The Meaning of *Hilasmos*
in the First Epistle of John 2:2 (Cf. 4:10)

by

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SUMMARY

The purpose of this research is to determine the meaning of ἰλασμός within the First Epistle of John. There will be a threefold procedure to meet this need: (1) grammatico-historical analysis of First John; (2) consideration of ἰλασμός within social and historical contexts; and, (3) extended theological analysis of three Greek words (ἰλασμός, περί, and κόσμος). The goal for the grammatico-historical study is to analyze the text of First John 1:5—2:2 and 4:10 to understand the meaning of ἰλασμός. The meaning of ἰλασμός may be determined either semantically or theologically. The proposition of this research is that the theological approach is inadequate because meaning is determined primarily by systematic presuppositions. However, meaning should be determined through grammatico-historical analysis of the First Epistle of John, and consideration of ἰλασμός within social and historical contexts.

The examination of ἰλασμός within social and historical contexts will determine the terminology of sacrifice in the Old Testament, in addition to the sacrificial language of the ἰλάσκομαι word group within classical Greek, within Judaism, and in the Septuagint. Examination of the usage of ἰλασμός in pre-Christian and extra-Christian literatures will be essential to assess similarities and differences with the biblical usage. Consequently, the analysis of this research will demonstrate the extent to which the Apostle John was dependent upon the Old Testament sacrificial language, in addition to sacrificial language of ἰλασμός and its cognates within classical Greek literature, Judaism, and the Septuagint.

The research herein is intended to contribute to the scholarship concerning the salvific work of Jesus Christ as ἰλασμός, and will inform understanding of the extent and nature of His death within the plan and purpose of the Godhead. The grammatico-historical analysis of the First Epistle of John and consideration of ἰλασμός within social and historical contexts will indicate the nature and extent of Christ's death by (1) the interpretation of ἰλασμός; (2) three parallel prepositional phrases (περί) in 2:2; and, (3) the Johannine usage of the word κόσμος. The intent is

for this research to provide scholarly and theologically important contributions for New Testament studies.

KEY WORDS

Atonement

Expiation

First Epistle of John

ἱλασμός

כֹּפֶר

Offering

Propitiation

Reconciliation

Sacrifice

Wrath

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Ten Points

1) John's interpretation develops earlier biblical imagery thereby providing more comprehensive meaning of the death of Christ. With regard to the impact of the sacrificial language of the Old Testament upon the Johannine usage, one may conclude that ἱλασμός was used in agreement with the preparatory revelation of the Old Testament sacrificial system.

2) When the term "wrath" (ὀργή) is used, there does not appear to be any contextual reason for rejecting its obvious meaning. There are numerous examples, where כָּפַר is used within the Hebrew Old Testament and ἱλάσκομαι is used within the Septuagint, which indicate that the anger of an individual or even the anger of God was propitiated.

3) The description of Jesus Christ as the ἱλασμός for the sins of others (1 John 2:2; 4:10), in addition to the use of παράκλητος (2:1) to also describe the Lord Jesus indicates that there is divine displeasure toward sinners; therefore, the Lord Jesus gives support to believers for whom He is sure to plead.

4) Johannine theology does not contrast the notions of propitiation and love.

5) Explanations of ἱλασμός that are dependent upon pagan sacrifice analogies, as opposed to the sacrificial language of the Old Testament, will necessarily distort the character of God and the meaning of that word.

6) The Old Testament sacrifices typified the ἱλασμός that was yet to be manifested in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Five of the primary Levitical offerings specifically anticipated antitypical fulfillment in the death of Jesus Christ.

7) The only reason why the sanguinary sacrifices were propitiatory is that they typified the substitutionary sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, and thus mediated the effects of His final substitution for sin. Substitution is fairly evident in these contexts. The concept of propitiation is also fundamental to the biblical sacrificial rite.

8) God used the Levitical offerings to demonstrate His holiness and His wrath against sin. The sacrifice truly appeased God's wrath against defilement and sin, and was the means for purifying the offender. The offerings in Leviticus 1—7 were propitiatory and atoning. The animal sacrifices, in particular, were a substitutionary atonement.

9) The fundamental differences between the biblical usage of ἱλασμός and the usage of ἱλασμός in classical Greek is substantial. The usage of ἱλασμός within Judaism and the Septuagint is quite frequent, particularly with regard to ἱλασμός rendering the penalty of sin ineffective.

10) The assessment of this research is that those who argue in defense of propitiation have accurately represented the biblical usage because the term includes the notion that God's wrath has been averted, and that His righteousness has truly been appeased or satisfied.

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I. INTRODUCTION: NEED, PURPOSE, PRESUPPOSITION, METHOD, AND HYPOTHESIS OF RESEARCH

I.A. Overview of Current Research

Exegesis and interpretation of ἱλασμός in the First Epistle of John is significant for interpreting the nature and effects of the work of Christ in His death. The Johannine interpretation of the death of Jesus as the salvific event is consistent with other New Testament writers in expanding upon the early Christian creed, "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor 15:3). John's interpretation develops earlier biblical imagery thereby providing more comprehensive meaning of the death of Christ. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the New Testaments writers employed several words that describe various aspects of the importance of Christ's work for humanity. As the biblical imagery is complementary, the plurality of the various words directs attention to the distinctive nature and effects of God's salvific action in Christ.[1] Furthermore, as a result of its complex nature, no single word can fully explain the significance of the work of Christ. New Testament words that express the aspects of what the death of Christ accomplished include:[2] "forgiveness" (ἀφίημι, χαρίζομαι), "reconciliation" (καταλλάσσω), and "redemption" (ἀγοράζω, ἐξαγοράζω, λυτρόω). Assuming a date of composition in AD 85, the First Epistle of John advances the images of the death of Christ, expanding upon earlier statements of Jesus' death as ἱλαστήριον in Romans 3:25 (written ca. 65) and ἱλάσκεσθαι in Hebrews 2:17 (written ca. 65).

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[1] Henri Blocher, "Biblical Metaphors and the Doctrine of the Atonement," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 47 (December 2004): 629-45.

[2] Ron J. Bigalke Jr., "Christ as the 'Mercy Seat': Understanding the Shed Blood of Christ," *Chafer Theological Seminary Journal* 2 (April-June 2002): 50-53. The theological reality of covenant ratification (Luke 22:20; 1 Cor 11:25; Heb 9:13-20) is also noteworthy.

The Old Testament does not reveal a definitive explanation regarding how perfection (from the guilt of sin) and removal of sins through animal sacrifices could be effected for worshippers. Moreover, the New Testament does not reveal a comprehensive explanation regarding how Jesus Christ endured the sins of many for all time through His offering one sacrifice. Although the early Christian thought does reflect coherent explanation of how Christ's offering effected salvation, theologians did not articulate a reasoned explanation of the death of Jesus Christ until later centuries in church history. Church Fathers provided two primary answers as to the necessity of Jesus' death—either His death propitiated God's wrath or it averted the bondage of death, Satan, and sin. The first explanation is based upon legal metaphors, whereas the second utilizes warfare language to describe divine victory over the powers of death and evil.[3]

Augustine (ca. 354-430) argued that the death of Jesus propitiated the anger of the Father against sin, and removed this wrath unto reconciliation.[4] Athanasius

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[3] Paul S. Fiddes. *Past Event and Present Salvation: A Study in the Christian Doctrine of Atonement* (Atlanta: Westminster John Knox, 1989) 69-70. Gustaf Aulén provided three primary atonement types: the objectivist (Anselmian) Latin model, the subjectivist (Abelardian) model, and the dramatic (victory) model (*Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Ideas of the Atonement*, trans. A. G. Hebert [1931; reprint, London: SPCK, 1965] 1-15). J. Denny Weaver was dependent upon the work of Aulén in subdividing the classic or victory model into the ransom theory (Satan was tricked into believing he would gain power over Christ by killing Him, but by raising Him from the dead, God triumphed over death and sin, thereby freeing the captives of Satan) and the motif of cosmic battle with emphasis upon Christ's victory over evil powers through His resurrection (*The Nonviolent Atonement* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001] 151-53).

[4] "But what is meant by 'justified in His blood?' What power is there in this blood, I beseech you, that they who believe should be justified in it? And what is meant by 'being reconciled by the death of His Son?' Was it indeed so, that when God the Father was wroth with us, He saw the death of His Son for us, and was appeased [*placatio*] towards us? Was then His Son already so far appeased [*placatio*] towards us, that He even deigned to die for us; while the Father was still so far wroth, that except His Son died for us, He would not be appeased [*placatio*]?" (Augustine, *The Trinity*, xiii. 11). In *Enchiridion* xxxiii, he said of Christ: "qui hanc iram sacrificii singularis, cuius erant umbrae omnia sacrificia legis et prophetarum, oblatione placaret." Augustine explained the wrath of God not as a feeling but an attitude toward sin. "Now, as men were lying under this wrath by reason of their original sin, and as this original sin was the more heavy and deadly in proportion to the number and magnitude of the actual sins which were added to it, there was need for a Mediator, that is, for a reconciler, who, by the offering of one sacrifice, of which all the sacrifices of the law and the prophets were types, should take away this wrath. Wherefore the apostle says: 'For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more,

sought to resolve the apparent tension between the love and wrath of God as communicated in the notion of appeasement (cf. *placatio*) through the penal death of Jesus. He lamented the corruption of humanity by arguing the necessity of redemption on the basis of God's goodness (ἀγαθότης).

Athanasius believed that Jesus surrendered Himself as the sinners' substitute and took for Himself the penalty due to all in death, thereby destroying the power of the law of death, and redeeming from its dominion.[5] Christ's death was motivated by love having "bore in Himself the wrath that was the penalty of our transgression."[6] Athanasius (ca. 296-373) sought to resolve the apparent tension between the love and wrath of God involved in Christ offering Himself "as a substitute for the life of all," by expressing Christ's gift of Himself to satisfy the integrity of God and the created order, since His Father declared death as the debt of sin. Therefore, "Christ

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being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.' Now when God is said to be angry, we do not attribute to Him such a disturbed feeling as exists in the mind of an angry man; but we call His just displeasure against sin by the name 'anger,' a word transferred by analogy from human emotions. But our being reconciled to God through a Mediator, and receiving the Holy Spirit, so that we who were enemies are made sons ('For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God'): this is the grace of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." In *Enarrationes Psalmos* xlviii. 9, he defined propitiation by "placatio": "qui non dabit Deo depropitiationem suam; id est placationem qua flectat Deum pro peccatis" (cf. *Patrologia Latina* xxxvi. 549).

[5] "Nor die He will merely to become embodied or merely to appear; had that been so, He could have revealed His divine majesty in some other and better way. No, He took *our* body, and not only so, but He took it directly from a spotless, stainless virgin, without the agency of human father—a pure body, untainted by intercourse with man. He, the Mighty One, the Artificer of all, Himself prepared this body in the virgin as a temple for Himself, and took it for His very own, as the instrument through which He was known and in which He dwelt. Thus, taking a body like our own, because all our bodies were liable to the corruption of death, He surrendered His body to death in place of all, and offered it to the Father. This He did out of sheer love for us, so that in His death all might die, and the law of death thereby be abolished because, when He had fulfilled in His body that for which it was appointed, it was thereafter voided of its power for men. This He did that He might turn again to incorruption men who had turned back to corruption, and make them alive through death by the appropriation of His body and by the grace of His resurrection. Thus He would make death to disappear from them as utterly as straw from fire" (*De Incarnatione Verbi Dei*, trans. and ed. a religious of C.S.M.V. [Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press], § 8 (p. 34).

[6] Ibid. 101. See also, Frances M. Young, *Sacrifice and the Death of Christ* (London: SPCK, 1975) 93.

assumed a body capable of death, in order that it, through belonging to the Word Who is above all, might become in dying a sufficient exchange for all."[7]

In his *Cur Deus Homo*, Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) formulated the classic expression of the satisfaction theory of atonement. He regarded sin as an offense of infinite proportions because it was committed voluntarily against a God of infinite majesty. Therefore, the death of Christ was necessary to satisfy infinitely the demands of divine justice. God demanded full satisfaction for the offense against His divine justice and majesty, but the infinite could not be accomplished by humanity even though the penalty of satisfying the divine justice must be paid by humanity.[8] The Father sent the infinite Son of God as the finite Son of Man to pay the debt of honor that only humanity must pay but that only God could pay.[9]

John Calvin (1509-64) developed the Anselmian argument regarding the principle of divine justice by expressing humanity's acquittal through substitution:[10] "the guilt that held us liable for punishment has been transferred to the head of the Son of God."[11] To pay the debt to divine justice, Christ took the necessary punishment for humanity. Christ offered Himself as substitute upon whom was the penalty of God's indignation and wrath.[12] Calvin developed the Athanasian argument concerning the motive of the death of Christ as divine love and God's propitiation of Himself, which thereby satisfied the demands of His own divine

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[7] Ibid., § 9 (p. 35). Athanasius also presented several reasons for the death of Christ, which would destroy death in His body, and therefore, the evil that condemned humanity to death (ibid. § 19-25 [pp. 48-56]). See also René Girard's theories of mimesis, scapegoat, and sacred violence in *Violence and the Sacred*, trans. Patrick Gregory (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1977).

[8] Such a notion is similar to the patristic adage expressed by Gregory of Nazianzus: "For that which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved" (*Epistles* 101). Philip Schaff and Henry Wace, eds., *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2nd ser., trans. Charles Gordon Browne and James Edward Swallow (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994) 7:830.

[9] St. Anselm, *Proslogium; Monologium; An Appendix in Behalf of the Fool by Gaunilon; and Cur Deus Homo*, trans. Stanley Norton Deane (Chicago: Open Court, 1903; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2003) 1.vii-viii, xi (pp. 187-92, 201-03).

[10] Emil Brunner, *The Mediator: A Study of the Central Doctrine of the Christian Faith*, trans. Olive Wyon (Cambridge, UK: Lutterworth Press, 1934) 435-507.

[11] John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1960) 2.16.5 (pp. 509-10).

[12] Ibid. 2.16.3-5 (pp. 505-10).

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justice. The necessity of Jesus' death as propitiating God's wrath emphasizes the decisiveness and finality of Christ's work upon the cross, and explains why divine justice or wrath never again necessitates propitiation in the redemption of sinners.

The explanation of Christ's death based upon warfare language is expounded from the biblical imagery. For instance, Hebrews 2:14-15 reads, "through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives." The writer to the Hebrews developed in greater detail the freedom achieved at the cross in 8:1—10:31. Aulén revived understanding of the Christus Victor model of the atoning work of Christ. According to this model, Christ's work is understood as divine conflict and victory over the powers of evil that held humanity in bondage and suffering. Aulén argued for this "classic idea of the work of Christ" as "distinguished from the view which grew up in the West on the basis of the forensic idea of sin as transgression of law, and which received its first clear formulation from Anselm."[13]

Interpretation of the salvific nature of the death of Jesus Christ may be clarified and developed by examining the meaning of ἱλασμός in the First Epistle of John. The noun ἱλασμός is mentioned twice in the First Epistle of John (2:2; 4:10).[14] The meaning of ἱλασμός in both instances of the First Epistle of John seems to presuppose what was stated in John 3:16 concerning the redemptive ministry of Jesus Christ.[15] From the dialectic process of interpretation, a reading of the First

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[13] Aulén, *Christus Victor*, v.

[14] Cognates appear in Luke 18:13; Romans 3:25; and, Hebrews 2:17; 9:5. The concept of ἱλασμός, however, extends throughout the whole corpus of the New Testament because it incorporates the theological motif of the nature of Jesus Christ as mediator between God and humanity, and His salvific work as the God-Man on behalf of humanity.

[15] Since presuppositionless exegesis is not possible (Rudolf Bultmann, "Is Exegesis without Presuppositions Possible?," in *Existence and Faith*, trans. Schubert M. Ogden [New York: World, 1960] 342-51), this fundamental hermeneutical presupposition is acknowledged consciously and explicitly. Recognizing that objective and impartial interpretation is indefinable, this research will seek to overcome the dynamics of preunderstanding in interpretation of the biblical text (William W. Klein, Craig L. Blomberg, and Robert L. Hubbard Jr., *Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* [Dallas: Word, 1993] 81-116; Stanley E. Porter, *A Handbook to the Exegesis of the New Testament* [Leiden: Brill, 2002] 591-604; Wilhelm Egger, *How to Read the New Testament: An Introduction to Linguistic and*

Epistle of John 2:2 and 4:10 may be developed expectedly that can delineate a legitimate assertion at being more than one mere possible reading of the texts (i.e. in contrast to postmodern theories of probability and reader-response approaches). Authorial intention as communicated particularly in the context of a specific literary genre and structure, and as preserved in the biblical text, is acknowledged as the foundation by which the legitimacy of a particular interpretation is to be compared. Consequently, the reading of the First Epistle of John that corresponds most directly to the historical-cultural background and is consistent with linguistic and literary traditions of the first century AD has the primary assertion of being the most accurate meaning of a given passage.[16]

In Greek literature, the normal usage of the word ἱλάσκομαι is the idea of a guilty person making an offering for the purpose of appeasing or placating an offended person. The English word "propitiate" is used to convey this meaning. Westcott challenged this usage. He believed "the scriptural conception . . . is not that of appeasing one who is angry, with a personal feeling, against the offender; but of altering the character of that which from without occasions a necessary alienation, and interposes an inevitable obstacle to fellowship."[17] Dodd concurred with

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Historical-Critical Methodology [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1996]). Although exegesis without presuppositions is not possible, such prepositions do not exclude engagement necessarily with the biblical text so that this researcher's understanding of the biblical text (as intended by the Author/author) is corrected with determinacy by the biblical message (Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral: A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation* [Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1991]; Robert L. Thomas, *Evangelical Hermeneutics: The New Versus the Old* [Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2002] 13-240). Furthermore, exegesis always occurs within the sphere of the illumination of the Holy Spirit, and is the vantage of regenerate faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The illuminating ministry of the Holy Spirit in relation with regenerate faith—as controlled by humility, exegetical work, and attention to the research of others—will be invaluable (Gerhard Maier, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, trans. Robert W. Yarbrough [Wheaton: Crossway, 1994] 45-63; J. G. van der Watt, "Exegesis: An Approach" [unpublished class notes, University of Pretoria, n.d.] 1).

[16] E. D. Hirsch Jr., *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967); Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998).

[17] Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Epistles of St John*, 3rd ed. (1883; reprint, Cambridge and London: Macmillan, 1892) 87.

Westcott,[18] and both rendered the English word "expiate" to convey this emphasis.[19]
With the publication of his 1931 essay,[20] Dodd commenced an extended debate
regarding the interpretation of the ἱλάσκομαι word group. Dodd's research
conclusions excluded any notion of propitiation. According to Dodd, the idea of
propitiation was entirely contrary to the biblical doctrine of grace and conveyed a
depiction of God too directly associated with paganism. Consequently, the *Revised
Standard Version* translated ἱλασμός as expiation.[21] Modern English translations
indicate the extent of the debate, as some render the English word "propitiation"
(ASV, KJV, NKJV, NASB, ESV, HCSB), whereas others render the concept of expiation
(CEV, JB, NEB, TEV). Leon Morris demonstrated that the meaning of the ἱλάσκομαι
word group refers to propitiation as opposed to expiation.[22] The works of Roger
Nicole and David Hill have substantiated the New Testament scholarship of
Morris.[23] The *New International Version* combines the concepts of expiation and
propitiation by translating ἱλασμός as "atoning sacrifice," and therefore represents
the concepts as complementary as opposed to being contradictory. Marshall
defended the translation "since 'atonement' is something made for sin, and
'sacrifice' is an offering to God."[24]

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[18] C. H. Dodd, "ʽΙλάσκεσθαι, Its Cognates, Derivatives and Synonyms in the
Septuagint," *Journal of Theological Studies* 32 (1931): 352-60.

[19] See also, Brad Jersak and Michael Hardin, eds., *Stricken by God? Nonviolent
Identification and the Victory of Christ* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007).

[20] Dodd, "ʽΙλάσκεσθαι," 352-60.

[21] Prior to 1952, the New Testament committee included: Luther A. Weigle (Yale
University), James Moffatt (Union Theological Seminary), Henry J. Cadbury (Harvard
University), Edgar J. Goodspeed (University of Chicago), Walter Russell Bowie (Union
Theological Seminary), Frederick C. Grant (Union Theological Seminary), Millar Burrows
(Yale University), Clarence T. Craig (Oberlin Graduate School of Theology), and Abdel R.
Wentz (Lutheran Theological Seminary).

[22] Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (London: Tyndale Press, 1955)
125-85; idem, "The Meaning of ἱλαστήριον in Romans iii. 25," *New Testament Studies* 2
(1955-56): 33-43.

[23] Roger Nicole, "C. H. Dodd and the Doctrine of Propitiation," *Westminster
Theological Journal* 17 (1954-55): 117-57; David Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings:
Studies in the Semantics of Soteriological Terms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,
1967; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2000) 23-48.

[24] I. Howard Marshall, *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978) 118.
Although the *New International Version* may *combine* the concepts of expiation and
propitiation, it is presupposed that there is a single meaning in the text (Thomas,

According to dictionaries and lexicons,[25] there are three possibilities for interpreting ἱλασμός: propitiation, expiation, or atonement. Clavier introduced a fourth and unique interpretation of ἱλασμός as God in Christ not offering to Himself a propitiatory sacrifice; rather, the propitiation is offered as an act of love by God to man.[26] Historically, the majority of English translations have rendered ἱλασμός as propitiation (with exception occurring primarily in the early twentieth century with the research of Dodd). Stott regarded this translation as coming "from the Vulgate, but is regarded by many modern writers as 'infelicitous.'"[27] Some lexicons do not support the possibility for interpreting ἱλασμός as expiation or atonement,[28] whereas others only propose the possibility of expiation.[29] The standard Greek-English lexicon supports the two different meanings of expiation and propitiation as atonement.[30]

Evangelical Hermeneutics, 141-64; cf. Robert W. Wall, "Reading the New Testament in Canonical Context," in *Hearing the New Testament: Strategies for Interpretation*, ed. Joel B. Green [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans] 375-78).

[25] Friedrich Büchsel and Johannes Herrmann, "ἱλάσκομαι, ἱλασμός," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., ed. Gehard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1965) 3:300-23.

[26] "Dieu en Christ ne s'offre pas à Soi-même un sacrifice propitiatoire; c'est à l'homme que la propitiation est offerte, pour vaincre, par cet acte d'amour, ses dernières résistances, pour provoquer en lui le „self surrender", l'abdication de son hostilité, de son orgueil et de ses craintes qui le retiennent loin de Dieu et de son éternel Salut" (Henri Clavier, "Notes sur un Mot-clef du Johannisme et de la Soteriologie Biblique: ἹΛΑΣΜΟΣ," *Novum Testamentum* 10 [1968]: 303). Clavier insisted, "le ton soit mis sur une action de Dieu par Christ, en faveur de l'homme pécheur et repentant, cela paraît incontestable" and identified the "personification hardie de ἱλασμός en Christ" (ibid. 295-96).

[27] John R. W. Stott, *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 84-85.

[28] Joseph Henry Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, rev. and enlarged (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1889) 301.

[29] Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A. Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 2nd ed., 2 vols. (New York: United Bible Societies, 1989) 504; cf. Horst Robert Balz and Gerhard Schneider, eds., *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993) 2:186.

[30] Walter Bauer, Frederick Danker, William Arndt, and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000) 474.

I.B. Overview of Present Need

Due to the polarizing debate between the majority of Covenant Theologians and Dispensational Theologians regarding the nature and extent of the death of Jesus Christ, this research is both necessary and foundational. Unfortunately, the debate seems to be focused upon theological persuasion, as opposed to actual exegesis.[31] Scholarly debate also continues regarding whether the Greek terms derived from the ἱλάσκομαι word group should be translated as "propitiation," "expiation," or a combination of both. Consequently, there is a concrete need for research in this particular field. The research herein is intended to contribute to the scholarship concerning the salvific work of Jesus Christ as ἱλασμός, and will inform understanding of the extent and nature of His death within the plan and purpose of the Godhead. If 1 John 2:2 does indeed reveal the *extent* of the atonement, there should also be a strong relationship upon such revelation for understanding the *nature* of Christ's salvific work on the cross.

I.B.1. Purpose

The primary concern of this research is to examine the usage of ἱλασμός in the First Epistle of John to determine the extent and nature of the death of Jesus Christ. The meaning of ἱλασμός in the First Epistle of John 2:2 (cf. 4:10) is not only relevant for the debate between the majority of Covenant Theologians and Dispensational Theologians, but also for contributing to the scholarly debate concerning whether the Greek terms derived from the ἱλάσκομαι word group should be translated as "propitiation," "expiation," or a combination of both.

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[31] Charles R. Smith, *Did Christ Die Only for the Elect?* (Winona Lake, IN: BMH Books, 1975) 6-7; Robert P. Lightner, *The Death Christ Died*, 2nd rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 1998) 118-24; Craig R. Brown, *The Five Dilemmas of Calvinism* (Orlando: Ligonier Ministries, 2007) 42.

I.B.2. Presupposition

The meaning of ἱλασμός may be determined either semantically or theologically. The proposition of this research is that the theological approach is inadequate because meaning is determined primarily by systematic presuppositions. However, meaning should be determined through grammatical analysis of the First Epistle of John, and consideration of ἱλασμός within social and historical contexts.

Although it is possible to translate ἱλασμός as atoning sacrifice,[32] the primary discussion is whether it should be understood as expiation or propitiation. Therefore, this research will conclude that the preferred translation must be *primarily* either of the two terms. Several presuppositions are acknowledged in formulating the conclusion. *First*, the love of God is the motive for sending His Son— "the one who is in His own bosom"—into the world. "There we see the love of God not only in the world He came into, but in the [ἱλασμός] . . . so that those "in the dregs and depths of sin" may "be delivered."[33] "In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the ἱλασμός for our sins" (1 John 4:10). *Second*, God is not arbitrary but a principled sovereign (cf. Tit 1:2; 2 Tim 2:13; Jas 1:17). He is not bound by any rule higher than Himself, and therefore all His actions are consistent with His immutable character. God willed the ἱλασμός of His own Son because He is love (1 John 4:8, 16). Scripture reveals the love of God as both diverse and dynamic, as opposed to being abstract and somewhat impersonal. The love of God is not contradictory to His wrath.[34] *Third*, the ἱλασμός was required by God for forgiveness of sin (Gen 3:21; Exod 29:36; Lev 4; 9:7: 17:11; Isa 53:4-6, 10-11; Matt 26:27-28; Rom 3:23-25; 4:25; 5:9-10; 1 Cor 15:3; Eph 1:7; 2:13; Col 1:19-23; Heb 9:14-29; 10:19-20; 1 Pet 1:18-19; 2:24; 3:18; 1 John 1:7; 2:1-2; Rev 1:5; 5:9).

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[32] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 118.

[33] Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *The Love of God: Studies in 1 John* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 1994) 57, 59. Lloyd-Jones stated additionally, "He is not trying to persuade an unwilling God to look upon us and to forgive us and have mercy upon us, for as John tells us, it was the Father Himself who 'sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world'" (ibid. 138).

[34] D. A. Carson, *The Difficult Doctrine of the Love of God* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2000) 65-84.

Moreover, references to the blood of Christ in the New Testament are regularly sacrificial (cf. Rom 3:25; 5:9; Eph 1:7; Rev 1:5). *Fourth*, the ἱλασμός is Jesus. He did not merely "die on the cross to change the mind of God (which, like everything about God, was unchangeable)" but to demonstrate the love of God.[35] *Fifth*, the anger (wrath) of God toward sinners is consistent with His love.[36] The anger (wrath) of God is certainly a New Testament theme and should not be neglected from determining the meaning of ἱλασμός.[37] However, understanding John's meaning of καὶ αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστιν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν must be sought within the immediate context. Therefore, even these presuppositions must be acknowledged tentatively, and only as a basis for further examination in this research.

I.B.3. Method

In seeking to understand First John, there have been various methods of describing how it is structured. Interpretations have emphasized characteristics of content (doctrine and paraenesis), style (antithesis and repetition), or outline divisions. According to the theory adopted by Raymond Brown, which is similar to Marinus de Jonge and James Houlden,[38] a Johannine community that sought to confront changing circumstances formulated the Epistles of John. Brown suggested that the author of First John structured the plan of the letter as an imitation and commentary on sections of the Gospel of John. The two plans progress from the "more obvious to the more obscure." The first part addressed the secessionist adversaries (1:5—3:10), which would parallel the interaction with the Jews in John 1:19—12:50. The

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[35] Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999) 108.

[36] The use of the cognate verb ἐξιλάσκεσθαι in the Septuagint not only indicates cleansing and forgiveness of sin, but also the appeasement of God's wrath.

[37] Modern forms of Marcionism, which make a false dichotomy between the "wrathful" God of the Old Testament and the "loving and gentle" Christ of the New Testament, are unwarranted distinctions to the Bible. The Book of Revelation, for instance, reveals the outpouring of God's wrath in the presence of the Lamb (cf. Rev 14:9-11).

[38] Cornelis Haas, Marinus de Jonge, and J. L. Swellengrebel, *A Translator's Handbook on the Letters of John* (London: United Bible Societies, 1972); James L. Houlden, *A Commentary on the Johannine Epistles* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973).

second part focused upon the theme of divine love to the author's adherents (3:11—5:12), which would parallel the believing group in John 13:1—20:29. First John and the Gospel of John both reflect an "outsiders/insiders pattern."[39]

Rudolf Bultmann analyzed the relationship between the Johannine Epistles and the Gospel of John, in addition to the interrelationship of the three Epistles. He concluded that the structure of First John was based upon "a prior written Source" and "a later redaction," which means "the text of First John was reworked to bring it into conformity with ecclesiastical tradition." The writer of First John used and commented upon an earlier Source for the primary component (1:1—5:13) of the Epistle. Based upon the phrase ἀπαγγέλλομεν καὶ ὑμῖν providing grammatical support, Bultmann outlined 1:1-4 as the proemium. He regarded 1:5—2:27 as an original, independent writing, "or perhaps more appropriately, a rough draft," which means "the Epistle could have been concluded with 2:27."[40] First John 2:28—5:12 would be "a compendium of various fragments collected as a supplement to 1:5—2:27" (i.e. not a unified composition, but certainly coherent regarding content, and therefore, exegetical approaches should demonstrate this unity and organic thought).[41] Bultmann admitted the temptation to regard the fragments as representative "sketches or meditations" by "the author" of 1:5—2:27 or his disciples.[42] The postscript of 5:13 states the purpose of the Epistle, and the ecclesiastical redactor supplemented with the appendix in 5:14-21.[43]

George Strecker analyzed First John as an oral discourse, which is similar to the emphasis of Robert Kysar and Pheme Perkins,[44] and accentuated the polemical

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[39] Raymond E. Brown, *The Epistles of John* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982; reprint, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006) 123-26.

[40] Rudolf Bultmann, *The Johannine Epistles*, trans. R. Philip O'Hara et al., ed. Robert W. Funk (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1973) 2-3.

[41] Bultmann rejected questions concerning higher criticism of the entire Epistle in the area of source criticism and redaction criticism, but was sympathetic to the Johannine school hypothesis. See R. Alan Culpepper, *The Johannine School: An Evaluation of the Johannine-School Hypothesis Based on an Investigation of the Nature of Ancient Schools* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975).

[42] Bultmann, *Johannine Epistles*, 43-44.

[43] Ibid. 83.

[44] Robert Kysar, *I, II, III John* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986) 15-16; Pheme Perkins, *The Johannine Epistles* (Wilmington, DE: Michael Glazier, 1979) xix.

emphasis of the Epistle. The recipients of the Epistle were multiple congregations that constituted the Johannine community as a whole, as opposed to a particular local congregation. As a homiletic writing that combines the genres of both letter and sermon (albeit written in the form of a letter), Strecker regarded the content of the homily as alternating between paraenesis and dogmatic exposition. His exegetical method demonstrated "that the conflict with the opposing teachers is restricted mainly to the dogmatic sections," while the letter as a "unified whole" communicates "the author's affection for the Christian community, as opposed to "the existing polemical situation." He proposed the following outline: 1:1-4, prelude; 1:5—2:17, paraenesis; 2:18-27, dogmatic exposition; 2:28—3:24, paraenesis; 4:1-6, dogmatic exposition; 4:7—5:4a, paraenesis; 5:4b-12, dogmatic exposition; and, 5:13-21, final paraenetic remarks.[45]

In seeking to understand First John, and the meaning of ἱλασμός within the Epistle, it would seem best to regard the letter as symphonic. Basic themes appear in a series of cycles.[46] The writer of this Epistle recorded a series of affirmations to his converts, as noted by the recurrent words "little children" and "beloved." A leader within the church directed this Epistle to Christians who were being confronted with teachings antithetical to those revealed by the Holy Spirit to the Apostles. Much of the content of First John relates to false teaching. For instance, the structure of 1:5—2:2 refers to false propositions, which are answered through a Christian apologetic. The false teaching is stated in 1:6, 8, and 10, followed by the Christian concepts in 1:7, 9, and 2:1-2. The entirety of the teachings is predicated upon the proposition that a sanctified life is not possible without a living-redemptive relationship to God the Father through His Son, Jesus Christ.

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[45] Georg Strecker, *The Johannine Letters: A Commentary on 1, 2, and 3 John*, trans. Linda M. Maloney (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) xliii-iv, 3, 18.

[46] Some of these themes are related to the concept of "life" (1:1-2; 2:25; 3:13-16; 4:9; 5:11-13, 16, 20), "light" (1:5, 7; 2:8-10, 16), "darkness" (1:5-6; 2:8-9, 11), "abide" (2:6, 14, 24, 27-28; 3:6, 9, 15, 17, 24; 4:12-13, 15-16). Other distinguishable and recurrent ideas are "love," "witness," "sin," and "believe." Throughout this research, the differing views (either "τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον" or "κοινωνίαν") concerning the primary message of 1 John will be understood as complementary [Dirk van der Merwe, "Salvation in the Johannine Epistles," in *Salvation in the New Testament*, 437-64].

First John 1:5—2:2, therefore, is a pericope that appears to be a hortatory discourse focused upon sin and forgiveness.[47]

(1:5) Principle: καὶ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ ἀγγελία ἥν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ' αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστιν καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία.

> (1:6) False proposition: Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' αὐτοῦ
>
> Heteropraxy: καὶ ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν,
>
> Refutation: ψευδόμεθα καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν·

(1:7) Command and Promise: ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν ὡς αὐτός ἐστιν ἐν τῷ φωτί, κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ' ἀλλήλων καὶ τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας.

> (1:8) False proposition: ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν,
>
> Refutation: ἑαυτοὺς πλανῶμεν καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.

(1:9) Command and Promise: ἐὰν ὁμολογῶμεν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν, πιστός ἐστιν καὶ δίκαιος ἵνα ἀφῇ ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας καὶ καθαρίσῃ ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀδικίας.

> (1:10) False proposition: ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι οὐχ ἡμαρτήκαμεν,
>
> Refutation: ψεύστην ποιοῦμεν αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.

(2:1) Orienter: Τεκνία μου, ταῦτα γράφω ὑμῖν

Command and Promise: ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε. καὶ ἐάν τις ἁμάρτῃ, παράκλητον ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν δίκαιον·

(2:2) Command and Promise: καὶ αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστιν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κὸσμου.

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[47] Simon Kistemaker, *Exposition of the Epistle of James and the Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1986) 248; cf. Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed. (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002) 16-20. Regarding the first two verses of chapter 2 with 1:5-10 as the pericope, D. Moody Smith noted, "this is appropriate, for they continue the theme of the work of Christ in dealing with sin" (*First, Second, and Third John* [Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1991] 55).

Verse 5 states the principle,[48] "God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all."
The central message of verse 5 is the basis for the remainder of this pericope.[49] It
appears that three propositions affirmed by the false teachers were quoted first (cf.
"if we say" in 1:6a, 8a, 10a), then refuted (vv. 1:6cd, 8bc, 10bc), and contrasted with
the commands and promises of the true doctrine (1:7, 9; 2:1b-2). The heterodoxy of
the first proposition from the false teachers manifested itself in heteropraxy (1:6b;
the second and third propositions are not equated with specific heteropraxy). The
vocative in 2:1a does not introduce a new section; rather 2:1-2 is a subunit of the
1:5—2:2 pericope.[50] John's use of the pronoun ταῦτα (2:1; i.e. "this message," "these
things") refers to 1:10 particularly, and to 1:5-10 generally concerning sin and
forgiveness within the church. Consequently, the application of the principle of 1:5
is threefold: (1) walking in the Light assures fellowship and cleansing through the
blood of Jesus (1:6-7); (2) confessing sin assures forgiving and cleansing (1:8-10);
and, (3) the means of fellowship, cleansing, and forgiveness is through the
Advocate,[51] the ἱλασμός for the sins of the world (2:1-2). Whereas the earlier focus
was upon opponents and their false teaching, the mood is changed to relate these
things (1:5-10) to Christians. Due to the guilt of the whole world, the "Advocate with
the Father" pleads on behalf of those whom ἱλασμός for their sin has been made

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[48] Each occurrence of οὗτός in First John, followed by ὅτι or ἵνα indicates
progression of content, which these particles introduced. The only exception would be the
second οὗτός in 5:11.

[49] The principle is also the basis for the entirety of 1:5—2:27.

[50] John Callow, "Where Does 1 John 1 End," in *Discourse Analysis and the New
Testament: Approaches and Results*, eds. Stanley E. Porter and Jeffrey T. Reed (Sheffield:
Sheffield Academic Press, 1999) 401; cf. Robert E. Longacre, "Towards an Exegesis of 1 John
Based on the Discourse Analysis of the Greek Text," in *Linguistics and New Testament
Interpretation: Essays on Discourse Analysis*, ed. David Allan Black (Nashville: Broadman
Press, 1992) 273.

[51] Dirk G. van der Merwe, "Salvation in the Johannine Epistles," in *Salvation in the
New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt (Leiden: Brill, 2005)
446-49; Jan van der Watt, *An Introduction to the Johannine Gospel and Letters* (New York:
T&T Clark, 2007) 56-57, 62-63.

(2:1-2). Jesus Christ is the ἱλασμός Himself.[52] The Septuagint translators used this Greek noun to translate the "mercy seat" on the Ark of the Covenant. First John 1:5—2:2 appears to convey these Old Testament tabernacle connotations.[53]

Either the actuality or potentiality of the ἱλασμός is indicated by three parallel prepositional phrases (περί). First John 2:2 clearly affirms the sufficiency of the ἱλασμός for every individual's sins, but whether there is an actual or potential intent must explain the sense of περί exegetically (i.e. the adverbial relationship of the prepositional phrases to the ἱλασμός). Furthermore, the word κόσμος appears to distinguish two people groups: those for whom an actual ἱλασμός has occurred and those for whom the ἱλασμός is potential. However, it could also be that κόσμος is a synecdoche for people as a whole (i.e. not only those in Asia Minor, but also among all ethnic groups). Any attempt to understand the meaning of "the whole world" in 1 John 2:2 without noting the Johannine usage of κόσμος throughout his First Epistle will result in exegetical fallacy.

Grammatico-historical exegesis of 1 John 2:2 (cf. 4:10) will involve consideration for the grammatical-language context in addition to the historical context of the text of Scripture,[54] and will thereby analyze the coherent units of text in their discernable context, which is to interpret the text in accordance with its normal (literal) sense.[55] The methodology of this research will be to employ grammatico-historical analysis intentionally as a means of examination beyond the sentence level of the text through focus upon factors such as audience (immediate recipients), cohesion (the manner in which discourse components are related), cultural context (discourse aspects distinctive to the immediate recipients), genre

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[52] The relationship of ἱλασμός in 2:2 with παράκλητος in 2:1, and with the confession of sin in 1:8, 10, creates an interesting question whether παράκλητος should be understand in combination with ἱλασμός, or apart from it.

[53] Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross*, 125-85; W. Hall Harris, "A Theology of John's Writings," in *A Biblical Theology of the New Testament*, ed. Roy B. Zuck (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994) 215.

[54] Michael Stallard, "Literal Interpretation," *Journal of Ministry & Theology* 4 (Spring 2000): 14-34.

[55] The normal sense is the grammatical-historical sense, that is, the meaning that the original writer expressed (Robert D. Preus and Earl D. Radmacher, eds., *Hermeneutics, Inerrancy, and the Bible* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1984] 884-85).

(literary style), repetition (word or thematic emphasis), and structure (argumentum organization within the discourse)—although the text will be regarded as the primary object of inquiry.[56]

The questions raised in this introduction concerning the meaning of ἱλασμός in the First Epistle of John 2:2 (cf. 4:10) will be answered in this student's completed research by utilizing semantic-structural analysis for the macrostructure of the text, and critical analysis of 1 John 2:2 (cf. 4:10) through the grammatico-historical method to systematize the words, phrases, and historical situations into meaning of the text.[57] By semantic-structural analysis is meant the attempt to research the organization of the 1 John 1:5—2:2 pericope beyond the sentence level, and in relation to the larger linguistic units, thereby charting the flow of the argument of the pericope.[58] By grammatico-historical[59] is meant the art and skill of explaining or interpreting the text itself (i.e. the words in context, according to form and syntax);[60] it is the attempt to understand all the geographical, historically, and similar elements in the pericope. Since the God of the Bible reveals Himself in action and word in time and space, these elements have significance; it is therefore necessary to identify the *Sitz im Leben* to understand the message.[61]

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[56] Thomas, *Evangelical Hermeneutics*, 113-34, 154-58; George Guthrie, "Discourse Analysis," in *Interpreting the New Testament*, eds. David Alan Black and David S. Dockery (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001) 256; Richard A. Young, *Intermediate New Testament Greek: A Linguistic and Exegetical Approach* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1994).

[57] Black, *Linguistics and New Testament Interpretation*; Joel B. Green, "Discourse Analysis," in *Hearing the New Testament*, 175-96; Stanley E. Porter and D. A. Carson, eds., *Discourse Analysis and Other Topics in Biblical Greek* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995).

[58] Jeffrey T. Reed, "Discourse Analysis," in *Handbook to Exegesis*, 189-217.

[59] Grammatical interpretation includes lexicology, morphology, parts of speech, and syntax. Historical interpretation includes the initial circumstances, context, and setting in which the words of Scripture were written.

[60] Exegesis is from ἐξηγέισθαι which means "to explain" or "to interpret" (from the preposition ἐξ and ἡγέισθαι), as opposed to eisegesis (from ἐισηγέισθαι, "to introduce") which is to interpret the text of Scripture by introducing one's own ideas. Exegesis is a critical interpretation, or "drawing out," of a text or portion of Scripture. A. B. Mickelsen, *Interpreting the Bible* (1963; reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984) 56-57; Walter F. Bauer, William F. Arndt, and Frederick W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed., rev. F. W. Gingrich and F. W. Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979) 343.

[61] John Painter, "The Johannine Literature," in *Handbook to Exegesis*, 582-90.

Establishing the accurate reading of the Greek text will be essential for the exegesis and interpretation of ἱλασμός in the First Epistle of John. Codex Vaticanus is the best manuscript of the Johannine Epistles. Codex Sinaiticus is subsequent in textual accuracy, whereas Codex Alexandrinus is generally expansive and inconsistent regarding the Johannine Epistles. Extended interpolations in 1 John 2:17, 4:3, and 5:6-10, 20 can be identified in several Western manuscripts (particularly considering the Vulgate). Papyrus 9 is an early third century text (albeit fragmentary) of 1 John 4:11-12 and 14-17; it is, however, unreliable for its careless copying as evident in the crude and irregular handwriting, and even indecipherable spellings.[62]

I.B.4. Hypothesis of Research

There appears to be two reasons for opposing the interpretation of ἱλασμός as propitiation: (1) whether or not the concept of God's wrath is biblical, and related to the divine plan of salvation through the salvific work of the ἱλασμός (moreover, how does the context of 4:10 which testifies to the love of God in sending His Son as ἱλασμός to be understood); and, (2) the influence of the ἱλάσκομαι word group upon the meaning in 1 John 2:2 (cf. 4:10). The noun ἱλασμός has the following cognates: ἱλαστήριον, ἱλάσκομαι, and ἵλεως. Therefore, in addition to the concept of whether the concept of God's wrath is biblical, the noun ἱλασμός and its cognates will be researched within classical Greek, within Judaism, and in the Septuagint.[63] The impact of the sacrificial language of the Old Testament upon the Johannine usage will also be examined (e.g. the relationship between αἷμα [1:7] and ἱλασμός

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[62] Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgeselschaft, 1994) 639-51.
[63] The historical interpretation and understanding of the ἱλάσκομαι word group varies chronologically and contextually as a result of variations in language and linguistics, extending to semantic and structural analyses. Understanding the meaning of ἱλασμός necessitates interaction with more than one component (viz. grammatical/syntactical analysis, near/far context, secular/theological motif, and socio-religious background).

[2:2; cf. 4:10]);[64] it would seem indeed that the New Testament writers formulate their word usage for the salvific work of Jesus Christ based upon the preparatory revelation of the Old Testament.[65] Explanations of ἱλασμός that are dependent upon pagan sacrifice analogies as opposed to the sacrificial language of the Old Testament will necessarily distort the character of God.

The concept of Jesus as ἱλασμός in First Epistle of John finds parallel in Pauline theology (Rom 3:25).[66] The key word that Paul used in Romans 3:25 is ἱλαστήριον, which is an uncommon term in the New Testament, as it is used elsewhere only in Hebrews 9:5. The term appears to be a cognate of the Greek verb ἱλάσκεσθαι, which is commonly translated as either propitiate (conciliate) or expiate. Translating ἱλαστήριον as "propitiation" would mean the wrath of God was placated through the death of Christ.[67] The common meaning of ἱλαστήριον in classical Greek is propitiation. Dodd challenged whether this is true necessarily in

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[64] Büchsel and Herrmann, "ἱλάσκομαι, ἱλασμός," in *Theological Dictionary*, 3:301-23

[65] Paul Garnet, "Atonement Constructions in the Old Testament and the Qumran Scrolls," *Evangelical Quarterly* 46 (July—September 1974): 131-63; Bernd Janowski, *Sühne als Heilsgeschehen: traditions- und religionsgeschichtliche Studien zur Sühnetheologie der Priesterschrift*, 2nd ed. (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2000).

[66] See the following research by Cilliers Breytenbach: "Reconciliation: Shifts in Christian Soteriology," in *Reconciliation and Construction: Creative Options for a Rapidly Changing South Africa*, ed. W. S. Vorster [Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1986] 1-25; "On Reconciliation: An Exegetical Response," *Journal of Theology of South Africa* 70 [1989]: 64-68; "Using Exegesis: On 'Reconciliation' and 'Forgiveness' in the Aftermath of the TRC," in *Theology in Dialogue: The Impact of the Arts, Humanities in Science on Contemporary Religious Thought*, eds. John W. De Gruchy, Lyn Holness, and Ralf K. Wüstenberg [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002] 245-56; The 'For Us' Phrases in Pauline Soteriology: Considering Their Background and Use," "Salvation of the Reconciled [With a Note on the Background of Paul's Metaphor of Reconciliation]," in *Salvation in the New Testament: Perspectives on Soteriology*, ed. Jan van der Watt [Leiden: Brill, 2005] 163-85, 271-86. Also helpful is I. Howard Marshall, "The Meaning of 'Reconciliation'," in *Unity and Diversity in New Testament Theology: Essays in Honor of George E. Ladd*, ed. Robert Guelich [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978] 117-32).

[67] Morris, "Meaning of ἱλαστήριον," 33-43. Cranfield understood ἱλαστήριον to mean God purposed the death of Christ as a "propitiatory sacrifice" ("victim"). Therefore, fallen humanity is not the subject of the propitiation; rather it is God Himself who is the object. Christ received the full extent of the God's righteous wrath, which sinners deserved, and which was even "against His own very Self in the person of His Son" (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, 2 vols. [1975; reprint, New York: T & T Clark, 2004] 1:217).

the Septuagint and the New Testament.[68] Since ἱλασμός could have been employed, the majority of commentators understand ἱλαστήριον, as a neuter adjective, in Romans 3:25 to embody greater meaning than "propitiation" merely. The primary interpretations of ἱλαστήριον in Romans 3:25 are that it refers either to a propitiatory act (sacrifice), propitiatory person (Christ), or a propitiatory place (the cross). Consequently, modern translations render ἱλαστήριον as expiation, mercy seat, or propitiation. Translating ἱλαστήριον as "expiation" would mean that the death of Christ cancelled the debt of sin by covering the sins of fallen humanity. The Septuagint translated כַּפֹּרֶת, which is the word for the golden lid ("mercy seat") of the Ark of the Covenant,[69] as ἱλαστήριον (e.g Lev 16:15).[70] Sacrificial reference is certainly a focal point of ἱλαστήριον because the word is used frequently for the lid of the Ark of the Covenant.[71] (The cognate verb ἱλάσκεσθαι does not necessarily contain the identical New Testament meaning as in classical Greek, which is why it is essential to examine the impact of the Old Testament sacrificial language upon the New Testament usage.[72]) According to N. T. Wright, ἱλαστήριον by itself meant "mercy seat."

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[68] Dodd, "'Ἱλάσκεσθαι," 352-60. Barrett translated ἱλαστήριον as God's method for "dealing with sin" (*A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans* [New York: Harper & Row, 1957] 77).

[69] T. W. Manson, "ἱλαστήριον," *Journal of Theological Studies* 46 (1945): 1-10.

[70] In the Vulgate, it is rendered "propitiatorium." The term "mercy seat" was used initially by Tyndale as a literal translation of Luther's inexact rendering "gnadenstuhl" ("throne of grace").

[71] B. Hudson McLean ["The Absence of An Atoning Sacrifice in Paul's Soteriology." *New Testament Studies* 38 (1992): 531-53] argued that Pauline soteriology concerning the death of Christ was not influenced by Judaic sacrificial concepts but rather by Near Eastern ideas of scapegoating (what he called "scapeman"). McLean believe Paul's soteriology "prohibits a sacrificially based interpretation of Christ's atoning death" (p. 531). He offered five defenses of his thesis: "1) sacrifice does not atone for personal sin; 2) a sacrificial victim becomes neither sinful nor accursed, but remains holy; 3) there are no explicit textual references in Paul's letters to Christ's death as an atoning sacrifice; 4) references to Christ's blood in Paul's letters cannot be interpreted as implicit references to an atoning sacrifice; 5) Paul's interpretation of the suffering and death of Christ is incompatible with sacrificial theology" (pp. 531-32).

[72] Dodd understood the Pauline usage of ἱλαστήριον to mean that Christ, as mercy seat, expiated the sins that estranged sinners from God.

The focal point of the great ritual of the Day of atonement; and, thence, the place and/or the means of dealing both with wrath (or punishment) and with sin. Dealing with wrath or punishment is propitiation; with sin, expiation. You propitiate a person who is angry. You expiate a sin, crime, or stain on your character.[73]

The primary issues regarding ἱλαστήριον are threefold: (1) whether the term should be understood as the *means* or the *place* of ἱλαστήριον; (2) whether the term should be understood as an adjective[74] or a noun[75]; and, (3) whether ἱλαστήριον is derived from ἐξιλάσεται, ἱλάσκεσθαι, or ἱλάσκομαι.[76] There have also been attempts to introduce martyr theology into the immediate background of Romans 3:25.[77] Emphasis of this research will focus upon the meaning of ἱλασμός in Johannine imagery, and, in Pauline theology, only as it informs understanding of the Johannine usage. Consequently, the emphasis of this research will be upon the meaning of ἱλασμός in the First Epistle of John 2:2 (cf. 4:10) within its immediate context, and therefore, within the Johannine usage and theological structure. The research of this work will proceed from an analysis of the First Epistle of John in four parts: (1) examining the Epistle macrostructurally through understanding of setting (historical context) and style (literary type/genre); (2) examining the First Epistle of John by means of grammatico-historical analysis; (3) examining First John 1:5—2:2 microstructurally through understanding of word grammar

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[73] N. T. Wright, "Romans," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, 12 vols., ed. Leander E. Keck et al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002) 10:476.

[74] At the ancient town at Harît, the first column of a philosophical work concerning the gods reads: εἰλαστη[ρίο]υς θυσίας [Bernard P. Grenfell, Arthur S. Hunt, and David G. Hogarth, *Fayûm Towns and Their Papyri* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1900) 313]. The adjectival form is also evident in 4 Maccabees 17:22 (ἱλαστηρίου τοῦ θανάτου) and Flavius Josephus, *Antiquitates Judaicae* [ed. Benedikt Niese] 16.182 (ἱλαστήριον μνῆμα).

[75] Arland J. Hultgren, *Paul's Gospel and Mission: The Outlook from His Letter to the Romans* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985) 55-60. G. F. Moore concluded, "the interpretation 'atoning *sacrifice*' (after the analogy of σωτήριον, χαριστήριον, τελεστήριον, etc.) is not entirely certain though highly probable; the more general 'means of expiation' satisfies the context, and the addition of the words 'in his blood' does not necessarily imply that this means is thought of as sacrificial" ("Sacrifice," in *Encyclopædia Biblica*, 4 vols., ed. T. K. Cheyne and J. Sutherland Black [New York: Macmillan, 1903] 4:4229).

[76] Dodd, "῾Ιλάσκεσθαι," 352-60; Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings*, 23-48; Morris, "Meaning of ἱλαστήριον," 33-43; Nicole, "Dodd and Propitiation," 117-57.

[77] Hill, *Greek Words and Hebrew Meanings*, 41-50; Sam K. Williams, *Jesus' Death as Saving Event: The Background and Origin of a Concept* (Missoula, MT: Scholars Press, 1975).

(lexical/grammatical analysis) and sentence grammar (syntax), and concluding with theological analysis; and, (4) examining 4:10 microstructurally through understanding of word grammar (lexical/grammatical analysis) and sentence grammar (syntax), and concluding with theological analysis. A more detailed examination of ἱλασμός within social and historical contexts will determine the terminology of sacrifice in the Old Testament, in addition to the sacrificial language of the ἱλάσκομαι word group in classical Greek, Judaism, and the Septuagint. The grammatico-historical analysis of the First Epistle of John and consideration of ἱλασμός within social and historical contexts will indicate the nature and extent of Christ's death by means of the following: (1) the interpretation of ἱλασμός; (2) three parallel prepositional phrases (περί) in 2:2; and, (3) the Johannine usage of the word κόσμος. The summary and conclusions will indicate the scholarly and theologically important contributions of this research project to New Testament studies.

II. THE GRAMMATICO-HISTORICAL ANALYSIS
OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

II.A. The First Epistle of John, macrostructurally

II.A.1. Historical Context of the First Epistle of John

The Johannine Epistles are frequently categorized with the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation as authored by the Apostle John. The five writings would thus comprise the Johannine corpus. However, there is not unanimous agreement with regard to the authorship of the writings. Three viewpoints currently dominate scholarly discussion with regard to authorship of the Johannine corpus.

The *first view* is that the Apostle John was the sole author of the Gospel, the Epistles, and Revelation.[1] The *second view* is entirely contrary to the first in that three different authors are thought to have composed the Johannine corpus. The assertion is that the Apostle John was an eyewitness to the testimony of Jesus; however, a different individual (nicknamed "the evangelist") wrote the Gospel of John. The presbyter (elder), who is also called John, wrote the Johannine Epistles. A third individual wrote the Book of Revelation.[2] The *third view* is somewhat an amalgamation because the assertion is that the author of the Gospel of John and the Johannine Epistles is the same, but the author of the Book of Revelation was a different, second author.[3]

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[1] Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of John's Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2001) 22-41; D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992) 446-50; Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Introduction* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1978) 864-69; Herman Ridderbos, *The Gospel of John*, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 1-9.

[2] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 21-30; Bart D. Ehrman, *The New Testament*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004) 468-69; Stephen L. Harris, *Understanding the Bible*, 2nd ed. (Palo Alto, CA: Mayfield, 1985) 355; Grant R. Osborne, *Revelation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2002) 2; Robert L. Thomas, *Revelation 1-7* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1992) 2-11.

[3] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 42-48; J. Massyngberde Ford, *Revelation* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1975) 28-30.

Among the three viewpoints, the only unanimous agreement is that the same author wrote the Johannine Epistles.[4] Indeed, the consensus view is "the author of 1 John is the same as the author of 2 and 3 John."[5] One of the reasons to posit that the Apostle John was the sole author of the Gospel of John, the Johannine Epistles, and the Book of Revelation is the internal evidence, particularly the language, thought, and style of these writings.[6] Brown charted similarities of phrases and words between Second and Third John with First John and the Gospel of John. He demonstrated that 70 percent of significant words in Third John are also identifiable in either First John or the Gospel of John. Furthermore, 86 percent of significant words in Second John are identifiable similarly in either First John or the Gospel of John.[7] Von Wahlde demonstrated that there are substantive differences, and rightly concluded, "most of these can be attributed to the context of letter writing as opposed to the more formal context of either Gospel or 'tract' (1 John)." Consequently, "it seems best to conclude that, in spite of differences of language and terminology, the author of 1 John is the same as that of 2 and 3 John."[8]

The similarities of language and terminology are a primary reason to posit that the author of First John is the same as the author of the Gospel of John.[9] For

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[4] Noteworthy exceptions by those who posit one author for First John and another for Second and Third John include the following: Bultmann, *Johannine Epistles*, 1-2; Udo Schnelle, *The History and Theology of the New Testament Writings*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1998) 455; Strecker, *Johannine Letters*, xxxv-xlii; and, Klaus Wengst, *Häresie und Orthodoxie im Spiegel des ersten Johannesbriefe* (Gütersloh: Verlag, 1976) 230-31.

[5] Urban C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010) 3:6.

[6] Kruse, *Letters of John*, 9-11; Merrill C. Tenney, *New Testament Survey*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1985) 374-75; Thomas, *Revelation 1-7*, 11-17.

[7] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 755-59; von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 7.

[8] Von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters*, 9.

[9] Alternative proposals against Johannine authorship include: (1) an unknown elder within the Johannine community; (2) a supporter of the Apostle John (or, the disiple "whom Jesus loved;" John 13:23); and, (3) "John the Elder" of Asia Minor (Martin Hengel, *The Johannine Question* [London: SCM Press, 1989]). One of the most influential arguments against apostolic authorship is that of a Johannine community ("circle" or "school") (Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* [Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1979]; Oscar Cullman, *The Johannine Circle* [Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976]; Helmut Koester, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2000] 2:182-83; James L. Martyn, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel* [Nashville: Abingdon,

instance, the prologues of First John and the Gospel of John are remarkably similar, and indicate eyewitness testimony with regard to the historical Jesus.[10] Furthermore, the purpose of First John and the Gospel of John are consistent: to elicit faith in Christ and to know the certainty of eternal life (cf. John 20:31; 1 John 5:13).[11]

The Johannine Epistles are important because they provide clarity with regard to the circumstances and issues that the church was experiencing by the end of the first century. Even as the church grew numerically, there was also opposition. The incipient church was dependent upon traveling evangelists and teachers to communicate the gospel, which would result in the Lord "adding to their number

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1979]). A primary argument in favor of the Johannine community is the assertion that the reference to expulsion from the synagogue in John's Gospel (9:22; 12:42; 16:2) is anachronistic. The historical merits of this perspective have been rigorously examined and have progressively been more questioned (Richard Bauckham, ed., *The Gospel for All Christians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998]; Martin Hengel, *Die Johanneische Frage* [Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1993]; cf. Robert Kysar, *Voyages with John: Charting the Fourth Gospel* [Waco, TX: Baylor University Press, 2005]).

[10] The author of this research project contends that the Gospel of John was written approximately AD 85-95 by the Apostle John. The Johannine Epistles were written during the general time that John wrote his Gospel. First John was written AD 85, and was included with the New Testament Homologoumena. The Second (ca. 85-90) and Third (ca. 90) Epistles were regarded as New Testament Antilegomena for various reasons with regard to their inclusion in the biblical canon. Although canonical acceptance was gradual for the Second and Third Epistles of John, these books were cited as inspired by the earliest sources and did have an early apostolic recognition. Similar to the Pauline and Petrine Epistles, the Apostle sent his letters to cities, individuals, and regions with the express need for response to specific ecclesial issues (see Ron J. Bigalke Jr., "Literature, Early," in *The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization*, 4 vols., ed. George Thomas Kurian [Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011] 2:1357). According to 3 John 9, the Apostle wrote other letters that are non-extant. The allusion to the previous letter should not be regarded as 2 John. Diotrephes, the influential church leader who rejected John's authority, apparently either received the letter or prevented its delivery to Gaius. Since traveling evangelists and teachers in the first two centuries of the church promulgated the Gospel, these missionaries were welcomed into homes and given provisions for their journey when they departed. Gnostic teachers, however, also adopted this practice. John urged his readers to be discerning with regard to traveling teachers, and to refuse hospitality and support to false teachers "who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh" (2 John 7). The circumstances and content of 2 John do not appear to indicate that it is the prior letter referenced in 3 John 9. Consequently, the three extant letters of John, which were written at three different times with three different audiences and purposes, were included in the biblical canon.

[11] Kruse, *Letters of John*, 5; cf. Tenney, *New Testament Survey*, 374-75; von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters of John*, 3:29-33.

day by day those who were being saved" (e.g. Acts 2:47). Consequently, there was significant communication among local churches by means of correspondence and personal visitation. As a consequence of these circumstances, the early church needed to be vigilant in their discernment because many false teachers sought to distinguish themselves as being legitimate leaders. First John 2:18 warns, "Children, it is the last hour; and just as you have heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour."[12]

II.A.1.a. The First Epistle

As reflected in its title, certainty is lacking with regard to the recipients of the First Epistle of John. The simplest title, IWANNOU A, is identifiable in Codex Alexandrinus (A) and Codex Vaticanus (B). Codex Sinaiticus (א) has a slightly expanded form: ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ ΕΠΙΣΤΟΛΗ Α, whereas Codex Ephraemi (C) does not contain any title. Codex Angelicus (L) includes the epithet καθολικνή, which indicates that the First Epistle was general or circular (in the sense of universal), and thereafter appears in the majority of titles. Although not addressed to any particular church or individual, the Epistle was certainly sent to those churches familiar with John's ministry (possibly the seven churches of Asia Minor). As a consequence of its "general" addressees, the Epistle does not contain the typical introduction and conclusion as characteristic of other New Testament writings. While there is an evident structure to the Gospel of John, analysis of the Johannine Epistles may be difficult since the author did not write dialectically.

John resumed the response to the escalating expressions of false teaching that both Peter (in his second epistle) and Jude addressed. The specific aberrant teaching to which John elicited response in his First Epistle is not readily apparent. His letter is not entirely polemical but does provide substantive warning against a

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[12] There were also significant and unique transitions in leadership due to the martyrdom of the twelve apostles (of course, John being the only apostle to die naturally). At the time of John's writing, the church was developing the revealed precedent for ecclesial leadership in 1 Timothy 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9.

Gnosticism that was becoming ever more persuasive.[13] Although Gnosticism may be expressed multitudinously, there was agreement among its proponents with regard to the essential evil of matter. The primary manifestations of this teaching involved those who denied the humanity of Christ as mere illusion, and those who distinguished the man Jesus from the divine (*aeon*) Christ that resided on the body of Jesus at His baptism and departed at the crucifixion. There are historical accounts with regard to John's interaction with the Gnostic teacher in Ephesus (named Cerinthus) who affirmed Docetic theology. Docetists believed Jesus was truly God but merely appeared to be human (δοκέω, "to appear" or "to seem"). Docetism distorted the biblical revelation concerning Jesus by teaching that the incarnation made Him merely appear human. Affirming Docetic Christology, Cerinthus taught that the "Christ" descended upon Jesus at His baptism "in the form of a dove from the Supreme Ruler, and that then he proclaimed the unknown Father, and performed miracles."[14] According to this heretical interpretation of Scripture, the Christ did not suffer upon the cross and therefore remained pure as a spiritual being. Although Gnostic teachings were not entirely pervasive until the second and third centuries, an incipient Gnosticism was prevalent enough that John admonished his readers to "test the spirits" whether they confessed the incarnation (1 John 4:1-3), which would indicate that John was writing against either Docetism, an incipient Gnosticism, or some similar teaching. Therefore, it is not entirely certain that John was responding to Cerinthian theology since his warnings do not correspond exactly with the representation of those heretical teachings provided by Irenaeus. Moreover, because the Docetic and Gnostic teachings were multifaceted, both John and Irenaeus may not have responded to every issue those heresies presented. The teaching of Cerinthus was serious enough that John would not even enter a public bath in Ephesus when he perceived Cerinthus to be present. He "rushed out of the

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[13] Gnosticism has a twofold application: (1) to denote a broad religious movement that was essentially dualistic and syncretistic, and was predominate throughout the ancient Near East immediately before and after the first century AD; and, (2) the religious system that was prevalent from the second to the fourth century AD. The usage here is with regard to Gnosticism in the general meaning, as opposed to the primary distinctives of the latter.

[14] Irenaeus, "Against Heresies," in *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, 10 vols., eds. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (1885; reprint, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1995) 1:352.

bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, 'Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.'"[15]

Similar to the Apostle Peter's earlier writings, John proposed that the church demonstrate resolve with regard to the false teaching (which eventually developed into the religious movement that was particularly influential among the second century church) by affirming the knowledge "concerning the Word of Life" and "the testimony of God."[16] According to First John, sanctified living and love for fellow Christians is the consequence of this knowledge. John was intentional to communicate that three dynamics are adequate for discerning false teaching: (1) the Lord's resurrection; (2) the Holy Spirit's work; and, (3) the believer's sanctified life.

II.A.1.b. Reason for Writing

In seeking to understand First John, and the meaning of ἱλασμός within the Epistle, the reader may discern a twofold purpose for the writing. *Firstly*, believers in Jesus Christ are assured to have eternal life (5:13) and encouraged to have complete joy (1:4). *Secondly*, the Epistle was written to correct false Gnostic teachings in contradiction to the certainty of the apostolic message. The symphonic character of First John is evident as basic themes appear in cyclical series. Some of these themes are related to the concept of "life" (1:1-2; 2:25; 3:13-16; 4:9; 5:11-13, 16, 20), "light" (1:5, 7; 2:8-10, 16), "darkness" (1:5-6; 2:8-9, 11), "abide" (2:6, 14, 24, 27-28; 3:6, 9, 15, 17, 24; 4:12-13, 15-16). Other distinguishable and recurrent ideas are "love," "witness," "sin," and "believe." Throughout this research, the differing views (either "τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον" or "κοινωνίαν") concerning the primary message of 1 John

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[15] Ibid. 1:416. Irenaeus remarked, "Such was the horror which the apostles and their disciples had against holding even verbal communication with any corrupters of the truth" (ibid).

[16] In various cognates, Peter employed the word "know" and "knowledge" sixteen times in his second epistle (1:2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 12, 14, 16, 20, 21[twice]; 2:9, 20; 3:3, 17, 18). Only one usage is in reference to the Lord (2:9); the other usages emphasize the "true knowledge" that all Christians *already* know." The remedy against false teaching is the knowledge from the prophetic message, which was validated by the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and revealed "by the Holy Spirit" (1:16-21).

will be understood as complementary.[17] Van der Merwe likened this distinction to a spiral as "an expression of thought-structure" wherein "the author regularly returns to a point where he has been before, but by bringing in a new element he moves a step further." Consequently, "it would be impossible to explore one without saying something about the others as well."[18]

The Christians to whom this Epistle is addressed were being confronted with teachings antithetical to those revealed by the Holy Spirit to the Apostles. Much of the content of First John relates to false teaching. While John was exiled to Patmos (Rev 1:9), he wrote the Johannine Epistles, the Book of Revelation, and combated Gnostic heretics. According to tradition,[19] the Apostle lived the latter years of his life in Ephesus (until the reign of Trajan).[20] The Apostle Paul was first to proclaim the Gospel to the Roman province of Asia (cf. Acts 18:19-21; 19:1-41; 20:17-38). Having established several churches in the Ephesus territory within a period of nearly three years, Paul appointed Timothy to continue the ministry and departed for Macedonia (Acts 20:1). He urged Timothy to instruct certain self-appointed teachers not to teach erroneous and godless doctrines (1 Tim 1:3, 6-7; 2 Tim 2:16-18). When John wrote the Book of Revelation, the church in Ephesus (and in several other Asiatic cities) was still confronted by "evil men" and false apostles (Rev 2:1-3, 6).

The Johannine Gospel and Epistles elucidate that Gnosticism articulated an erroneous conception regarding the nature of Jesus' deity (and additionally denying His deity). John, therefore, emphasized the genuineness of Jesus' human nature when he wrote, "the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Moreover, he stated the following: "blood and water" exited the dead body of Jesus when His side was pierced (19:34); the resurrection body of Jesus bore "the imprint

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[17] Dirk van der Merwe, "Salvation in the Johannine Epistles," in *Salvation in the New Testament*, 437-64.

[18] Ibid. 437; cf. van der Watt, *Johannine Gospel and Letters*, 28-30.

[19] Another post-New Testament tradition is that Ephesus is the location for the death of Mary Magdalene. Additionally, "Mary's house" is a venerated shrine in Ephesus for the mother of Jesus; however, the evidence for Ephesus as the location for her residence or burial is less ancient and dependent upon text from the Council of Ephesus.

[20] Cf. Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III.III.4; Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III.XXIII, IV.XIV.

of the nails" from the crucifixion in His hands and side (20:25-28); the testimony of the Apostles concerning hearing, seeing, beholding, and touching "the Word of Life" (1 John 1:1); the Holy Spirit causes every spirit from God to confess "that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (4:2); and, Jesus Christ "came by water and blood" (5:6).[21]

The error of Gnostic teaching regarding the Person of Christ was the consequence of conceptions regarding the nature of God and the world. The effect of Gnostic teaching is to deny the efficaciousness of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. According to Gnostic teaching, Christ could not die if He did not possess a true physical body, nor could there be any efficaciousness to His death, if Christ was not true God by nature. Consistent with the Greek worldview, the Gnostics denied the bodily resurrection of the dead (cf. Acts 17:32).[22] The First Epistle of John, in particular, not only corrected the error of Gnostic teaching concerning the Person of Christ, but also it expounded the nature of Christian morality, which was necessary as a consequence of the Gnostic teaching regarding soteriological conceptions. As the privilege of the elect, Gnostic teachers claimed to attain an exclusive kind of spiritual enlightenment that allowed them to achieve an exalted and superior level of knowledge as an effective salvific energy. Gnostics maintained that salvation was not achieved by faith (πίστις), but rather through esoteric knowledge (γνῶσις) that was not available to the uninitiated. The emphasis upon γνῶσις was consistent with the Greek conception of "sin" as merely intellectual as opposed to moral culpability (and thereby necessitating regeneration).

When the knowers (Gnostics) attained γνῶσις, which revealed to them a knowledge of the nature of the transcendent god, their own original consubstantiality to him, and an awareness of their heavenly origins and destiny (predetermined destiny of bliss), they were released from the bondage of their

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[21] Whether the statement of 1 John 5:6 is interpreted as a reference to the birth process, the crucifixion, or to both birth and death, the reference is certainly testimony to the genuineness of Jesus' humanity.

[22] Only Judaism (with the exception of the Sadducees, Matt 22:23; Acts 4:1-2; 23:6-8) and Christianity affirmed the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

material bodies ("the prison-house of the soul"[23]), and also the evil world-creating and world-ruling powers (archons). Having been unshackled and no longer somnolent, the elect are able to live their earthly existence as desired, which may result in life as either an ascetic (demonstrating withdraw from the material world) or sensualist (living in unrestrained manner so as to demonstrate freedom from the bondage of the material world[24]). Consequently, a primary emphasis for writing the First Epistle of John was in regard to Gnosticism. For instance, First John 1:5—2:2 specifies Gnostic concepts in 1:6, 1:8, and 1:10, which are countered by the Christian concepts in verses 1:7, 1:9, and 2:1-2. The entirety of John's specific teaching is either affirmed or denied by the proposition that eternal life is possible solely upon belief in the Lord Jesus, and through a vital redemptive relationship to God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ. One cannot disavow the consequence of darkness and share in that darkness, if "he is in the Light." The one who knows the truth lives according to God's commandments, which have been revealed through the Lord Jesus and His apostles (cf. 1 John 2:3-24).

As John continued the teaching of his epistle, he contrasted "the one who practices righteousness" as righteous and "the one who practices sin" as belonging to the devil (cf. 2:25—3:12). The practice of righteousness fulfills the purpose for the first coming of the Son of God (3:7-8). Moreover, the apostle provided a detailed explanation concerning the nature of love (3:13-24). Living in obedience to the will of God as demonstrated in love for "the brethren" is what Jesus Christ has commanded and what He expects of those who abide in Him. The demonstration of love—through both action and word—is obedience to the commandment of God's Son Jesus Christ (3:23; cf. John 13:34-35). Therefore, in the first six verses of chapter

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[23] Throughout the *Phaedo*, Plato contrasted the soul and the body, and employed the Pythagorean expression, "the body is the prison house of the soul." It seems apparent that the essential details of the Gnostic religion were developed by teachers familiar with Platonist metaphysics, as such concepts were widely accessible in the Mediterranean world from the first century BC. Aristotle was overtly opposed to Plato's Archetypal world. Thomas Aquinas argued that the essential relation between the Creator and His creatures is the realm of ideas that are unified in reality with His essence.

[24] Obviously, in disquieting defiance of the Lord's teaching concerning "the truth" of His word making one free: "Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin" (John 8:34).

4, the Apostle contrasted "the spirit of truth and the spirit of error." Following this brief parenthesis, John provided a detailed exposition concerning the love of God for those who "might live through Him;" it is because of His love that God sent His only begotten Son into the world as the ἱλασμός for sin (4:10). Therefore, those who are His are commanded to follow the example of divine love through love in their own lives (4:7—5:3). Both righteousness and love are two necessary and practical demonstrations of a vital redemptive relationship to God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ. John concluded his first epistle by indicating the nature of Christianity for the purpose of providing confidence to the believer in Jesus Christ, and to expose those whose beliefs and teachings were antithetical to those revealed by the Holy Spirit to the Apostles (5:1-21). The importance of understanding the entirety of John's teaching is related to knowing that one has "eternal life." The purpose for the writing of the First Epistle of John was to provide an objective analysis of oneself with regard to the eternal (5:13). Eternal life is through belief "in the name of the Son of God, and is evident through love of God and observance of His revealed commands which is manifested in the practice of righteousness.

II.A.2. Style of the First Epistle of John

First John does not contain the typical characteristics that would designate it as an epistle. The early church was dependent upon the epistolary format as a common method of communication. Several factors were particular to the early church that influenced the manner in which the letters were composed. The epistles were used for affirming the unique authority of the Apostles, for correction and discipleship, for greetings and encouragement, and for the proclamation of the gospel message. Congregations could be addressed with regard to both doctrine and practice. The epistles were written upon papyri and adopted the conventions of Greek letters with some modifications unique to the Christian experience. The typical epistolary format began with a prescript (*praescriptio*), which included a sender (*superscriptio*), addressee (*adscripto*), and greetings (*salutatio*). The prescript was often followed by the sender's thanksgiving to God (*eucharistein*). The body or

message of the epistle was subsequent to the thanksgiving, and the epistle was typically concluded with a closing or postscript.[25]

The genre of First John differs from the epistolary format. When one examines twenty-one New Testament works that are "normally classified as epistles, I John is the least letterlike in format."[26] The nearest parallel to First John in the New Testament canon is Hebrews and James, since "Hebrews lacks the customary opening, while James likes the customary ending," yet "1 John lacks both."[27] First John does not include an author nor does it designate the recipients.[28] First John does not contain a closing or postscript.[29] Consequently, there has been much diversity with regard to identifying the genre for First John.

First John has been regarded as a "tractate," which was intended for the church worldwide.[30] The classification of First John as a tractate would explain why there is no designation of an author or specifically designated recipients. However, such a classification does not explain how the absence of these typical epistolary characteristics would encourage the early church to accept First John as inspired, and thus, authoritative.[31]

Another possibility for the genre of First John is to regard it as a circular epistle. The classification of First John as a circular epistle would explain the "particularity" of the contents and the lack of the epistolary format, in addition to justifying the absence of "opening and closing greetings" and the omission of personal names since it "was intended for a number of different churches."[32] A third possibility for the genre of First John is to regard it as "homily" or encyclical." First John can certainly be described as hortatory, which would be consistent with a

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[25] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 788-95; Duane F. Watson, "Letter, Letter Form," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament and Its Developments*, eds. Ralph P. Martin and Peter H. Davids (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1997) 649-51.

[26] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 87.

[27] Andreas J. Köstenberger, *A Theology of John's Gospel and Letters* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2009) 125.

[28] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, xxix.

[29] Gary M. Burge, "John, Letters of," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament*, 596.

[30] Hans Windisch, *Die Katholischen Briefe*, 3rd rev. ed. (Tübingen: Mohr, 1951) 136, as cited in Brown, *Epistles of John*, 87.

[31] Kruse, *Letters of John*, 28.

[32] Ibid. 28-29.

pastoral encyclical.[33] The somber character and unequivocal commands of First John, in addition to the terms of endearment, might be an indication of a pastoral homily. However, one would expect that a pastor would identify himself.

Brown understood First John as a commentary on the Gospel of John. He regarded the "peculiar format" as "influenced by the author's attempt to refute the secessionists" as a commentary on the Fourth Gospel "to which they also appealed as a justification for their views."[34] Smalley regarded First John simply as "a paper" (however, not in the academic sense). The paper was certainly written with consideration of the Gospel of John, "for purposes of teaching and further discussion, of the Christological and ethical issues that were causing debate and even division within the Johannine church."[35]

First John does not contain the typical epistolary format, yet it can still be understood as a letter for reasons noted by Aune. "Early Christian letters tend to resist rigid classification, either in terms of the three main types of oratory or in terms of the many categories listed by the epistolary theorists. Most early Christian letters are multifunctional and have a 'mixed' character, combining elements from two or more epistolary types."[36] The author of First John was an authoritative individual (i.e. an Apostle). However, the recipients are identified with general and figurative terms, such as "little children" and "beloved." Specific information was provided with regard to the false teaching of the secessionists (2:18-24). First John thus appears to be written in response to a particular situation. John wrote his letter to both encourage and instruct those Christians in and near Asia Minor with regard to the gospel and their relationship to it.[37]

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[33] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 89; Robert E. Longacre, "Exhortation and Mitigation in First John," *Selected Technical Articles Related to Translation* 9 (1983): 3-5.

[34] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 90. Marshall noted, "John considered it necessary to write a careful statement of the apostolic understanding of Christianity for the benefit of his friends so that they might see where it was distorted by the seceders and confirm their own understanding of it and their place in the company of God's people" (*Epistles of John*, 14-15).

[35] Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, xxx.

[36] David E. Aune, *The New Testament in Its Literary Environment* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1987) 203.

[37] Köstenberger, *Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, 126.

II.B. The Structural Analysis of the First Epistle of John

As previously stated, the goal for this grammatico-historical study is to analyze the text of First John 1:5—2:2 and 4:10 to understanding the meaning of ἱλασμός. The most characteristic distinctive of this structural study is analysis beyond sentence boundaries.[27] "The definition of the textual unit (or unities), ie that unit which extends beyond the boundaries of the sentence and is larger than the sentence, is one of the most attractive problems" for this approach.[28] Semantic-structural analysis presupposes the text as the fundamental aspect of language because communication is inherent in the text as opposed to the sentence. While it is challenging not to begin this research with an emphasis upon ἱλασμός and the phraseology containing its usage, and then progress to emphasis upon the clause to the larger units, and ultimately to the Johannine text itself, the recognition that the text is the fundamental linguistic unit necessitates first identifying the unit boundaries within the Johannine discourse.[29] However, a cursory examination with regard to commentaries on the Johannine Epistles will quickly demonstrate that structural analyses are often in variance with one another. Moreover, as demonstrated by Anderson in his exegetical summary,[30] even the first word of the text of the First Epistle of John demonstrates the need for structural analysis.[31]

Surveying commentaries and introductions to the Johannine Epistles reveals a multiplicity of methodology with regard to the structure of the Epistles. Proposals have generally emphasized characteristics of content (doctrine and paraenesis),

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[27] Andreas Hock, "The Book of Revelation and Discourse Analysis" (paper presented at the inaugural conference of the Monsignor Jerome D. Quinn Institute for Biblical Studies, Saint Paul Seminary School of Divinity, St. Paul, MN, 13 June 2009) 2.

[28] János S. Petöfi, ed., *Text vs Sentence: Basic Questions of Text Linguistics* (Hamburg: Helmut Buske, 1979) 283.

[29] George H. Guthrie, *The Structure of Hebrews: A Text-Linguistic Analysis* (Leiden: Brill, 1994) 49-55.

[30] John L. Anderson, *An Exegetical Summary of 1, 2, & 3 John* (Dallas: SIL International, 1992) 10.

[31] It is not that such structural analysis is superior to other hermeneutical methodologies, especially historico-grammatical interpretation; rather, it is necessary to demonstrate fundamental language functions and text structures.

style (antithesis and repetition), or outline divisions. If the intent of the author is connected to the structure of the text, then commentaries and introductions may not adequately explain the meaning of ἱλασμός in the First Epistle of John. By means of structural analysis and consideration of ἱλασμός within social and historical contexts, the authorial intent can be discerned. The lack of agreement among commentators as to the division of the First Epistle of John has resulted in numerous interpretative conclusions. For instance, Brooke remarked, "While some agreement is found with regard to the possible division of the First Epistle into paragraphs, no analysis of the Epistle has been generally accepted. The aphoristic character of the writer's meditations is the real cause of this diversity of arrangement, and perhaps the attempt to analyse the Epistle should be abandoned as useless."[32] Moreover, as a consequence of difficulty in ascertaining the structure of the text, interpretations are formulated frequently upon theological persuasions and historical reconstruction.

The methodology of this research is a holistic analysis first, followed by a microstructural analysis of First John 1:5—2:2 (cf. 4:10) prior to considering ἱλασμός within social and historical contexts. As stated in the introduction, this is essential due to theological persuasions with regard to determining or stating the meaning of ἱλασμός. The tendency to structure the First Epistle of John partitively (microstructurally) as opposed to holistically (macrostructurally) certainly contributes to interpretative confusion with regard to the meaning of ἱλασμός in 2:2 and 4:10. Since macrostructural analysis seeks to approach the text holistically, it will seek to identify unit boundaries as opposed to focusing merely upon the sentence. The attempt to identify a relationship between each section constituent and subsection constituent that contributes to the intent of the entire text necessitates a concentrated effort to explain word grammar and sentence grammar at the microstructural level. In other words, discerning why a certain verb tense was used is more relative to the author's theme for writing, as opposed to being merely syntactical, especially considering that other options in verb usage were possible

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[32] A. E. Brooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Johannine Epistles* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1912), xxxii.

(yet only one would communicate the particular message that the author wished to convey).

There have been many attempts to provide structural analyses for First John. However, with the exception of the prologue (1:1-4) and the conclusion (5:13-21),[33] it is nearly impossible to identify agreement among commentators, which can be frustrating for the majority of believers who seek to understand the First Epistle of John macrostructurally. As a consequence of this challenge, some commentators have suggested that it is impossible to identify an evident structure in First John. Strecker, for example, commented, "But for the most part 1 John is seen as a relatively loose series of various trains of thought hung together on the basis of association. Many exegetes therefore regard their suggested outlines more as aids to the reader's understanding than as genuine attempts to discover a clear-cut form within the letter."[34] Such pessimism, however, seems unnecessary since there does appear to be a definite structure, which the analysis within this dissertation will demonstrate and allow the reader to discern.[35] The structure in which the thought process was developed is fundamental for understanding the contents of First John. As a consequence of diverse proposals with regard to the structure of First John, it seems appropriate to address this diversity first and then conclude by demonstrating how microstructural analysis indicates the structure.

II.B.1. Structural Proposals of the First Epistle of John

Brown noted that diversity with regard to structural analysis is not merely characteristic of modern biblical scholarship. Augustine confessed that First John

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[33] Köstenberger, *Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, 171.

[34] Strecker, *Johannine Letters*, xliii. Colin G. Kruse wrote similarly: "The analysis of 1 John . . . does not seek to trace any developing argument throughout the letter because there isn't one" (*The Letters of John* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000] 32).

[35] The preceding comments are not intended to imply that commentators are either uninterested or unwilling to resolve structural issues because scholars have indeed and continue to propose numerous suggestions. See, for instance, Brown, *Epistles of John*, 116-29; Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 22-27; and, P. J. van Staden, "The Debate on the Structure of 1 John," *Hervormde Teologiese Studies* 47 (1991): 487-502.

possessed a lack of sequence and thought development, and John Calvin likewise communicated the absence of continuity.[36] Operinus published a commentary in 1741 in which he demonstrated that John's purpose for writing was announced in his preface, and this formed the basis for the remaining composition throughout his epistle. Almost all subsequent commentators worked from the persuasion that Operinus articulated.[37] Not until the latter half of the nineteenth century did scholars exert diligence to resolve the structural difficulties of First John. During this time, Westcott remarked, "It is extremely difficult to determine with certainty the structure of the Epistle. No single arrangement is able to take account of the complex development of thought which it offers, and of the many connexions which exist between its different parts."[38] Writing concurrently, Plummer admitted that John did not write dialectically, but adamantly refused the notion that John's structure was disorganized.

> It is quite true to say with Calvin that the Epistle is a compound of doctrine and exhortation: what Epistle in N.T. is not? But it is a mistake to suppose with him that the composition is confused. Again, it is quite true to say that the Apostle's method is not dialectical. But it cannot follow from this that he has no method at all. He seldom argues; one who sees the truth, and believes that every sincere believer will see it also, has not much need to argue: he merely states the truth and leaves it to exercise its legitimate power over every truth-loving heart. But in thus simply affirming what is true and denying what is false he does not allow his thoughts to come out haphazard. Each one as it comes before us may be complete in itself; but it is linked on to what precedes and what follows. The links are often subtle, and sometimes we cannot be sure that we have detected them; but they are seldom entirely absent. . . . The *spiral movement*, which is so conspicuous in the Prologue to the Gospel and in Christ's Farewell Discourses, is apparent in the Epistle also.[39]

A few years later than Westcott and Plummer, Häring argued for the ability to "erkennt man vollends deutlich, in welchem Verhältniss die beiden Grundgedanken in der ganzen Ausführung des Briefs stehen." He recognized structure in First John

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[36] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 116.

[37] Johann Eduard Huther, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the General Epistles of James, Peter, John, and Jude*, 3rd ed., trans. Paton J. Gloag and Clarke H. Irwin (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1887) 442.

[38] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, xlvi.

[39] Alfred Plummer, *The Epistles of St. John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1886; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 1980) liii-liv.

based upon an "ethische und christologische These."[40] Between the prologue (1:1-4) and the conclusion (5:13-21), these two primary emphases were expressed repeatedly within three primary divisions: A. 1:5—2:27; B. 2:28—4:6; and, C. 4:7—5:12.[41] Häring's recognition of this associated and intertwined structure, which was alternated between an "ethische und christologische These" within the threefold division," influenced subsequent commentators profoundly.

Von Soden's work, *Die Schriften des Neuen Testaments*, became the most important with regard to the text of the New Testament since Westcott and Hort's Greek New Testament.[42] He distinguished "drei Gedankenkreise voneinander trennen" in the First Epistle of John: I. 1:5—2:28 combats the idea of "gut and böse" in the life of a Christian; II. 2:29—3:22 defines the assertion of morality (both outwardly and inwardly) more distinctly; and, III. 3:23—5:13 addresses the mutual relationship between faith in Jesus Christ and the fulfillment of His command to love. Von Soden asserted that the "drei Gedankenkreise voneinander trennen" are closed related; therefore, the divisions continually intersect with one another.[43]

> Denn er ist keine Einheit, sondern eine Aneinanderreihung von Gedankengruppen. Diese sind aber einander so verwandt, daß die Grenzen ineinander fließen. Dieselben Gedanken und dieselben Stichworte kehren in verschiedenen dieser Gruppen wieder. Alles Persönliche fehlt. Nur Anschauungen werden miteinander abgewogen. Dennoch kennt der Verfasser die, die er sich als Leser denkt, und traut sich ihnen gegenüber eine Autorität zu.[44]

Also writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, Law observed: "The impression might be, indeed, that there is no such progress [in the First Epistle of John], but that the thought, after sundry gyrations, returns ever to the same point . . .

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[40] Theodor von Häring, "Gedankengang und Grundgedanke des ersten Johannesbriefs," in *Theologische Abhandlungen*, Adolf Harnack et al. (Freiburg I. B.: J. C. B. Mohr, 1892) 184.

[41] Ibid. 184-87.

[42] Hermann Freiherr von Soden, *Die Schriften des neuen Testaments in ihrer ältesten erreichbaren Textgestalt hergestellt auf Grund ihrer Textgeschichte*, 3 vols. (Berlin: Alexander Duncker, 1902-10).

[43] Hermann Freiherr von Soden, *Urchristliche Literaturgeschichte (die Schriften des Neuen Testaments)* (Berlin: Alexander Duncker, 1905) 191-92.

[44] Ibid. 191.

here it seems as if, while the things said are of supreme importance, the order in which they are said matters nothing."[45] Law rejected this impression, as characteristic of some scholars, that First John possesses "no logical structure . . . no ordered progression of thought." Nevertheless, he noted, "And this estimate has a measure of support in the fact that there is no portion of Scripture regarding the plan of which there has been greater diversity of opinion." Law concluded such an estimate "is nevertheless erroneous," and argued (in agreement with Plummer) for a "spiral" structure to the Epistle.

> The word that, to my mind, might best describe St. John's mode of thinking and writing in this Epistle is "spiral." The course of thought does not move from point to point in a straight line. It is like a winding staircase—always revolving around the same centre, always recurring to the same topics, but at a higher level. Or, to borrow a term from music, one might describe the method as contrapuntal. The Epistle works with a comparatively small number of themes, which are introduced many times, and are brought into every possible relation to one another. . . . And the clue to the structure of the Epistle will be found by tracing the introduction and reappearances of these leading themes.[46]

Brooke's commentary—written a few years after Law's work—was not as positive with regard to the division of the First Epistle. He noted, "no analysis of the Epistle has been generally accepted; therefore, "The aphoristic character of the writer's meditations is the real cause of this diversity of arrangement, and perhaps the attempt to analyze the Epistle should be abandoned as useless."[47] Perhaps recognizing the necessity to arrange John's meditations for continuity in his commentary, Brooke reproduced the structural analyses of von Soden, Häring, and Law. He concluded that Häring's was "the most successful attempt to analyse the Epistle" as to demonstrate "that there is a real underlying sequence of thought."[48]

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[45] Robert Law, *The Tests of Life: A Study of the First Epistle of St. John* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1909) 1.

[46] Ibid. 5.

[47] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, xxxii.

[48] Ibid. xxxiv. Brooke also noted the "substantial agreement" between Häring and Law, yet criticized the latter for not being as beneficial "in tracing the [probable] sequence of thought" (ibid. xxxvii).

The influence of Plummer and Law is apparent in Dodd's reference to the thought progression of First John as "spiral," yet Dodd was not optimistic (as they were) with regard to discerning an organized arrangement of the Epistle. He also referred to aphorisms, as did Brooke previously. Similar to other commentators, Dodd indicated that the argument of First John is challenging to divide into an orderly structure.

> The argument is not closely articulated. There is little direct progression. The writer 'thinks around' a succession of related topics. The movement of thought has not inaptly been described as 'spiral,' for the development of a theme often brings us back almost to the starting-point; almost, but not quite, for there is a slight shift which provides a transition to a fresh theme; or it may be to a theme which had apparently been dismissed at an earlier point, and now comes up for consideration from a slightly different angle. The striking aphorisms which are the most memorable things in the epistle do not usually emerge as the conclusion of a line of argument. They come in flashes, and their connection with the general line of thought is sometimes only hinted at.
>   Any attempt to divide the work into orderly paragraphs and sections must be largely arbitrary, and will indicate only in a broad way the succession of topics.[49]

Wilder affirmed "the theme of love" as dominating the primary section of the Epistle. He distinguished two primarily polemic sections: 2:18-27 and 4:1-6. Wilder also noted a "cyclical" structure. "An earlier commentator compared its course to that of the river Meander, which flowed through the province of Asia, while the adjective 'cyclical' has been applied to it by modern students."[50] With tremendous creativity, Bogaert referred to First John as the Canticle of Canticles of the New Testament; therefore, it contains "Semitic thought patterns."[51] He believed that love

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[49] C. H. Dodd, *The Johannine Epistles* (New York: Harper & Row, 1946) xxi-xxii.

[50] Amos N. Wilder, "The First, Second, and Third Epistles of John," in *The Interpreter's Bible*, 12 vols., ed. George A. Buttrick (New York: Abingdon, 1957) 12:210.

[51] Maurice Bogaert, "Structure et message de la Première Épître de saint Jean," *Bible et Vie Chritienne* 83 (1968): 33-34; cf. Edward Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant* (Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978) 1-6. Law would have seemed to concur with the latter assertion. He wrote with concern "that the closeness with which the style has been moulded upon the Hebraic model, especially upon the parallelistic forms of the Wisdom Literature, has been sufficiently recognized (*Tests of Life*, 2). "It is not suggested that there is in the Epistle a conscious imitation of Hebraic forms; but it is evident, I think, that no one could have written as our author does whose style of thought and expression had not been unconsciously formed upon Old Testament models" (ibid. 4).

is the primary subject, but it was not always evident whose views were being expressed, and there appeared to be minimal progression in the action.

Bultmann explained the apparent futile attempt to identify the structure of First John is due to his contention that the Epistle "could have been concluded with 2:27 and originally probably was."[52] According to his opinion, "a prior written Source (*Vorlage*) underlies the text of 1 John, which the author annotated."[53] Bultmann, however, did not develop this *Vorlage* completely; rather, it is presented sporadically throughout his commentary and in the footnotes.[54] Bultmann's contention that there are "no new ideas, but the same themes treated in 1:5—2:27 recur" throughout 2:28—5:12 means the latter section "is obviously not a coherent organic composition, but rather a compendium of various fragments collected as a supplement to 1:5—2:27."[55] His argument for an abbreviated version of First John, however, is not based upon any external textual evidence (because there is none).[56] Bultmann's conjecture is based solely upon the epistolary content, and is "a theory rebutted by others for the paradoxical reason that they cannot explain why anyone would have added pieces that say little or nothing which was not already said in 1:5—2:27!"[57]

Brown referenced others who found an apparent "lack of sequence," such as de Ambroggi who posited "free association of ideas," and Houlden (similar to Law) who used the term "spiral" for the Johannine arguments. According to Houlden:

> At times the argument approaches the circular. . . . But it is better to describe the argument as a whole . . . as spiral; that is, while there is circularity of movement involving a small number of ideas, there is also progression as new themes are introduced. . . . Each cycle includes a consideration of the central themes with some subordinate question in mind; or, alternatively, using the great, constant words and

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[52] Bultmann, *Johannine Epistles*, 43.

[53] Ibid. 2.

[54] Brown charted "Bultmann's Reconstructed Source for I John" in a comprehensive manner by listing the various couplets and triplets (*Epistles of John*, 760-61).

[55] Bultmann, *Johannine Epistles*, 43-44; cf. J. C. O'Neill, *The Puzzle of 1 John: A New Examination of Origins* (London: SPCK, 1966).

[56] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 28-29.

[57] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 117.

ideas for material, it radiates from some new notion or question, introduced or brought into prominence for the first time.[58]

Brown noted the benefit that may result from even a cursory comparison of First John with the Gospel of John and Book of Revelation since they contain "a definite structure, even though it is difficult to discern the exact lines dividing one pericope from another and sometimes the thought is repetitive." Brown's outline demonstrates a division into two parts (eleven units), as a reflection upon the Gospel of John.

> 1.   PROLOGUE: Reflections upon the Gospel of John
> Prologue: "In the beginning was the Word"
>
> PART ONE (1:5—3:10): The obligation of walking in light in response to the gospel of God as light, a response that divides the secessionist Antichrists from the author's Little Children.
> 2.   1:5: "This is the message: God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all"
> 1:6—2:2: Three boasts and three opposite hypotheses, reflecting different understandings of the gospel.
> 3.   2:3-11: Three claims of intimate knowledge of God, which are to be tested by the way one walks.
> 4.   2:12-17: Admonitions to believers who have conquered the Evil One and so must resist the world.
> 5.   2:18-27: Warning against the secessionist Antichrists who deny the Son and the Father.
> 6.   2:28—3:10: In face of the coming encounter with Christ and God, the contrast between God's children and the devil's children.
>
> PART TWO (3:11—5:12): The obligation of loving in deeds in response to the gospel that we should love one another according to the example of Jesus as Christ come in the flesh.
> 7.   3:11: "For this is the message: we should love one another"
> 3:12-24 Admonitions to the author's Brothers and Little Children with regard to the need to demonstrate love in deeds.
> 8.   4:1-6: The Spirits of Truth and Deceit, governing respectively the secessionists who belong to the world and the author's beloved adherents who belong to God.
> 9.   4:7—5:4a: The absolute necessity to love one another in order to love God.
> 10.   5:4b-12: Faith as the conqueror of the world and the believer's relation to testimony.
>
> 11.   CONCLUSION (5:13-21): A statement of the author's purpose.

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[58] Houlden, *Johannine Epistles*, 22-23.

Consequently, this "suggests that there may be structure in I John as well."[59]

Bruce summarized the problem with regard to identifying both the purpose and structure of First John.

> Attempts to trace a consecutive argument throughout I John have never succeeded. For the convenience of a commentator and his readers, it is possible to present such an analysis of the epistle . . . , but this does not imply that the author himself worked to an organized plan. At best we can distinguish three main courses of thought: the first (I. 5—2. 27), which has two main themes, ethical (walking in light) and Christological (confessing Jesus as the Christ); the second (2. 28—4. 6), which repeats the ethical and Christological themes with variations; the third (4. 7—5. 12), where the same two essential themes are presented as love and faith and shown to be inseparable and indispensable products of life in Christ.[60]

The challenge to identify the structure of First John is not only limited to earlier scholarship, but also applies to modern scholarship. Bruce's summary statement of the problem in 1970 has since improved. One reason for this progression is the emphasis upon the text as the foundational linguistic unit.[61]

> The historical information on the possible socio-cultural setting of the Johannine community (although hypothetical) should be linked up with the text-immanent analyses. To bind the text together, its cohesion and coherence on the surface level should be analysed to respond methodologically to the syntactic dimension. The logical and temporal relations underlying the text from the conceptual patterns of the semantic organisation of the text, and the pragmatic dimension, then, makes the use of the syntactic and semantic analysis and describes the meaning to be materialised in the relation between narrator and audience.[62]

The analysis of such cohesion and coherence for the entirety of the First Epistle of John, and then the syntactic and semantic components is the next matter to consider for this research.

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[59] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 117.

[60] F. F. Bruce, *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970) 29.

[61] Wolfgang U. Dressler, ed., *Current Trends in Textlinguistics* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1978); Anthony C. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory and Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan 1997) 55-79.

[62] Jan A. du Rand, "A Synchronic and Narratological Reading of John 10 in Coherence with Chapter 9," in *The Shepherd Discourse of John 10 and Its Context*, eds. Johannes Beutler and Robert T. Fortna (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991) 96.

II.B.2. Structural Characteristics of the First Epistle of John

As already noted, semantic-structural analysis involves the meaning of a text. Therefore, analysis seeks to exegete all the information conveyed by the surface structure. To analyze semantic structure it is first necessary to delineate its characteristics (which are closely related to the presuppositions already stated). For example, Malatesta organized First John schematically. His intention was "to facilitate a sharper awareness and better understanding of the peculiar style and rhythm of these letters."[63] His analysis commenced with the clause and especially identified various textual aspects, such as: thematic words, correspondences and oppositions, concentric patterns, parallelism, and inclusio. Following the identification of these textual characteristics, the text was arranged into individual units to make the particular structure more readily apparent.[64] In addition to a prologue and an epilogue, Malatesta presented the Greek text of First John in "three parts which successively and ever more profoundly treat the same general theme 'Criteria of New Covenant Communion with God'." The subdivisions of these three parts address "the Christian ethic in general, then charity, and finally faith."[65] The threefold structure was formulated as follows:[66]

> Prologue: Apostolic Witness to Life and Communion (1:1-4)
>
> 1.   First Exposition of Criteria of New Covenant Communion with God (1:5—2:28)
> Perspective: God is Light (1:5)
> This communion considered in terms of light
> No explicit indication of the connection between love and faith
> 2.   Second Exposition of Criteria of New Covenant Communion with God (2:29—4:6)
> Perspective: God is just (2:29)
> This communion considered in terms of sonship
> Mention of the connection between faith and love (3:23)

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[63] Edward Malatesta, *The Epistles of John: Greek Text and English Translation Schematically Arranged* (Rome: Pontifical Gregorian University, 1973) 4.

[64] Ibid. 5.

[65] Ibid. 4.

[66] Ibid. 7-47.

3. Third Exposition of Criteria of New Covenant Communion with God (4:7—5:13)
   Perspective: God is Love (4:8, 16)
   This communion considered in terms of love
   Development of the relationship between love and faith

Epilogue: Prayer (5:14-17) and Summary of Letter (5:18-21)

Malatesta's arrangement of the text emphasizes how John's thought was progressively expanded. The thought process of First John is singular, yet "it can only be expressed gradually and so one paragraph leads to another, as from section to section the same subjects are treated ever more profoundly."[67] The threefold structure may be further divided into an additional three elements (A, B, and C), which are related to the general structure as parts of the whole.

A. Walking in the Light and Freedom from Sin (1:5—2:2)
   B. Knowledge of Communion with God and Observance of the New Commandment of Love (2:3-11)
      C. Believers Contrasting with the World and with Antichrists (2:12-28)
A. Doing Right and Avoiding Sin (2:29—3:10)
   B. Love: Its Nature, Exigencies and Signs (3:11-14)
      C. Discernment of Spirits (4:1-6)
   B'. Love Comes from God and Is Rooted in Faith (4:7-21)
      C'. Faith in the Son of God Is the Root of Love (5:1-13)

The third and final level is a combined progression of both the literary structure and the theological structure.[68] Each level must be analyzed to discern the unified thought. The observational elements that form the basis for the analysis include "a careful attention to literary traits, the author's personality, the nature of his message, and the purpose and genre of this particular Letter."[69] The literary structure of First John for Malatesta is most dependent upon his conception of "John's conviction and experience." Malatesta explained, "To experience the faith and love of which he speaks is both to understand the author and his message and to realize the Letter's *raison d'être*. Perhaps no other single writing of the Bible

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[67] Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant*, 40.
[68] Ibid. 37-41, 77-79.
[69] Ibid. 38.

places so forcefully and so explicitly its entire contents under the sign of an experience the readers are invited both to share and to discern." First John was written "under the sign of an experience the readers are invited both to share and to discern." As the result of his pastoral concern, John presented criteria for believers to help them distinguish authentic fellowship with God "from the deviant behavior and unchristian attitudes of those who falsely claim to be united to God."[70] John approached "his expositions in the light of his contemplation of the mystery of God's love in Jesus Christ." His appeal to this mystery in love and faith "*underlies* the entire text."[71] The primary issue against Malatesta's structure, however, is his argument that First John should be interpreted on the basis of covenantal thought. The Johannine emphasis upon mutual abiding (viz. Christ in [εἶναι ἐν] the believer, and the believer in Christ) is confused with the interiority of the law in the New Covenant (cf. Jer 31:31-34). There is neither an allusion nor reference to covenant (διαθήκη) in First John.

Longacre analyzed the text of First John as hortatory discourse.[72] His works complement the previous analysis by his doctoral student, who contented that First John should be regarded as written to be exhortative as opposed to informative, that is, "a hortatory (not simply expository) text with the perlocutionary function of persuasion."[73] "1 John was written primarily to persuade its readers to act consistently with what they say they believed, rather than to inform them about what was desirable to believe."[74] Longacre argued, "the brute statistics of the book (as far as the type of verbs that occur) are misleading[[75]]; that the command forms

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[70] Ibid. 39.

[71] Ibid. 40.

[72] Robert E. Longacre, "Exhortation and Mitigation in First John," *Selected Technical Articles Related to Translation* 9 (1983); idem, "Towards an Exegesis of 1 John Based on the Discourse Analysis of the Greek Text," in *Linguistics and New Testament Interpretation*, 271-86.

[73] Helen Louise Miehle, "Theme in Greek Hortatory Discourse: Van Dijk and Beekman-Callow Approaches Applied to 1 John" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Arlington, 1981) ix.

[74] Ibid. 178.

[75] "The overt command forms, by contrast, constitute only 9%" (Longacre, "Towards an Exegesis of 1 John," 278).

are central; and that the book moves from mitigated (almost disguised) commands to overt commands at the structures which we call the peaks of the book."[76]

Longacre's exegesis is based upon a fivefold analysis: (1) dividing "the book into structural paragraphs which [he believes] are indicated by certain features of the surface structure of the book;" (2) discussing "the distribution of the verb γράφω ('write') in Greek;" (3) adopting "the point of view that the book is fundamentally not an expository but a hortatory discourse;" (4) identifying "the peaks in the introduction and the peaks in the body of the book;" and, (5) considering "the macrostructure of the book in the van Dykian sense of the word."[77]

Identifying the distribution of vocatives provided Longacre with his first indicator for determining the message of First John. The vocatives indicate that First John can be divided into structural paragraphs,[78] as follows: 1:1-4; 1:5-10; 2:1-6; 2:7-11; 2:12-17; 2:18-27; 2:28-29; 3:1-6; 3:7-12; 3:13-18; 3:19-24; 4:1-6; 4:7-10; 4:11-21; 5:1-12; and, 5:13-21.[79] What is unusual is that Longacre regarded 1:1—2:29 as the introduction for the Epistle, so that "the body of the book" is located in 3:1—5:12.[80] Longacre did not label the sixteen paragraphs with any themes, nor did he indicate any thought development. The result of his 16-paragraph division is "a string of *natural* paragraphs."[81]

Identifying the distribution of the verb γράφω was the second indicator for determining the message. Having posited a "string of sixteen paragraphs," Longacre sought a "natural grouping" of the paragraphs based upon the occurrence of γράφω in the introduction and the conclusion. John constructed the introduction (esp. 1:5—2:28) to inform those who received his epistle as to his reasons for writing. Γράφω is distributed frequently throughout the introduction (1:1—2:29), which is unusually long and "contains most of the themes of the body of the work, yet the performative

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[76] Ibid. 277.
[77] Ibid. 271-72.
[78] Textual changes were also discerned: "Other considerations such as ἴδετε in verse 21 and discontinuities of subject matter mark these suggested paragraphs as units of the text" (ibid. 276).
[79] Ibid. 272-76.
[80] Longacre, "Exhortation and Mitigation," 5, 20.
[81] Longacre, "Towards an Exegesis of 1 John," 276.

verb γράφω does not occur in the body of the work (3:1—5:12). With the last occurrence in 2:26, γράφω does not appear again until 5:13, which begins the final paragraph. Based upon the distribution of γράφω, Longacre contended that the main body of First John is 3:1—5:12.[82]

As a third indicator for determining the message, Longacre counted and considered the kinds of verb used, which is thought to designate the type of discourse that First John is. Longacre was specifically concerned as to whether First John should be regarded as expository or hortatory. Static and relationship verbs were examined and seen to dominate, which means "the general cast of the surface structure of 1 John looks decidedly more expository than hortatory." Longacre, however, clarified that determining the type of discourse cannot "be so simply stated by appeal to verb classification and counting."[83] The reason is that hortatory verb forms function quite differently than the static and relationship verbs in First John because they occur at the "peaks of the book." Therefore, "the surface structure" and word count seem to indicate an expository character to First John; however, with a stronger and weightier functional significance, the "hortatory-type verbs predominate."[84]

The fourth indicator is the "peaks of the book, i.e., points of cumulative development."[85] The peaks are the primary divisions of the discourse, and as such, not only indicate the unusual development of First John but also provide the most conclusive means for determining the primary message of First John. Longacre considered 1 John 1:1—2:29 as containing two peaks: ethical (2:12-17) and doctrinal (2:18-27). Peaks also occur in reverse parallel in 4:1-21: doctrinal (4:1-6) and ethical (4:7-21).[86]

Considering "the macrostructure of the book in the van Dykian sense of the word" is the final indicator for determining the Johannine message. Based upon the hortatory character of First John, the peaks "are the places where overt imperatives"

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[82] Ibid. 276-77.
[83] Ibid. 278.
[84] Ibid. 279.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Longacre, "Exhortation and Mitigation," 5, 20.

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and ὀφείλω verb forms are "characteristically" located.[87] The peaks within the Johannine discourse "peculiarly develop the main message of the book," whereas the immediately preceding information indicates evident statements with regard to the macrostructure of First John ("i.e., the gist of a work, what it is all about").[88] Consequently, the paragraphs immediately preceding the dual peaks in chapter 2— verses 12-17 and verses 18-27—state the macrostructure of First John "in more overt form."[89] Based upon the assertion that καὶ νῦν has transitional "summary force," 2:28-29 provides "closure" to the introduction (1:5-29), which may be regarded as a legitimate feature if the vocative τεκνία "signals onset of a new paragraph."[90]

Likewise, the paragraphs immediately preceding the dual peaks in chapter 4—verses 1-6 and verses 7-21—clearly reveal "the central thrust of the whole work."[91] John wrote in 4:1-6 with regard to the divine commands that are obligatory for believers (viz. "that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ and love one another").[92] The macrostructure is restated in the subsequent paragraph to 4:7-21, which is 5:1-12. Specifically, verse 1 restates the microstructure: "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him."

Longacre's analysis is based upon "the peaks of the introduction and especially in the peaks of the body of the work" to determine the message of First John.[93] His analysis is similar to du Rand,[94] yet also considered the preponderance of the communicative circumstances. Identifying "peaks" may be apparent relatively, however, inclusive questions with regard to the Johannine structure have been multifaceted.

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[87] Longacre, "Towards an Exegesis of 1 John," 279.
[88] Ibid. 272.
[89] Ibid. 281.
[90] Longacre, "Exhortation and Mitigation," 18.
[91] Longacre, "Towards an Exegesis of 1 John," 280-81.
[92] Ibid. 283.
[93] Ibid. 284.
[94] J. A. du Rand, "A Discourse Analysis of 1 John," *Neotestamentica* 13 (1979): 1-42.

The reason for examining structural analyses of the First Epistle of John was to discern those elements that may be neglected by traditional commentators. Anderson's interpretive summary of the first word of the text of First John illustrates the need for this analysis.

> Most commentators think that instead of ὅ 'what' referring to any specific noun, it has a more complex reference. It does not refer to Jesus directly, but to that which the writer declares about Jesus [Brd]. It refers to the person, words, and acts of Jesus [AB, Brd, ICC], to both the gospel message and the person of Jesus [Herm, NIC, NTC], to both the gospel message about Jesus [Ws, WBC], to the account of ἡ ἀγγελία 'the messsage' (1:5) which is identical with the person of Jesus [Herm], to Jesus and all that he is and does for us [Ln], to Jesus as the Word and the life he manifested [EGT], the content of the Christian doctrine [HNTC]. Another thinks that it refers specifically to the Word, but the neuter form suggests that the Word cannot be adequately described in human language [TH].[95]

The remainder of the first clause, Ὅ ἦν ἀπ᾽ ἀρχῆς, similarly demonstrates the need for more exhaustive analysis, as evident in the summary by Anderson or even one's own perusal of various commentaries. Moreover, the exegetical summary of discourse units by Anderson[96] indicates the need for hermeneutical methodologies that can be integrated into the exegetical analysis for the purpose of achieving a more consistent and valid structure of the text. The relationship between the thematic structure of the text and the discourse units is important to discern so that one does not interpret a biblical text in a partitive manner without regard for the holistic structure.[97] Porter noted how the macrostructures of a text "convey the large thematic ideas which help to govern the interpretation of the microstructures."

> Macro-structures serve two vital functions. On the one hand, they are the highest level of interpretation of a given text. On the other hand, they are the points at which

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[95] Anderson, *1, 2, & 3 John*, 10.
[96] Ibid. 9.
[97] Robert E. Longacre, *The Grammar of Discourse*, 2nd ed. (New York: Springer, 1996) 198-201.

larger extra-textual issues such as time, place, audience, authorship and purpose (more traditional questions of biblical backgrounds) must be considered.[98]

To identify the macrostructure is to adopt an holistic approach to the text of Scripture. Macrostructures help to identify discourse units, whereas traditional hermeneutical methods tend to emphasize a clause or sentence of a biblical book. By identifying the macrostructure, one more discern the relationship between each section and subsection to the complete text. Therefore, the endeavor to identify the microstructure assists in answering specific noun or verbal usage within a clause or sentence. "The micro-structures are the smaller units (such as words, phrases, clauses, sentences, and even pericopes and paragraphs) which make-up macro-structures."[99] With application of a structural analysis to the First Epistle of John, one may identify the author's particular reason for using the noun ἱλασμός.

II.B.3. Structural Analysis of First John 1:1—2:27

The prologue of First John uses several relative clauses, which is not only a precise usage of grammar by the Apostle, but most commentators also note that such usage is uncommon. The consistency of 1:1-4 is evident in the repetition of four terms: ἀκηκόαμεν (2x), ἑωράκαμεν (3x), ἐφανερώθη (2x), and ἀπαγγέλλομεν (2x). The unit is also designated by prominence, as evident in the repetition of ὅ (5x). Furthermore, there is the plurality of witnesses (12x).[100] The semantic relationship is evident in 1:1-4, yet there are also chiastic elements that indicate the cohesion of this unit. The repetition and variation in word usage demonstrates a consistent, discourse unit.

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[98] Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994; reprint, London: Continuum, 1999) 300.

[99] Ibid. 300.

[100] R. C. H. Lenski (*The Interpretation of I and II Epistles of Peter, the Three Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude* [Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1961; reprint, 2008] 370-73) identified the "we" as the Apostles, whereas Brown (*Epistles of John*, 160) understood the plurality to indicate "a School of tradition-bearers rather than to eyewitnesses."

First John 1:2 is parenthetical with the emphasis upon τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς, which/who[101] was mentioned at the end of verse one. Longacre referred to this type of phenomenon as "tail-head linkage (in which the last sentence of one paragraph cross-references to the first sentence of the following paragraph)."[102] The parenthetical clause restates the assertion with regard to what the Apostle saw with his own eyes, in addition to the testimony of others (ὃ ἑωράκαμεν). Verse one and verse three are chiastic, which is evident in the reverse order of the two perfects ἀκηκόαμεν and ἑκράκαμεν, which are then followed immediately by two aorists, ἐθεασάμεθα and ἐψηλάφησαν. The usage of the two perfects emphasizes consistency of thought and informs the readers of the Epistle that the same topic is the basis for the continued revelation.

The primary verb in 1:1-4 is ἀπαγγέλλομεν, even though it was consigned to verse two and then again in verse three. The verb ἀπαγγέλλομεν emphasizes the entity of examination, that is, τῆς ζωῆς. Whereas the construction is unique stylistically, it nevertheless conveys local prominence syntactically because the customary structure was altered; in other words, the syntax effectively emphasizes that the subject of the Epistle is the reason for "the message." Moreover, μαρατυροῦμεν is connected with the proclamation of ἡ ἀγγελία as a consequence of its appositional placement in the clause, and as evident in the denotation of the adverbial καί, that is, this normal conjunction emphasizes the subsequent pronoun. Even though the unity of 1:1-4 is not generally disputed, the analysis of this section conveys the notion that structural analysis is helpful to determine interpretation. Furthermore, the identification of the coherence of 1:1-4 may indicate how the next discourse unit is related to the previous section.

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[101] Marshall noted, "Jesus Himself may be meant as the Word who is the source and substance of eternal life. Probably the phraseology is again deliberately ambiguous, although the writer is perhaps thinking more of the Christian message" (*Epistles of John*, 103). Rudolf Schnackenburg (*The Johannine Epistles*, trans. Reginald Fuller and Ilse Fuller [New York: Crossroad, 1992] 61) and Westcott (*Epistles of St. John*, 6-7) indicated the complexities involved in determining the meaning of the phrase.

[102] Longacre, *Grammar of Discourse*, 13.

Generally, most commentators agree that 1:5 begins a new unit; thereafter, unfortunately, there is much disagreement. Lexically common characteristics indeed indicate a relationship of 1:5 with 1:1-4. For instance, (to use the terminology of Longacre) the "tail-head linkage" is evident in how ταῦτα γράφομεν in 1:4 corresponds to ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ ἀγγελία in 1:5. Moreover, prominence is evident in the transition from the Apostle's authority in 1:1-4 to the content and implications of ἡ ἀγγελία beginning with 1:5 to the end of the Epistle. Furthermore, there is a change in verb usage from either the aorist or perfect tense to the present tense, and the literary genre changes from proclamation to hortatory,[103] which is evident in the repetitive use of the phrase ἐὰν εἴπωμεν that commences in 1:6. To apply these principles to other discourse units will assist in the elimination of conflicting analyses with regard to the holistic structure of the Epistle.

The methodology of traditional hermeneutical approaches to texts of Scripture is not normally upon the discourse unit. Consequently, the present analysis not only indicates that conjunctions are important to discern within clauses and sentences, but also within the unit itself. Determining the function of conjunctions is helpful for delineating "boundary markers,"[104] which is then beneficial for identifying the primary emphasis of a text. Moreover, discourse units or new paragraphs are often introduced by conjunctions.[105]

Larsen noted that the primary conjunction in the Greek New Testament is καί, which would be somewhat equivalent to the waw consecutive (וְ) in the Hebrew Old Testament.[106] Titrud noted that the importance of καί is often minimized ("overlooked"[107]); yet "it is used in practically every verse of the New Testament."[108]

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[103] Longacre, "Exegesis of 1 John," 271-73; Robert W. Yarbrough, *1—3 John* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008) 231.

[104] Richard J. Erickson, *A Beginner's Guide to New Testament Exegesis: Taking the Fear out of Critical Method* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005) 66; Iver Larsen, "Boundary Features in the Greek New Testament," *Notes on Translation* 5 (1991): 51.

[105] Larsen, "Boundary Features," 48-54.

[106] Iver Larsen, "Notes on the Function of γάρ, οὖν, μέν, δέ, καί, and τέ in the Greek New Testament," *Notes on Translation* 5 (1991): 43.

[107] Kermit Titrud, "The Overlooked KAI in the Greek New Testament," *Notes on Translation* 5 (1991): 1-28.

"When καί is used, it implies that what follows is closely related to what precedes; this is not so when other particles such as δέ, ἀλλά, and τότε are used."[109] Titrud noted that even primary Greek lexicons "seek to describe the meaning of καί by relating it to the meaning of various English or German constructions." However, the usage of καί should be based upon its usage in the Greek New Testament, as opposed to either an English or German perspective.[110] Disagreeing with the assertion that καί is used commonly "as a connective where more discriminating usage would call for other particles,"[111] Titrud asserted "that καί was not just written arbitrarily;" rather, "it has a particular function in the discourse structure of New Testament Greek."[112] By delineating what is prominent, καί functions as a conjunction "both on the intraclausal and interclausal level," and indicates when one proposition is logically subordinate to another, than if introduced by other particles.[113] "The conjunctive καί is a coordinating conjunction; it coordinates grammatical units of equal rank."[114]

Καί does not always function as a coordinative, even though there may be instances in which one proposition is logically subordinate to another. Nevertheless, when such contrast occurs between a discourse and a logical construction, the intent of the author is "deliberate and significant." The syntactic emphasis upon what is "logically subordinate" means the author is indicating "more prominence" upon the clause than if it were "introduced by a subordinating conjunction."[115]

The relevance of Titrud's helpful research for better understanding the usage of καί in discourse contexts is apparent in the beginning of the First Epistle of John.

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[108] Kermit Titrud, "The Function of καί in the Greek New Testament and an Application to 2 Peter," in *Linguistics and New Testament Interpretation*, 240.

[109] Ibid. 250.

[110] Ibid. 240-41.

[111] Bauer et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, 392.

[112] Titrud, "The Function of καί," 242; see also, David L. Allen, *Hebrews* [Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2010) 136-37.

[113] Titrud, "The Function of καί," 255.

[114] Titrud, "Overlooked KAI," 9.

[115] Titrud, "The Function of καί," 250; Titrud, "Overlooked KAI," 16 (cf. Stephen H. Levinsohn, *Discourse Features of New Testament Greek*, 2nd ed. [Dallas: SIL International, 2000] 99-102; Steven E. Runge, *Discourse Grammar of the Greek New Testament* [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2010] 23-26, 48-49).

For instance, in 1:5 and 2:3, καί is located in the "clause-initial position," which would normally indicate new information and simultaneously indicate a new discourse unit.[116] Moreover, "when καί does introduce a new paragraph, the paragraphs are more closely linked semantically."[117] The thematic continuity and development of thought that is reflected by the καί in the clause-initial position indicates that the subsequent clause is "closely linked semantically" to the preceding one. Since there is not an alternative textual reading in 1:5 and 2:3, there must be a deliberate and significant reason for the use of καί.

Titrud noted that when καί is followed by a pronoun, the function is adverbial and thus provides emphasis,[118] which may be a possible classification of καί in 1:5 and 2:3. According to Nestle-Aland's *Novum Testamentum Graece* (26th ed.), καί introduces a paragraph only in the following: 1 Corinthians 2:1; 3:1; 12:31; 2 Corinthians 1:15; 7:5; Ephesians 2:1; 6:4; Colossians 1:21; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Hebrews 7:20; 9:15; 10:11; 11:32; 1 Peter 3:13; 1 John 1:5; 2:3; 3:13, 19; 3:23. Alternative textual readings can be identified in 1 Thessalonians 2:13 and 1 John 3:13, 19. The conjunction γάρ is a "postposition particle" in 2 Corinthians 2:5, and the particle occurs subsequent to καί, which functions adverbially in that verse. In the other uses of καί (e.g. 1 Cor 2:1; 3:1; Eph 2:1; Col 1:21; Heb 11:32; 1 Pet 3:13; 1 John 1:5), there is a demonstrative, personal, or relative pronoun that is immediately subsequent to καί, which would be adverbial, and thereby would likely denote emphasis upon the pronoun. With regard to determining the structure of the Epistles, "a new paragraph should not be made where a conjunctive καί begins a sentence in the Greek text. A paragraph-initial καί followed by a pronoun or a post-

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[116] Christopher s. Butler, *Structure and Function: A Guide to Three Major Structural-Functional Theories*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2003) 2:171-78; Hilde Hasselgård, *Adjunct Adverbials in English* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 86.

[117] Titrud, "The Function of καί," 251.

[118] Ibid. 242-44. Titrud provided the example of 1 Peter 2:21 wherein the adverbial καί is understood to modify the immediately subsequent constituent, as opposed to necessarily modifying the entire clause. "The focus is on the fact that *even Christ Himself suffered*, so they also should endure suffering." Prominence is upon Christ Himself as opposed to the subordinate constituent ὑμῶν, which is important to not give the notion that someone else ("also") suffered for the believers (p. 244).

positive particle (e.g., γάρ) should be classified as an adverb."[119] Therefore, in both 1:5 and 2:3, a pronoun is subsequent to the clause-initial conjunction καί, which indicates prominence (a "highlighting device"[120]), and is therefore helpful for determining the structure of the beginning chapters since καί not only delineates thematic continuity but also a new section of the Epistle.

II.B.3.a. The Use of the Vocative

Longacre is most notable for his emphasis upon identifying structural paragraphs based upon the distribution of vocatives.[121] Of course, the vocative is not the only discourse feature that delineates the structural units. In addition to the vocative, Longacre noted the distribution of the verb γράφω, the counting and weighing of the various kinds of verbs (i.e. either expository type, or hortatory type), peaks of the book that are especially vital to the message, and the macrostructure as a limitation upon the content.[122]

Based upon the distribution of vocatives, Longacre asserted that one "can posit a string of *natural* paragraphs" and most "boundaries" are delineated "with a vocative, either in the initial sentence or in a sentence or two into the body of the paragraph."[123] However, it is not entirely certain that one can indeed identify the structural paragraphs on the basis of whether a vocative is located at the beginning of a sentence or even within the paragraph unit. Longacre's analysis of First John indicated that there are no vocatives in the beginning of two units that he delineated: 1:5-10 and 5:1-12. The vocatives in his structural paragraphs of 3:1-6 and 3:19-24 are not "paragraph-initial" (which, of course, Longacre admitted could occur). The vocative in 3:1-6 is found in verse 2; and, within 3:19-24, it is located in the middle of the unit (v. 21). Consequently, it seems arbitrary to begin the

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[119] Ibid. 251-52; cf. Larsen, "Notes on the Function," 35-47.
[120] John L. Anderson and Joy Anderson, "Cataphora in 1 John," *Notes on Translation* 7 (1993): 43.
[121] Longacre, "Towards an Exegesis of 1 John," 272-76.
[122] Ibid. 272-83.
[123] Ibid. 276.

structural paragraphs in chapter 3, with verse 1 and verse 19, when the vocative is found later in the section. Furthermore, he stated that the thesis of First John is located in the paragraph unit of 3:19-24, and one of the doctrinal "peaks" is located in the paragraph unit of 4:1-6. The vocative in 4:1-6 is paragraph-initial, yet there is another to be found in verse 4, which again seems arbitrary in not beginning a new structural paragraph where the second vocative is located. Therefore, one may conclude that Longacre's assertion that the vocatives constitute new units is lessened.

Rogers' article addressing vocatives and boundaries demonstrated that the former is not as decisive as other factors in determining the latter. She noted, "In many places where vocatives seem to signal boundaries, other forms or factors are decisive. In itself, the vocative form cannot be said to signal change of theme. Although some writers may use vocatives only at boundaries, it should not be assumed that all do."[124] Larsen asserted that a vocative is "a rhetorical device, not a structural device, and it functions to establish a closer relationship with the hearers."[125] Callow noted that within 1:6—2:2, "the use of the vocative τεκνία μου, and the performative γράφω ὑμῖν, focuses attention on the purpose statement, and so serves to give it added performance." As opposed to understanding the vocative and the performative as indicating a new paragraph division, it could have a prominence function as opposed to an initiating role (particularly within the context of 1:6—2:2).[126] Therefore, it would be best to understand the use of the vocative as able to introduce a new subject, whether it is primary or subordinate, yet it could also introduce a conclusion, which seems evident in 2:28, 3:21, and 5:21.

The vocative "children" or "sons" was a customary rabbinical practice, which is evident throughout all varieties of Jewish literature. Griffith noted the significance of "this particularly Jewish filial authority device," which appears to have been rejected by the Gentile church. The use of the vocative functioned both to emphasize

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[124] Elinor MacDonald Rogers, "Vocatives and Boundaries," *Selected Technical Articles Related to Translations* 11 (1984): 26. Rogers' conclusions were based upon association with the Pauline usage of vocatives.

[125] Iver A. Larson, "Boundary Features," Notes on Translation 5 (1991): 51.

[126] Callow, "Where Does 1 John 1 End?," 401.

authority and equality.[127] Van der Watt concluded that the ethical thought of First John was developed "by using a coherent network of metaphors related to first-century family life."[128]

> The vocative plural is found 20 times in 1 John, distributed among six nouns, and this frequency helps to generate a sense of urgent pastoral concern. *agapetoi* ('beloved': 2.7; 3.2, 21; 4.1, 7, 11) always occur at the head of a sentence and in contexts where love (whether for one another, or of God's love for us, or both) is stressed. *paidia* ('children': 2.14, 18) can convey affection, and occurs in parallel to *teknia* (2.12), but its association with slavery and service may account for John's preference for *teknia*. However, it is perhaps significant that *paidia* is the preferred vocative when the serious topics of the antichrist and the schism are introduced (2.18). *adelphoi* ('brothers': 3.13) is used once in the context of a reference to Cain's murder of his brother (3.12).[129]

Callow noted that the better understanding of τεκνία μου in 2:1, with the immediately subsequent γράφω ὑμῖν, was to give additional prominence to the purpose statement, ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε.[130] Therefore, the vocative in 2:1 would provide reassurance immediately subsequent to the resolute denunciation in 1:10; therefore, it would be awkward and unnatural to regard the vocative as indicating a new paragraph. The usages of the vocatives throughout the First Epistle of John serve to provide encouragement to the believers (cf. 2:12-13; 4:4).

The majority of the vocatives within First John introduce a conclusion or have a tail-head linkage where a motif or word from the "tail" of the last clause or sentence of one paragraph is located in the first clause or sentence of the subsequent paragraph. For example, the vocatives in 2:1, 7, 3:18, 21, 4:4, and 5:1 all seem to provide a conclusion to the aforementioned propositions. The vocatives in

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[127] Terry Griffith, *Keep Yourselves from Idols: A New Look at 1 John* (New York: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002) 63-65.

[128] Jan van der Watt, "Ethics in First John: A Literary and Socioscientific Perspective," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 61 (July 1999): 491. See also, Dirk G. van der Merwe, "'A Matter of Having Fellowship': Ethics in the Johannine Epistles," in *Identity, Ethics, and Ethos in the New Testament*, ed. Jan G. van der Watt (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2006) 537-39.

[129] Ibid. 65. Griffith noted that 2:12-14 contains six vocatives, and "is a special case with its thrice repeated γράφω ὑμῖν . . . followed by the vocatives τεκνία, πατέρες . . . and νεανίσκοι (young men) respectively (2.12-13), and its thrice repeated ἔγραψα ὑμῖν . . . followed by the vocatives παιδία, πατέρες and νεανίσκοι respectively (2.14).

[130] Callow, "Where Does 1 John 1 End?," 401.

2:18, 28 and 3:2 seem to have a tail-head linkage. The vocatives in 4:1, 11 are difficult to identify as either conclusions or as the tail-head variety. First John 2:12-14 is unique with its usage of six vocatives; it would seem best to regard that section as providing encouragement. Of course, verses that are typically regarded as beginning new sections, such as 1:1 and 5:1, do not contain any vocatives. Consequently, the vocatives do not always indicate new structural paragraphs (i.e. this is not their primary purpose, even though they can be used for this reason) and were often used to give prominence (when used in this manner, the vocatives may correspond to other structural paragraphs to delineate discourse units).

II.B.3.b. The Use of Coherence

Coherence has been previously defined as indicating the relationship between parts of one unit with another (i.e. "the constituents of a unit will be semantically compatible with one another").[131] Semantic and structural cohesion in First John 1:5—2:2 will prove the assertion that the vocative in 2:1 does not initiate a new structural paragraph. The contention here is that τεκνία μου in 2:1 was used to initiate a concluding exhortation to the constituents of a unit that began in 1:5. Moreover, the occurrence of καὶ ἐάν in 2:1 "introduces the last of a series of six conditional clauses, supporting the idea of a unit."[132] "Although καί is a conjoining and not a contrastive particle," it should be translated "but" in 2:1 because "two conjoined clauses or sentences have contrastive content" (cf. 1:6).[133] Akin asserted that καί in 2:1 should be translated as "and."

> John never uses καί to connect opposing thoughts in 1 John. He uses either δέ or ἀλλά. See δέ as "but" in 1:7; 2:5,11,17; 3:17; 4:18 (the δέ in 5:5 and 5:20 are probably just "and"). See αλλά as "but" in 2:2,7,16,19 (twice), 21,27; 3:18; 4:1,10,18; 5:6,18. Cf. the literal translation of the NASB on these verses. (The NASB does

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[131] Beekman et al., *Semantic Structure*, 21.

[132] Grace E. Sherman and John C. Tuggy, *A Semantic and Structural Analysis of the Johannine Epistles* (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1994) 29.

[133] Larsen, "Notes on the Function," 43; See also, Titrud, "Overlooked KAI," 24.

inexplicably translate καί in 2:20 as "but"; it also translates ἐι μὴ, "except," as "but" in 2:22 and 5:5.[134]

However, as Larsen and Titrud noted, there are contrasting notions in 2:1. Therefore, the use of καί as opposed to another conjunction, such as δέ or ἀλλά, can be explained by the semantic compatibility of 2:1 with 1:10, which does not occur when other conjunctions are used.[135] Certainly, the syntactical argument by Akin is persuasive; however, the semantic analysis of First John reveals a contrastive content that is best represented by translating καί as "but."

Callow demonstrated that there is a definite threefold arrangement in the Greek text of 1:5—2:2, which is reproduced in the ensuing tables.[136] The threefold arrangement is labeled as Units 1, 2, and 3. Each of the three subunits (1:6-7; 1:8-9; 1:10—2:2) were structured with two protasis, in addition to an apodosis construction. There are a total of six protases (1:6a; 1:7a; 1:8a; 1:9a; 1:10a; 2:1c) with each introduced by ἐάν. Each apodosis has a dual structure with the second half of each case introduced by καί (1:6e; 1:7d; 1:8d; 1:9d; 1:10d; 2:2a).

ref.	Greek text	structure
1.5a **1.5b** **1.5c**	καὶ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ ἀγγελία ἣν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι	**orienter**
1.5d **1.5e**	ὅτι ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστιν καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία.	**SETTING**

UNIT 1

1.6a **1.6b** **1.6c**	Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν,	**protasis**
1.6d **1.6e**	ψευδόμεθα καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν·	**apodosis (x)** **apodosis (y)**
1.7a	ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν ὡς αὐτός ἐστιν ἐν τῷ φωτί,	**protasis**

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[134] Daniel L. Akin, *1, 2, 3 John* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 2001) 77 fn. 142.

[135] Titrud, "Overlooked KAI," 17.

[136] Callow, "Where Does 1 John 1 End?," 396-97. Keir L. Hansford also noted this significantly structured writing, and regarded it as a form of poetry ("The Underlying Poetic Structure of 1 John," *Journal of Translation and Textlinguistics* 5 [1992]: 126-74).

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1.7b **1.7c**	κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ᾽ ἀλλήλων καὶ τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτου	**protasis**
1.7d	καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας.	**apodosis (x)** **apodosis (y)**

UNIT 2

1.8a **1.8b**	ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν,	**protasis**
1.8c **1.8d**	ἑαυτοὺς πλανῶμεν καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.	**apodosis (x)** **apodosis (y)**
1.9a	ἐὰν ὁμολογῶμεν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν,	**protasis**
1.9b **1.9c**	πιστός ἐστιν καὶ δίκαιος ἵνα ἀφῇ ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας	**apodosis (x)**
1.9d	καὶ καθαρίσῃ ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀδικίας.	**apodosis (y)**

UNIT 3

1.10a **1.10b**	ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι οὐχ ἡμαρτήκαμεν,	**protasis**
1.10c **1.10d**	ψεύστην ποιοῦμεν αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.	**apodosis (x)** **apodosis (y)**
2.1a **2.1b**	Τεκνία μου, ταῦτα γράφω ὑμῖν ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε.	**orienter**
2.1c	καὶ ἐάν τις ἁμάρτῃ,	**protasis**
2.1d	παράκλητον ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν δίκαιον·	**apodosis (x)**
2.2a **2.2b** **2.2c**	καὶ αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστιν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κὸσμου.	**apodosis (y)**

Brown also noted the use of protases and apodoses.[137] His structural analysis is somewhat different than that of Callow, as seen in the ensuing representation.

    (a) PROSTASES
7ab: But if we walk in the light as He Himself is in light
9a: But if we confess our sins
2:1b: But if anyone does sin

    (b) COMPOUND APODOSES
7c: we are joined in communion with one another
7de: and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin

9bc: He who is reliable and just will forgive us our sins
9d: and cleanse us from all wrongdoing

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[137] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 237.

2:1cd: we have a Paraclete in the Father's presence, Jesus Christ, the one who is just,

2:2abc: and he himself is an atonement for our sins, and not only for our sins but also for the whole world.

Brown noted the contrasting structure of the three protases. The first protasis exhorts the believer to "walk in the light," whereas the other two protases assume that some walking in the darkness will occur and inform the believer how to respond. The apodoses are theological and are structured in a compound manner. Each conditional sentence (ἐάν) of disapproval corresponds to a conditional sentence of approval.[138]

First John 1:5 contains the first orienter, and therefore, this verse can be understood as the introduction for the three subunits. The orienter in "2:1a and 1b break the pattern, which, if strictly regular, would have started at 1c."[139] The clause-initial καί was used in both 1:5 and 2:1, and was followed by a pronoun, thereby indicating an adverbial function and prominence.[140] For this reason, Brown noted that the clause initial καί in 2:3 "is not a simple connective, as THLJ rightly observes [καί "does not have connective or transitional force here but serves to emphasize the subsequent" ἐν τούτῳ[141]]." A similar clause initial καί, in addition to a slightly different form of the demonstrative (αὕτη) was located in 1:5 (τούτῳ in 2:3), wherein John stated the ἀναγγέλλομεν, and now subsequent to "three pairs of conditional sentences," he will "now" inform his readers with regard to knowing "the God who is light." [142]

First John 1:5 certainly corresponds to Callow's Unit 1, which then corresponds to Unit 2, and finally from Unit 2 to Unit 3. Therefore, 1:5—2:2 is characterized by semantic cohesion, resulting in "'a recognizable unit of thought.'"[143] The semantic structure of 1:5—2:2 emphasizes the apodosis as more important

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[138] Ibid. 237-38.
[139] Callow, "Where Does 1 John 1 End?," 396. The interruption is also noted by Haas et al., *Letters of John*, 22, 33.
[140] Titrud, "The Function of καί," 242-44.
[141] Haas et al., *Letters of John*, 38.
[142] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 248.
[143] Callow, "Where Does 1 John 1 End?," 398.

than the protasis to which it corresponds. The apodosis is the primary clauses, whereas the protasis is subordinate. Consequently in 1:6—2:2,

> the only concept that meets the . . . criteria for a topic is the concept 'sin', formally introduction in 7d with the noun ἁμαρτία (in the phrase ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας). This noun is repeated in 8b, 9a, 9c and 2a; the corresponding verb is used in 10b, 1b and 1c; and the synonym ἀδικία is used in 9d. And although in 2.2 the noun is used only once, the περί phrases that are used in 2b and 2c clearly presuppose the ἁμαρτιῶν of 2a.[144]

God's provision for overcoming sin is stated in 2:2, which is the most important revelation for concluding the discussion with regard to sin.[145]

Φῶς and κοινωνία can be demonstrated to be intimately related in thought by comparing the protases in 6b (κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ᾽ αὐτου) and 7a (ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν) with the apodases in 6c (καὶ ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν) and 7c (κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ᾽ ἀλλήλων). Therefore, the development of thought continues from 1:5 to the end of the unit, which is 2:2. Moreover, the φῶς and σκοτία motif, which began in 1:5, is evidently cohesive to the end of 2:2. The emphasis of 1:5—2:2 is upon sin. Therefore, verse 5 states, "God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all." The thought progression is then evident in verse 6, which reveals that κοινωνία with God is evident when one does not "walk" ἐν τῷ σκότει. Κοινωνία with God is also evident in that "the blood of Jesus . . . cleanses us from all sin" (2:7), which is in contrast to those who say they have no sin (2:8-10). First John 2:1-2 continues to address the notion of sin by revealing that the believer has "an Advocate with the Father" who is the ἱλασμός for sin.

As already stated, the only concept that could be regarded as a topic from 1:5—2:2 is the issue of sin, which was introduced formally in 1:7. The noun ἁμαρτία is repeated throughout 1:8-9. The issue of sin is continued from 1:10 and then stated again in 2:2, with three parallel prepositional phrases (περί) indicating that ἁμαρτία is the primary issue in the cohesive structure of 1:5—2:2. Moreover, the

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[144] Ibid. 400.
[145] Callow, "Where Does 1 John 1 End?," 401; Sherman and Tuggy, *Johannine Epistles*, 29.

Apostle indicated that his reason for writing is that believers would not sin (2:1). Callow concluded that this reason "refers to the purpose of this unit, not to the epistle as a whole," which is evident when one contrasts the purpose statements in 1:3 (ἀπαγγέλλομεν καὶ ὑμῖν, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ᾽ ἡμῶν) and 1:4 (καὶ ταῦτα γράφομεν ἡμεῖς, ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ἡμῶν ᾖ πεπληρωμένη) that are located in the introduction of John's Epistle, and therefore, indicate the purpose for the entire letter, and not just a portion of it. The vocative τεκνία μου would then give prominence to the purpose statement.[146]

First John 2:3-11 is the second subunit of 1:5—2:11, which is evident by the resumption of the φῶς and σκοτία motif in 2:8-11. The motif began in 1:5; therefore, this verse provides the theological proposition, which is preliminary for the entire unit. With the repetition of the φῶς and σκοτία motif in 2:8-11, the primary unit of 1:5—2:11 may be then understood as an *inclusio*.[147] The nature of summarizing expressions is to unify the information to which they allude or state, thereby implying that the preceding facts are to be understood as a crucial component for what is subsequent. With regard to non-narrative texts, summarizing expressions thus indicate structural paragraphs, that is, a conclusion will often repeat information from an introduction in some manner.[148] To understand 1:5—2:11 as a primary unit, with 2:12 commencing the next unit, is based upon the linguistic data.[149]

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[146] Callow, "Where Does 1 John 1 End?," 397-401; see also, Brown, *Epistles of John*, 765; P. R. Jones, "A Structural Analysis of 1 John," *Review and Expositor* 67 (1970): 433-44; Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 22-25; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 13; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 34.

[147] For the significance of *inclusio* structures, see Guthrie, *Structure of Hebrews*, 14.

[148] Larsen, "Boundary Features," 51.

[149] Callow noted the differences of structural analyses of the First Epistle of John, and discerned "a distinct move towards treating 1.5—2.2 as a unit in the structure of the epistle" ("Where Does 1 John 1 End?," 394). Commentators who divided 1:5—2:11 into two subunits (as Callow did) include the following: Malatesta, *Epistles of St. John*, 8-13; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 11-15. Kenneth Grayston understood 1:5—2:11 as one primary unit, with no subunits, which is primarily concerned to address moral consequences (*The Johannine Epistles* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1984] 4).

The vocative ἀγαπητοί appears in 2:7, which Longacre understood to introduce a new structural paragraph.[150] The reference to "a new commandment" and γράφω ὑμῖν in the same verse is reason why many commentators have made a structural division subsequent to 2:6. However, as noted throughout the examination of 1:5—2:2, the vocative indicates prominence with regard to the subsequent propositions. First John 2:6 progresses from emphasis upon general statements with regard to all commandments, such as walking in the light and having fellowship, to the more specific commandment that those in the φῶς and in κοινωνία are to love one another.[151]

The concepts of either φῶς and σκοτία occur at least once in 2:8-11. Σκοτία was used the most, with one occurrence in verses 8 and 9, and three occurrences in verse 11. Φῶς was used for a total of three times: once in each of the verses, with the exception of verse 11. Subsequent to 2:8-11, the concepts of φῶς and σκοτία are not referenced any longer, which means that these verses form an *inclusio* with 1:5-7. Furthermore, 2:12 is the first verse of a quite distinctive section, as evident in the repeated phrases γράφω ὑμῖν with ὅτι (once in 2:12, and twice in 2:13) and ἔγραψα ὑμῖν with ὅτι (thrice in verse 14). The division between 2:11 and 2:12 is evident by the senary phraseology, and the fact that only 1:5—2:11 contain the φῶς and σκοτία motif.

Other apparent lexical and structural parallels between 1:5—2:2 and 2:3-11 demonstrate that First John 1:5—2:2 is a cohesive unit, and that 2:3-11 is the second subunit of 1:5—2:11. For example, the usage of ἐὰν εἴπωμεν in 1:8 and 1:10, in addition to ἐὰν ὁμολογῶμεν in 1:9, corresponds to the threefold usage of ὁ λέγων in 2:4, 2:6, and 2:9. The assertions in 1:6 (ψευδόμεθα,) and 2:4 (ψεύστης ἐστίν) are quite similar, in addition to those in 1:8 (καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν) and 2:4 (καὶ ἐν τούτῳ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν). Περιπατέω was used repeatedly in both 1:5—2:2 and 2:3-11, yet the verb does not occur again throughout First John. The vocatives, τεκνία μου (2:1) and ἀγαπητοί (2:7), were used medially for prominence.

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[150] Longacre, "Exegesis of 1 John," 273.
[151] Callow, "Where Does 1 John 1 End?," 403 fn. 31.

The repetition of ὁ λόγος in 1:10, and then again in 2:5 and 2:7 is also a notable correspondence. In addition to these parallels, there is the *inclusio* of 1:5—2:11 that was already mentioned, which indicates that 1:5—2:11 is a primary semantic unit, consisting of two subunits: 1:5—2:2 and 2:3-11 (with 1:5 providing the theological proposition, which is preliminary for the entire unit, thus the first subunit could be regarded as 1:6—2:2).[152]

Longacre includes 2:12-14 with 2:15-17 based upon the γράφω and ἔγραψα formulae in verses 12 and 13, which can be regarded as a "somewhat elaborate introduction to the paragraph." Moreover, the imperatives in 2:15-17 indicate overt, negative commands as opposed to being mitigated.[153] Longacre's unit is noteworthy because 2:12-14 contain six of the nineteen vocatives (cf. 2:1, 7, 18, 28; 3:2, 7, 13, 18, 21; 4:1, 4, 7, 11) and six of the twelve orienters (2:1, 7, 8, 26; 3:19; 5:13) that are located throughout the Epistle. The first imperative in First John is located in 2:15, with the majority of the ten imperatives occurring in the middle of the Epistle and only one located in chapter 5.[154] For this reason, Longacre regarded 2:12-17 as indicating "a peak of the discourse which embeds within the Introduction to the book" (1:1—2:29).[155] Callow regarded 2:12-14 as possibly constituting a transitory unit, thereby providing a relationship between 1:5—2:11 and the subsequent revelation.[156] Grayston also understood 2:12-14 as "a transition from the statement to the writer's development of it."[157] Indeed, it would be best to understand 2:12-14 as a transitory unit, as opposed to a component of Longacre's structural division from 2:12 to 2:17.

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[152] Ibid. 402-04.

[153] Longacre, "Exegesis of 1 John," 273, 277-79; see also, Daniel A. Hoopert, "Verb Ranking in Koine Imperativals," *Journal of Translation* 3 (2007): 4-5.

[154] Joseph D. Fantin, *The Greek Imperative Mood in the New Testament* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010) 195.

[155] Longacre, "Exhortation and Mitigation," 11.

[156] Callow, "Where Does 1 John 1 End?," 404.

[157] Grayston, *Johannine Epistles*, 4. Duane F. Watson regarded the change from the present tense of γράφειν to the aorist as amplificatory: "The passage as a whole is a *digressio* used after argumentation and refutation, serving to praise the audience, elicit their goodwill, enhance style, and amplify topics" ("1 John 2.12-14 as Distributio, Conduplicatio, and Expolitio: A Rhetorical Understanding," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 35 [January 1989]: 97-110.

Most commentators note the unique characteristics of 2:12-14 as a consequence of the senary vocatives and senary orienters. The primary reason why Longacre structured 2:12-17 as one unit (as opposed to two) was the lack of another vocative until 2:18.[158] The repetitive usage of the vocatives "is a way of reinforcing the message by repeating the verb "write" six times."[159] Another unique characteristic of 2:12-14 is the variation of tense from the present (γράφω) in 2:13 to the aorist (ἔγραψα) in 2:14, and this change continues throughout the Epistle and to the conclusion of First John (cf. 2:21, 26; 5:13). Longacre identified the subsequent units as 2:18-27 and 2:28-29, which he understood to be the concluding sections of the introduction, thus "the body of the work" does not begin until 3:1 and continues to 5:12. The evidence of this assertion is that the verb γράφω occurs only in the introduction (1:1—2:29) and the conclusion (5:13-21).[160]

John already explained what it means to have fellowship with God and thus to walk in the Light. The message is somewhat similar to the Epistle of James, wherein one reads, "faith, if it has no works, is dead" (2:17). John's "work" involves not walking in the darkness. Regardless of one's profession to abide in God, if someone does not "walk in the Light," such an individual remains in the darkness and has been blinded (1:5—2:11). "The author now turns directly to his readers, having refuted the errors of his opponents. He seeks to assure his readers of their salvation (vv. 12-14), and he urges them to reject all evil love of the world (vv. 15-17)."[161] First John 2:12-14 is addressed to those who do walk in the Light and further explains what such fellowship entails.

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[158] "Since no further vocatives occur in 2:15-17, I take the latter three verses to be a continuation of the same paragraph—indeed, as the nucleus of that paragraph" (Longacre, "Exhortation and Mitigation," 13). "First John 2:18-27 is marked as a separate paragraph by the clause which begins with παιδία" (Longacre, "Exegesis of 1 John," 273).

[159] Miehle asserted, "These two features [the vocatives and the orienters] set this paragraph off as a unit orienting 2:15-17." The lack of vocatives in 2:15-17 is explained on the basis that the audience was already mentioned, therefore, "since this has been taken care of in the orienter paragraph 2:12-14," there is no need for any "specific mention" of the addressees ("Theme in Greek Hortatory Discourse," 270-71).

[160] Longacre, "Exegesis of 1 John," 276-77; idem, "Exhortation and Mitigation," 11-14.

[161] Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 115.

The next unit (2:15-17) contains the overt command to "not love the world" for it "is passing away." Consequently, the lack of coherence in 2:15-17 indicates that it should be regarded as a new unit. Moreover, the unit is demarcated "by its lack of explicit vocatives and by the negative commands," μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. Moreover, "two other prevalent themes" that unify 2:15-17 include the references to κόσμος and θεός.[162] Moreover, the overt prohibition of 2:15 contains obvious prominence. The prohibition is the first overt command in First John; nevertheless, the entire Epistle is characteristically hortative. Longacre explained that the commands are initially mitigated, yet become more overt as the Epistle reaches its conclusion. Therefore, "in 15b, we have the by now familiar use of a conditional clause to express a covert command; here 'if any man love the world' equal 'don't love the world' and echoes in mitigated form the overt imperative of the preceding clause."[163]

Smith noted the lack of "a more explicit connection" between 2:12-14 and 2:15-17, yet affirmed that an "intrinsic relationship is real enough." His argument is based upon the assertion that "the warnings against the world" must be elaborated, thus the "elaborate words of address lead to a strong warning against worldliness."[164] According to Smith, if one were to divide 2:12-17 into two units, this would result in the "elaborate words of address" (2:12-14) lacking the warning of 2:15-17. Brown noted a threefold problem for determining the intent of 2:12-14.[165] The *first* issue is the "alteration of tenses" between γράφω and ἔγραψα. The *second* issue is the "different groups of people" who are addressed as τεκνία, πατέρες, νεανίσκοι, and παιδία. The *third* issue is with regard to the interpretation of ὅτι. The alteration of tenses could either be stylistic or epistolary. If the latter, then John was referring to the truths that they already knew (including "past writings or John's letters in general"[166]), and could also be the Apostle's means for preparing his readers for the overt prohibition of 2:15 (i.e. the relationship of trust between John

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[162] Miehle, "Theme in Greek Hortatory Discourse," 272.

[163] Longacre, "Exhortation and Mitigation," 13.

[164] Smith, *First, Second, and Third John*, 65.

[165] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 294-302.

[166] Miehle, "Theme in Greek Hortatory Discourse," 271.

and his readers was reinforced by his assertion that he already trusted them).[167] John addressed three groups of readers—children, fathers, and young men—who may have been divided chronologically by age, or the division may denote spiritual maturity. "Fathers" is not sequential, however, which would indicate that the chronological or maturity interpretation is inconsistent. Furthermore, the Epistle addresses all readers as "children" (2:1, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21), which would indicate that all the addresses could be regarded as "children," "fathers," and "young men."[168]

The best interpretation of ὅτι seems to be declaratively as "that" (rather than "because" or "since"). The reason is that the context indicates that John was referring to truths that they already knew (2:21), that is, he referred to their current experience and declared his message to them on that basis. Brown noted that the causative "because, since" is affirmed by many scholars, yet recent commentators affirm the particle as declarative. Schnackenburg, for example, rejected the notion that John's readers needed reassurance with regard to those truths that they already knew; rather, the Christians who are addressed already enjoy "the salvation they desire."[169]

The senary vocatives in 2:12-14 are not insignificant, yet neither is it conclusive that 2:15-17 should be regarded as a structural paragraph. First John 2:12-14 is certainly unique, which seems to indicate that it should be distinguished from 2:15-17. However, neither is 2:12-14 unrelated to 2:15-17, and could even be distinguished as a "peak" (according to Longacre's usage). For instance, Malatesta noted, "Although no connecting particles relate 12-14 to what precedes (9-11) or to

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[167] Sherman and Tuggy, *Johannine Epistles*, 42.

[168] The inspired authors of Scripture often used figurative speech to denote age contrasts between the elderly, middle aged, and young. For example, the quotation of Joel 2:28-32 in Acts 2:17 refers to young men seeing visions and old men dreaming dreams, which is a poetic expression to indicate that visions and dreams will be experienced by all ages. Therefore, the statements with regard to each of the three different groups of individuals in 1 John 2:12-14 was intended to be true with regard to believers of all ages. All believers are like "children" because all have experienced forgiveness of sins and have come to "know the Father." As "fathers," all believers have come to "know Him who has been from the beginning," which means they have truly experienced and known what it is to have fellowship with God. As "young men," all believers "have overcome the evil one" and have become "strong" because the Word of God abides within them.

[169] Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 115-16, 118.

what follows (15-17), the passage is related to both." First John 2:12-14 is "prepared by 7-11" and "is directed principally to what follows, since believers (12-14) will be contrasted with the world (15-17) and antichrists (18-28)."[170] First John 2:12-14 could be regarded as a parenthesis, which contrasts the selfless love that characterizes one who is in the Light (2:7-11) with the selfish love that characterizes the unbelieving world (2:15-17); therefore, 2:12-14 is indeed related to both units.[171]

Disagreement as to whether 2:18 begins a new structural paragraph is generally with regard to the statement regarding the world "passing away," that is, does verse 18 continue that theme or does it begin a new section.[172] Marshall noted the "slight" relationship with the preceding section. John "told his readers that the world is passing away; he now bids them note that it is in fact approaching the end. It is the last hour, as various signs make clear." The thought progression with regard to "the last hour" is somewhat related to the statement "that the world is passing away." The primary concern is an increasing number of individuals who are opposed to the truth.[173] Schnackenburg regarded the transition as "didactic and parenetic," with a new emphasis upon the "last hour," as a consequence of "heretical teachers who deny the central point of the Christological message, the saving significance of Jesus Christ."[174]

As in 2:12, the readers of the Epistle are addressed as παιδία, which would seem to indicate that 2:18 begins a new structural paragraph.[175] The distinct

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[170] Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant*, 167.
[171] Sherman and Tuggy, *Johannine Epistles*, 43.
[172] Jones, "Structural Analysis of 1 John," 433-44.
[173] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 147-48.
[174] Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 129.
[175] José María Casciaro, gen. ed., *The Navarre Bible: The Catholic Letters* (New York: Scepter Publishers, 1999) 140-41; D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Epistles of John* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1991) 105-06; E. Ridley Lewis, *The Johannine Writings and Other Epistles* (London: James Clarke & Company, 1964) 83-84; Judith Lieu, *I, II, & III John* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008) 97-100; William Loader, *The Johannine Epistles* (London: Epworth Press, 1992) 26-28; John Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2002) 196; Perkins, *Johannine Epistles*, 33-34; David Rensberger, *The Epistles of John* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001) 35-36; Schnackenburg,

features of this section, with the preceding and subsequent paragraphs, is the emphasis upon the ἐσχάτη ὥρα (2:18) and the ἀντίχριστοι (2:18, 22). The unit also emphasizes the following motifs: μείνη (2:24), ἐπαγγελία (2:25), and ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον (2:25). Another distinguishing characteristic of this section that emphasizes coherence is the contrast between "the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ" (2:23) and those who "abide in the Son and in the Father" (2:24). Prominence in 2:18-27 is evident by the adjoined phrases in 2:20-23 and 2:24-25. The anaphoric ταῦτα in 2:26 is, of course, a reference to previous constituents, which could be the entirety of First John to this point, or, as Painter asserted, it could refer to 2:18-25.[176] Painter's suggestion considered the first specific mention of the antichrists, and therefore, ταῦτα is best understood as a conclusion to the section. The phrase ὁμολογῶν τὸν υἱόν is asserted in the imperative because there is emphasis upon positively acknowledging Jesus as the Christ and the negative statement that the one who denies this truth "is the antichrist." The second adjoined phrase is stated as a command: μενέτω. First John 2:18-19 provides additional justification for acknowledging the Son and for abiding in the truth. Moreover, the fact that it is the ἐσχάτη ὥρα makes the commands all the more important to heed.[177]

First John 2:18-27 emphasizes the distinction between the χρῖσμα received "from the Holy One," who[178] allows believers to know all things, with those who cannot discern between lies and truth. "Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ?" The antichrist "denies the Father and the Son;" therefore, "whoever denies the Son does not have the Father." Confessing the Son indicates that one "has the Father also" and abides in that which was "heard from the beginning." Abiding in the Son and in the Father culminates in "the promise," that is, "eternal life." For this reason, John's readers are warned with regard to the

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Johannine Epistles, 129-33; Marianne Meye Thompson, *1—3 John* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992) 71.

[176] Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 208.

[177] Miehle, "Theme in Greek Hortatory Discourse," 273-74.

[178] The majority of commentators conclude that χρῖσμα is "a metonymy for the Holy Spirit, since the Holy Spirit is associated with Old and New Testament ceremony of anointing" (Sherman and Tuggy, *Johannine Epistles*, 48).

antichrists, and reminded that if they abide in the χρῖσμα, who was received "from Him" who abides in them, they will "have no need for anyone to teach" them because the χρῖσμα will teach them the truth. Consequently, they are to "abide in Him."

The intent of 2:18-27 is both expository and hortatory.[179] John's readers are to abide in the truth, which they have "heard from the beginning." The subunits of 2:18-27 are identified by the threefold usage of the emphatic pronoun ὑμεῖς in verses 20, 24, and 27. The first subunit (2:18-23) is expository, as evident by the predominance of ἐστιν and ἔχω. The second subunit (2:24-27) is hortatory, as evident by the predominance of μενέτω and μένετε. First John 2:18-27 provides much emphasis upon the concept of abiding, with the verb μένω occurring seven times (2:19, 24, 27, 28). The believer has an anointing from God, and should abide in it. First John 2:26-27, therefore, concludes the section with an overt command to abide in God, "as His anointing teaches you."

II.B.4. Structural Analysis of First John 2:28—5:21

Divisions into two units,[180] three units,[181] or multiple units[182] generally characterize structural proposals for the First Epistle of John.[183] Among those commentators who affirm a twofold structure for First John, disagreement exists with regard to the first division occurring at the end of John 2 or at 3:11.[184] Among those who affirm a threefold structure for First John, the debate is focused upon whether the first primary division should occur at 2:17, 28, or 29, and whether the second primary division should occur at 4:1 or 4:7.[185] Among those commentators who affirm a

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[179] Longacre, "Exhortation and Mitigation," 14.

[180] Joseph Chaine, *Les Epitres Catholiques* (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1927); André Feuillet, *Johannine Studies*, trans. Thomas E. Crane (Staten Island, NY: Alba House, 1965).

[181] Dodd, *Johannine Epistles*; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*; Wilhelm Thüsing, *The Three Epistles of St. John*, trans. Alois Stöger (London: Sheed & Ward, 1971); Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*.

[182] Houlden, *Johannine Epistles*.

[183] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 116-29, 764.

[184] Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 37-48; Brown, *Epistles of John*, 118-19; Longacre, "Exegesis of 1 John," 273-74; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, xxx-xxxi; Smith, *First, Second, and Third John*, 21-24

[185] Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 11-15.

multiple unit division for First John, there is a plethora of arguments for the structural paragraphs.[186] First John 2:28 is best understood as beginning a new section because it allows for the content with which it begins to parallel 2:12 and 2:18.

The construction πᾶς ὁ, with a subsequent participle, occurs in seven clauses from 2:29 to 3:10. There is a thesis of the unit (similar to 1:5), which according to Talbert "is given in 2:29: Since he is righteous, everyone who does right is born of him. Doing right is a consequence of and, therefore, a sign of one's spiritual birth." Three units provide the Christological basis for John's assertion: 3:1-4; 3:5-8a; and, 3-8b-10. Each unit contains positive and negative corollaries (3:3-4; 3;6-8a; 3:9-10) to prove the thesis of 2:29.[187]

As there is debate with regard to the first primary division, there is also disagreement with regard to whether the section ends at 3:3, 10, or 12. The best understanding would be to regard the structural paragraph as concluding with 3:10 because 3:9-10 form an *inclusio* with 2:28-29. For instance, 2:29 describes the one who is born of God, as does 3:9. The positive assertion, "everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him" (2:29), is contrasted with two negative declarations: "no one who is born of God practices sin" (3:9) and "anyone who does not practice righteousness is not of God" (3:10).

Moreover, many of the same themes from 2:28-29 are repeated, such as abiding, practicing righteousness, and the appearing of the Son in relationship to the manifestation of the children of God. First John 3:1-3 serves as a parenthesis to explain what it means to be the children of God, which was mentioned already in 2:29. First John 3:4 resumes the argument, with a contrast to the children of God, who were described in 2:29. The contrast between practicing righteousness is the one who "practices sin" (3:6, 9). Of course, believers do still sin (cf. 1:8, 10); however, they do not persist habitually in sin (cf. 2:1; 2:29; 3:4). The one who is "born of God" cannot persist in habitual sin (3:9). First John 2:29—3:10, therefore,

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[186] Köstenberger, *Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, 171-72.
[187] Charles H. Talbert, *Reading John: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Fourth Gospel and the Johannine Epistles* (New York: Crossroad, 1992) 28-29.

contrasts the child of God with the child of the devil. First John 3:1, in particular, reminds John's readers that God's great love has bestowed upon them the gift of being called His children. The persistent contrast between those who are called the children of God is righteousness (3:7, 10) as opposed to sin (3:4, 5, 6, 8, 9).

The next structural paragraph begins in 3:11 with the assertion ὅτι αὕτν ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγγελία, which is parallel to the assertion in 1:5. The parallel assertion demonstrates that 3:11 is indeed the beginning of the unit. Moreover, the repetition of ἀγγελία demonstrates a relationship between 1:5 and 3:11,[188] and may indicate a second primary unit in First John.[189] The phrase ἵνα ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους in 3:11 is comparable to Jesus' command in John 15:12, which is, of course, a restatement of the "new commandment" given by Jesus in John 13:34-35. The section constituent is somewhat of an elaboration upon obedience to God's commandment to demonstrate love toward fellow believers in 2:3-11. Dodd noted this enforcement and illustration of John's thesis "that right conduct is the only sure and sufficient mark of the child of God. For in a Christian valuation love and hatred are the typical forms of righteousness and sin respectively" (cf. 3:12).[190]

The unit ends with 3:18, and functions as the midpoint of the Epistle; however, one could also extend the unit to 3:24, especially since 4:1-6 is one of the few sections within First John where there is almost unanimous agreement among commentators that it is a distinct unit. The similarity between the assertions in 3:11 and 3:23 may indicate that 3:11-24 should be regarded as a single unit. The transitional statement in 3:24 (καὶ ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν ὅτι μένει ἐν ἡμῖν, ἐκ τοῦ πνεύματος οὗ ἡμῖν ἔδωκεν) is similar to the summary statement at the end of 3:10 (καὶ ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ). However, the two negative imperatives, μὴ θαυμάζετε (3:13) and μὴ ἀγαπῶμεν (3:18), demonstrate coherence to an unit as designated by verses 11-18, in addition to the orienters, οἴδαμεν and οἴδατε, in 3:14-15. The explanatory examples and summary (3:12, 14, 16, 17, 18)

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[188] Haas et al., *Letters of John*, 22; Hiebert, *Epistles of John*, 150; Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 232-33; Perkins, *Johannine Epistles*, 44-45.

[189] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 440; Lieu, *I, II, & III John*, 141-42; Rensberger, *Epistles of John*, 52-54; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 181-82; Stott, *Letters of John*, 143.

[190] Dodd, *Johannine Epistles*, 82.

with regard to love also provide 3:11-18 with coherence. Additional themes (to that of love) which characterize 3:11-18 include κόσμος (3:13, 17), μένω (3:14, 15, 17), and ζωήν (3:14-15).[191]

First John 3:12-17 is an illustration and extended discussion with regard to the truth that "the one who does not love his brother" is the child "of the devil." The example given is that of Cain in 3:12, and then application for the believer is given by means of comparison in 3:13-14. The vocative ἀδελφοί in 3:13 gives prominence to this application. Although the vocatives ἀγαπητοί or τεκνία were the customary usages by John, the usage of ἀδελφοί identifies John and his readers with Abel, as opposed to those who hate, who are identified with the murderer Cain (cf. the dual usage of ἀνθρωποκτόνος in 3:15). First John 3:18 restates the assertion of 3:11 as a mitigated exhortation based upon the instruction and application given in 3:12-17.

First John 3:11-18 provides additional explanation of the divine command to love fellow believers. The love of Jesus (3:16) and the corresponding love for other believers (3:11, 14, 17) are contrasted with the hatred of those who belong to "the evil one," of whom Cain is the primary example (3:12-13, 15). The section also contributes to the emphasis upon eternal life in 1:1-4 and 5:13-21. Love is the distinguishing characteristic of the believer, which was also emphasized in 2:3-11, 12-14, 15-17 and 4:7-10, 11-21 (cf. 3:19-24). The love of Jesus and love for other believers demonstrates that one abides in the love of God, and thus, is abiding in eternal love (as opposed to abiding in death, as those who hate). The love that is described in 3:11-18 is the kind that is expressed not only in word but also in deed, that is, helping fellow believers who are "in need," even to the point of ultimate and particular sacrifice (3:16-17).

With the exception of 3:21, καί and ὅτι are in the clause-initial position, which would indicate that 3:19-24 is best understood as a separate unit from 3:11-18. First John 3:19-24 is related to 3:11-18, as the consequence of the previous

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[191] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 440-50; Haas et al., *Letters of John*, 94-101; Hiebert, *Epistles of John*, 150-58; Lieu, *I, II, & III John*, 142-53; Miehle, "Theme in Greek Hortatory Discourse," 288; Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 232-36; Rensberger, *Epistles of John*, 52-57; von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters of John*, 3:122-26.

reason (i.e. the initial conjunction καί relates 3:19-24 to the previous, as also evident by the usage of τούτω). First John 3:19-24 demonstrates the result of the prior practice addressed, that is, how love for fellow believers is the basis for either confidence or conviction.

First John 3:19-24 is the first indication of a potential chiastic structure to the First Epistle of John.[192] For instance, the emphasis upon having "confidence before God" (3:21) is comparable to 2:28—3:10, wherein emphasis was given to the relationship between "confidence" and "righteousness." The condemnation of the conscience (3:20) or freedom of the conscience (3:21) is a prominent aspect of this section.[193] The contrast between either condemnation or freedom of conscience develops this section. John's statement in verse 19 was given to reinforce

> the exhortation to his readers not to close their hearts toward their fellow believers in need: they will know they belong to the truth when their love finds practical expression in helping those in need. So that they may know that they belong to the truth, the readers must 'persuade their hearts in the presence of God' . . . , so that they do not succumb to the meanness in their hearts and refuse to offer material assistance. This persuasion is to be undertaken . . . whenever their hearts object to legitimate calls upon their generosity when they are in fact in a position to respond.[194]

Consequently, verses 19 and 20 form a conditional sentence which should be understood as follows: if the believer will assure his/her heart before God, then his/her heart will not have the feeling of condemnation. The second usage of the clause initial ὅτι in 3:20 serves as the reason for the prominence in 3:19, that is, John's readers are to persuade their hearts because God is greater than it and knows all things. First John 3:21-24 describes two consequences when the heart does not condemn the believers. First, there is confidence before God; and, secondly, one may receive whatever they ask from Him. The second consequence is emphasized by three propositions: (1) believe in Jesus and love other Christians; (2) obedience is

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[192] Sherman and Tuggy, *Johannine Epistles*, 70.
[193] Miehle, "Theme in Greek Hortatory Discourse," 289.
[194] Kruse, *Letters of John*, 141.

the basis for abiding in God; and, (3) confidence is received by the giving of the Holy Spirit.

The concept of righteousness is apparent, albeit it is stated differently than in 2:29, with emphasis upon whether one's heart does or does not feel condemnation. Verse 22 indicates that having "confidence before God" allows the believer to ask for needs in accordance with the will of God. The heart will not condemn the one who keeps the divine commandments, especially the command to believe in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and to love fellow believers. Whereas righteousness in 2:29 indicated whether one was born of God, it is seen to be evident in 3:19-24 by heeding God's commands, which proves whether one abides in God, and God remains in the believer. First John 3:9 affirmed that the σπέρμα of God abides in the believer, whereas 3:24 places emphasis upon τοῦ πνεύματος whom God has given to believers.

With the occurrence of πνεύματος, the "tail-head linkage" is apparent between 3:24 and 4:1. The use of the vocative ἀγαπητοί with the imperative verbs μὴ πιστεύετε and δοκιμάζετε as subsequent to 3:24 indicate a structural division.[195] Moreover, the initial ἐν τούτῳ anticipates the deictic ἐκ τούτου at the conclusion of the unit.[196] First John 4:1-6 is easily distinguished from the previous contexts. The context would also indicate a new structural paragraph because the emphasis changes from confidence before God from one's actions to the confidence as a consequence of the doctrine that one affirms. The emphasis is for the readers "to believe correctly regarding Jesus Christ."[197] Brown understood 4:1-6 as related to the first part of the commandment in 3:23, whereas 4:7-12 is related to the second part of that commandment.[198] As is customary Johannine usage throughout

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[195] Larsen, "Boundary Features," 54. Longacre regarded 4:1-6 as the "doctrinal peak" of the body of the Epistle ("Exegesis of 1 John," 275; "Exhortation and Mitigation," 28).

[196] Miehle, "Theme in Greek Hortatory Discourse,"291.

[197] Longacre, "Exhortation and Mitigation," 28.

[198] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 543. The same aspect of "tail-head linkage" was evident at the end of 2:27 and the unit at 2:28 (cf. the phrase μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ).

this Epistle, there is "a transition to a new section in the repetition of the last prominent idea."[199]

The relationship between 4:1-6 and 4:7-12 is further demonstrated by the cataphoric ἐν τούτῳ at the beginning of 4:13. First John 4:13-21 expounds upon aspects that are identified in 4:1-6 and 4:7-12, even though, in the immediate context, ἐν τούτῳ refers to subsequent information. The mutual abiding resumes the prior statements from 4:4 (ὁ ἐν ὑμῖν) and 4:12 (ὁ θεὸς ἐν ἡμῖν μένει), yet it provides a new dynamic, which is that the believer also abides in God (4:13, 15, 16). To know whether one abides in God is based upon confessing "that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (4:1-6), and expressing love toward fellow believers, which manifests the character of God, who is love (4:7-12). Consequently, the receiving of the Holy Spirit is based upon two essential doctrinal truths: (1) listening to those who speak as from God; and, (2) living in a manner that proves God abides within oneself.

The context of 4:1-6 is the contrast between the spirit of error from the world and the spirit of truth from God. The prepositional phrase ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ is prominent throughout this section. The first occurrence of the phrase is located in 4:1 to indicate the necessity to discern the truthfulness of any and all teaching. The phrase is used in every verse of 4:1-6. The prominence structure of this section is evident in the chiastic structure of the pronouns of 4:4-6, which contrasts the apostolic message with the spirits from the world.[200]

A ὑμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστε
    B αὐτοὶ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου εἰσίν
A' ἡμεῖς ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐσμεν

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[199] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 106.
[200] Houlden, *Johannine Epistles*, 109-10; Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant*, 178-82; Sherman and Tuggy, *Johannine Epistles*, 78.

The parallel to this section is 2:18-27, which would again indicate a chiastic structure to First Epistle of John.[201]

4:1-6	2:18-27
many false prophets have gone out into the world (v. 1)	*even now many antichrists have appeared* (v. 18)
Spirit of God (v. 2)	*anointing from the Holy One* (v. 20)
confesses . . . Jesus Christ (v. 2)	*confesses the Son* (v. 23)
antichrist . . . in the world (v. 3)	*this is the antichrist* (v. 22)
truth (v. 6)	*truth* (v. 21)
have overcome (v. 4)	*promise* (v. 25)
spirit of truth (v. 6)	*His anointing teaches you* (v. 27)

First John 2:18-27 indicates "even now many antichrists have appeared," whereas 4:1-6 indicates "many false prophets have gone out into the world." The units are similar in that God's gives the provision for discernment, and confession is an essential aspect for discerning and testing the spirits. Both passages emphasize that one's confession with regard to Jesus Christ is evidence whether one is from God. John's readers are ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ thus they listen to His messengers, whereas those who are from the world (ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου) do not listen to God's apostolic messengers (cf. 1:1-4).

The next unit beginning with 4:7 is best understand to conclude at 4:12. Although it is possible to argue for a division between 4:11 and 4:12 because the content changes from loving others as a consequence of God's love to loving others as evidence of God's abiding,[202] it would be best to understand 4:12 as concluding

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[201] J. Smit Sibinga ("A Study in I John," in *Studies in John: Presented to Professor Dr. J. N. Sevenster on the Occasion of His Seventieth Birthday* [Leiden: Brill, 1970] 206) asserted that 2:27-28 belong to 2:18-26, based upon a chiastic structure of those verses. For example, 2:27 reads, "true and is not a lie," which is a reverse parallel to verse 21, "you do not know the truth [i.e. lies] . . . you do know it [i.e. the truth]." Similarly, in 2:24, the Son and the Father was reversed from "the Father and the Son" in 2:22. The emphasis of the chiasm would then be 2:24.

[202] Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 270-71; Sherman and Tuggy, *Johannine Epistles*, 82; cf. Bruce, *Epistles of John*, 109; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 210-17; Thompson, *1—3 John*, 122-23.

the command to love others. Moreover, the use of the cataphoric ἐν τούτῳ at the beginning of 4:13 would better delineate the commencing of a new unit. The expression of love for others cannot be separated from God abiding in the believer. The repetition (fifteen times) of some form of ἀγάπη in each verse of 4:7-12 (in addition to the predominance of θεός) provides coherence to this unit.

A   love one another (v. 7a)
    B   love is from God (v. 7b)
        C   love demonstrates knowing God (v. 8)
            D   God is love and so loved (vv. 9-11a)
        C'   love demonstrates the love of God (v. 11b)
    B'   love from God not seen (12a)
A'   love one another (12b-c)

A   love one another (v. 7a)
    B   love is from God (v. 7b)
        C   God is love (vv. 8-10)
    B'   God so loved (v. 11a)
A'   love one another (v. 12)

The command to love fellow believers in 4:7-12 is not based God's commands or as evidence of the believer's relationship with God (as in prior sections); rather, the command to love is theological, that is, because God is love. The Johannine theology is that love is based upon the God who is love abiding in the believer, and thus, His love is perfected in them.

The command to love fellow believers is stated in 4:7 as three doctrinal truths: (1) love is from God; (2) love is the consequence of regeneration; and, (3) love is the consequence of knowing God. According to 4:8, not to love means one does not know God because it is His nature. The manifestation of God's love is explained in 9-10, beginning with the cataphoric ἐν τούτῳ, which develops the thought progression. John's developed his theology for the readers by asserting how it is that God manifests His love, namely by sending His only begotten Son into the world *to be* the ἱλασμός for sin. John concluded this section by restating the command to love fellow believers, which manifests the nature of God who abides in the believer. The assertion to love one another forms an *inclusio* between 4:7 and

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4:12; however, the reason to love in 4:12 is somewhat different than in 4:7, yet the rationale for doing so is more substantive. When believers love one another, it is the manifestation of the nature of the God who has not been seen.

The deictic expressions ἐν τούτῳ (4:13, 17) and ταύτην (4:21) is a reference to the subsequent information. Kruse understood 4:13 as "transitional" because "it is more closely connected with what follows than with what precedes"[203] (cf. 3:24). There are two ὅτι clauses in 4:13, which are subsequent to the occurrences of ἐν τούτῳ. The first occurrence is in relation to the verb γινώσκομεν, and indicates the content of the believer's knowledge: "that we abide in Him and He in us." The second use of the ὅτι clause occurs epexegetically to ἐν τούτῳ, and therefore, explains how believers may know the reality of the mutual abiding: "because He has given us of His Spirit."[204] First John 4:13 asserts that the giving of the indwelling Holy Spirit to the believer is one manner in which God grants confidence of the reality of a relationship with Him.

"What the author is implying in 4:13, then, is that because the Spirit teaches believers about the love of God expressed in the sending of the Son to be the Saviour of the world (4:14), and because they believe that teaching, they may be assured that they dwell in God and God in them."[205] If the Christian confesses the teaching that is "from God," particularly with regard to the nature of Jesus Christ, and manifests the nature of God who has not been seen, the consequence is confidence before God on the basis of a mutual abiding. In a previous section (2:5), John told his readers that the love of God is perfected in whoever keeps God's Word. Similarly, in 4:12, the love of God is perfected in those who love one another, and in 4:17, the love of God is perfected in those who abide in God, and those within whom He abides.

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[203] Kruse, *Letters of John*, 163.

[204] Smalley also noted the expression ἐν τούτῳ as used in relation to what is subsequent (*1, 2, 3 John*, 238). Although he understood the second ὅτι clause as causal ("because"), which is also indicated by the New American Standard, the consequent meaning is not profoundly different from an epexegetical understanding.

[205] Kruse, *Letters of John*, 163.

The clause initial καί in 4:14 is best understood in relation to the immediately preceding verse (4:13).[206] First John 4:15-16 develop the concepts of the previous sections with specific application to the believer. First John 4:16 then provides a conclusion and explanation based upon 4:13-15. With the occurrence of the noun ἀγάπη, there is a "tail-head linkage" between the first and second portions of 4:16. The manifestation of the love of God in the believer is to "have confidence in the day of judgment" (4:17). "Perfect love casts out fear" whereas "the one who fears is not perfected in love" (4:18).

The occurrence of ἐν τούτῳ in 4:17 makes it difficult to determine the referent since there are both ἵνα and ὅτι clauses subsequent to its usage, and it is not conclusive whether the clauses are related to ἐν τούτῳ. Brooke noted two possible interpretations for determining the referent in 4:17, that is, ἐν τούτῳ either refers to what was preceding or what is subsequent.[207] If the latter, ἐν τούτῳ refers to the clause that ἵνα introduces, with the consequent meaning that love is perfected only by those who can confidently anticipate the future day of judgment. Therefore, one does not "have confidence in the day of judgment;" rather, the confidence is with regard to the event, that is, confidence with regard to the day (as opposed to ἐν the day). The second interpretation is that ἐν τούτῳ recapitulates the preceding information, which would be the better understanding, because then the ἵνα clause would indicate the consequence of perfected love, and the ὅτι clause would indicate the reason for such confidence.[208]

First John 4:19 begins with emphasis upon the love of God, and the thought progression is developed with regard to love for fellow believers. Once loved is defined by the nature of God, it is evident that love in the believer must be subsequent to the love of God, that is, the love of God is not only prior to the

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[206] Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 239. Schnackenburg, however, regarded 4:14-15 as an evident digression (*Johannine Epistles*, 219).

[207] Brooke, *Epistles of S. John*, 123-24; see also, Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 222-23.

[208] Smalley understood the referent of ἐν τούτῳ to occur subsequently, yet did not preclude "a retrospective reference to v 16 (despite the new paragraph)" (*1, 2, 3 John*, 244). See also, Brown, *Epistles of John*, 526-27; Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 223; and, Westcott, *Epistle of St. John*, 157.

believer's love of Him but also the love of God is the ability to love. Love is next related to obedience (4:20-21), which is a thought developed by the conditional, "if we say." There are two protases that develop the conditional sentence: (1) someone saying they love God; and, (2) someone hating their brother. Brown understood 4:20 as involving "an artistic chiasm."[209]

 A The one not loving
    B   whom he has seen
    B' God whom he has not seen
 A' cannot love

The one who asserts love for God, yet hates a fellow believer, "is a liar." The apodoses are based upon twofold reasoning. *First*, one cannot love God who is not seen while hating the believer who can be seen (cf. 4:12). *Second*, love and obedience cannot be separated from each other; therefore, someone is a liar if they do not love fellow believers because it is disobedience to the command of God.

 The clause initial καί "tightly connects v. 21 to the preceding verse, upon which it is a commentary. The ἵνα clause in 4:21 is understood to be epexegetical.[210] If the clause introduces the purpose or result of "this commandment," then the ἐντολήν is not specified. However, if the ἵνα clause is epexegetical to ταύτην, the commandment is explained as loving God and loving fellow believers. The structural prominence of 4:13-21 is evident by the application of verses 19-21, and the foundational propositions in 4:13-16 and 4:17-18.[211]

 Miehle noted "a loose tail-head linkage between 4:21 and 5:1 with the parallelism of the idea of loving one's brother as a sign that one loves God."[212]

  ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν θεόν
    ἀγαπᾷ καὶ τὸν ἀδελφὸν αὐτοῦ

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[209] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 533.
[210] Ibid. 534.
[211] Sherman and Tuggy, *Johannine Epistles*, 88-90; cf. Gary M. Burge, *The Letters of John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996) 189; Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 223; Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 272-82; Strecker, *Johannine Letters*, 162.
[212] Miehle, "Theme in Greek Hortatory Discourse," 297; see also, Sherman and Tuggy, *Johannine Epistles*, 88.

πᾶς ὁ ἀγαπῶν τὸν γεννήσαντα
ἀγαπᾷ [καί] τὸν γεγεννημένον

First John 5:1-12 may be understood as an extended exposition of 4:1-21, which is evident by the repetition of the two doctrinal truths that prove the receiving of the Holy Spirit. Longacre understood this section as presenting an assertion (5:1) and then articulating the evidence (5:2-12). However, the evidence contains a "reason paragraph" (5:2), with the reason forming the remainder of the structural paragraph (5:3-12).[213] The structural paragraph of 5:1-12 will be understood similar to Longacre, with some minor revisions, such as 5:2-5 being more propositional and 5:6-12 providing the evidence for those assertions.

Coherence in 1 John 5:1-12 is evident by the following repetitions: belief in Jesus (5:1, 4-5, 10); loving fellow believers (5:1, 2-3); and, heeding God's commandments (5:2-3). The section reiterates that those who possess the threefold characteristics of belief, love, and obedience are truly "the children of God" (5:1, 4) and have "overcome the world" (5:4-5). Moreover, the section gives prominence to the testimony of God (5:6, 7, 9-11) and its relationship to the granting of eternal life (5:11-12). The unit could be subdivided as 5:1-5 and 5:6-12,[214] as evident by the "tail-head linkage" of Ἰησοῦς in verses 5 and 6. Moreover, the cataphoric οὗτός at the beginning of 5:6, in addition to the continuation of thought from 5:1 to the end of 5:5, and the progression from the one who "has overcome the world" to the evidence of such victory.

First John 5 begins with two equivalent constituents: those who believe and love are ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ γεγέννηται.[215] Verses 2-3 are then epexegetical, with the

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[213] Longacre, "Exhortation and Mitigation," 36.

[214] See, for example, du Rand, "Discourse Analysis of 1 John," 26-27. However, du Rand regarded 5:6-21 as the concluding unit.

[215] Bultmann, *Johannine Epistles*, 76. Marshall understood the statement to be "surely self-evident that everybody who loves a parent also love his child" (*Epistles of John*, 227). Other commentators understood the statement with regard to one's own parent, that is, whoever loves one's own father also loves the other children that he has fathered (Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 128-29; Haas et al., *Letters of John*, 132-33; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 177). Marshall's deduction appears to be most probable, especially as the statement was introduced with πᾶς ὁ. However, within context, the application of the statement is

conclusion being that love for God is inextricably related to obedience.[216] Moreover, love for God's commandments (esp. love for fellow believers) "are not burdensome" because the believer's faith "has overcome the world" (5:3-4). In reverse parallel, 5:5 reiterates the truth of verse 1: "whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God."[217]

> **A**   whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ (5:1a)
>   **B**   is born of God (5:1b)
>   **C**   loves the *child* born of Him (5:1c-2a)
>   **D**   love and obey (5:2b-3a)
>   **C'**   loving the child is not burdensome (5:3b)
>   **B'**   whatever is born of God overcomes the world (5:4)
> **A'**   he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God (5:5)

First John 5:6-12 provides the evidence for the previous assertions. There are two propositions that provide the foundation for the conclusion of 5:12. The first proposition is that the proof demanded by the Old Testament was satisfied (5:6-8). The second proposition is the testimony that God gave with regard to His Son (5:9-10). Therefore, not to believe in Jesus is to regard God as a liar. Verses 11-12 conclude the unit with the testimony of God: eternal life "is in His Son" and whoever "has the Son has the life." Contrariwise, the one "who does not have the Son of God does not have the life."

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certainly true with regard to God. Love for God motivates the believer to have love for fellow believers, that is, the children "born of Him" (cf. 4:20).

[216] In the Old Testament, love is inextricably related to covenant and obedience (Exod 20:6; Deut 7:6-8; 10:12; 11:13, 22; 19:9; 30:19-20; Josh 22:5; 1 Sam 18:1-3; etc.). In the New Testament, love is most frequently related to discipleship and obedience (John 14:15, 21, 23-24; 15:9-10; 1 John 2:4-6; 5:1-3; 2 John 6a; etc.).

[217] Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 44, 193; Sherman and Tuggy, *Johannine Epistles*, 93; John Christopher Thomas, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John* (New York: T&T Clark, 2004) 56, 58-60; idem, "The Literary Structure of 1 John," *Novum Testamentum* 40 (1998): 372; Dirk G. van der Merwe, "Animosity in the Johannine Epistles: A Difference in the Interpretation of a Shared Tradition," in *Animosity, the Bible, and Us*, eds. John T. Fitzgerald, Fika J. van Rensburg, and Herrie F. van Rooy (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2009) 242; von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John*, 3:24-25; cf. Griffith, *Keep Yourselves from Idols*, 83; Lieu, *I, II, & III John*, xix, 206-08; Barnabas Lindars, Ruth B. Edwards, and John M. Court, *The Johannine Literature* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2000) 33-34; Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 296; Rensberger, *Epistles of John*, 83-86.

The "tail-head linkage" between 5:12-13 (ἔχει τὴν ζωήν in v. 12 and ζωὴν ἔχετε in v. 13) indicates that the first half of 1 John 5 concludes with verse 12.[218] The remainder of the Epistle provides an apologetic whereby one may proclaim the truth of God's Word so that one may know whether they have eternal life. First John 5:13-21 is the conclusion and epilogue, with 5:21 providing an appropriate exhortation and warning. The conclusion of the First Epistle of John begins with the author's purpose statement, that is, his purpose for writing was for his readers to "believe in the name of the Son of God" and to know that they "have eternal life" (cf. John 20:31). The relationship between a true Christology and eternal life is asserted, which was important as a consequence of many antichrists who deviated from the apostolic doctrine and demonstrated that they belong to the lie and remain in darkness. Having asserted that he wrote for his readers to know that they have eternal life, John expounded upon that statement in the subsequent verses.

Several elements demonstrate coherence in 5:13-21. In addition to the "tail-head linkage" between 5:12 and 5:13, there is the chiastic structure with regard to the confidence that believers may have in their prayers when asking according to the will of God.

> **A** ἐάν τι αἰτώμεθα
>   **B** ἀκούει ἡμῶν
>   **B'** ἀκούει ἡμῶν
> **A'** ὅ ἐὰν αἰτώμεθα

First John 5:14 asserts such confidence, with 5:15 written epexegetically. The sin that either leads to death or does not illustrates why prayers are to be made in accordance with the will of God, in addition to providing a warning. The contrasts and parallelism between 5:16 (ἁμαρτίαν μὴ πρὸς θάνατον) and 5:17 (ἁμαρτία οὐ πρὸς θάνατον), and the contrast between 5:20 (ὁ ἀληθινὸς θεός) and 5:21

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[218] Smalley understood 5:13 as transitional, "in that it looks back to the subject matter of vv 5-12 and also provides a summary conclusion to 1 John in its entirety that leads into the closing remarks of vv 14-21" (*1, 2, 3 John*, 276; cf. Dodd, *Johannine Epistles*, 133; Haas et al., *Letters of John*, 145; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 247). Other commentators understood 5:13 in relation to 5:14-21 (e.g. Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 188).

(εἰδώλων) also demonstrate a coherent unit. Moreover, the orienter οἴδαμεν (5:15, 18, 19, 20) begins five propositional statements, which is a prominent motif throughout this section to assure believers with regard to the work of God on their behalf.[219] The teaching of 1 John 5:18 was stated previously in 3:9.[220] The particle ἀλλά is contrastive and provides additional explanation of the phrase οὐχ ἁμαρτάνει. First John 5:19 clarifies the previous verse, especially since ὁ πονηρός is mentioned for a second time (τῷ πονηρῷ; cf. 2:13-14; 3:12). The final segment of First John contains a concluding reference to eternal life, which is the close of the explanations with regard to this life, and it relates the affirmation from 5:13. The prominence of 5:20 is evident by the propositional assertions: (1) "the Son of God has come;" (2) believers have been given understanding because He came; (3) the Son is true (ἀληθινός) and life (ζωή) (cf. John 14:6); and, (4) being in the Son unites one to the only ἀληθινὸς θεός. With the explanation of the Son's first coming, and the emphasis upon truth and life, believers are to have their actions affected by not accepting any alternative for belief in the Son of God. First John 5:21 is an appropriate exhortation with regard to the repeated commands to abide in God. The hortatory character of First John is evident in that the Apostle not only wrote to provide confidence to his readers but also to make prominent appeals to their actions. Consequently, the final declaration of the Epistle is an overt command not to substitute anything for belief in the Lord Jesus Christ.[221]

II.B.5. Conclusions for Interpretation

First John is indeed different than the common first century letter, especially in comparison with the contemporaneous examples of Second John and Third John,

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[219] Anderson, *1, 2, & 3 John*, 194; Lieu, *I, II, & III John*, 222-38; Miehle, "Theme in Greek Hortatory Discourse," 301-02; Sherman and Tuggy, *Johannine Epistles*, 101-02; Thomas, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John*, 264-81; Yarbrough, *1—3 John*, 295-303.

[220] Malatesta understood 5:18-20 as explaining and summarizing various aspects of 2:29—3:10 (*Interiority and Covenant*, 237-41, 319-20).

[221] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 627-29; Griffith, *Keep Yourselves from Idols*; Haas et al., *Letters of John*, 154; Sherman and Tuggy, *Johannine Epistles*, 102.

which do possess nearly all the first century characteristics of the epistolary format. Although the grammar and syntax of First John is simple, there does appear to be a rather evident structure, which may even be understood to exhibit a concentric format.[222] The analysis of First John in this research has sought to respect both the semantic structure of the text, in addition to the manner in which content defines certain structural units (such an examination also helps to explain the thematic repetition of First John). Moreover, one may develop an outline that is representative of the primary Johannine emphases. The semantic-structural analysis will assist interpretation of First John in, at least, a fourfold manner.

The structural analysis of First John on pages 52-88 (II.B.3-4) of this research indicated fourteen units (1:1-4; 1:5—2:2; 2:3-11; 2:12-14; 2:15-17; 2:18-27; 2:28—3:10; 3:11-18; 3:19-24; 4:1-6; 4:7-12; 4:13-21; 5:1-12; 5:13-21), which can be expressed chiastically in an elevenfold manner.

<div style="margin-left:2em">

A   Prologue: Eternal Life (1:1-4)
    B   Three Witnesses (1:5—2:2)
        (to deny sin is to make God a liar) (walk)
        C   The love of God and the believer (2:3-17)
            D   False christs (2:18-27)
                E   Believer's confidence (2:28—3:10)
                    (do not sin)
                    F   Love proves abiding (3:11-18)
                E'   Believer's confidence (3:19-24)
                    (do keep God's commands)
            D'   False prophets (4:1-6)
        C'   The love of God and the believer (4:7-21)
    B'   Three Witnesses (5:1-12)
        (to deny Jesus is to make God a liar) (testimony)
A'   Epilogue: Eternal Life (5:13-21)

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[222] Aune, *New Testament in Its Literary Environment*, 203; Brown, *Epistles of John*, 89-90, 788-95; Gary M. Burge, "John, Letters of," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament*, 596; Köstenberger, *Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, 125-26; Longacre, "Exhortation and Mitigation," 3-5; Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 14-15; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, xxx; Watson, "Letter, Letter Form," in *Dictionary of the Later New Testament*, 649-51; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, xxix.

The *first* aid in interpretation is evident in the chiastic outline, which indicates the theological development of First John, and demonstrates that the Epistle was not written as a series of unrelated aspects of doctrine and ethics that tend to spiral in a somewhat disorganized manner. *Secondly*, by indentifying the fourteen structural units of First John, one may give greater attention to the manner in which certain motifs and terms appear and then recur throughout the Epistle. Moreover, the observation of the development of the themes throughout First John allow one to identify the progression of thought in addition to the intensification of meaning (cf. 3:11-18). *Third*, one is encouraged to consider the extent of similarities and dissimilarities between parallel units. When such an approach is adopted, one may discern the thematic and theological magnificence of First John. *Fourth*, the semantic-structural analysis of First John indicates many motifs that are fundamental to the thought progression of the Epistle, such as emphasis upon confidence, eternal life, false teachers, love, walking in the Light, and the testimony of God. Although debate with regard to the genre of First John will likely continue, there is an evident structure to the message of First John, which indicates the importance for internalizing the revelation and perhaps even to memorize its contents.

II.B.5.a. Conclusions from Structural Analysis of First John 1:1—2:27 (II.B.3)

The semantic-structural analysis of First John indicates the important aspects of the Epistle. For instance (as the analysis of pages 52-73 demonstrated), the emphasis in the prologue (1:1-4) is upon the authentic and authoritative proclamation of the gospel message. John's hope was for his readers to appropriate this message for the purpose of fellowship (1:3) and for their joy to be made complete (1:4). The basis for understanding the first structural unit of First John is found in the summary statement of 1:5 ("God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all"). Subsequent to the foundational statement of 1:5, the claims and false propositions between John and his opponents comprise the first primary structural unit (1:5—2:2). The negative apodoses were introduced by a protasis with the ἐὰν εἴπωμεν clause (1:6,

8, 10), whereas the positive apodoses were introduced with protases containing only ἐάν (1:7, 9; 2:1). The somberness of the assertion in 1:10 (ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι οὐχ ἡμαρτήκαμεν) necessitates the assurance provided to the believer in 2:1-2. The sins of believers are forgiven based upon the advocacy and propitiation of Jesus Christ.

The structural analysis of pages 52-73 also demonstrated that the notion of κοινωνία in 1:1-4 and 1:5—2:2 does not appear in 2:3-11; rather, the emphasis is upon knowing God and loving God, in addition to the new commandment (2:3-5, 10). The next unit (2:12-14) is transitory, and is addressed to those who do not walk in the Light and further explains what characterizes such fellowship. The next unit (2:15-17) contains the overt command to "not love the world" for it "is passing away." First John 2:12-14 parenthetically contrasts the selfless love that characterizes one who is in the Light (2:7-11) with the selfish love that characterizes the unbelieving world (2:15-17). The intent of 2:18-27 is both expository and hortatory, with much emphasis upon abiding, and concluding with the overt command to abide in God. John's injunctions exhort his readers to abide and mature in the Father and the Son.

II.B.5.b. Conclusions from Structural Analysis of First John 2:28—5:21 (II.B.4)

The structural analysis of pages 73-79 demonstrated that First John 2:28 is best understood as beginning a new section, which continues to the end of the Epistle. The reason why 2:28—3:10 is understood as a unit is because it allows for the content with which it begins to parallel 2:12 and 2:18. The next structural paragraph begins in 3:11 with the assertion ὅτι αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ ἀγγελία, which is parallel to the assertion in 1:5. The unit ends with 3:18, and functions as the midpoint of the Epistle. First John 3:18 restates the assertion of 3:11 as a mitigated exhortation based upon the instruction and application given in 3:12-17. The love of Jesus and love for other believers demonstrates that one abides in the love of God, and thus, is abiding in eternal love (as opposed to abiding in death, as those who

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hate). First John 3:19-24 is the first indication of a potential chiastic structure to the First Epistle of John because the emphasis upon having "confidence before God" (3:21) is comparable to 2:28—3:10, wherein emphasis was given to the relationship between "confidence" and "righteousness."

The structural analysis of pages 79-85 demonstrated that First John 4:1-6 and 4:7-21 indicate prominence upon what is ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. Christians are to test the spirits because not all are ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. Believers are to love because it is ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ. The command to test the spirits (4:1-6) is an exhortation to maturity through correct doctrine, which reminds the reader of the emphasis in the prologue with regard to the apostolic message. The command to love (4:7-12) is emphasized in relation to abiding in God (4:13-21). Love is ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ, and it proves whether one abides in Him (3:11-18); therefore, the command to abide in God is evident again in 4:7-21, in close parallel to the prominence given upon God's love and the love of the believer in 2:3-17.

The analysis of pages 85-87 demonstrated that the structural paragraph of 5:1-12 begins with the confession "that Jesus is the Christ" (cf. 4:2-3), and this belief is the evidence as to whether one is truly fathered by God. The unit is subdivided into the propositional (5:2-5) and the evidence for those propositions (5:6-12). Coherence in 1 John 5:1-12 is evident by the following repetitions: belief in Jesus (5:1, 4-5, 10); loving fellow believers (5:1, 2-3); and, heeding God's commandments (5:2-3). The semantic correspondence within 5:12-13 (ἔχει τὴν ζωήν in v. 12 and ζωὴν ἔχετε in v. 13) indicates that the first half of 1 John 5 concludes with verse 12. The scrutiny of pages 87-88 demonstrates that the remainder of the Epistle provides an apologetic whereby one may proclaim the truth of God's Word so that one may know whether they have eternal life. First John 5:13-21 is the conclusion and epilogue, with 5:21 providing an appropriate exhortation and warning.

The message of First John is concerned with how the believer may have assurance of fellowship with God, and to exhort the Christian to abide in Him. From the beginning of the Epistle, it is evident that John was not content with immaturity by those who assumed such fellowship. Consequently, the message of First John is to

provide much hortatory content to assure the believer, who is not perfect and who does sin, yet who tests the spirits and abides in God, and who is able to do so based upon the work of Christ as παράκλητον and ἱλασμός, who the Father lovingly sent to the world. The evidence of one's fellowship with God is by walking in righteousness and by heeding the testimony of God.

II.C. First John 1:5—2:2

The present section will examine the sentence and word grammar of First John 1:5—2:2, in addition to providing a theological analysis of the pericope. The word grammar will be a lexical analysis of various aspects related to the individual grammar of the text. The sentence grammar will be a syntactical analysis with emphasis upon the relationship between clause, phrases, and words in the sentence. The theological analysis will systematize the revelation of the text into coherent meaning.

II.C.1. Word and Sentence Grammar

First John 1:5 begins with καί in the "clause-initial position," which not only indicates new information but also demarcates a new discourse unit. The arrangement and relationship of ἔστιν αὕτη is different than the normal usage in the Johannine Epistles (cf. 2:25; 3:11, 23; 5:3, 11, 14; 2 John 6).[274] The reverse order in 1:5 indicates emphasis upon ἔστιν. The function of ἔστιν is not merely as a copula; rather, it has the notion of "existence and reality,"[275] that is, it demarcates "the absoluteness, the permanence, of the message."[276] Αὕτη functions as the predicate, and has reference to the content of the message.[277] The initial arrangement of ἔστιν is to provide emphasis, "not merely as a copula, but in the sense, "'*there exists* this as the message.'"[278]

       Although ἡ ἀγγελία was used frequently by the Septuagint translators (e.g. 2 Sam 4:4; Prov 12:26; 25:26; 26:16), it occurs only twice in the New Testament, with

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[274] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 22.
[275] Karl F. C. Braune, *The Epistles General of John*, trans. J. Isidor Mombert (New York: Scribner, 1869; reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2007) 28.
[276] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 15.
[277] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 22.
[278] Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, 4 vols. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, n.d.) 2:311.

both occurrences in First John (1:5; 3:11).[279] The term conveys the notion of divine revelation. The message regarding the nature of God "is a personal revelation and not a discovery," which means, God's self-revelation comes from Him and is "to be delivered" to humanity.[280] Consequently, ἡ ἀγγελία did not originate with John or any other Apostle.

The perfect form of the verb ἀκηκόαμεν was already used in 1:1 and 1:3, and the third occurrence in 1:5 "again indicates the lasting effect" with regard to what John and others heard.[281] The phrase ἀπ' αὐτου indicates the origination of ἡ ἀγγελία. The more frequent manner for writing is ἀκούειν παρά (cf. Acts 9:13), which would indicate the immediate source of the message.[282] Although others announced the same message as John, the original source of the gospel was understood as coming from the Lord Jesus (cf. 1:2-3).[283] The description of God as "Light" is not identifiable among the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels; however, the coming of Jesus was understood "as a revelation of light" (Matt 4:16; Luke 2:32; John 1:4-9; 3:19-21), and Jesus did identify Himself as the light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5; cf. 12:35-36, 44-46).[284]

The difference between ἀναγγέλλομεν in 1:5 and ἀπαγγέλλομεν in 1:2-3 is not immense, yet John used the former for sake of a different emphasis. Whereas the prefix ἀπό emphasizes the origin of ἡ ἀγγελία, the prefix ἀνά gives emphasis to the recipients.[285] The latter prefix indicates bringing "the tidings *up to* (ἀνά) or *back* to him who receives them," whereas the former prefix indicates the announcement of

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[279] The only occurrence of the verb ἀγγέλλειν is John 20:18. John never used the term εὐαγγέλιον in his Gospel or Epistles; rather, his conception of the gospel is ὁ λόγος or ἡ ἀλήθεια (Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 22). Brown (*Epistles of John*, 193) noted that since εὐαγγέλιον does not ever occur in John's writings, then it is likely that ἀγγελία may be the technical equivalent of εὐαγγέλιον (cf. Prov 12:25; 25:25; Isa 28:9; 52:7 in the LXX).

[280] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 22; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 15.

[281] Lenski, *the Three Epistles of John*, 383.

[282] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 22; A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1934) 578-79; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 15.

[283] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 194.

[284] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 109.

[285] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 22-23; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 15.

"tidings as coming from (ἀπό) some one" (cf. Matt 2:8; John 4:51).[286] The distinct and foundational aspects of the ἀγγελία are twofold: (1) ὅτι ὁ θεὸς[287] φῶς ἐστιν; and, (2) σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία.[288] The "antithetic pattern of a positive statement (5d) followed by a negative statement (5e) is biblical" (e.g. Deut 32:4; Ps 92:15). The pattern gives emphasis to the negative clause, especially when there is a double negative: "no darkness, none at all."[289]

The syntactical arrangement of 1:5—2:2 indicates the thought progression of this pericope.

1:5	καὶ ἔστιν αὕτη ἡ ἀγγελία ἥν ἀκηκόαμεν ἀπ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἀναγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι ὅτι ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστιν καὶ σκοτία ἐν αὐτῷ οὐκ ἔστιν οὐδεμία.	orienting principle
	protastis	**apodosis**
1:6	ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι . . . περιπατῶμεν. . . .	ψευδόμεθα καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν. . . .
1:7	ἐὰν . . . περιπατῶμεν. . . .	ἔχομεν . . . καὶ . . . καθαρίζει. . . .
1:8	ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι . . . ἔχομεν. . . .	πλανῶμεν καὶ . . . ἔστιν. . . .

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[286] Vincent, *Word Studies*, 2:312; cf. Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 15.

[287] The designation ὁ θεός is common; however, as God is triune, one may inquire if a particular member of the Godhead is the referent. Of course, the term "member" distinguishes the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and such terminology can be misleading because the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not members of the Trinity in the sense of parts to a whole (God is not three entities or separable members). Each "member" of the Trinity is a complete individual being who is God (i.e. ὑπόστασις). Nevertheless, one may discern a distinguishable syntactical alteration in subject from God's Son, Jesus Christ, in 1:1-4, which would indicate that God the Father is the antecedent of the pronouns in 1:5-7 and 10, and is the subject of the verbs in 1:9 (therefore, the reference to the Son in 1:7 would be consistent with such an understanding, in addition to the distinction between the Father and the Son in 1:3 and 2:1). However, it is also possible to understand Jesus Christ as the referent of the designation ὁ θεός. Based upon the unambiguous reference to Him in 1:3, Archibald Thomas Robertson concluded (*Word Pictures in the New Testament*, 6 vols. [Nashville: Broadman Press, 1930-33; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, n.d.] 6:207), "Precisely so the *Logos* is light (John 1:4-9) and what Jesus claimed to be (John 8:12). John repeats it in negative form as he often does (John 1:3)." Jesus did assert, Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ φῶς in John 8:12; however, His claim was qualified by the τοῦ κόσμου, which would mean that φῶς ἐστιν is distinct in meaning. First John 1:1-4 indicates that Jesus revealed the truth ὅτι ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστιν, as opposed to the notion that He is the Light.

[288] Brown (*Epistles of John*, 195-96) and Malatesta (*Interiority and Covenant*, 27-32) noted that the usage of ἐν ἔστιν occurs thirteen times in the Gospel of John and eighteen times in First John, and is one of two frequent Johannine expressions for interiority (the other expression is μένειν ἐν, as in 2:6).

[289] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 195.

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1:9	ἐὰν ὁμολογῶμεν. . . .	ἐστιν . . . ἵνα. . . .
1:10	ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι οὐχ ἡμαρτήκαμεν. . . .	ποιοῦμεν . . . καὶ . . . ἔστιν. . . .
	orienter	
2:1	Τεκνία μου, ταῦτα γράφω ὑμῖν. . . .	
	protastis	**apodosis**
2:2	ἐάν τις ἁμάρτῃ. . . .	ἔχομεν . . . ἱλασμός. . . .

Subsequent to the orienting principle, 1:6 asserts a false proposition, which is also repeated in 1:6, 1:8, and 1:10. If one affirms the false propositions, they are said to lie, deceive himself/herself, and to make God a liar. "Three tests are here laid down in the form of a false claim introduced by the clause 'if we say', each of these false claims being introduced by the truth which is its antidote."[290] The truth with regard to the false propositions is the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the only "antidote" for sin.

The notion that someone could assert to have fellowship with God, yet "walk in the darkness" (1:6) is addressed in 2:4 and 2:9 by those who confess fellowship with God, yet remain disobedient, and nevertheless claim to "walk in the Light" albeit they hate fellow believers. Consequently, the three clauses in 1:6—2:2 are threefold: (1) believers have fellowship with God; (2) believers are without sin; and, (3) believers have not sinned.[291] Each "boast" is consistent with the theology of those who seceded from the Johannine Community; therefore, John was concerned with regard to those who were secessionist in thinking among those Christians remaining in the community.[292]

The clause ἐὰν εἴπωμεν does not assume that the assertion is true, yet there is a likely indication of truthfulness in the premise.[293] The premise is both "charitable" and "gentle," that is, the readers are not actually accused as affirming the "pernicious doctrine," and John included himself ("we" as opposed to "you").[294] The "we" in 1:1-4 was with regard to the apostolic authority in distinction to the readers to whom First John was addressed. The distinction between the two groups

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[290] Bruce, *Epistles of John*, 42.

[291] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 110.

[292] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 196-97.

[293] Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 1004-16.

[294] David Smith, "The Epistles of John," in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, 5 vols., ed. W. Robertson Nicoll (reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979) 5:171.

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is no longer affirmed in 1:6, and both are regarded as one, hence the first person plural. John addressed "his own adherents" in contradistinction to the secessionists; however, he was truly concerned that they might be influenced by the thought of the false teachers who had departed from the true Christians.[295] John identified himself with his readers because he realized even they were susceptible to the influence of the false teachers in both practice and thought, even though John and his readers were faithful to the truth. Throughout the First Epistle of John, the author wrote "under a pressing sense of danger" as opposed to addressing "purely hypothetical situations, of the realization of which he felt no serious apprehension."[296] The ὅτι clause in 1:6 (and also in 1:8 and 1:10) was used to introduce instructive discourse; it is therefore "recitative" (cf. 2:4; 4:20).[297]

Κοινωνίαν with God is the consequence of regeneration, and is the practical expression of communion with the Father and with the Lord Jesus. Although the term may indicate the "subjective sense of fellowship held in common by Christians,"[298] its use in 1:6 with the pronoun (μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ) is in reference to God the Father, who was the subject of the preceding clause.[299] The initial καί has an adversative emphasis.[300]

The phrase ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν was also spoken by the Lord Jesus (John 8:12; 9:9-10). To walk in the darkness means one is opposed to the truth, that is, "their moral attitude and their consequent behavior" is opposed to God (such

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[295] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 197.

[296] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 13. Brown noted that the negative and positive apodoses from 1:6 to 2:1 "are not merely possible contingencies but reflect the language of jurisprudence" (*Epistles of John*, 197). The phrase is "expectational" as opposed to being "conditional or hypothetical" (Haas et al., *Letters of John*, 25).

[297] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 19.

[298] Ron J. Bigalke Jr., "Fellowship," in *The Encyclopedia of Christian Civilization*, 4 vols., ed. George T. Kurian (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011) 2:922.

[299] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 13; Brown, *Epistles of John*, 197; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 19.

[300] Friedrich Blass and Albert DeBrunner, *A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. and rev. Robert W. Funk (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1961) 227-29; Brown, *Epistles of John*, 197; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 77.

actions and attitudes prove that the claim to have fellowship with God is false).[301]
God is Light; therefore, anyone who walks in darkness cannot have communion with
God and their lifestyle is an evident contradiction.[302] The present active
περιπατῶμεν indicates habitual action. The validity of one's confession to have
fellowship with God is proved either true or false by one's lifestyle. Those who
confessed falsely deceived themselves into thinking they could have fellowship with
God while persisting in habitual sin. The incompatibility between the character of
God as light and the character of sinful individuals as darkness indicates the
deception.[303] The conclusion that the clause ἐὰν εἴπωμεν was not hypothetical
indicates that the heteropraxy could involve either believers or unbelievers.

       The relationship between truth and light is a crucial element of John's Gospel.
Jesus statement in John 8:12, for instance, was the second of seven "I Am" passages
in the Gospel of John. Similar to water (John 4) and bread (John 6) being necessary
for life, so is light. Jesus explained that spiritual light is available only to those who
follow Him. Light is one of the primary themes in John's Gospel, which is why
chapter 1 indicates the need of the world for it. Nevertheless, there are conditions
for knowing and seeing the light, that is, following Jesus. Walking in the Light can
change a person permanently, so that he or she need never again walk in darkness.

       The term τῷ σκότει describes a realm of moral darkness in which one lives.
The relationship of the term in 1:6 with σκοτία in 1:5 may not indicate any
difference in meaning,[304] or the terms could indicate a difference in connotation
where σκοτία was used abstractly and σκότος was used with actuality and
definiteness. The two terms do appear to have a subtle difference in meaning, which
is evident in the Johannine usage of σκοτία fourteen times and only a twice usage of

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[301] Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 76-77.
[302] "Some Gnostics taught, not merely that to the illuminated all conduct was alike,
but that to reach the highest form of illumination men must experience every kind of action,
however abominable, in order to work themselves free from the powers that rule the
world" (Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 25).
[303] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 110-11.
[304] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 14; Bultmann, *Johannine Epistles*, 17-18.

σκότος (John 3:19; 1 John 1:6). Therefore, σκότος may be understood tentatively as the definitive converse of light, whereas σκοτία indicates a condition of darkness.[305]

The verb περιπατῶμεν was often used with an ethical meaning in the New Testament, and was particularly common in the Pauline Epistles, yet was also characteristic of the three Johannine Epistles (cf. 1:6-7; 2:6, 11; 2 John 4, 6; 3 John 3-4), which is especially noteworthy when one considers these letters only constitute a total of seven chapters.[306] Περιπατῶμεν "signifies the ordinary course of life," that is, the verb "expresses not merely action, but habitual action."[307] The use of the word to denote one's lifestyle is a Semitism (e.g. Prov 8:20; Isa 2:5).[308]

John used the verb ψευδόμεθα exclusively in his Gospel and Letters.[309] The secular usage of the term was common in legal writing for false witness or perjury.[310] The verb has been given two meanings: (1) to assert what is not only factually false, but also what is known to be deliberately false; and, (2) to intentionally lie as a characteristic of walking in the darkness and to be entirely void of truth.[311] The root ψευδ- was one of "two sets of falsehood terms," which was

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[305] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 195, 197; Grayston, *Johannine Epistles*, 45-48; Eric E. Kress, *Notes for the Study & Exposition of 1st John* (The Woodlands, TX: Kress Christian Publications, 2002) 27-28; Robert P. Lightner, *The Epistles of First, Second, & Third John & Jude* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2003) 16-17; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 19.

[306] Bruce, *Epistles of John*, 42; cf. Charles P. Baylis, "The Meaning of Walking 'in the Darkness' (1 John 1:6)," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 149 (April-June 1992): 214-22; Zane C. Hodges, "Fellowship and Confession in 1 John 1:5-10," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 129 (January-March 1972): 48-60; Kysar, *I, II, III John*, 38; Udo Schnelle, *Theology of the New Testament*, trans. M. Eugene Boring (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2009) 733; Yarbrough, *1—3 John*, 56-58.

[307] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 25; cf. Hiebert, *Epistles of John*, 60; Zane C. Hodges, *The Epistles of John* (Irving, TX: Grace Evangelical Society, 1999) 60-61; Ben Witherington III, *The Indelible Image: The Theological and Ethical Thought World of the New Testament*, 2 vols. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009) 1:483.

[308] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 197-98; cf. Elizabeth W. Mburu, *Qumran and the Origins of Johannine Language and Symbolism* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010) 47.

[309] Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 144; cf. Herbert W. Bateman IV, *A Workbook for Intermediate Greek: Grammar, Exegesis, and Commentary on 1—3 John* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2008) 181-83; Hansford, "Poetic Structure of 1 John," 173; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:207.

[310] Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, comps., *A Greek-English Lexicon*, rev. ed. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996) 2020; Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 676.

[311] Bultmann, *Johannine Epistles*, 19; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 19; cf. Raymond E. Brown, *New Testament Essays* (Milwaukee: Bruce Publishing Company, 1965; reprint, New York: Random House, 2010) 158-59; Robert S. Candlish, *The First Epistle of John*, 3rd. ed.

consistent with "darkness and falsehood" in contrast to "light and truth." The other root that John used was πλαν- translated as "deceit." The Hebraic thought of John is evident in his use of the roots ψευδ- and πλαν-. Consequently, the false teachers are not described as ignorant but as liars; their lies are not "self-deception but a lie involving active hostility to the truth" (cf. John 8:44; 1 John 2:4, 21-22; 4:1, 20).[312] The three contrasting false propositions in 1:6-10 demonstrate that John wrote to refute those who were intentional in their hostility to the light and truth. The Johannine conception is that those who are opposed to the light and truth are intentional. For example, the devil is a liar (John 8:44) and the antichrists and false teachers are false prophets (1 John 4:1). Moreover, the Christology of the antichrists and secessionists is entirely false, and their disregard for God's commandments proves that they are void of truth (2:4, 22; 4:20).

When one's speech is contradicted by his/her conduct, the consequence is that ψευδόμεθα καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν. To confess κοινωνίαν with God and yet choose darkness as the realm of one's life is to "actively affirm" what is known to be false and to deny in deed what one claims to believe.[313] Plummer noted the correspondence between these concepts: "ψευδόμεθα balances εἴπωμεν (speech); ποιοῦμεν balances περιπατῶμεν (action)." The verb ποιοῦμεν demonstrates that truth is not merely intellectual, but must also include the ethical.[314] Truth "is not something which exercises only the mind; it is something

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(Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1877) 38-40; Harry A. Ironside, *Epistles of John & Jude*, rev. ed. (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux, 2001) 24-27; Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant*, 158; Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 120; Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 25-26; Philip Graham Ryken, *City on a Hill* (Chicago: Moody, 2003) 170-71. The use of the ψεῦδος word group in First John "is essentially hortatory." The verb was used to denote the extreme contrast with the truth. The action is "a historical manifestation of antichrist" (Hans Conzelmann, "ψεῦδος," in *Theological Dictionary*, 9:602.

[312] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 198-99; cf. Anderson, *1, 2, & 3 John*, 29-30; Lieu, *I, II, & III John*, 54-55; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 21; Anthony C. Thiselton, *The Hermeneutics of Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007) 25-26.

[313] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 19; cf. Joel Beeke, *The Epistles of John* (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2006) 41-46; Lewis, *Johannine Writings*, 82-83; Loader, *Johannine Epistles*, 9-11; Perkins, *Johannine Epistles*, 16-19; Rensberger, *Epistles of John*, 18, 20-21; Thomas, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John*, 74-76.

[314] Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 166; Christopher D. Bass, *That You May Know* (Nashville: B & H Publishing, 2008) 93; Hansford, "Poetic Structure of 1 John," 173; Hiebert, *Epistles of John*,

which exercises the whole personality;" it is not merely concerned with "the discovery of abstract things; it is concrete living; truth "is not only thinking; it is also acting."[315] The expression ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν is another Semitism. "The idiom of 'doing' applied to divine realities suggests that they can be concretized in human behavior." Not to practice the truth is to live a lie, as in Revelation 21:27 and 22:15. Throughout the First Epistle of John, there is reference to obeying the will of God (2:17), practicing what is pleasing to Him (3:22), and practicing righteousness (2:29; 3:7, 10), in contrast to practicing sin (3:4, 8-9) and lawlessness (3:4).[316]

Truth (ἀλήθειαν) "has no exclusive reference to the sphere of the intellect;" rather, with regard to humanity it designates one's entire nature—moral and spiritual—in addition to the intellect.[317] Consequently, the Bible denotes several possible relationships with truth: (1) it can be within someone (1:8; 2:4); (2) it can be possessive of someone (John 18:37; 1 John 2:21; 3:19); (3) it can determine the manner of one's lifestyle (2 John 4); and, (4) it can be known (John 18:32; 1 John 2:21; 2 John 1). Truth is "the authentic reality."[318] The Johannine concept of τὴν ἀλήθειαν is derived from the Old Testament (and is consistent with the intertestamental literature of the Essenes) "whereby for John truth is predicated of God's mysterious plan of salvation, which is revealed to human beings."[319]

170; Kruse, *Letters of John*, 63; Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 26; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:207; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 76-78; von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters of John*, 3:38.

[315] William Barclay, *The Letters of John and Jude*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976) 29.

[316] Baylis, "Meaning of Walking," 214-22; Brown, *Epistles of John*, 199; Hiebert, *Epistles of John*, 61; Kruse, *Letters of John*, 63; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:207; Robert Saucy, *Scripture* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2001) ch. 10; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 76-78; James G. Williams, review of *Covenant of Peace* by Willard M. Swartley, *The Bulletin of the Colloquium on Violence & Religion* 29 (October 2006): 20.

[317] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 14; cf. Grayston, *Johannine Epistles*, 48-52; Johnson, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 30; Kysar, *I, II, III John*, 38; Lightner, *John & Jude*, 16-18; Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 25-26.

[318] Bultmann, *Johannine Epistles*, 19.

[319] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 199; Christopher Bryan, *The Resurrection of the Messiah* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011) 127; Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 111; Thompson, *1—3 John*, 41; Cornelius van Dam, *The Urim and Thummim* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1997) 85-86.

The conjunction δέ indicates a contrast in 1:7. The contrast may be between the previous reference to ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν and the current reference to ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν. Walking in the darkness and walking in the light are certainly antithetical. However, it is also possible that the contrast is between the "mere claim to fellowship" with God, and the actual fact that one does have fellowship with God. "Those who have no fellowship with God are the ones who are most apt to set up the claim to have it; those who have the divine fellowship need not make a claim to it."[320] John did not provide the antithesis; rather, he took "the opposite hypothesis to that just considered and expands it." The Apostle often seems to recollect or repeat prior assertions, yet he truly develops his themes and provides original inferences. For instance, John could have simply reinforced 1:6 (by writing, "if we walk in the light, and say that we have fellowship with Him, we speak the truth, and do not lie"); however, he would not have provided any original inferences.[321] The ἐάν clause certainly develops the previous motif, with regard to the "negative description" of the false teachers who "walk in the darkness." The ἐὰν εἴπωμεν clauses in 1:6, 1:8, and 1:10 represent the perspective of the false teachers in their distortion of the truth. Therefore, no contrast is necessary when John represents the truth.[322]

The phrase ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν describes the true behavior of those who live consistent with the nature of God. Westcott explained, "To choose the light as the sphere of life is to live and move as in the revealed presence of God."[323] Brooke concurred that to "walk in the Light" is "the conscious and sustained

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[320] Lenski, *the Three Epistles of John*, 387; cf. Ruth B. Edwards, *The Johannine Epistles* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996; reprint, 2001) 58; Kruse, *Letters of John*, 64; Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 110; Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 152; Rensberger, *Epistles of John*, 18; Thomas, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John*, 76.

[321] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 26.

[322] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 200; Burge, *Letters of John*, 80; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 76-77.

[323] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 20; cf. John H. A. Ebrard, *Biblical Commentary on the Epistles of St John*, trans. William B. Pope (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1860) 91-93; Erich Haupt, *The First Epistle of St. John*, trans. W. B. Pope (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1893) 37; Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 110-11; Armando J. Rodriquez Jr., "Life from on High: The Eschatology of the Gospel of John in Light of Its Vertical Dimension" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Loyola University of Chicago, 2008) 188.

endeavour to live a life in conformity with the revelation of God, who is 'light.'"[324] The phrase is not merely an ethical exhortation for "the light" is "the truth." To "walk in the Light" is not only to believe the light—the truth—but also to obey it in both deed and word. The nature of the soul will be evident in one's conduct.[325] The present active subjunctive of the verb may be rendered, "keep on walking in the light with God."[326] The use of the first person plural indicates that John did not regard himself as exempt from the subject of the verb. The emphasis is surely general in nature for the purpose of including himself and his readers if they are indeed walking in the Light.

The pronoun αὐτός is in reference to God the Father (as in 1:5). Parallels to the expression ἐστιν ἐν τῷ φωτί include Psalm 104:2, Isaiah 2:5, Daniel 2:22, and 1 Timothy 6:15-16. There is a slight difference between the expressions in 1:5 (φῶς ἐστιν) and 1:6 (ἐν τῷ φωτι). The former depicts God's beings as the basis for the Christian life, whereas the latter depicts God as the supreme example for living the Christian life.[327] The consequences of walking in the Light are threefold, as indicated by the words κοινωνίαν and ἀλλήλων. *First*, believers have κοινωνίαν with God, and He with the believer. When the Christian walks in the Light in which God exists, the expected consequence is the enjoyment of κοινωνίαν with Him. Consequently, such κοινωνίαν is a living reality, which means it is not an inactive assertion (cf. εἴπωμεν in 1:6). *Second*, believers have κοινωνίαν with ἀλλήλων (i.e. fellow Christians). When the believer is walking in the Light, the expected consequence is κοινωνίαν with those (ἀλλήλων) who are also walking similarly. As Smith indicated,[328] it is possible that the consequences are not twofold; rather, κοινωνίαν

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[324] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 15; Ebrard, *Epistles of St John*, 94; William Edward Jelf, *A Commentary on the First Epistle of St. John* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1877) 20; Thomas, *1 John, 3 John, 3 John*, 95; Thompson, *1—3 John*, 50; Yarbrough, *1—3 John*, 54-56.

[325] Köstenberger, *Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, 283; idem, L. Scott Kellum, and Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2009) 788; Lenski, *the Three Epistles of John*, 388; Thiselton, *Hermeneutics of Doctrine*, 272.

[326] Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:207; cf. Kruse, *Letters of John*, 66; Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 144; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 22; Ben Witherington III, *A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on Titus, 1-2 Timothy, and 1-3 John* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006) 450.

[327] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 200-01; cf. Hansford, "Poetic Structure of 1 John," 173.

[328] Smith, "Epistles of John," 5:171.

μετ' ἀλλήλων is with regard to God[329] *or* fellow believers. The second understanding is reasonable especially since First John demonstrates that κοινωνίαν with God is impossible if one does not also have κοινωνίαν with other Christians. O'Neill objected to this understanding since it would "import a new idea into the contrast with 1:6a,"[330] that is, the false claim of the secessionists to have fellowship with God. The assertion that believers have fellowship μετ' ἀλλήλων does introduce a new concept because the secessionists proved their lack of fellowship with God when they departed from the fellowship of the Christian community. The two concepts—fellowship with God *and* with fellow Christians— are inseparable. Fellowship with fellow believers is only possible because one has fellowship with God, and this is both the consequence and evidence of one's fellowship with God.[331] Κοινωνίαν is consequential when one is walking in the Light. Having κοινωνίαν with God naturally results in the same with fellow believers. Just as love of fellow believers evidences love of God, so does fellowship with fellow believers evidence fellowship with God.[332]

The *third* consequence of walking in the Light is that τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας. In addition to the experience of fellowship, the believer also enjoys cleansing from all sin. Καί is best understood as "and," as opposed to the notion that the cleansing is the basis or evidence of fellowship, or that the cleansing is the consequence of having fellowship.[333] Both the κοινωνίαν and the καθαρίζει are the consequence of walking in the Light. The cleansing from sin is the consequence of walking in the Light, therefore, the metaphor is with regard to sanctification as opposed to initial justification. The

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[329] Smith referenced Augustine and Calvin as affirming this understanding.

[330] O'Neill, *Puzzle of 1 John*, 8, 10, as cited by Brown, *Epistles of John*, 201.

[331] Lenski, *the Three Epistles of John*, 379; Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 111-12; Rensberger, *Epistles of John*, 17; Smith, "Epistles of John," 5:171; Thompson, *1—3 John*, 38.

[332] David A. deSilva, *Honor, Patronage, Kinship & Purity* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000) 214; Köstenberger, *Theology of John's Gospel and Letters*, 291; John MacArthur, *1—3 John* (Chicago: Moody, 2007) 164; Thomas, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John*, 98; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 21.

[333] Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 75; Bass, *That You May Know*, 47; Bultmann, *Johannine Epistles*, 20; Hiebert, *Epistles of John*, 62; Painter, *1, 2, and 3 John*, 145; Strecker, *Johannine Letters*, 25.

expression καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας is with regard to the believer's conduct subsequent to his/her coming to the Light (cf. John 3:20-21); therefore, the cleansing from all sin is with regard to the post-conversion experience of believers.[334]

The mention of αἷμα is more than a mere reference to the death of Jesus for it also includes the concept of the Old Testament sacrificial system.[335] Within the Old Testament, there were two aspects with regard to the sacrificial blood. *First*, the blood was shed by the offerer, and then, *secondly*, the shed blood was subsequently sprinkled by the priest. Any other use for the blood was explicitly forbidden because it represented the life of the substitute offering (Lev 17:10-14). Whereas the Old Testament sacrifices were imperfect and transitional, the blood of Jesus was perfect and once-for-all. Christ's shed blood depicted His atoning and substitutionary death (cf. John 19:34). In addition to the reference in 1:7, the Apostle John used the term αἷμα twice in 5:6 and once more in 5:8. The term is also important in the Book of Revelation (1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11).

The term is understood in various manners. Smith understood τὸ αἷμα Ἰησου in reference to "God's Infinite Sacrifice for the sin of the world."[336] Robertson emphasized the fact that Jesus' blood was "real blood and no mere phantom."[337] Similar in understanding is the notion that the blood of Jesus "was the result of the death of the sacrificial victim, and its application to the person offering the sacrifice

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[334] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 202; Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 111; Thomas, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John*, 79; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 21; Terry Wilder, J. Daryl Charles, and Kendell Easley, *Faithful to the End* (Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2007) 182.

[335] Bigalke, "Christ as the 'Mercy Seat'," 44-45, 47-49; idem, "The Error of Divine and Mystical Attributions with Regard to the Blood of Christ," *Journal of Dispensational Theology* 13 (August 2009): 44-47; idem, "The Theory of Sacrifice in the Mass," *The Conservative Theological Journal* 10 (May-June 2006): 49-56, 68-71; James Montgomery Boice, *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1979; reprint, Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006) 38-43; Brown, *Epistles of John*, 202; Lenski, *the Epistles of John*, 389; Thomas R. Schreiner, "Penal Substitution View," in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, eds. James Beilby and Paul R. Eddy (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006) 87; John D'Souza, *The Lamb of God in the Johannine Writings* (Allahabad, India: St. Paul Publications, 1968) 34.

[336] Smith, "Epistles of John," 5:171; see also, Lenski, *the Epistles of John*, 389.

[337] Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:207.

indicated that the effects of the sacrifice applied to him."[338] Westcott argued that the blood should be understood as conveying the notion of life and not that of death.[339] However, to shed blood in Scripture is "to destroy the bearer of life and therefore life itself." The interest of the New Testament "is not in the material blood of Christ, but in His shed blood as the life violently taken from Him."[340] The contexts in which the phrase "the blood is the life" (Gen 9:14; Lev 17:11; Deut 12:23) is used cannot be interpreted to mean that life can be released from the flesh for subsequent activity as the result of shed blood. Indeed, the life of the body ceases when the blood is shed; therefore, it is unwarranted to argue that Jesus' shed blood was to release the life for a posthumous active existence. The best understanding of τὸ αἶμα within the context of 1:7 is not only as the evidence that Jesus died sacrificially, but also to signify the benefits of His shed blood for those who are walking in the Light.[341] The description of Jesus as τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτου is an indication of the union of His two natures. The name "Jesus" demonstrates humanity. Jesus was truly human, and He sacrificed His life, as a man, for those whom He died. The phrase υἱοῦ αὐτου indicates the full deity of Jesus. As the Son of God, the blood of Jesus has "all-sufficing efficacy." The phrase τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτου is not redundant for it explains how

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[338] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 112.

[339] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 34-37; idem, *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, 3rd ed. (London: Macmillan, 1903) 295. William Milligan developed this notion earlier in his work, *The Resurrection of Our Lord* (New York: Macmillan, 1927). His contention was the various Scriptures (e.g. Gen 4:10; Job 16:18; Ezek 24:7-8; Heb 12:24) refer to blood speaking, which allows one to think of the blood as being alive. Milligan's emphasis upon the shed blood of Christ as resulting in life set free for others would eliminate the need for a resurrection since the power of life is in the blood. The power of Jesus' blood is that the redeemed have their wages of sin paid by faith in the living Savior and are able to be resurrected to a new life because the risen Lord is no longer dead (Rom 6:1-4).

[340] Behm, "αἶμα," in *Theological Dictionary*, 1:173-74. Similarly, one reads that "shedding blood is violently taking the life of another, or murder" (Frank Pack, "Blood," in *Wycliffe Bible Dictionary*, eds. Charles F. Pfeiffer, Howard F. Vos, and John Rea [Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998] 263).

[341] "What John has in mind here is that cleansing of the conscience from guilt and moral defilement which is so insisted on in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and which takes a leading place among the saving benefits of the redemptive self-sacrifice of Christ. These saving benefits are permanently available to those who are united to Christ, but not to those who sever themselves from Him" (Bruce, *Epistles of John*, 44).

the death of Jesus could have any virtue beyond a death that others have died likewise.[342]

The Synoptic writers used the term καθαρίζει to describe cleansing from leprosy (cf. Matt 23:26; Luke 11:39). In the Book of Acts, the term was used to mean "pronounce clean" (10:15; 11:9). The occurrence of the term in 1:7 is with an ethical meaning. However, the precise meaning of καθαρίζει is debated. For instance, the term can refer to the removal of sin as opposed to the canceling of the wages of sin.[343] Bruce understood the cleansing to be "from guilt and moral defilement."[344] God did certainly desire ritual cleanness—by means of the Mosaic Covenant—to approach His presence. The New Testament attests that the blood of Jesus cleanses the conscience (Heb 9:13) of His peculiar people (Tit 2:14), and He indeed cleanses the church for His own glory (Eph 5:26).[345] Synonymous expressions that John used to describe what God has accomplished with regard to sin include: ἀφιέναι (John 20:23; 1 John 1:9; 2:12), αἴρω (John 1:29; 1 John 3:5), λύω (1 John 3:8), ἱλασμός (1 John 2:2; 4:10), and καθαρός (John 13:10-11).[346]

With regard to the notion that the καθαρίζει is from guilt and moral defilement, the intent of 1:7 may be understood as communicating how the blood of Jesus obliterates the sins of a Christian just as soon as they are committed (for the purpose of maintaining the walk in the Light in a substantial manner). First John 1:9, however, necessitates confession of sin prior to Jesus forgiving sin and cleansing from unrighteousness, thus, there is an interval between the sin and the forgiveness.[347] To assert that Jesus' blood cleanses is to indicate that sin has been removed and forgiven, and therefore, the defiling effects of sin no longer condemn the believer before God.[348] If the meaning of walking in the Light has reference not only to truth but also to practice, then the meaning of καθαρίζει in 1:7 is not only

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[342] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 27; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 21.

[343] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 15-16; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 21.

[344] Bruce, *Epistles of John*, 44.

[345] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 22.

[346] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 203.

[347] Houlden, *Johannine Epistles*, 56; Brown, *Epistles of John*, 204.

[348] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 112.

with regard to sins committed deliberately but also those sins committed unintentionally, and even to include cleansing from the defilement of depraved human nature.[349] However, it is possible that the Light may have reference to revelation, and not specifically to the light of holiness and purity (cf. 1:5). If the believer is walking in the light of holiness and purity, he/she would not be conscious of sins that necessitate cleansing. The καθαρίζει is best understood as the removal of sin, as opposed to the canceling of the wages of sin. The removal of sin was certainly necessary as "preparation for divine service and divine fellowship" in accordance with the Mosaic Covenant; therefore, the New Covenant must also have similar demands.[350] The present tense of the verb καθαρίζει also indicates what occurs continually, that is, the cleansing is constant. Therefore, the cleansing is with regard to the progressive sanctification of the believer, and is always constant for those who walk in the Light. First John 1:9 distinguishes ἀφη and καθαρίση; therefore, the meaning of the καθαρίζει is with regard to the walk of the believer in the Light. Furthermore, to walk in the darkness and not practice the truth, and to walk in the Light are experiential issues, thus to be consistent, the καθαρίζει must also be experiential.[351]

The final matter of analysis in 1:7 is with regard to the extent and nature of πάσης ἁμαρτίας. Robertson cited καθαρίζω ἀπό in 1:7, and noted that the simplest ablative with the verb means "to free from, to separate, to deprive of, to hinder from, etc."[352] The notion that 1:7 conveys is that Jesus' blood frees or separates the one who walks in the Light from sin because it is contrary to the nature of God who is Light. First John 1:7 is not addressing the moment of regeneration, thus πάσης ἁμαρτίας should not be understood as forgiveness at that moment. The fact that walking in the Light indicates the conduct of one's life negates the notion of forgiveness at the moment when one becomes a Christian. The cleansing cannot be understood in reference to the fallen nature because it would be difficult to think

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[349] John R. W. Stott, *The Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 76.
[350] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 22.
[351] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 27.
[352] Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 518.

that a Christian could be cleansed from all sinful tendencies (even though the noun may have such a meaning in certain contexts, 1 John 1:7 does not indicate this meaning). The better understanding of πᾶς is with regard to "*the principle* of sin in all its forms and manifestations; not the separate manifestations."[353] Vincent's understanding is certainly consistent with the normal usage of πᾶς with abstract nouns (cf. 2 Cor 12:12; Eph 1:8; Jas 1:2; 2 Pet 1:5). Moreover, the meaning of the construction, πάσης ἁμαρτίας, is distributive, which would mean ἀπό "every type of sin"[354] (not "every sin" since this meaning "would require the plural," nor all sin committed before one became a Christian because the context of 1:7 is conduct in the life of the believer, not the pre-Christian experience[355]).

The second false proposition is introduced in 1:8 with the phrase ἐὰν εἴπωμεν. John's opponents apparently reasoned (or would have) that they did not need Jesus' blood to cleanse them from sin because they did not have any sin from which to be cleansed.[356] Perhaps they surmised that there was not any enduring effect of sin upon the one who sinned, thus, they did not have any concern that there would be any devastating consequences for their sinful conduct.[357] As opposed to walking in the Light and having fellowship, as specified in 1:7, which is to acknowledge the reality of sin, and thus to perceive the need for the blood of Jesus to cleanse from all sin, the secessionists denied the definite reality of sin. John addressed the false proposition uncompromisingly, yet he was charitable and temperate toward those with whom he knew to be erroneous. The subjunctive ἐὰν εἴπωμεν supposed rather than assumed the error,[358] and the first person plural was John's method for indirect discourse.

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[353] Vincent, *Word Studies*, 2:317.

[354] J. William Johnston, *The Use of Πᾶς in the New Testament* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004) 126-28; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 22.

[355] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 16.

[356] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 112-13.

[357] Brooke commented, "To those who hold such a view, sin ceases to be of any importance. It is merely a passing incident which leaves behind it no lasting consequences" (*Johannine Epistles*, 17).

[358] Vincent, *Word Studies*, 2:314.

The ἁμαρτίαν in 1:8 could refer (1) to the principle of sin and its continual manifestation, (2) to original sin, or (3) sin and the resultant consequences.[359] The notion that ἁμαρτίαν in 1:8 is in reference to original sin and the sinful acts that result from this universal condition of humanity would mean that one is self-deceived when denying any such acts of sin in their life. There are several dissimilarities with the occurrence of ἁμαρτία in 1:8 than with the other verses in the chapter: (1) the plural ἁμαρτίας was used in 1:7 and 1:9, whereas the singular ἁμαρτίαν was used in 1:8; (2) the verb ἔχομεν was used with the noun ἁμαρτίαν in 1:8, whereas the perfect active ἡμαρτήκαμεν was used in 1:10. Consequently, it would be proper to understand ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν as an idiomatic usage in 1:8.

The Johannine usage of ἔχω with abstract nouns (e.g. John 5:42; 13:35; 15:13; 16:33; 17:13; 1 John 1:3, 6-7; 2:28; 3:3, 15, 21; 4:16-17; 5:12-13; 3 John 4) suggests that a particular condition of being is involved, which would refer to a condition of sin with the occurrence of ἁμαρτία. However, the context for the four occurrences of ἔχω with ἁμαρτία in the Gospel of John (9:41; 15:22, 24; 19:11) involve a circumstance "in which a wrong action has already been committed or there is a wrong attitude already existing, and in which something further has occurred to underline the evil of that action." The usage indicates an individual who is in a condition of being guilty of sin.[360] However, the condition depicted by the expression "have sin" could also be in reference to a condition of sinfulness as a consequence of a nature that is depraved and fallen.

Consequently, it would be best to understand ἁμαρτίαν in 1:8 as a reference to the sin nature and its continual manifestation as a principle. One is self-deceived when denying this sin nature. The expression ἔχειν ἁμαρτίαν is unique to John's writings, yet similar phrases can be identified, such as ἔχειν πίστιν (Matt 17:20; 21:21, etc.), ζωὴν ἔχειν (John 5:26, 40, etc.), and λύπην ἔχειν (John 16:21, etc.), and these corresponding expressions do not describe an isolated presence of something; rather, the phrases indicate "a continuous source of influence." Therefore, "to have

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[359] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 17; Dodd, *Johannine Epistles*, 22; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:208; Smith, "Epistles of John," 5:172.
[360] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 205-06.

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sin" may be distinguished from the phrase "to sin," since the former indicates the principle of sin and the latter denotes the specific acts of sin.[361] The singular noun ἁμαρτίαν (1:8) in distinction with the plural noun ἁμαρτίας (1:9) confirms this understanding, since the former indicates a condition of sinfulness and the latter denotes the specific acts of sin. John's opponents made a perfectionist claim on the basis that their evil tendency to sin was removed.[362]

The present active subjunctive (ἔχομεν) indicates the current condition as opposed to sins prior to becoming a Christian. The usage of the phrase ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν is peculiar to John; its meaning is not only a denial of the sin nature but also a rejection of the principle of sin and the sinful acts that render one guilty. The assertion was consistent with the Gnostic notion that matter was evil and the spirit was uncontaminated by the sinful flesh. Sin that was committed with the physical body did not have any affect upon the spirit.[363] The phrase "have sin" is in reference to the principle of sin, whereas "have sinned" is in reference to specific acts of sin. If someone does sin, the affects of that sin do indeed cleave to them and they are controlled by the principle of sin.

John used the verb πλανῶμεν in two other contexts of his First Epistle (2:26; 3:7). The basic meaning of the verb is to lead oneself astray, that is, to cause oneself to wander by means of misconduct (as opposed to misconception). The emphasis is upon corruption as opposed to ψεύδομαι in 1:6 (cf. 1 John 4:6; 2 John 7). The straying is fatal, yet one is responsible for it because the disastrous results are the result of one's own doing. The cognate terms for πλανῶμεν connote a grave departure from the truth, and are used with regard to Babylon (Rev 18:23), Balaam (Jude 11), false christs and prophets (e.g. Matt 24:4; Rev 2:20; 13:14; 19:20), and Satan (Rev 12:29; 20:3).[364]

The use of the present active πλανῶμεν (rather than the middle or passive voice) with the reflexive pronoun ἑαυτοὺς emphasizes "that the persons concerned

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[361] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 22.

[362] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 204-05.

[363] Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:208.

[364] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles,* 18; Brown, *Epistles of John*, 206; Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 28; Smith, "Epistles of John," 5:172; Vincent, *Word Studies*, 2:319.

are held responsible; hence, for example, 'we are leading ourselves astray,' 'we take the wrong road,' or better, to bring out the metaphorical use, 'we are leading our hearts astray,' 'our thoughts follow the wrong road,' 'we are turning our heads,' 'we are fooling ourselves (literally causing ourselves to be stupid).'"[365] The deception is the consequence of one's own efforts. The assertion is known to be false, yet, more than simply affirming the lie, the deceived persuade themselves that it is true.[366] Πλανῶμεν is the first personal consequence ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν.

The second consequence when one denies the control of sin is expressed by the negative clause, ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν. The lack of truth working within oneself demonstrates "an inner and effective principle," whereas the outward expression of sin was intended in 1:6.[367] The phrase is reminiscent of Jesus' assessment of the devil in John 8:44, "there is no truth in him."[368] John's opponents included individuals whom he did not regard as Christians (2:19); these secessionists did not admit their sin, thus it remained "unconfessed and unforgiven." John was concerned that others who professed to be Christian could be influenced by the example of the false teachers.[369]

The mention of τὴν ἀλήθειαν in the context of 1:8 has resulted in different understandings of the word. Westcott asserted that τὴν ἀλήθειαν is "the whole Gospel as that which meets the requirements of man's nature."[370] His conclusion was based upon John's usage of τὴν ἀλήθειαν in his Gospel (8:32; 18:37). The same usage is evident throughout the New Testament (Rom 2:8; 2 Cor 8:8; 2 Thess 2:12; 1 Tim 3:15; 4:3; 6:5; 2 Tim 2:15, 18; Heb 10:26; Jas 3:14; 5:19; 1 Pet 1:22).[371] The term ἀλήθεια can be used sometimes as a synonym for "the whole Gospel," yet εὐαγγέλιον and ἀλήθεια do not convey the exact same meaning. Brown referred to

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[365] Haas et al., *Letters of John*, 29.
[366] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 23.
[367] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 19.
[368] Bruce, *Epistles of John*, 44.
[369] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 113.
[370] Vincent used the same expression for τὴν ἀλήθειαν: "the whole Gospel" (*Word Studies*, 2:319).
[371] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 23.

the phrase "to do truth" (cf. 1:6) as "God's fidelity in action" (cf. Neh 9:33). Furthermore, the expression ἀλήθειαν ποιεῖν in the Septuagint refers to a diversity of human actions, which are "faithful" and "right" (cf. Gen 47:29; Isa 26:10). Consequently, "to do truth" involves faith, which could imply that τὴν ἀλήθειαν is faith.[372] Practicing the truth does involve faith, yet the truth is not defined by faith for it is something external to humanity and given by means of divine revelation. Brooke provided a better understanding of τὴν ἀλήθειαν as "an external standard in accordance with which actions must be shaped, or as an inner principle, working from within and moulding a man's inner life."[373] Brown may concur since he indicated that ἀλήθεια in the Johannine writings is "an interiorized principle" that is quite personal; therefore, "in Johannine theology people are identified by their inmost being."[374] The only problem with Brooke's definition is that an "external standard" is not a notion conveyed in First John 1:8. Smith regarded τὴν ἀλήθειαν as the revelation of the true God, which was made known through the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is Himself the Truth (John 1:17; 14:6; 17:3).[375] Brown explained that typical Johannine thought is to regard ἀλήθεια "with the revelation in and by Jesus," which was "under attack by the secessionists."[376] The best understanding of τὴν ἀλήθειαν in 1:8 is not to regard the concept of God's revelation and an internalized principle as mutually exclusive; rather, the concepts are inclusive in that the meaning of ἀλήθεια in 1:8 is in reference to the revelation of the one true God, which made known through Jesus His Son, and this revelation must be internalized to influence and transform an individual's interior life. The final construction of 1:8 (ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν) is consistent with this understanding because it reiterates that individuals are known by their innermost being, which is why truth cannot be ἐν the devil (cf. John 8:44).

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[372] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 200.
[373] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 19.
[374] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 200, 207.
[375] Smith, "Epistles of John," 5:172.
[376] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 199.

The evident resolution for one who claims to have no sin (1:8) is to admit the reality of sinfulness and thus to confess sin (as opposed to pretending).[377] The individual who is truly self-deceived and devoid of the truth within them can eliminate these negative experiences. The resolution is given as a third class conditional statement in 1:9. The relationship between 1:9 and 1:8 is evident by the adversative manner in which the preceding thought is expressed by asyndeton, as opposed to usage of a δέ particle (cf. 1:7). First John 1:7 was adversative to 1:6, as is 1:9 to 1:8; however, 1:9 does not provide a "mere logical contrast, but at the same time the introduction of a new element which exhibits, like ver. 7, the blessing of the right condition of the heart, of the *περιπατεῖν ἐν τῷ φωτί*."[378]

The compound word ὁμολογῶμεν is derived from ὁμός ("the same") and λέγω ("to say"),[379] which means, "to agree with," "to confess," or "to say the same thing" (as another).[380] The sinner agrees with God, that is, one confesses the same thing as God, especially with regard to the faithful and righteousness of God against which all sin is committed. The verb ὁμολογέω is used elsewhere in Scripture to denote "confession of faith" (2:23; 4:2-3, 15; 2 John 7). The more common verb used with regard to confessing sin is ἐξομολογέω (Prov 28:13; Matt 3:6; Acts 19:18; Jas 5:16).[381] Some commentators understand the confession as being made to God alone, and "has nothing to do with the question of confession to our fellow-men,"[382] yet others understand the confession as not only an acknowledgement of sin, but also an acknowledgement of sin "openly in the face of man."[383]

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[377] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 113.
[378] Haupt, *First Epistle of St. John*, 45; see also, Brown, *Epistles of John*, 207; Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 29; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 23.
[379] Vincent, *Word Studies*, 2:320.
[380] Bauer et al., *Greek-English Lexicon*, 568; Liddell and Scott, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 1226.
[381] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 113.
[382] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 29.
[383] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 23. Schnackenburg also affirmed public confession of sin. Since the emphasis is upon God's act in forgiving and cleansing, it is "unlikely that the community itself or their leaders are standing in the background hearing the confessions and pronouncing absolution" (*Johannine Epistles*, 82).

The view that confession is to be made to God, yet also involves public confession is not without merit. For instance, the nature of confession implies openness before others (cf. John 1:20; 9:22; 12:42; Rom 10:9; 1 John 2:23; 4:2-3, 15; Rev 3:5).[384] James 5:16[385] seems especially persuasive in this regard. Moreover, other passages, such as Matthew 3:6, Mark 1:5, and Acts 19:18, indicate some form of public confession of sin among the believing community. Four occurrences of ὁμολογεῖν are found in the Gospel of John, which involve "public professions in relation to Jesus" (1:20; 9:22; 12:42).[386] Nevertheless, confession of sin and profession with regard to Jesus may be understood as quite distinct. Public confession could have been easily indicated in 1:9, if John had written specifically, "If we confess our sins to one another." The fact that he did not write "one another" would indicate that John was not thinking with regard to public confession.

Based upon the emphasis given to God as faithful and righteous in 1:9, the confession should be understood as made to Him alone. The context also does not indicate confession to others, and John did use the verb ὁμολογεῖν only in reference to confessing Christ (John 1:20; 9:22; 12:42; 1 John 2:23; 4:2-3, 15; 2 John 7; Rev 3:5).[387] Moreover, as Brown indicated, the remainder of 1:9 emphasizes God alone as the "agent of forgiveness," yet he concluded, this "does not prove that the confession is to God rather than to the Community."[388] The "us" in 1:3 and "one another" in 1:7 are referenced specifically; however, in 1:9, there is no specific reference. The confession should be understood as being made to God alone. Lexically, the plural τὰς ἁμαρτίας demonstrates that confession is to be made for definite and specific acts of sin, and not merely confessing one's sins in broad terms. Syntactically, the plural τὰς ἁμαρτίας also indicates confessing specifically, as opposed to mere generalities.[389]

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[384] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 23.
[385] "Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much."
[386] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 208.
[387] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 29.
[388] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 208; see also, Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 82-83.
[389] Vincent, *Word Studies*, 2:321; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 24.

God is πιστός, which means He acts consistent with His nature and is trustworthy in His interactions with humanity (cf. Deut 7:9; Ps 36:5; 1 Cor 1:9; 10:13; 1 Thess 5:24; 2 Thess 3:3; 2 Tim 2:13; 1 Pet 4:19). One may have faith (trust) in God because He is faithful to His promises that He has given in Scripture.[390] "True to His own nature and promises; keeping faith with Himself and with man."[391]

The καί in 1:9 (subsequent to the assertion that God is faithful) should be understood as a coordinate conjunction between the two adjectives (πιστός ἐστιν καὶ δίκαιος).[392] The term δίκαιος depicts "the rectitude of the judge who judges according to the evidence."[393] God is righteous in giving to each individual what is due to him or her. God may acquit sinners of their sin, yet He does so in righteousness as opposed to an attitude that is arbitrary or partial.[394] The meaning of the term δίκαιος has generally been understand as either indicating the satisfaction of God's justice on the basis of the redeeming work of Christ, or signifying the nature of God's interaction with humanity.

If δίκαιος is understood in relation to the satisfaction of God's justice in Christ's work upon the cross, then "the application of that satisfaction" is made when one confesses their sins; it is thus "an act of divine justice," which is due to the believer in Christ. Alford concluded, "But this is plainly too much to be extracted from our verse." Romans 3:26 does indicate that "God's justice has been satisfied in Christ;" however, in that context, the reason was given and was explained in an exhaustive manner. Within the context of 1 John 1:9, such an explanation "would be most harsh and unprecedented," and would be equivalent to eisegesis.[395] The context of 1:9 does not necessitate the notion that δίκαιος there should be understood as the satisfaction of God's justice. The thought in 1:9 is that God is righteous in His interactions with humanity; however, the reason for His

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[390] Dodd, *Johannine Epistles*, 22; Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 29; Smith, "Epistles of John," 5:172; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 24.

[391] Vincent, *Word Studies*, 2:321.

[392] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 19.

[393] Haupt, *First Epistle of St. John*, 47.

[394] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 29; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 24.

[395] Henry Alford, *The Greek Testament*, 4 vols. (London: Rivingtons, 1861) 4:430.

righteousness is not within the context of the verse. Moreover, within the Gospel of John and the First Epistle of John, δίκαιος was not used with a "merely judicial" meaning. John emphasized "the demand to act justly in the OT sense of doing what is right; only now it is in imitation of Christ who is just (2:29; 3:7), and this broadens the concept." Jesus demonstrates His justice "by judging justly," that is, He separates "those who believe in him from those who reject him unjustly because they do not know God."[396]

The ἵνα clause may be understood as either a purpose clause[397] or as a result clause.[398] Brown understood the clause to express both purpose and result because "Johannine grammar is not precise enough for us to decide whether such a clause is final (purpose) or consecutive (result)."[399] Purpose and result are distinct in meaning, thus one should distinguish the ἵνα clause as either a purpose clause or a result clause. Plummer was correct that normally the ἵνα clause would be understood as a purpose clause. Moreover, there is the confidence in John's writings "that all things happen in accordance with the decrees of God: events are the results of His purposes." God's decree and purpose is "that His faithfulness and righteousness should appear in His forgiving us and cleansing us from sin."[400] Alford commented similarly: "His doing so [i.e. forgiveness] is in accordance with, and therefore as with Him all facts are purposed, is in pursuance of, furthers the object of, His faithfulness and justice."[401]

Two problems argue against understanding ἵνα in 1:9 as a purpose clause. *First*, the ἵνα clause modifies two adjectives, and cannot be understood as the purpose for God being faithful and righteous. God is both faithful and righteous regardless of His interactions with humanity. Certainly, fallen humanity can

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[396] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 210.
[397] Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:430; Braune, *Epistles General of John*, 38-39; Haupt, *First Epistle of St. John*, 49; Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 29-30
[398] Blass and DeBrunner, *Greek Grammar*, 197-98; H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (New York: Macmillan, 1927) 248-49; Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 114; Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 997-98
[399] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 210-11.
[400] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 30.
[401] Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:430.

experience forgiveness and cleansing because God is faithful and righteous; however, those attributes do not exist for that purpose. *Second*, the telic persuasion of ἵνα has yielded to the definitive in the Johannine writings (John 1:27; 2:25; 4:47; 5:7; 6:29, 40; 8:56; 9:22; 11:50, 57; 12:23; 13:1, 2, 29, 34; 15:12-13; 16:2, 7, 30, 32; 17:3, 15, 24; 18:39; 19:31, 38; 1 John 2:27; 3:1, 11, 23; 4:17, 21; 5:3, 16; 2 John 6; 3 John 4; Rev 6:11; 13:12-13, 15-16; 19:8).[402] The ἵνα clause in 1:9 is best understood as a result clause. Blass and DeBrunner explained, "The infinitive of result is related to the infinitive of purpose, yet it is distinguished from it as ἵνα is distinguished from ὅτι."[403] Therefore, the ἵνα clause in 1:9 denotes the manner in which God expresses faithfulness and righteousness. As already indicated, the ἵνα clause modifies two adjectives, thus one would expect that it would provide the result of God being faithful and righteous.

The meaning of ἀφῇ is in the sense that sins have been forgiven (not merely dismissed or released).[404] Linguistically, the interpretation "to dismiss" or "to release,"[405] which denies any moral notion, cannot be defended. The context of 1:5—2:2 emphasizes moral responsibility. The application of ἀφῇ with regard to sin "is almost certainly suggested by the metaphor of the remission or cancelling of debts." Throughout the New Testament, ἀφιέναι is used to convey the notion of remission, that is, there has been remittance or the cancelling of a debt (cf. Matt 9:2, 5-6; 12:31; Mark 2:5, 7, 9-10; 3:28; 4:12; Luke 5:20-21, 23-24; 7:47-49; 11:4; John 20:23; Jas 5:15; 1 John 2:12).[406]

Not only is the debt of sin forgiven, but also the believer is cleansed from its defilement. The phrase, καθαρίσῃ ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀδικίας, indicates the "second and distinct result" of confession. The believer is "absolved from sin's punishment" and "freed from sin's pollution." The cleansing may also signify not only removing the guilt of sin but also the power of sin, especially since both forgiveness and

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402 Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 19-20.
403 Blass and DeBrunner, *Greek Grammar*, 197
404 Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 20; Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 88-89; Vincent, *Word Studies*, 2:322; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 25.
405 Brown, *Epistles of John*, 211.
406 Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 20-21.

cleansing are indicated (even though the primary thought is pardon). God cleanses the believer by means of the blood of Jesus.[407] The aorist tense for both ἀφῇ and καθαρίσῃ denote completeness: "the purpose of the faithfulness and justice of God is to do each as one great complex act—to justify and to sanctify wholly and entirely."[408] Among the Johannine writings, the noun ἀδικίας is only used thrice (John 7:18; 1 John 1:9; 5:17). The use of ἀδικίας in 1:9 corresponds with ἁμαρτίας in 1:7, and is also used in contrast to the δίκαιος character of God.[409] The notion of ἀδικίας is anything that fails "to maintain right relations with other men or with God" (i.e. "unrighteousness of heart and life"[410]); it is a violation of justice and law.[411]

The third false proposition (ἐὰν εἴπωμεν) is asserted in 1:10. One may assert the reality of the sin nature, the principle of sin, and the sinful acts that render one guilty, which is certainly progress from the false proposition in 1:8, yet still deny that they have actually and personally sinned. The consequences of this false assertion of sinlessness are that with the same structure as in 1:6 and 1:8. To assert that one has not personally sinned is to affirm (in the positive) that God's interactions with humanity is false, and (negatively) that one is devoid of God's Word within the development of their being.[412] The false proposition not only denies the unambiguous declaration of Romans 3:23 ("all have sinned"), but also contradicts centuries of belief by God's people, as evident throughout Scripture (e.g. 1 Kgs 8:46; Ps 14:3; Job 4:17; 15:14-16; Prov 20:9; Eccl 7:20; Isa 53:6; 64:6; Matt 6:12; Mark 1:5; Luke 11:4; John 1:29; 8:24; Acts 2:38).[413]

The word ἡμαρτήκαμεν was used several times in the First Epistle of John (2:1; 3:6, 8-9; 5:16, 18) and four times in the Gospel of John (5:14; 8:11; 9:2-3). The perfect active tense of the verb indicates the continuing result of past action (i.e. the

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[407] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 114; Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 30; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 25.

[408] Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:430; see also, Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 25.

[409] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 211.

[410] Thayer, *Greek-English Lexicon*, 12.

[411] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 21.

[412] Ibid; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 26.

[413] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 115.

false claimants asserted never committing an act of sin in the past).[414] Syntactically, the phrase οὐχ ἡμαρτήκαμεν indicates denial of any particular or personal acts of sin. The perfect tense is a denial of any remaining consequences from past sin.[415]

Brown inquired, "But could secessionist theology really have urged people to say that they never had committed sins?" Certainly, there is an abundance of Old Testament and New Testament teaching that emphasized the entire sinfulness of human actions, thus it is difficult to comprehend how the secessionists could have asserted that they never had sinned. Brown suggested that their claim to sinlessness was based upon thinking only with regard to sins committed since they became Christians.[416] Several commentators question how the assertion of 1:10 differs from the false proposition in 1:8. Lenski, for example, asserted that the assertion "we have no sin" is not any different from the claim "we have not sinned."[417] Plummer disagreed that the third false proposition is the same as ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν in 1:8.[418] The phrase οὐχ ἡμαρτήκαμεν does appear different than the claim ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν. "To have sin" refers to the principle of sin, whereas "to not have sinned" refers to the acts of sins.

The first consequence of the false proposition with regard to personal sinlessness is the affirmation (in the positive) that God's interactions with humanity are false (ψεύστην ποιοῦμεν αὐτὸν). God's plan of salvation assumes the universality of sin and that every human being needs redemption. However, if one had no sins of which to confess, then for God to promise forgiveness would be a lie. Lenski was correct (cf. 1 John 5:10): "The worst that we are doing by our false claim is really blasphemous: we are making *God a liar!*"[419] The term ψεύστην in 1:10

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[414] Hiebert, *Epistles of John*, 68; Lieu, *I, II, & III John*, 59; Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 30; Witherington, *Indelible Image*, 488; idem, *Socio-Rhetorical Commentary*, 458.

[415] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 21; Hansford, "Poetic Structure of 1 John," 173; Hiebert, *Epistles of John*, 68; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 84; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 26; Witherington, *Indelible Image*, 488.

[416] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 211-12.

[417] Lenski, *the Epistles of John*, 394.

[418] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 30.

[419] Balz and Schneider, *Exegetical Dictionary*, 3:499; Bass, *That You May Know*, 93; Boice, *Epistles of John*, 134-35; Michael L. Bryant, "An Examination of Prayer in the Johannine Literature" (Ph.D. dissertation, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2008)

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corresponds to the thought of πλανῶμεν in 1:8. Moreover, the Lord Jesus applied the term to the devil (John 8:44). John used the verb ποιοῦμεν frequently for asserting "that one is" (John 8:53; 10:33; cf. 5:18; 19:7, 12).[420] The second consequence of the false proposition, with regard to one's denial of personal sin, is stated as a negative relationship with the λόγος of God (οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν). Absolute and objective truth is absent from the nature of the false claimants.[421]

The noun λόγος has been understood with various meanings. Alford defined λόγος as the "final revelation of God" including the Old and New Testaments, "and all other manifestations of His will" to believers.[422] Although this understanding is consistent with Jesus' use of the term (cf. 10:35; 17:6, 14, 17),[423] it does not adequately consider the parallel statement in 1:8, ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν.[424] Westcott understood the phrase ὁ λόγος αὐτου as "used specially for the Gospel message, which is the crown of revelation" (Luke 5:1; 8:11, 21; 11:28; Acts 4:31; 6:2, 7; 8:14; 11:1; 12:24; 13:5, 7, 44, 46).[425] However, the Gospel is an external message, whereas the usage of λόγος in 1:10 is with regard to something internalized. Haupt understood the phrase ὁ λόγος αὐτου as "the aggregate collective internal unity of the entire divine commandment; not, indeed, as to the external words, but these words as they are spirit and life, as a power laying fast hold upon men."[426] The context, however, does not indicate this definite form. Therefore, it would be best to understand λόγος in the same manner as the contextual parallel of ἡ ἀλήθεια in 1:8 (i.e. in reference to the revelation of the one true God, which was made known

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125; Kruse, *Letters of John*, 70; Lenski, *the Epistles of John*, 395; Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant*, 110; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 33; Thomas, *1 John, 2 John, 3 John*, 74; von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters of John*, 3:42.

[420] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 30-31; cf. Hiebert, *Epistles of John*, 227; Kruse, *Letters of John*, 171; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 228.

[421] Haupt, *First Epistle of St. John*, 52.

[422] Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:431; cf. T. E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970) 172-81.

[423] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 31; Daniel Rathnakara Sadananda, *The Johannine Exegesis of God: An Expression into the Johannine Understanding of God* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2004) 127-28.

[424] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 212.

[425] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 26.

[426] Haupt, *First Epistle of St. John*, 52.

through Jesus His Son, and this revelation must be internalized to influence and transform an individual's interior life). Malatesta concluded, "There is thus a progression from truth to word, in that the word, as an interior principle within us, communicates the truth."[427] The best understanding is to regard λόγος as an interior principle that communicates the truth.

Τεκνία is the diminutive from of τέκνον, and occurs only in First John (2:1, 12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21) and once in the Gospel of John (13:33). The term may indicate advanced age of the Apostle John, yet it most certainly was used as a term of affectionate endearment; it demonstrates that First John was written to those who were regarded as a family in which brotherly and parental relationships exist between the author and his recipients. The term was used with pastoral endearment, as opposed to depicting the recipients as God's children.[428] John used the term τέκνον when addressing his readers as God's children (cf. 3:1, 2, 10; 5:2). Marshall noted that the disciples were not to call one another "father" (Matt 23:9), yet the relationship of the pastor to his congregation was often likened to a father addressing children, and the pastor did not perceive it as inappropriate to address his congregation as children (cf. 1 Cor 4:14, 17; Gal 4:19; 1 Tim 1:2; Philem 10; 3 John 4).[429] Τεκνία is comparable to παιδία, and the two terms are used somewhat interchangeably in First John (cf. 2:12, 14, 18).[430] John addressed all his readers with the term τεκνία, which is evident throughout the Epistle (cf. 2:12, 28; 3:7, 18; 4:4; 5:21).

The vocative does not begin a new section in 2:1; rather, the term of endearment reflects the heart of the Apostle toward his recipients. John will mention the biblical standard that his readers "may not sin," thus he will speak to them with gentleness and patience so that they are not overwhelmed by the command. His affectionate and personal tenor is understandable when one

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[427] Malatesta, *Interiority and Covenant*, 114.

[428] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 22-23; Brown, *Epistles of John*, 214; Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 32-33; Schnackenburg, *Johannine Epistles*, 85-86; Smith, "Epistles of John," 5:172-73; Vincent, *Word Studies*, 2:323; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 41.

[429] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 115.

[430] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 214.

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considers the warning he would soon address to his readers. John would "fain take the sting out of it and disarm opposition."[431]

If 2:1 did begin a new structural paragraph, it would be possible to derive one or two false conclusions from the preceding verses (1:8-10).[432] The first error for a Christian would be to deduce that since it is impossible for sin to be eradicated from one's life that it is futile to strive against sin and to endeavor for holiness. The believer may conclude that sin is an abiding reality, and thus allow indifference or passivity to result. The second error for a Christian would be to think that forgiveness of sins and cleansing from unrighteousness is a simple matter, and thus to adopt an attitude of presumption and lack of concern to live without sin. A believer may think that it is not that serious for God to remit a few more sins. First John 2:1 asserts the reason for writing, which is for the purpose that the Christians will not sin.

Ταῦτα has been understood to denote either the preceding paragraph (1:5-10) or as the entire First Epistle. Brooke is representative of the view that ταῦτα "must refer to the contents of the whole Epistle."[433] Westcott concurred with this understanding: ταῦτα refers "not only all that has been already said [viz. 1:5-10] . . . but, as i. 4, all that is present to the mind of the Apostle as the substance of the letter, though indeed the preceding section includes all by implication."[434] The purpose clause, ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε, is too restrictive an objective for the entire First Epistle, thus the ἵνα clause must be in reference to 1:8-10.

Braune is correct to regard 2:1 as "progressive—a further step taken in the direction of unfolding the great theme of this part of the Epistle, enounced in ch. i. 5."[435] Ταῦτα is in reference to the preceding verses (1:5-10) that form the structural unit of 1:5—2:2. Having stated that God is Light and then explaining how the

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[431] Smith, "Epistles of John," 5:172-73.
[432] Ibid. 5:173; Lenski, *the Epistles of John*, 397.
[433] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 23.
[434] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 42.
[435] Braune, *Epistles General of John*, 43; see also, Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:431; Brown, *Epistles of John*, 215; Haupt, *First Epistle of St. John*, 53-55; Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 33.

believer is to walk in the Light, the address in 2:1-2 provides the Christians with the revelation necessary for them not to sin. The stated purpose of the writing (ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε) means "the reference is to 1:8-10 where the author has been talking about the certainty of sin."[436] The false propositions that are immediately prior to 2:1 may be misunderstood as an authorization for sin; therefore, perceiving this possibility, John refuted any such wrongful interpretation.

The subject of the verb γράφω changed from first person plural in 1:4 to first person singular in 2:1 (see also, 2:7, 8, 12-14, 21, 26; 5:13). The "we" in 1:4 indicated the plurality of the apostolic witnesses, whereas John certainly made reference to himself in 2:1. The purpose clause, ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε, indicates John's purpose for writing. The aorist tense with the verb ἁμάρτητε may be rendered, "*in order that you won't even commit an act of sin.*"[437] John's intended goal for his readers is for them to be sinless, that is, to produce Christlikeness (cf. 2:6). The goal is not impossible because the means for overcoming sin are readily available to every believer.[438] The second use of the aorist depicts individual acts of sin (ἁμάρτῃ), as opposed to continuous sin or even the habitual condition of sin (ἁμαρτάνει). First John 2:1 does not state whether it is possible for a Christian not to sin; rather, the text asserts that if a believer does commit a sinful act (καὶ ἐάν τις ἁμάρτῃ), there is provision made for that act of sin.

The conditional clause (ἐάν) is preceded by an adversative καί,[439] and begins the last in the succession of six sequential conditions. Three conditions are disapproved, and subsequently, there are three approved conditions.

I.   **Disapproved Conditions**
(A)   Protases
    1:6   Ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ᾽ αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐν τῷ σκότει περιπατῶμεν
    1:8   ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν
    1:10 ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι οὐχ ἡμαρτήκαμεν

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[436] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 215.
[437] Dana and Mantey, *Manual Grammar*, 195.
[438] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 23; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 42.
[439] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 215.

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    (B) Compound Apodoses
       1:6   ψευδόμεθα καὶ οὐ ποιοῦμεν τὴν ἀλήθειαν
       1:8   ἑαυτοὺς πλανῶμεν καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια οὐκ ἔστιν ἐν ἡμῖν
       1:10 ψεύστην ποιοῦμεν αὐτὸν καὶ ὁ λόγος αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἔστιν
              ἐν ἡμῖν

II.   Approved Conditions

(A') Protases
       1:7   ἐὰν δὲ ἐν τῷ φωτὶ περιπατῶμεν ὡς αὐτός ἐστιν ἐν τῷ φωτί
       1:9   ἐὰν ὁμολογῶμεν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν
       2:1   ἐάν τις ἁμάρτῃ

  (B') Compound Apodoses
       1:7   κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν μετ᾽ ἀλλήλων καὶ τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ
              υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας
       1:9   πιστός ἐστιν καὶ δίκαιος ἵνα ἀφῇ ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας
              καὶ καθαρίσῃ ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀδικίας
       2:1   παράκλητον ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν
              δίκαιον·
              (2:2) καὶ αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστιν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν
              ἡμῶν, οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ
              ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου.[440]

The summary of the disapproved and approved conditions demonstrates the thought progression for the structural unit. First John 1:5 serves as the orienter and provides the setting for the sequential conditions.[441] The first false proposition asserts that one's behavior (heteropraxis) is irrelevant to the reality of whether or not they have fellowship with God (1:6). The response given in 1:7 is that one's walk (works) will correspond to their true condition. The reply of the false claimant is that the believer does not have any guilt for sin (1:8). John's reaction was that the biblical and true response is not to deny any guilt for sin; rather, it is to admit guilt and confess one's sins (1:9). John's opponents, however, would even assert that there is no sin in their lives as Christians (1:10). First John 2:1-2 argues conclusively that the true believer should admit the reality of sin and avail oneself of the continuing work of Jesus Christ in the presence of the Father on his/her behalf.[442]

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[440] Ibid. 231, 237.
[441] Callow, "Where Does 1 John 1 End?," 396-97.
[442] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 241-42.

The occurrence of the term παράκλητον in 2:1, which refers either to Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit, is only found elsewhere in the New Testament within the Johannine writings (John 14:26, 26; 15:26; 16:7). The promise of Christ to send ἄλλον παράκλητον is located within a context in which Christ asserted His own paracletion (John 14:12-16). The form of the term παράκλητον is a verbal passive adjective. The passive indicates the meaning "one called to the side of" an individual "who claims the services of the called." If παράκλητον were a verbal active adjective, the term would denote one who comforts, consoles, or strengthens, and would thus indicate the quality of service of the one who is called. The type of help that the παράκλητον may render would include "advocacy, intercession, or mediation" and would be determined "by the context in which it is used."[443] Παράκλητον has been understood in a twofold manner: (1) either with the forensic meaning of "advocate;" or, (2) with a less technical meaning, such as, "one called to help."

Brown asserted that John 16:8-11 demonstrates "that there is a forensic aspect in the role of the Spirit/Paraclete."[444] Indicating the literal meaning "one called alongside (to help)" as valid, Marshall concluded that the context of 2:1 "undoubtedly" denotes "a legal context."[445] However, as evident from John 14:16, 26 a broader and "less technical meaning" would be a better understanding, which would include the responsibility of an advocate, intercessor, or mediator.[446] The meaning of παράκλητον should not be determined exclusively from legal activity, but more generally, and, if a legal context were evident, would mean "superior or sponsor."[447] Brown noted that the meaning of an intercessor pleading for those who are not innocent is a good translation of παράκλητον, which is evident in the Old Testament (cf. Gen 18:20-23; Exod 8:28-29) and also within the New Testament (cf.

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[443] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 26.
[444] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 217.
[445] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 116.
[446] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 23, 26. *The Voice New Testament* is certainly wrong to render παράκλητον as "*high-powered* defense lawyer."
[447] Kenneth Grayston, "The Meaning of PARAKLÊTOS," *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 13 (1981): 67.

Rom 8:34; Heb 9:14; 1 Pet 3:18).[448] The word for "intercession" (ἐντυγχάνειν) is used with regard to the activity of Christ (Rom 8:34). Moreover, the reference to sacrificial activity (τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρίζει) recalls the intercessory activity of the high priest.[449] John 16:26-27 does indicate that believers do not need an intercessor,[450] yet the context in First John is with regard to those "who have sinned and thus lost the direct line to God."[451] Within classical Greek, the term παράκλητος designates an influential patron who was called for support. Within the First Epistle of John, when a believer sins "the Father observes that the sinner is sponsored by Christ and is persuaded not to reject him and withdraw his truth."[452] The notion of one who gives support to the believer based upon a relationship (κοινωνίαν) is certainly evident, and thus παράκλητον is understood to indicate "one called to help," in the sense of one who lends His presence before the Father so the believer does not remain alone. Jesus Christ pleads the cause of the believer before the Father, and His responsibility as an Advocate (Supporter or Sponsor) is to assist the Christian by His presence. Παράκλητον is used with an active meaning in 2:1 of He who comes to the believer's side to help, as an Advocate who pleads the Christian's case with the Father.[453]

The change from the impersonal and indefinite τις to the personal ἔχομεν is significant. The use of the first person not only expresses John's identification with his readers, but also indicates the possibility of a Christian committing a sinful act.[454] The preposition πρός can be interpreted as indicating Christ's advocacy, or could designate "face-to-face converse" with the Father. Πρός can be used to signify an intimate converse and a living relationship,[455] and would indicate that Jesus is

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[448] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 216.
[449] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 34.
[450] Stanislas Lyonnet and Léopold Sabourin, *Sin, Redemption, and Sacrifice: A Biblical and Patristic Study* (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1998) 152.
[451] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 217.
[452] Grayston, "Meaning of PARAKLÊTOS," 67, 79-80.
[453] Haas et al., *Letters of John*, 35.
[454] Vincent, *Word Studies*, 2:324; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 42.
[455] Robertson, *Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, 625.

"ever *before* His face."[456] John 1:1-2 does testify to the Word who was in God's presence, which connotes "both presence with and relationship toward," and indicates a unique relationship (both preincarnational and a postresurrectional), which "makes Jesus effective as a Paraclete."[457] The use of Πατέρα as opposed to Θεός informs the reader that the One who pleads for the believer does so before "a loving Father" as His Son. The argument against understanding πρός as face-to-face converse is that the context in First John is entirely different than John 1:1-2. The better understanding is that πρός expresses "turning *towards* in order to *plead*."[458] Christ's advocacy is not merely with the Father, "for the accusative must have its rights, as meaning over against or towards the Father;"[459] in other words, it is "not simply in His Presence, but turned toward Him, addressing Him with continual pleadings."[460]

The designation Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν indicates the humanity of Jesus in His responsibility as παράκλητον; however, there is not any neglect with regard to His deity. Jesus is fully human, and thus, can truly plead the case for believers with understanding and sympathy. Jesus is also fully God, and thus, can accomplish His responsibility as παράκλητον and remains acceptable to the Father "before whom He pleads." Moreover, as δίκαιον, He can remain in the presence of the Father from whom "all sin excludes."[461] The characteristic of Jesus Christ as δίκαιον makes His paracletion both effectual and possible. Jesus is not merely a righteous Advocate; rather, He is in His own nature righteous and can thus plead with the righteous Father (cf. 1:9). Jesus is not merely an Advocate who desires to overlook any laws; rather, He will accomplish all the law completely.[462] John used the adjective δίκαιον elsewhere in his Epistle (2:29; 3:7) with reference to Jesus, and especially in

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[456] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 34. See also, Vincent, *Word Studies*, 2:324.
[457] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 216.
[458] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 34.
[459] Haupt, *First Epistle of St. John*, 57.
[460] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 43.
[461] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 27.
[462] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 34; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 43.

thinking of Jesus as the supreme example for Christians.[463] Syntactically, δίκαιον is anarthrous, and thus, emphasizes predicatively that characteristic of Jesus that designates Him as being the righteous One. The nature of Jesus is identical to that of the Father toward whom He pleads, and contrary to the nature of those for whom He pleads.[464]

Καί and the emphatic pronoun (αὐτός), which begin 2:2, relate the preceding context, with regard to the efficacy of Jesus Christ's advocacy as δίκαιον, and the subsequent revelation of Him as ἱλασμός. Jesus Christ is not only qualified as the righteous One to offer the ἱλασμός, but also "He Himself" is the very ἱλασμός that He offered. The intensive αὐτός emphasizes that Jesus is both the offerer and the offering: both the priest and the sacrifice (cf. Heb 9:14).[465]

The noun ἱλασμός is used only twice in the New Testament, once in 1 John 2:2 and again in 4:10. Fallen humanity is estranged from God as a consequence of sin, thus for any reconciliation to be accomplished with Him, one must have their sins forgiven and to be cleansed from unrighteousness to His satisfaction. Brooke noted the primary emphasis in Jewish thought, as demonstrated in the Old Testament, was "not God, as in Greek thought, but man, who has estranged himself from God, or the sins which have intervened between him and his God." The work of Christ is the provision for sin and it is available to all who "attach themselves to Him."[466] Καταλλάσσειν is closely related to the concept of ἱλασμός. The difference between the two terms is that καταλλάσσειν depicts the relationship between two parties, such as that of humanity with God. However, ἱλασμός depicts the relationship of one nature to another; it indicates "the overcoming of the divine wrath, or its being brought into harmony or understanding with the divine love; and thus it is the reconciliation of these two characteristics of the *interior* divine nature

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[463] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 116.

[464] Akin, *1, 2, 3 John*, 80-81; Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:432; Braune, *Epistles General of John*, 44; Kruse, *Letters of John*, 73; Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 34-35; Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 35-36; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 43.

[465] Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:432; Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 28; Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 35.

[466] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 28.

which had been brought into collision by human nature." Reconciliation is possible because ἱλασμός has occurred.[467]

The use of the term ἱλασμός has resulted in two possible interpretations: (1) expiation; or, (2) propitiation. The *New International Version* combines the concepts of expiation and propitiation by translating ἱλασμός as "atoning sacrifice," and therefore represents the concepts as complementary as opposed to being contradictory. Nevertheless, discussion with regard to the meaning of the noun ἱλασμός is primarily concerned with either an expiatory or propitiatory understanding. The fundamental concept of expiation connotes the removal of sin as guilt against God, whereas the primary notion of propitiation is that Jesus Christ is both the propitiator and the propitiation.

Brown noted that either God or a priest is frequently the subject of ἱλασμός verb cognates in the Septuagint, and the verbs typically convey the notion that cleansing or forgiving has made something pleasing to God. Moreover, the second occurrence of the term ἱλασμός in First John (4:10) appears to indicate the meaning of "expiation" since there is no mention of wrath within the context, which would indicate the meaning of "propitiation," and the emphasis in 4:10 is upon the fact that the Son was sent from God. Furthermore, the Hebrew verb כָּפַר is most frequently rendered by ἱλάσκεσθαι (e.g. Exod 29:37; 30:10). The comparison with the Day of Atonement would also seem to indicate the concept of expiation as opposed to propitiation (cf. Lev 16:16; 25:9), and according to the Book of Hebrews, the sacrifice of Christ is understood primarily in terms of expiation.[468] Within context, the Hebrew verb כָּפַר may indicate the averting of punishment, especially with regard to divine anger, or denote the accomplishment of reconciliation between God and fallen humanity by means of sacrifice. Furthermore, ἱλάσκεσθαι was used eleven times in the Septuagint in the middle or passive voice, which would connote

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[467] Haupt, *First Epistle of John*, 58-59.
[468] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 218-20.

the concept of propitiation. Within classical Greek, the only two passages that could render the verb as "expiate" could also be interpreted in a propitiatory manner.[469]

Marshall indicated that the argument against propitiation is based upon the conviction that God provided the ἱλασμός when He sent His Son; however, this argument is unjustifiable since God is the object of Christ's advocacy.[470] In response to the ἱλασμός verb cognates in the Septuagint, it can be demonstrated that while God is sometimes the subject, He may also be the object of the verb cognates (especially since the entire initiative within First John is attributed to Him). Dodd formulated his argument in favor of expiation upon what he perceived to be the broader context of the believer's forgiveness on the basis of the faithfulness and justice of God (cf. 1:9), as opposed to the averting of the divine wrath. He understood ἀφῇ and καθαρίσῃ in 1:9 as expressing the notions "principally associated with words of this family throughout the Greek Old Testament (and probably also in the few cases where they occur in the New Testament" (i.e. Luke 18:13; Rom 3:25; Heb 2:17; "and in a transferred application," Heb 9:5).[471] If the concept of expiation was intended, such a meaning could have been conveyed by a genitive as opposed to the preposition περί.

The concept of propitiation is evident in that Jesus is depicted as both the victim and the priest. For instance, the neuter is similar to ὅ in 1:1, and is abstract and more complexive than the specific term for "one who offers atonement." The classical Greek usage (including pagan religious occurrences) of the ἱλασμός word group denoted the notion that an offended person was placated. Although the primary usage of ἱλασμός cognates in the Septuagint are without God as an object, there are Old Testament passages wherein the word group was used in reference to propitiating God, and did so without any pagan or pejorative implications. Within those Old Testament contexts where the ἱλασμός word group can be found, the

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[469] Morris, *Apostolic Preaching*, 142, 154-55.
[470] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 118.
[471] Dodd, *Johannine Epistles*, 26.

wrath of God is a frequent emphasis (cf. Mic 7:18-19). Both the Gospel of John and the Book of Hebrews depict Jesus as both victim and priest.[472]

First John 2:1 depicted Jesus as the believer's Advocate πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, and the same description is also evident in 2:2. Jesus pleads the case of guilty sinners πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, "who is being petitioned to pardon their acknowledged guilt."[473] The association of ἱλασμός with παράκλητον confirms the concept of propitiation. Both ἱλασμός and παράκλητον convey the notion "of winning over the party to whom appeal is made or sacrifice offered."[474] Although the New Testament never explicitly states that God needs to be propitiated, there are biblical words and phrases that do indicate in some manner that God does require propitiation, especially because His wrath is against all sin and thus must be appeased (or averted) if the sinner is to be forgiven. The concept of propitiation is regarded as repulsive in application to God when one imagines pagan notions of deities, yet the wrath of God must be distinguished from pagan conceptions of divine wrath that are arbitrary and capricious, and whose wrath was averted by bribes, either from the offerer or another on their behalf. According to John 3:36, the wrath of God abides upon the one who does not believe in Jesus Christ, thus the reference to God's wrath necessitates a doctrine of propitiation as the means for averting His wrath. According to 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 (cf. Eph 2:16; Col 1:20), there is not need for God to be reconciled because He reconciles the believer.[475] The word that is used in Corinthians is καταλλάξαντος (not ἱλασμός), thus the meaning there does not have any effect upon the interpretation in First John. Καταλλάσσω, which does mean to reconcile, was also used in Ephesians 2:16 and Colossians 1:20; however, the notion conveyed by this word is not identical to the concept expressed by ἱλασμός.[476]

The present tense ἐστιν is noteworthy because it signifies that even though Christ's death occurred in the past, the effectiveness of that act is "continual" and

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[472] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 218-21.
[473] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 118.
[474] Houlden, *Johannine Epistles*, 62.
[475] Braune, *Epistles General of John*, 44.
[476] Haupt, *First Epistle of St. John*, 58-59.

"eternally valid."[477] The phrase περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν emphasizes the sins of believers, whereas the next phrase οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων emphasizes that the sins truly are those of the believers (i.e. "our sins"). The two phrases do not emphasize substitution nor the manner and means by which the ἱλασμός occurs; rather, "the sins are the points with which the propitiation is concerned, to which it has reference (περί)."[478]

The particle δέ has been understood as adversative or emphatic (intensive). The clause that is introduced by δέ is not an additional thought; rather, it is used as somewhat of a corrective to the preceding assertion and would thus be adversative to some extent. Dana and Mantey indicate that δέ is emphatic in 2:2.[479] The particle indicates that what was been previously stated is not "the full extent of the wonder."[480] The phrase οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων prior to δέ is a corrective, and is best understood as adversative. The translation of δέ as "however" and μόνον ἀλλα as "but also" would demarcate the emphasis upon δέ and the clause, which guard against any error that would limit the efficacy of the ἱλασμός. The particle is surely appended as a corrective against some error, yet the exclusivity against which it guards may not necessarily be directly in contrast to the secessionists.[481]

The phrase περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κὸσμου has been interpreted either as an ellipsis in reference to the sins of the entire world, or as simply denoting "the world" as a mass of sinful people and things. The latter interpretation regards the second phrase as not only addressing sin but also its effects. Smith explained, "There are *sins*, special and occasional, in the believer; there is *sin* in the world; it is sinful through and through." Τοῦ κόσμου not only indicates the sins of believers, but also "that mass of sin, the world."[482] Brown indicated that such meaning is not impossible since "it is possible to mix objects in such prepositional phrases" (cf. Heb

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[477] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 35; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 44.
[478] Braune, *Epistles General of John*, 45.
[479] Dana and Mantey, *Manual Grammar*, 244.
[480] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 119.
[481] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 35; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 44.
[482] Smith, "Epistles of John," 5:174. See also, Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:209-10.

9:7).[483] The term κόσμος was used derogatorily within the First Epistle of John; however, such occurrences never indicate a meaning such as "mass of sin." The elliptical understanding regards the phrase to be in reference to the sins of the entire world.[484] John did use ellipsis in his writings (cf. John 5:36).[485] The meaning "sins of the entire world" is evident in John 1:29.[486] The parallelism between τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν and τῶν ἡμετέρων with the first two περί phrases would seem to indicate a residual thought with regard to "the sins" to be applied to the third περί phrase.

The term κόσμος was used twenty three times in First John;[487] it could refer to the entire human race or the meaning could be with regard to John's readers (περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων) and those believers beyond his initial readership (δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κὸσμου). Brown noted that κόσμος in John's writings demonstrates that "the divine intent is initially salvific toward the world,"[488] which is a view consistent with the Gospel of John (cf. 1:29; 3:17; 12:32).[489] Johannine references to the κόσμος are predominately negative and oppositional,[490] and thus "there was danger lest he should seem to give his sanction to a Christian exclusiveness as fatal as the Jewish exclusiveness out of which he and other converts from Judaism had been delivered."[491] Therefore, it is possible to understand κόσμος as a reference to all nations, even those beyond John's direct readership. Christ's advocacy on behalf of believers was asserted in 2:1, thus the ἱλασμός would be limited to believers also. The effects of Christ's death transcend that of the Johannine community: οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κὸσμου.

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483 Brown, *Epistles of John*, 222.
484 Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:433; Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 35-36.
485 Brown, *Epistles of John*, 222.
486 Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 119.
487 Brown, *Epistles of John*, 223.
488 Ibid. 224.
489 Houlden, *Johannine Epistles*, 63.
490 Dodd, *Johannine Epistles*, 27.
491 Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 36.

II.C.2. Theological Analysis

The secessionists denied "that Jesus is the Christ" (1 John 2:22; 5:1) and "that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh" (4:2). The denial of the effects of Christ's death was based upon the false claim of being without the principle of sin (1:8-10.) Consequently, the Epistle of First John not only emphasizes confessing Jesus as the Christ, but also the fundamental role of the death of Christ to accomplish reconciliation with the Father. The reference to the death of Christ was given in response to such error because τὸ αἷμα Ἰησου distinguishes His death as essential to the Christian confession (1:7; cf. 5:6, 8). The language that John was inspired to write emphasizes the physical reality of the death of Jesus, and thus prioritizes the salvific effects by depicting His death in sacrificial language, namely, that αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστιν.

The fact that the first of the references to the death of Christ is within the first structural unit (subsequent to the prologue) indicates the importance of the subject in relation to the remainder of the Epistle. Sacrificial language is present immediately in First John, and this cultic imagery depicts the violent death of Jesus. The assertion that τὸ αἷμα Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ καθαρίζει ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἁμαρτίας recalls the Levitical offerings (cf. Lev 8:15; 16:30). John was particularly concerned with regard to the removal of sins,[492] as opposed to the canceling of guilt or personal transformation,[493] which is particularly evident not only by the cultic terminology of this expression but also by the relationship to those who denied the sin principle in all its forms and manifestations (ἐὰν εἴπωμεν ὅτι ἁμαρτίαν οὐκ ἔχομεν).[494] Moreover, there is the parallel promise (ἐὰν ὁμολογῶμεν τὰς ἁμαρτίας ἡμῶν) to the false proposition of 1:8, and the recurrent mention of sin and the remedy in 2:1-2, which again evokes cultic imagery.

The occurrence of ἱλασμός in 2:2 is within a context emphasizing ἡμᾶς and πάσης ἁμαρτίας. Expanding upon the topic of sin and its remedy, the Apostle John

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[492] Brooke, *Johannine Epistles*, 15, 21; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 21-22.
[493] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 204; Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 112, 114-15
[494] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 205-06.

expresses a pastoral concern in his address, "my little children." Whereas 1:5-10 warned against having "too *lenient*" an attitude toward sin, the Apostle countered the possibility of "too *harsh*" an attitude in 2:1-2.[495] The description of Jesus as παράκλητον with the Father indicates that God is the object of the paracletion. The Father is not the subject of the reconciliation that 2:1 is describing, and would thus indicate "propitiation" as the meaning of ἱλασμός in 2:2. Jesus' responsibility as παράκλητον is upon the basis of His ἱλασμός . . . περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν. First John 2:1 depicted Jesus in His responsibility as παράκλητον before the Father, which is a reference to one who is called alongside another, that is, one who is summoned to the assistance of another. Jesus pleads the case of guilty sinners πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, "who is being petitioned to pardon their acknowledged guilt." If pardon will be granted, there must be "an action in respect of the sins which has the effect of rendering God favorable to the sinner."[496] The goal of the believer is not to sin, yet when an act of sin is committed, the Christian can appeal to Christ's advocacy and propitiatory sacrifice as the basis for restoration.[497]

Murray described propitiation as presupposing "the wrath and displeasure of God, and the purpose of propitiation is the removal of this displeasure. Very simply stated the doctrine of propitiation means that Christ propitiated the wrath of God and rendered God propitious to his people."[498] According to this definition, the concept of propitiation encompasses four characteristics: (1) an offense (i.e.) that incurred a penalty; (2) an offended individual (viz. God) whose anger needed appeasement; (3) an offending individual (viz. the sinner) who needs to be pardoned and accepted; and, (4) a sufficient sacrifice to appease the offended person, which results in pardon and acceptance of the offender, and then a reconciliation of the two estranged individuals. Propitiation testifies to the wrath of God against sin, and which needs to be appeased by sufficient sacrifice.

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[495] Smalley, *1, 2, 3 John*, 33.
[496] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 118.
[497] Robert G. Gromacki, *New Testament Survey* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1974) 372.
[498] John Murray, *Redemption Accomplished and Applied* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1955) 30.

The notions of wrath are a component of the First Epistle of John. For instance, death is not an impersonal effect; rather, it is the negative consequence of God's judgment (1 John 2:28; 4:17-18); death is the ultimate consequence from a life of disobedience and unbelief (2:17; 3:14). Consequently, forgiveness and cleansing in the context of First John is based upon promise and reconciliation. Jesus Christ is the believer's παράκλητον πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, and His advocacy is implicitly consequential from His being ἱλασμός περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν. Consequently, it would be best to understand ἱλασμός with the meaning of propitiation, in addition to the removal of sin (in the sense of the absolution of its punishment and also freedom from its defilement) as expressed in 1:7 and 1:9. The extent of the propitiation is περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν, οὐ περὶ τῶν ἡμετέρων δὲ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ ὅλου τοῦ κόσμου, which (at minimum) communicates that Jesus Christ is the only basis for one to have fellowship with God. (The implications of these words will be examined more completely in Section IV.)

II.D. First John 4:10

The present section will examine the sentence and word grammar of First John 4:10, in addition to providing a theological analysis of this verse. The word grammar will be a lexical analysis of various aspects related to the individual grammar of the verse. The sentence grammar will be a syntactical analysis with emphasis upon the relationship between clause, phrases, and words in the verse. The theological analysis will systematize the revelation of First John 4:10 into coherent meaning.

II.D.1. Word and Sentence Grammar

The command to love fellow believers in 4:7-12 is based upon three doctrinal truths: (1) love is from God; (2) love is the consequence of regeneration; and, (3) love is the consequence of knowing God. First John 4:8 thus reads, "The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love." The manifestation of God's love is then explained. The phrase ἐν τούτῳ anticipated the two ὅτι clauses, thus it may be rendered "herein" or "in this manner." The essence of love, which is the subject of the previous verses, is summarized by the two ὅτι clauses in 4:10.[499]

The divine character of ἡ ἀγάπη has been given two interpretations: (1) it is God's love; and, (2) it is love in its most absolute and abstract meaning. Brown argued that the ὅτι clauses, which occur subsequently, define τούτῳ . . . ἀγάπη as being God's love.[500] If ἡ ἀγάπη was in reference to God's love, it would be unnecessary to subjoin the statements with regard to the love not being the response of believers to Him but His love toward them.[501] Westcott understood ἡ ἀγάπη according to the second interpretation: love in the "most absolute sense, not further defined as the love of God or of man."[502] The absence of the defining genitive ("of God) subsequent to the noun indicates that ἡ ἀγάπη should be understood in a

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[499] Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:490; Brown, *Epistles of John*, 518; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 150.
[500] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 518.
[501] Alford, *Greek Testament*, 4:490.
[502] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 150.

comprehensive manner. Marshall commented, "Here, he says, is love—not just the love of God but love as such. There can be no explanation or definition of true love which does not start from God's love,"[503] thus the statement should be understood generally (cf. 1 John 3:16).[504]

Syntactically, οὐχ ὅτι and ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι provide a noteworthy contrast between the negative and positive dymanics of love that exist between God and believers. The negative ὅτι clause demonstrates that humanity is entirely unable "to originate love." John used the ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι combination in his other writings (e.g. John 6:38; 7:22; 12:6; 15:16; 2 John 5; cf. Tit 3:4-5).[505] The emphatic pronouns ἡμεῖς and αὐτός accentuate the difference between the love of humanity and the love of God.

Both the Nestle-Aland and the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament contain the perfect tense for "loved" (ἠγαπήκαμνεν) as opposed to the aorist. Brown noted that aorist tense does have respectable textual witness; however, the perfect tense "is the more difficult reading and probably to be preferred."[506] The teaching is that the believer's love for God began at a certain moment in time and it continues with ubiquitous results from the moment of its inception. First John 4:10 was probably a refutation of the secessionist theology. The secessionists claimed to love God yet hated fellow believers, or (more likely) they claimed to love both God and believers, yet denied that the ἱλασμόν by God's Son "was a necessary part of God's salvific love."[507] The aorist verbs ἠγάπησεν and ἀπέστειλεν are understood with regard to the historic manifestation of God's love.[508]

The noun ἱλασμόν was already discussed when considering 2:2. The meaning of ἱλασμός was defined by its context in 2:2; however, the context is not defined as precisely and it was used in somewhat incidentally within the discussion of love in 4:7-12. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to conclude that the absence of those concepts that are so prevalent in 2:2 are somehow negated from the meaning of

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[503] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 214.
[504] Braune, *Epistles General of John*, 141.
[505] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 518; Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 150.
[506] Brown, *Epistles of John*, 518.
[507] Ibid. 519.
[508] Westcott, *Epistles of St. John*, 150.

ἱλασμός in 4:10. The anarthrous construction in 4:10 emphasizes the qualitative aspect of the noun. The noun ἱλασμόν is a predicate accusative in apposition to υἱόν. The ἱλασμὸν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν is parallel to ἵνα ζήσωμεν δι᾽ αὐτοῦ in 4:9, but is also a development of the statement. Jesus won life for the believer on the basis of His ἱλασμόν.[509] Περί is the same preposition used in 2:2, and it occurs in 4:10 with a similar context. Ὑπέρ is the normal preposition used in non-sacrificial descriptions of Christ giving His life for others. The term ἁμαρτιῶν is derived from classical Greek and signifies "a missing of *the goal conformable to and fixed by God*, because human action misses its destination, and therewith the will of God."[510]

II.D.2. Theological Analysis

In a manner consistent with other New Testament writings, God is both the object and the subject of Christ's sacrificial death. God πιστός ἐστιν καὶ δίκαιος ἵνα ἀφῇ ἡμῖν τὰς ἁμαρτίας καὶ καθαρίσῃ ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ πάσης ἀδικίας, even as Jesus Christ is the believer's παράκλητον πρὸς τὸν πατέρα (1 John 1:9; 2:1). First John 2:2 and 4:10 both use explicit sacrificial language to address the remedy for the sins of believers, as opposed to the sins of entire world. The initiative for the ἱλασμός in 4:10 is upon the Father. The emphasis here is upon the relationship between the propitiation of Christ with the love of God; therefore, "the cause of the estrangement between God and man lay in man, not God."[511]

According to John, "propitiation and love become ideas which explain each other, and which have no adequate illustration apart from each other."[512] Propitiation is defined in relationship to love: ἀλλ᾽ ὅτι αὐτὸς ἠγάπησεν ἡμᾶς καὶ ἀπέστειλεν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἱλασμὸν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν. Johannine

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[509] Plummer, *Epistles of St. John*, 102; Robertson, *Word Pictures*, 6:232-33.

[510] Hermann Cremer, *Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek*, trans. William Urwick (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1878) 99.

[511] D. Edmond Hiebert, *The Epistles of John* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1991) 75.

[512] James Denney, *The Death of Christ*, ed. R. V. G. Tasker (London: Tyndale Press, 1951; reprint, 1961) 152.

theology does not contrast the notions of propitiation and love. John cannot explain love without reference to the propitiation for it is in Christ's sacrifice that love was manifested. For John to write, "God is love," is to also say, "God sent His Son *to be* the propitiation." Denny noted, "If the propitiatory death of Jesus is eliminated from the love of God, it might be unfair to say that the love of God is robbed of all meaning, but it is certainly robbed of its apostolic meaning."[513]

The term ἱλασμός is variously translated in First John 4:10, and it does initially appear to indicate the meaning of "expiation" since there is no mention of wrath within the context. Moreover, the emphasis in 4:10 is upon the fact that the Son was sent from God, that is, the argument against propitiation is based upon the conviction that God provided the ἱλασμός when He sent His Son.[514] However, "propitiation" in 4:10 would make the text more readily understandable since God was already referenced as the object of Christ's advocacy in 2:1. The problem with rendering ἱλασμός as expiation in 4:10 is that the word does not convey the meaning of the Greek as does "propitiation." The language is that of religious sacrifice, which denotes the placating of the anger of God.

According to John, the reason why the Father sent His Son was for Him to be the ἱλασμὸν περὶ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ἡμῶν. The reason for the ἱλασμός is that sin estranges humanity from God, and this disharmony and estrangement remains until Christ intervenes to provide reconciliation. When God was appeased by the death of His Son, it was then that His love could be outpoured to sinners through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The unique role of remitting the sins of the world, and thereby removing the disharmony and estrangement between God and sinners belongs to Christ alone. God does not merely overlook sin to forgive sinners for this would violate His holiness, and result in the distortion of justice and righteousness. God is not apathetic toward sin; rather, He took the initiative through the sacrifice of His sin to pay the debt of sin. The emphasis in First John 4:10 is that God responded to the plight of humanity not because sinners were deserving of His grace; rather, the love of God was undeserved by sinful humanity. The sinners for whom Christ died

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[513] Ibid.
[514] Marshall, *Epistles of John*, 118.

were deserving of His wrath. God is righteous and must punish sin. He cannot merely absolve guilt for this would not satisfy justice. The thought of an innocent victim atoning for guilty sinners is the doctrine of substitutionary atonement. If the death of Christ was not a substitutionary atonement for sinners, then none could experience reconciliation. Therefore, it is Christ's death upon the cross as the wrath ending sacrifice that is the greatest expression of God's love.