

1 John Series

Charles Clough

www.bibleframework.org

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The Purpose: Resisting the Cosmos with Confidence in the Strategy of Envelopment

I. Review & Introduction:

Questions:

1. What is *fellowship* according to John and how does it differ from the act of regeneration at the time we savingly believe in Jesus Christ for eternal life? (Hint: **1:3**) *ANSWER: Fellowship according to John is our post-regeneration daily life continuation in alignment with the light of the Father's holiness, submission to the commandments of Jesus, and loving other believers.*
2. And what is that? (Hint: **1:1–2**) *Participation in the eternal life revealed when Jesus appeared in history and showed the personal relationship between the Father and the Son.*
3. If God's nature is "light and in Him is *no darkness at all*", how are we brought into harmony with that nature on a moment-by-moment basis? (Hint: **1:7**) *We have to respond to the light's conviction of our sin so that we are cleansed from our sin by the blood of Jesus Christ.*
4. How do we walk in the light? (Hint: **1:9**) *We must acknowledge that we have sinned to the Father.*
5. What does the Christian life constantly require in Heaven, beyond our sight? (Hint: **2:1–2**) *It requires constant advocating by Jesus Christ before the Father.*
6. How do we know that we are abiding in Christ? (Hint: **2:3–6**) *When we are adhering to the authority of Jesus' teaching (commands) over our life.*
7. What area of daily life does John pick out as the "litmus test" for keeping Jesus' commandments? (Hint: **2:7–11**) *Do we or don't we love other believers.*

Note the progression:

1. Our moment-by-moment relation with God's perfectly holy nature.
2. Our relation with historic revelation of Jesus Christ, not mysticism but "memory" of historic happenings.
3. Our relation with other believers in whom God is at work

What does this progression look like? (Slide 2)

Nature (unseen) => Historic Person (seen) => Influence of this Person in people

II. Purpose of this epistle (2:12–27)

Following the “deliberative orator” structure that this epistle seems to manifest, here is the central proposal of John: a call to remain in fellowship while resisting the world system with its Satanic character. (Slide 3)

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

This section:

- (1) presupposes that fellowship is understood—hence the preamble;
- (2) shows that the epistle is written to believers. Their salvation is never questioned.
- (3) encourages the listeners to build up confidence in the Truth so they can walk by faith
- (4) note the transition to the next section **2:28**

Observational questions:

- (1) what do the 3 classes refer to? *They seem to refer to three challenges of life for believers—little children to the core of our relationship to God, fathers to the more reflective experience of that relationship, and young men to the hostile environment under Satan that we live in.*

Three viewpoints of fellowship that express particular nuances in our relationship to God

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 real deal of 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**.

- (2) why repeat the 3 addressees? *Perhaps it is the rule of witnesses throughout the Bible that truth is established by two or three witnesses. This is a central part of John’s testimony (cf. 1:2–3) (Slide 4)*

We must have confidence in our personal relationship to God BEFORE we engage with the opposition.

B. We must understand God’s Strategy of Envelopment of the entire world system, doomed as it is by its alienation from God (2:15–17)

Observational questions:

What does “love” mean here? *Obviously, it doesn’t refer to mere sentimental feeling; it consists of a fundamental life orientation toward the entire world system. “Love” here is used as it occurs in the Old Testament in such passages as “love the Lord with all your heart. . . .” (Deut. 6:5) meaning total allegiance.*

What is the “world”? [Greek: *kosmos*] (Slide 5)

Cf. Rom 12:1–2; 2 Cor 4:4; Eph 2:2 “*Cosmos*” refers to an orderly arrangement, all the various elements—the flesh, the outlook, and the trust in human assets—reinforce each other and can therefore totally dominate us.

What does that imply about reality (cf **2:1–2**)? *There is a total spiritual/ethic war between the cosmos and God’s plan of salvation. One is true reality; the other is fantasy.*

What is the sobering warning and encouragement in **2:17**? *There are only two final destinies—the fantasy is passing away year by year as one idea after another is seen not to work and true reality that continues with God forever. This is a powerfully motivating viewpoint to keep abiding in Christ amid the temporary trials of life.*

III. Conclusion (Slide 6)

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

Our tactics must fit God’s strategy! Why waste time trying to chase the fantasy world of the cosmos?