

“Let us teach the New Testament!”

First Epistle of John

Lesson 4, 1 John 2:12-17

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Introduction

In this fourth of 15 lessons on the New Testament Book of 1 John, we shall deal with following nine matters.

1. 1 John 2:12-17 in the English Standard Version (2016)
2. 1 John 2:12-17 in the SBL Greek New Testament
3. Greek textual variants
4. Analytical outline of 1 John 2:12-17
5. Important vocabulary and historical meanings
6. Greek grammar : The present negative imperative, subjective and objective genitive
7. Teachable lists
8. Three historical Christian doctrines.
9. Practical application of 1 John 2:12-17 for Christians

1. The English Standard Version text of 1 John 2:12-17

¹² I am writing to you, little children,
because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.

¹³ I am writing to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I am writing to you, young men,
because you have overcome the evil one.

I write to you, children,
because you know the Father.

¹⁴ I write to you, fathers,
because you know him who is from the beginning.

I write to you, young men,
because you are strong,
and the word of God abides in you,
and you have overcome the evil one.

Do Not Love the World

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. ¹⁶ For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. ¹⁷ And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.

2. Interlinear Greek-English Text of 1 John 2:12-17

I-am-writing to-you children because have-been-forgiven to-you the sins for the name of-him.

¹² Γράφω ὑμῖν, τεκνία, ὅτι ἀφέωνται ὑμῖν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ·

I-am-writing to-you parents because have-come-to-know the from beginning

¹³ γράφω ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς·

I-am-writing to-you youth because you-have-overcome the evil-one

γράφω ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν·

I-write to-you children because you-have-come-to-know the Father

ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, παιδιά, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα·

I-write to-you parents because you-have-come-to-know the from beginning

¹⁴ ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς·

I-write to-you youth because strong you-are and the word of-the God in you abides

ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι ἰσχυροί ἐστε καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν μένει

and you-have-overcome the evil-one

καὶ νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν·

not love the world nor the in the world If anyone loves the world

¹⁵ Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ* ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον,

not is the love of-the Father in him for all the in the world

οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ· ¹⁶ ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ,

the desires of-the flesh and the desires of-the eyes and the pride of-the life

ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου,

not is from the Father but from the world is and the world is-passing-away

¹⁷ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς, ἀλλὰ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστίν· καὶ ὁ κόσμος παράγεται

and the desires of-it the but doing the will of-the God abides unto the age

καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ, ὃ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα.

3 Manuscript Variants in 1 John 2:12-17

2:12 By the 12th century, some scribes wrote another word for “children” copied from 2:14.

By the 9th century, a few manuscripts read, “your (sins are forgiven)”, instead of “(sins are forgiven) you”.

2:13 One 4th-century manuscript has a neuter article (το το, ‘the’), making “evil” an abstract thing, whereas all others have a masculine article (τον τον, ‘the’), making it a noun, “evil one”. In both cases, it is a reference to the devil.

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- 2:14** By the 10th century, few manuscripts read, “I am writing” instead of “I write” before “children”.
A 4th and a 9th-century manuscript have a neuter article (*to*, ‘the’) meaning “that which (was from the beginning), instead of a masculine article meaning “he who (was from the beginning). Their scribes may have remembered the neuter pronoun from 1:1. In both cases, it is a reference to Jesus Christ.
One 4th-century scribe mistakenly omitted “of God” after “the Word”.
- 2:15** By the 14th century, a couple of manuscripts omitted “the” before “world”.
From the 5th century, some manuscripts have “God” instead of “Father”.
- 2:17** From the 5th century, several manuscripts omit “its” from “its desires”. It is hard to know if “its” was original or not.

4. Analytical outline for preachers, teachers and groups leaders.

This outline derives from a linguistic discourse analysis rather than from ancient or modern theology.

IV. The Will of God 2.12-17

A. Christians’ advantages 2.12-14

1. I write to you
 - a. God has forgiven us 2.12
 - b. You know the true Jesus 2.13
 - c. You have defeated the evil one
2. I wrote to you 2.14
 - a. You know the Father
 - b. You know Jesus
 - c. You are strong

B. The danger Christians face 2.15

1. The world wants our affections 2.16
2. The world seduces us by its allure 2.17a

C. The future of obedient Christians 2.17b

1. They do the will of God now
2. They will live forever

5. Important terms and their historical meanings in 1 John 2:12-17

Abide μένω *menô*

A person or thing remains where he, she, or it is. ... To continue to exist, remain, last, persist, continue to live ... 1J 2:17.

Evil one πονηρός *ponéros*

Pertaining to being morally or socially worthless, wicked, evil, bad, base, worthless, vicious, degenerate... The devil (who is not defined as a sinner but as one who is morally destructive) ... 1J 2:13f; 5:18, 19.

Life βίος *bios*

'Life' in its appearance and manifestations freq. distinguished from ζωή, the condition of being alive. Worldly goods 1J.

Name ὄνομα *onoma*

Used in combination with God and Jesus... The new community of believers ... sees in ... the name something real, a piece of the very nature of the personality whom it designates, expressing the person's qualities and powers. ... Your sins are forgiven on account of (Jesus') name 1J 2:12.

Pride ἀλαζονεία *alazoneia*

pretension, arrogance in word and deed ... pride in one's possessions 1J 2:16.

World κόσμος *kosmos*

The system of human existence in its many aspects, the world ... the affairs of the world ... 1J 2:15f. In John ... the world, and everything that belongs to it, appears as that which is hostile to God, i.e. lost in sin, wholly at odds with anything divine, ruined and depraved.

6. Greek grammar of 1 John 2:12-17

Negative Present Imperative

The Greek negative imperative, "Do not love the world," (1 John 2:15) is in the verbal present tense. This implies that some Christians were still enamoured with the godless, Roman, political and economic system, or were devoted to Greek learning or philosophy. So one could rightly translate this verse, "Stop loving the world!"

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Subjective or Objective Genitive

When John wrote, “the love of the Father,” (1 John 2:15), did he mean the love that the Father has for Christians (a subjective genitive), or the love that Christians have for the Father (an objective genitive)? Christians are to cultivate their love for the Father, by ceasing the love they had for the godless world.

7. Teachable lists from 1 John 2:12-17

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you teachable ideas and summaries from the passage. For example:

7 advantages for Christian believers 15

1. your sins are forgiven 12
2. you know him who is from the beginning 13, 14
3. you have overcome the evil one 13, 14
4. you know the Father 13
5. you are strong 14
6. the word of God abides in you 14
7. whoever does the will of God abides forever 17

6 dangers that menace the enjoyment of those advantages

- love the world 15
- love things 15
- strong desires 16
- attractive things 16
- pride in possessions 16
- lose everything 17

8. Three historical Christian doctrines.

The knowledge of God. Christian believers know God, in their thoughts about Him, in their emotions towards Him and in their experience from Him. They communicate with God through prayer, by reading his words, and sometimes in visions or an inner Voice. God’s Holy Spirit indwells Christian believers, producing in them the ‘fruit of the Spirit,’ and distributing the ‘spiritual gifts’ for mutual service.

The forgiveness of sins. When non-believers repent, putting their faith in Jesus Christ, God forgives them all of their past sins. Throughout their lifetime on earth, Christian believers become aware of many ways in which they sin in their thoughts, words and deeds, so they often confess their sins to God who forgives them and cleanses them from all unrighteousness, because of Jesus’ death on a cross.

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The will of God. God has expressed his will in three ways. Firstly, God has foretold what he will do, in creating humans, in sending Jesus to die for sins, and in revealing eternal life and death. Secondly, God formerly expressed his will for human behaviour by issuing his laws, by speaking through his prophets and his Messiah Jesus, and by revealing the books of the New Testament. Thirdly, God leads Christian believers by replying to their prayers, by distributing gifts of the Spirit, and by opening opportunities for service.

9. Practical application of 1 John 2:12-17 for Christians

In small gatherings of learners, pose queries such as these:

- What have you learnt from this passage about God?
- What have you learnt from this passage about Jesus?
- What have you learnt from this passage your advantages?
- What have you learnt from this passage about the world?

Whilst preaching, teaching or leading, recommend ways in which to apply the passage or put it into practice. For example:

- Take time for everyone to pray, thanking the Gather for their eternal advantages.
- Discuss together ways in which better to please God during the week.
- Invite everyone to repent of the pride each one feels for their possessions.
- Pray that everyone's heart be filled with a renewed love for their heavenly Father.

Conclusion

- Download the document of this lesson at **[1john.currah.download](#)**.
- Read five times 1 John 2:18-27 before you view the next video lesson.
- Please, leave comments or queries, or write to me at the download site. I shall try to reply to you by email or on line.