.}$

$\tau\epsilon\kappa\nu\iota\omicron\nu, \omicron\nu$ n little child, child

$\phi\upsilon\lambda\acute{\alpha}\xi\alpha\tau\epsilon$ Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl

$\phi\upsilon\lambda\alpha\sigma\sigma\omega$ keep, guard, defend

Cf. Jude 21

$\epsilon\iota\delta\omega\lambda\omicron\nu, \omicron\nu$ n idol

From false devotion – from anything which occupies the place due to God alone. "John urges his readers to have nothing to do with false ideas of God and the sins that go with them." Marshall. Smalley paraphrases it, "Avoid the sham, John warns, and keep to the genuine (of which I have spoken)!" Cf. Ezek 14:4 for a similar use of 'idols'.

Some texts (among them K L P 81 614) include the word $\acute{\alpha}\mu\eta\nu$ at the end of the verse. This was a common liturgical addition.