

I John 2:12-14

- Intro.**
- Can you detect any connection between these verses and the previous verses?
 - Is there a continued polemic or adversarial attitude in these verses?
 - Can you see the duplicated triad of statements that comprises the structure of these verses?
 - Why do the verbs change from present tense in the first triad of statements, to aorist tense in the second triad of statements?
 - “I write”/“I am writing” – Do these refer to...
 - what has preceded in these epistle?
 - what is presently being written? ...this paragraph?
 - this epistle as a whole?
 - “I have written” – Do these refer to...
 - a previous document?
 - Gospel of John?
 - II John?
 - III John?
 - Revelation?
 - unknown document?
 - what has preceded in this epistle?
 - what was written in verse 13 before John was interrupted or distracted and returned to his writing in verse 14?
 - Do the different verb tenses of both triads refer to the same present tense exhortation of John?
 - Are the aorist tenses used as present tenses? (cf. 2:21,26; 5:13)
 - Are the aorist tenses used as epistolary aorists taking into account the time-interval between the writing and the receipt of the letter by the recipients?
 - Did John change to past tense because he thought he might be dead by the time this letter arrived?
 - Did a redactionist add the second triad at a later date?
 - Did John change tenses only as a stylistic variation?
 - Did John change tenses only for the purpose of reiterative emphasis?
 - What does John mean by the conjunction “that” or “because” used in all six statements?
 - Explanation of content?
 - information? “...that which you do not know” (cf. 2:21)
 - confirmation? “...that which you know, and I am reminding you of” (2:21)
 - Explanation of purpose and objective?
 - affirmation? “...because these spiritual realities are foundational...”
 - application? “...because practical Christian behavior is based on these spiritual realities”
 - What does John mean by the triads of people groupings?
 - Should differentiation be made between “little children” (*teknia* - vs. 12) and “children” (*paidia* - vs. 14)?
 - infants vs. school-children?
 - or are these essentially synonymous?
 - Is a gender bias apparent in reference to “young men” and “fathers”?
 - Are these three designations simply a rhetorical device used to refer to the same people?
 - Can all Christians be referred to as “children”, “young men”, and “fathers”?
 - Can what is said of each group be true of all Christians?
 - Was John thinking of the designations of people made by the prophet Joel? (cf. Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17)

- Are these designations a two-fold distinction whereby the latter two designations subdivide the first designation?
 - Does “children” refer to all Christians? (cf. 2:1,28; 3:7,18; 4:4; 5:21)
 - Do “young men” and “fathers” refer to...
 - Physical age distinction?
 - youth and older persons
 - Ministry distinction?
 - followers and leaders?
 - deacons and elders?
 - Maturity distinction?
 - immature and mature?
 - growing and grown
- Are these three designations distinguishing between three different groupings of people?
 - Physical age distinction?
 - children, adolescents, parents?
 - Spiritual maturity distinction?
 - babes in Christ, those in growing process, spiritually mature?
 - neophytes, trainees, reproducers?
 - Metaphorical or figurative distinction?
 - child-like, young-at-heart, mature?
 - dependent, exuberant, responsible?
- Would John be differentiating between different levels, stages, classes of spiritual maturity when Gnostic teaching advocated such spiritual progression?
- Would John have referred to anyone as “father” in the spiritual or metaphorical sense in light of Jesus’ comment in Matthew 23:9 - “Call no one on earth, ‘Father’, ...”? (cf. I Cor. 4:15)

- Vs. 12**
- Does “little children” refer to all Christians? (cf. 2:1,28; 3:7,18; 4:4; 5:21)
 - Is John writing to the “little children” to explain...
 - “that your sins are forgiven” (information or confirmation)?
 - “that because your sins are forgiven” your behavior should be consistent with the character of Christ” (affirmation and application)?
 - Does “your sins are forgiven” mean...
 - pardon of sins?
 - remission of sins?
 - absolution of sins?
 - deliverance from sins?
 - replacement of sins with godliness?
 - Why does John explain that “your sins are forgiven *for His name’s sake*”?
 - to emphasize that divine Being expressed in divine action is the only basis for forgiveness?
 - to emphasize that it was by Christ’s performance, not by our performance, that our sins are forgiven?
 - to emphasize that the name of “Jesus” means “Jehovah saves”?
 - to emphasize that one must believe in Jesus’ name to receive forgiveness of sins” (cf. John 1:12)
 - to emphasize that the expression of the nature and character of Christ are to be the consequences of forgiveness of sins?
 - to emphasize that God’s redemptive and restorative action in Jesus is unto His own glory?

- Vs. 13** • Who are the “fathers” that John is writing to?
- elderly?
 - grown-ups”
 - leaders?
 - spiritual reproducers?
- What does it mean to “know Him...”?
- to have accurate information about?
 - to have intimate personal relationship with?
 - to have a long-standing relationship with?
- Who is the “Him” who is “known” and “has been from the beginning”?
- God, the Father
 - Jesus Christ?
- In what sense has He “been from the beginning”?
- beginning of time? - creation
 - beginning of redemptive mission? - incarnation
 - beginning of public ministry? - baptism and temptation
 - beginning of the church? - Pentecost
 - beginning of Christian experience? - conversion
- Who are the “young men”?
- physical adolescents or juveniles?
 - growing Christians?
 - young Christians striving to prove themselves?
- What does it mean to “overcome the evil one”?
- to win the battle of spiritual warfare by putting on the full armor of God? (Eph. 6:10-20)
 - to win the battle of spiritual warfare by casting out demons?
 - to win the battle of spiritual warfare by repeating Jesus’ name?
 - to overcome temptation in Christian behavior? (cf. 2:15-17)
 - to partake of a spiritual exchange in regeneration? (cf. Acts 26:18; Eph. 2:2,3; Col. 1:13)
- In what way do children “know the Father”?
- infants know their daddy?
 - Christians have a personal relationship with God?
 - babes in Christ have an implicit trust and dependence upon God?

- Vs. 14** • Why is the same thing said about “fathers” as was stated in verse 13?
- Is John emphasizing the “young men” by expanding the explanation of them in these three statements?
 - Does John perceive that most of his readers qualify as “young men” in the growing stage of their Christian lives?
 - Of the three explanations of “young men”, should one be regarded as prior or predominant, and the others as predicate, subsequent or consequent on the one?
 - Can it be stated of all Christians that...
 - they have overcome the evil one? (cf. Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13; Eph. 2:2,3)
 - the Word of God abides in them? (cf. Col. 3:16; James 1:18; I Pet. 1:23)
 - they are strong? (cf. Phil. 4:13; Eph. 1:19; 6:10)

- Conc.** • What is the primary objective of John in writing these verses?
- to make clear-cut distinctions and categories of Christians?
 - to separate the sequential stages of spiritual progress?
 - to remind Christians, wherever they are in their Christian maturity, of the spiritual realities they have in Christ?
 - to encourage all Christians to practical Christian behavior that flows out of the sufficiency that is theirs in Christ?
- What personal application can you make for your life from these verses?