

Message #7**I John 2:12-14**

At this point in I John, John has just stung all who read this with hard-hitting truth that very bluntly denounced people who claimed to have fellowship with God but really didn't. These people continually walked in darkness (1:6); they denied their own sinfulness (1:8-10); they did not obey the commands of Christ (2:4); and they continually hated their brothers in Christ (2:9, 11). John's point in writing this was not to shake the confidence the true believer had, but to actually give the believer more confidence that he is moving in the right direction in one's fellowship with God.

THE THINGS JOHN WRITES IN I JOHN, HE WRITES TO BELIEVERS OF ALL SPIRITUAL AGES FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENCOURAGING THEM THAT THEY ARE RIGHT WITH GOD AND THAT THEY CAN MOVE ON TO DEEPER FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD.

The verb tenses and the words clearly indicate that once you believe on Jesus Christ, you are forever and finally saved.

- 1) The emphasis on these verses is on what was written.
- 2) There are different spiritual classes of people in the family of God.

One question that has plagued students of this passage is the question of whether or not the groups being addressed refer to physical age or spiritual status. We believe spiritual status is in view for two reasons: 1) The word "little children" (v. 12) and the word "children" (v. 13) are often used in this epistle to refer to the family of God as opposed to young children physically (2:1, 28; 5:21; 2:14, 18). Young physical children would have a hard time reading what is written and they certainly would have a hard time understanding what was written; 2) The order in which the group is addressed is not in a physical chronology such as child, young man, father, or father, young man, children. The order is children, fathers, and young men. We conclude the emphasis is on one's spiritual status, not one's physical age.

CYCLE #1 – Family address number one. 2:12-13b

Category #1 - The first address to the little children. 2:12

The term for "little children" used here is the Greek word "teknon." According to G. Abbott-Smith, the particular emphasis of this word is parentage, or being in the family (p. 334). We may assume that John has those in mind who have just recently come into the family of God.

Now John has a special message for those who are young in the family of God—your sins have been forgiven on account of the name of Jesus Christ. Now the verb tense is perfect passive. What this means is at some point in the past, God divorced you from all of your sin and you remain divorced from it at the present and into the future.

Category #2 - The first address to the fathers. **2:13a**

It had been nearly 40 years since the Apostle Paul had first taken the Gospel into Ephesus in Acts 18:19. The one doctrine that these fathers knew was the doctrine of the eternity of Jesus Christ.

Category #3 - The first address to the young men. **2:14b**

The word “young men” was a Greek word used to describe those who were between the ages of 22-40. They were not children, but they were not fatherly or mature.

(Implication #1) - The soteriological implication.

Any person who believes on Jesus Christ overcomes the evil one and the world (I John 5:4-5).

(Implication #2) - The contextual implication.

These young men would not budge concerning the satanic attack on the deity of Jesus Christ.

CYCLE #2 – Family address number two. **2:13c-14**

Category #1 - The second address to the children. **2:13c**

The word used for child here is different; this is the word paidion. This word for child refers to one who is growing and being instructed and disciplined by a parent.

Category #2 - The second address to the fathers. **2:14a**

To be a father in the faith, you must know Jesus Christ and you must know doctrine.

Category #3 - The second address to the young men. **2:14b**

1) This group is strong.

2) This group is focused on God’s Word.

Young person, here is where your strength will come from—the written Word of God.

3) This group overcomes the evil one.

When our Lord was tempted by Satan at an early age, He said over and over and over again—“It is written, it is written, it is written.” Victory over Satan comes from the written Word of God. Dr. John Mitchell used to say, “It is not possible to live a Christian life without knowledge of the Word of God.”