

1 John Series

Charles Clough

www.bibleframework.org

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The Purpose: Starting to Resist the Cosmos with Confidence in the Spirit's Work

I. Review & Introduction:

1:1–4	Prologue—call to sharing eternal life with God through the apostles
1:5–2:11	Preamble—daily interacting with the Triune God
	1:5–2:2 fellowship with God the Father at His Holy Integrity
	2:3–8 fellowship with God the Son at His commandments
	2:9–11 fellowship with God the Holy Spirit at His work in believers
2:12–27	Purpose—call to resist the doomed world system and its Christ-denying teachers
	2:12–14 resistance begins with confidence in the Spirit's work in one's life
	2:15–17 resistance utilizes the strategic envelopment of the world system being accomplished by the Father
	2:18–27 resistance adheres to the Spirit-confirmed, once-for-all time apostolic doctrine that renders innovation unnecessary and contradictory

Eternal life refers to the inter-personal relationship of the Trinity that was revealed for the first time in history with the Incarnation and is being passed along through apostolic teaching.

Fellowship with God is fellowship with His triune nature:

Fellowship with the Father focuses upon His Holy Integrity (righteousness + justice)

involves keeping compatible with His nature = awareness of our offending it & recovering by utilizing His gracious protocols (confession without vows)

Fellowship with the Son focuses upon His authoritative revelation (His words = Father's words)

involves honoring His teaching as the true Enlightenment in how we live so we walk as He walked (read the Gospel narratives)

Fellowship with the Holy Spirit focuses upon His work in members of the Body (other believers)

involves caring for His work in other believers' lives in a dark world

II. Purpose of this epistle (2:12–27)

Situation: fellowship with God *is being threatened*. Apparently certain teachers had departed from the commandments of Jesus to the apostles and other disciples and were trying to extend their influence into the churches this epistle would be read to.

We must operate from a position of strength that was given by the teachings of Jesus (2:12–14)

Observational questions:

(1) what do the 3 classes of people in this section of the epistle refer to?

(2) why repeat the 3 addressees?

2:12 little children (Gk: *teknia*)

Three stages of maturity?

Or three viewpoints of fellowship?

because the sins have been forgiven (perf) you on account of His name

familiar family dynamic; these truths are those of **1:5–2:2**, relationship with the Father!

2:13a fathers . . . have known (perf) Him who is from the beginning

“Him who is from the beginning” > **John 1:1–2** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.” Here the believers are reminded that they have come to the Creator of all things and therefore His Word is the absolute authority over all life.

Fathers are senior members in a family by virtue of their accumulated experiences of coming to know life.

2:13b young men because you have overcome (perf) the wicked one

John views believers as living in a spiritually hostile environment: Note **5:4, 19** “**Whoever is born of God overcomes the world. . . the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one.**”

Here the order of children-fathers-young men makes sense:

- the child-like fellowship with God the Father in **1:5–2:2** in having sins forgiven prepares one to orient properly to sin and grace;
- the father-like experience in coming to know God the Son as the One who has been with God from the beginning (eternal life relationship in view) solidifies confidence that Jesus Incarnate is the real deal of the true Enlightenment in **2:3–8**
- the warrior-age experience of believing against the deceptions of the world and the lies of Satan flows out of the fellowship with the Father and the Son; and warriors “hang together” reminiscent of **2:9–11**.

Keep the triadic structure intact ==> John is “testifying” (2 witnesses needed)

2:14 I write to you, little children [Gk: *paidia*] because you have come to know (perf) the Father

The tense of “write” is present as in 2:13 whereas it is perfect regarding the fathers and young men in 2:14 so some translations put this clause in vs. 13 instead of vs. 14. Child-like fellowship with the God the Father—this time more attention to personal care and appreciation of His love **I have written (perf) to you, fathers. . .**

Tense shift due to repetition of addressees because John is providing to them the testimony of their spiritual state that does not need to learn anything from the false teachers.

I have written (perf) to you, young men, because you are strong and the Word of God abides in you and you have overcome the evil one. John has the Upper Room Discourse in mind as he so often does in this epistle. Note: **John 15:7** “**If you abide in me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you**”

III. Conclusion

We must operate from a position of strength (2:12–14)

The listeners must think of themselves foremost as warriors but as warriors equipped by virtue of their child-like relationship to the Father and their realization that Jesus is the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity. The revelation they have received does not need to be “revised” or “updated” by the unnamed false teachers.