

1 John Sections 2 and 3: Full-Scale Faith

| | | OPENING WORDS | THEMES |
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| 1 | 1:1-2:6 | “That which was from the beginning ...” | Central Burden: God Is Light |
| 2 | 2:7-2:17 | “Beloved, I am writing to you ...” | Central Commandment: Embody the Age-Old Message |
| 3 | 2:18-3:8 | “Children, it is the last hour ...” | Key Counsel: Remain in His Anointing and Receive Eternal Life |
| 4 | 3:9-4:6 | “No one born of God makes a practice of sinning ...” | Central Warning: Beware Cain’s Error and False Prophets |
| 5 | 4:7-4:14 | “Beloved, let us love one another ...” | Foundational Imperative: God’s Love |
| 6 | 4:15-5:15 | “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God ...” | Necessary Instruction: Believing in Jesus the Christ, the Son of God |
| 7 | 5:16-5:21 | “If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death...” | Concluding Admonition: The True God and the Threat of Imposters |

II. Central Commandment: Embody the Age-Old Message (2:7–2:17)

- A. The Nature and Implications of the Message (2:7–11)
- B. Pastoral Appeal in View of the Message (2:12–17)

A. The Nature and Implications of the Message (2:7–11)

1 John 2:7 Beloved, I am writing you no new commandment, but an old commandment that you had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word that you have heard. ⁸ At the same time, it is a new commandment that I am writing to you, which is true in **him** and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining. ⁹ Whoever says he is in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. ¹⁰ Whoever loves his brother abides in the light, and in him there is no cause for stumbling. ¹¹ But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks in the darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

1. V. 7: In one sense, there is nothing new about the message. It has precedents in the OT and in Jesus' life and teachings and death. (The message is to love one another.)
2. V. 8: Yet it is true in a new sense: true in Christ and in them; true because of the progress of redemption, true because of the radiation of grace into the world. See Romans 13:11–14 for an expansion and application of this idea.
3. V. 9: Talk of saying one thing but living differently echoes previous verses. It also foreshadows the report of schism and warnings about hating others later in the letter.
4. Vv. 10–11: The gospel sets us before two ways. That is the nature and implication of a God who is light, offers life in the light, but leaves in darkness those who refuse his Son.

B. Pastoral Appeal in View of the Message (2:12–17) (**green** = pronouns for **God**)

1 John 2:12 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.

1 John 2:15 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.

1. Vv. 12–14: Commendation of representative stages of spiritual and/or physical maturity as believers live out the message, grounded in the character traits necessary to embody the message (love one another) with effectiveness and integrity.
2. Vv. 15–16: The pre-command behind the love command; why failure here is toxic.
3. V. 17: World-for-world’s-sake labors have no future. Doing God’s will has abiding (never-ending, highest quality) value. Pauline analogy: 1 Cor. 3:11-15.

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| 3 | 2:18-3:8 | “Children, it is the last hour ...” | Key Counsel: Remain in His Anointing and Receive Eternal Life |
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A. Considerations Informing the Counsel to “Abide” (2:18–21)

John 2:18 Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore we know that it is the last hour. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. 20 But you have been anointed by the **Holy One**, and you all have knowledge. 21 I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth.

1. V. 18: Evil and judgment are at the door.
2. Vv. 19–20: Many are not abiding—they are going ahead (2 John) and opposing the apostolic message which is not to be tampered with (see Gal. 1).
3. Vv. 20-21: The truth (of the gospel message) prevents switching sides.

B. The Truth That Abides (2:22—26)

1 John 2:22 Who is the liar but he who denies that **Jesus** is the **Christ**? This is the antichrist, he who denies the **Father** and the **Son**. 23 No one who denies the **Son** has the **Father**. Whoever confesses the **Son** has the **Father** also. 24 Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the **Son** and in the **Father**. 25 And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

1 John 2:26 I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you.

1. Vv. 22–23: True indicatives—they way things really are (not the way those who have departed claim).
2. V. 24–26: Logical imperative—abiding and its motivations.

C. The Imperative to Abide (2:27–29)

1 John 2:27 But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him.

1 John 2:28 And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame at his coming. 29 If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

1. V. 27: The power of the anointing.
2. Vv. 28–29: The benefit and mark of the anointing and abiding.

D. The Glory of Abiding (3:1–8)

1. The Marvel of the Father's Love (3:1)
2. The Promise of Divine Transformation (3:2–3)
3. The Ethics of Christ's Presence (3:4–8)

1 John 3:1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. 2 Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

1 John 3:4 Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; sin is lawlessness. 5 You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. 6 No one who abides in him keeps on sinning; no one who keeps on sinning has either seen him or known him. 7 Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. 8 Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

The words above nearly teach themselves:

1. V. 1 marvels at what believers are called to receive and remain in (not depart like the schismatics).
2. Vv. 2–3 believers' hope and response (purity not departure).
3. Vv. 4–6 describe the fruit of abiding: the freedom (from sin) of righteousness, which delivers from sin and destruction.

