

The First Epistle of John

...so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ (1John 1:3)

1John 2:12 - 14

Review

Where is John writing from?

What heresy was he addressing?

What flavor of Gnosticism was John specifically dealing with?

What did the heretics teach?

How does John deal with this false teaching?

1John 1:6-10

Read verses 2:6-11

Someone else read vv 2:12-14

John addresses three distinct groups two similar ways:

1. Little children (v12, 13)
2. Fathers (v13, 14)
3. Young men (v13, 14)

Are these verses tautological, and therefore indicative of corruption in the ms?

Tautology: Circular reasoning, needless repetition of an idea without adding meaning, eg., "Widow woman" or "The candidate will either win or not win"

Why is this unlikely?

There is no ms evidence support.

John often repeats himself in cases where he wants to be clearly understood (eg., 2:4)

"Is a liar and the truth is not in him."

What groups is he addressing?

Literal Children, Fathers, and Young Men

(1) Because this is the usual meaning of the word, and should be understood to be the meaning here, unless there is something in the connection to show that it is used in a metaphorical sense;

(2) Because it seems necessary to understand the other expressions, "young men," and "fathers," in a literal sense, as denoting those more advanced in life;

(3) Because this would be quite in character for the apostle John. He had recorded, and would doubtless remember the solemn injunction of the Saviour to Peter [Joh 21:15](#), to “feed his lambs,” and the aged apostle could not but feel that what was worthy of so solemn an injunction from the Lord, was worthy of his attention and care as an apostle (Albert Barnes). Robertson, the great Greek grammarian, agrees.

Spiritual children, fathers, and young men

Beloved children, those who were probably the apostle’s own converts, and members of the Church over which he presided. But it may be applied to young converts in general; those who can call God Abba, Father, by the Holy Spirit: therefore he says of them, that their sins were forgiven them for his name’s sake: i.e. on account of Jesus, the Savior, who had died for them, and was now their Mediator at the right hand of God. (Adam Clarke), well as Matthew Henry and John Gill. For more modern commentators that espouse this view, see FF Bruce, John Stott, I Howard Marshall. The Greek grammarian Vincent says: “Not children in age, but addressed to the readers generally.”

And how many groups are in view, here?

There is no agreement among the commentators.

Some say he is addressing his entire congregation when he says: little children, and then subdivides them into 2 groups: Fathers and Young Men.

He addresses his readers by calling them “little children” in 2:1; 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21

Some say he is addressing all believers in the first instance, and babes in Christ in the second. John uses *teknia* in 2:12, and *paidia* in verse 13.

He uses *teknia* in the other verses, rendered “little children in the NASB.

Teknia – Little children, diminutive form of *Tekna*, child.

Paidia – Infants, metaphorically like children in intellect; used in scripture of older children

Compare *τεκνία* *little children* ([1Jo 2:1](#)), which emphasizes the idea of *kinship*, while this word emphasizes the idea of *subordination* and consequent *discipline*. Hence it is the more appropriate word when spoken from the stand-point of *authority* rather than of *affection*.

(Vincent)

Has anyone seen the Stars Wars movies? What is Anakin called?
Padawan – one who is under discipline and being mentored

Some commentators say he is addressing 3 distinct groups, that John is merely using a stylistic variation between the 2 Greek words.

What do you think?

Those making this point usually cite v. 18 (where the Greek is *paidia*)

And they say there must be 3 groups in view by virtue of the fact that they are correlated with Fathers and Young Men. In other words, they argue on the basis of immediate context rather than word meaning.

There is one more distinction between the wording of verse 12 and 13a, and 13b and 14. What is it?

Present vs past tense

(technically aorist tense; Greek lacks a simple past tense).

Generally, the aorist tense is rendered in English with a simple past or past perfect).

Is there any significance to this distinction?

Is John referring in the first case to the Epistle and in the second to his Gospel?

The present, *I write*, refers to the immediate act of writing; the aorist is the *epistolary* aorist, by which the writer places himself at the reader's stand-point, regarding the writing as past.

See 1Pet 5:12

Read v 12:

“I am writing to you little children *because...*”

Giving the purpose: "Your sins have been forgiven"

This is a fine beginning to your Christian walk, to first know that your sins have been forgiven, not because of anything you have done, but "for His name's sake."

The meaning of "have been forgiven" is really "continually are being forgiven."

"for his name's sake"

Biblically, what does ones "name" signify?

It's more than just "Jesus," it signifies the totality of his being, His nature, His Character.

On account of Jesus, the Savior, who had died for them, and was now their Advocate at the right hand of God.

Verse 13

John here addresses "Fathers," those elders who are firmly established in their faith.

"because you have know Him who has been from the beginning"

What "beginning" is this?

Whatever else may be meant by "from the beginning" in the rest of this Epistle, here it must mean from all eternity.

John next addresses the "Young men."

They are more mature than the children (babes in Christ), but are not as mature as the fathers. They are strong and vital in their faith.

They have "overcome the evil one."

a permanent victory after conflict. The masculine article *ton* shows that the prince of darkness is the one defeated in this struggle.

He next addresses the "children" again, this time saying they "know the Father."

Literally "have come to know". They have come to recognize thru the HS that God is their Father and they are growing closer and

closer to Him as they are conformed to the image of Christ.
Gal 4:6-7

Verse 14.

V 14a is a word for word repetition from the previous verse. Why do you think John does this?

For emphasis: If scripture says something twice, you'd better pay attention!

V 14b adds some words from the previous verse. What words are added?

“You are strong...”

1) strong, mighty, powerful

of one who has strength of soul to sustain the attacks of Satan, strong and therefore exhibiting many excellences

Why are they “strong?”

“The word of God abides in you.”

“Abide” in this context means to dwell, remain, or endure.

Recall the temptation of Christ in the wilderness

Mat 4:1-11

How did Jesus overcome the Devil?

By quoting Scripture.

Jesus demonstrated it was the totality of Scripture that must abide in us, if we are to withstand the “fiery darts” of Satan.

Only by reading and meditating on the Word will it richly dwell in our hearts.