

## 1 JOHN, VERSE-BY-VERSE

### SESSION 5 | 1 JOHN 2:12-17

#### 1 JOHN 2:12-17 | SIN NOT: BY AVOIDING THE LUSTS OF THE FLESH

- Verse 12 –
  - In 1 John 1:9, the nation had been instructed to *confess* their sins in order to receive forgiveness. Now, at first glance, it appears that this forgiveness has been given.
  - The same past tense language will be used in verses 13-14.
  - The author is giving (in my estimation) a “prophetic past” and speaking of the nation in its final form, with the emphasis being **for his name’s sake**.
    - This use of the “prophetic past” is seen in the words of Jesus on the cross, **It is finished** (Jn. 19:30), yet the resurrection was future, so the work of Christ was certainly *not* finished.
- Verse 13-14 –
  - The author takes a moment to focus on **fathers** and on **young men**, since the words of vv. 15-17 especially relate to the men.
    - A general word is also given at the end of verse 13, addressed to the **little children** (also used in verse 1 and 12).
  - The fathers **have known him that is from the beginning** (v. 13 and repeated in v. 14). This is surely a reference to God Almighty.
  - The **young men** have **overcome the wicked one** (v. 13 and 14) and **are strong, and the word of God abideth in you** (v. 14).
  - The men (**fathers** and **young men**) are both the leaders of the Jewish society and the ones most likely to succumb to the things of the flesh, which he will write about in verses 15-17.
  - As mentioned in verse 12, I interpret these as a “prophetic past,” by necessity of context. They are written in the past tense, yet they are describing what is not present.
- Verse 15 –
  - The instruction is to **Love not the world**, and if one does, **the love of the Father is not in him**.
  - A love of the Father will elicit a hatred of the world. James speaks the same manner in James 4:4 and Jesus in Matthew 6:24.
  - When one fails to *rightly divide*, thus placing this as a standard for the Christian life, will invariably struggle with building a self-sanctification or a “fall from grace” position.
- Verse 16 –
  - The *summary list* of **all that is in the world** is given threefold:
    - The **lust of the flesh** - the overwhelming desire for the things that only relate to earthly nature of man, whether food, material goods, sexual pleasures, etc.
    - The **lust of the eyes** - the overwhelming desire for things which are beautiful to the eye. Just as *the mind* can become a “black whole, never filled” (see Acts 17:21), so too can the eye become a vacuum, always consuming, and never

filled. For a few enlightening passages, see Genesis 3:6, Joshua 7:21, Ecclesiastes 5:10-11, and Matthew 4:8.

- The **pride of life** - There is an arrogant boasting about accomplishments that distracts from the Lord and from the future. The word for **life** is βίος [bios], from which we get *biography*.
- Verse 17 –
  - The things of the world are ultimately a “house of cards” because **the world passeth away, and the lusts thereof**.
    - This has always been the case, and too quickly at that. Even if the last part of the verse was not truth, one would be foolish to find their boasting in **the world**.
  - Then the verse gives the declaration that **he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever**.
    - This statement is as clear as John 3:16 yet is “avoided like the plague” in any kind of “salvation” message by those who do not rightly divide.
    - When this is applied to salvation in our dispensation, the results are disastrous.
    - Some try to mitigate the disaster by teaching that **abideth** does not mean *everlasting life* but means *to remain in fellowship*.
      - However, a search of the Greek phrase does not support such a conclusion.
      - See the four other times that the Greek phrase is used: John 8:35, 12:34, 2 Corinthians 9:9, and 1 Peter 1:25.
    - The bottom line: *this verse teaches everlasting life by doing the will of God. Such a position does not fit in the age of Grace.*
    - Does the position fit in the dispensation of the law? Consider Matthew 19:16-17, Leviticus 18:5, Nehemiah 9:29, etc.