

Overcoming the Cosmos (vv. 12-17)

VERSE 12 I am writing to you, little children, because your sins have been forgiven you for His name's sake (Γράφω ὑμῖν, τεκνία, ὅτι ἀφέωνται ὑμῖν αἱ ἁμαρτίαι διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. [*pres.act.ind.1s. grapho + pro.dat.p. su + noun voc.m.p. teknia child + conj. hoti since + perf.pass.ind. 3p. aphiemī forgive + pro.dat.p. su + d.a.w/noun f.p. amartia sin + prep dia for the sake of + noun acc.nt.s. onoma name + pro.gen.m.s. autos his*]).

VERSE 13 I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning (γράφω ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. [*pres.act.ind.1s. grapho + pro.dat.p. su + noun voc.m.p. pater father + conj. hote + perf.act.ind.3p. ginosko + d.a.acc.m.s. the one; "Him" + prep apo + noun abl.f.s. arche beginning*]).

I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one (γράφω ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν [*pres.act.ind.1s. grapho + pro.dat.p. su + noun voc.m.p. neaniskos young man + conj. hoti + perf.act.ind.2p. nikao overcome + d.a.w/adj.acc.m.s. poneros evil; here of Satan*]).

I have written to you, children, because you know the Father (ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, παιδία, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν πατέρα. ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, πατέρες [*aor.act.ind.1s. grapho + pro.dat.p. su + noun voc.m.p. paidion infant, child + conj hoti + pf.act.ind.2p. ginosko + d.a.w/noun acc.m.s. pater*]).

VERSE 14 I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning (ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, πατέρες, ὅτι ἐγνώκατε τὸν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. [*aor.act.ind.1s. grapho + pro.dat.p. su + noun voc.m.p. pater + conj hoti + perf.act.ind.2p. ginosko + d.a.acc.m.s. + prep apo + noun abl.f.s. arche*]).

I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one (ἔγραψα ὑμῖν, νεανίσκοι, ὅτι ἰσχυροί ἐστε καὶ ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν ὑμῖν μένει καὶ νενικήκατε τὸν πονηρόν [*aor.act.ind.1s. grapho + pro.dat.p. su + noun voc.m.p. neaniskos + conj hoti + adj.nom.m.p. ischuroos strong + pres.act.ind.2p. eimi + conj kai + d.a.w/noun nom.m.s. logos + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. theos + prep en + pro.loc.p. su + pres.act.ind.3s. meno abide + conj kai + perf.act.ind.2p. nikao overcome + d.a.w/adj.acc.m.s. poneros evil*]).

VERSE 15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world (Μὴ ἀγαπᾶτε τὸν κόσμον μηδὲ τὰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ. [*neg me + pres.act.imper.2p. agapao love + d.a.w/noun acc.m.s. kosmos + conj mede neither + d.a.acc.nt.p. “the things” + prep en + d.a.w/noun loc.m.s. kosmos*]).

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him (ἐάν τις ἀγαπᾷ τὸν κόσμον, οὐκ ἔστιν ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ πατρὸς ἐν αὐτῷ. (*part ean if + indef.pro.nom.m.s. tis anyone + pres.act.subj.3s. agapao + d.a.w/noun acc.m.s. kosmos + neg ouk + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. agape love + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. pater + prep en + pro.loc.m.s. autos*)).

VERSE 16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world (ὅτι πᾶν τὸ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία τῶν ὀφθαλμῶν καὶ ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου, οὐκ ἔστιν ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς ἀλλ’ ἐκ τοῦ κόσμου ἐστίν [*conj hoti for + adj.nom.nt.s. pas all + prep en + d.a.w/noun loc.m.s. kosmos + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. epithumia lust + d.a.w/noun gen.f.s. sarx flesh + conj + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. epithumia lust + d.a.w/noun gen.m.p. ophthalmos eye + conj kai + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. alazoneia pride; “boastful pride” + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. bios life; material assests + neg ouk + prep ek + d.a.w/noun abl.m.s. pater + conj alla but + prep ek + d.a.w/noun abl.m.s. kosmos + pres.act.ind.3s. eimi*]).

VERSE 17 The world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does

the will of God lives forever (καὶ ὁ κόσμος παράγεται καὶ ἡ ἐπιθυμία αὐτοῦ, ὁ δὲ ποιῶν τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ μένει εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα [*conj kai + d.a.w/noun nom.m.s. kosmos + pres.pass.ind.3s. parago pass away + conj + d.a.w/noun nom.f.s. epithumia lust + pro.gen.m.s. autos + conj de but + d.a.w/pres.act.part.nom.m.s. poieo do + d.a.w/noun acc.nt.s. thelema will + d.a.w/noun gen.m.s. theos + pres.act.ind.3s. meno abide + prep eis into + d.a.w/noun acc.m.s. aion age, eternity, etc.*]).

ANALYSIS: VERSES 12-17

1. In this section John addresses three categories of believers to reassure them of their status before God the Father (vv. 12-14).
2. The section concludes with a warning regarding love of the cosmos (vv. 15-17).
3. Verses 12-14 contain two sets separated by two tenses of the verb “write”—starting with the present tense of the verb followed by the aorist or past tense of this verb.
4. The first set (vv. 12-13ab) and the second set (vv. 13c-14) contain largely the same subject matter.
5. Each of the two sets are addressed to: children, fathers, and young men.
6. In each case John says “why” he is writing to them.
7. He uses the present tense of “write” seven times (1:4; 2:1, 7, 8, 12, 13 [2x] viewing things from his perspective.
8. He uses the past tense six times at 2:13c; 14 [2x], 21, 26; 5:13.
9. The big issue here is in what sense is classifying these believers?
10. Proposals include: (1) literal children, fathers, and young men; (2) they represents three levels of spiritual attainment; (3) all his readers are children (metaphorically) and the fathers and young men are leaders in the local churches; (4) all his readers are children and he proceeds to address the older and younger believers.
11. Problem with the first is that it excludes women, as both the younger and older are found elsewhere (1 Tim. 5:1, 2).
12. Also, it would exclude men who are not fathers.
13. The problem with the board of deacons is that elders in the NT are both older men (1 Tim. 5:1; Titus 2:2) and young men like Titus (2:15).
14. Four above as well as # 2 leaves out women.
15. The advantage of identifying the three categories with three levels of spiritual attainment is: (1) this figurative use is found elsewhere (1 Cor. 3:1); (2) note the parable of three stages of spiritual growth in Mk. 4:26-29; (3) the term “children” is clearly used in John of all his recipients; (4) this usage would include both males and females.
16. To those in the first classification John refers to them as children using two different nouns (*teknon* and *paidion*).
17. These then are relatively new converts to the faith.

18. One of the very first things that new converts need to hear is that their sins have been forgiven.
19. In this connection “little children” need to understand and apply 1 Jn. 1:9.
20. It all starts with the understanding that pre-salvation sins were forgiven them at the point of saving faith.
21. For “fathers” or mature believers John appeals to the doctrine of Jesus eternal pre-existence.
22. The doctrine of the hypostatic union is the featured doctrine (cf. Jn. 1:1ff.; 1Jn. 1:1).
23. The mature believer has great capacity for this doctrine.
24. To the intermediate category “young men”, he reassures them that their victory over Satan is already *fiat accompli* under the designation “the evil one” (at 2:13, 14, 3:12; 5:18, 19; and at Matt. 13:19, 38; Jn. 17:16; Eph. 6:16; 2Thess. 3:3).
25. John uses the present tense of “overcome” to show that believers are delivered once-for-all from the domain of darkness via positional sanctification.
26. 1Jn. 5:4-5 makes it clear how this is accomplished for the individual (see Rev. 2:7, 11, 17; 3:5, 12, 21, 21:7).
27. “Children” are referred to again in v. 13c and this time in reference to their assurance of a relationship with God the Father based on their recent conversion (aorist).
28. They have come to know their heavenly Father which gives them comfort and confidence.
29. John repeats his reference to mature believers (v. 14a) using the aorist tense and repeats from v. 13 the same doctrine of the identity of the God-Man.
30. The use of the aorist tense versus the present tense in the second round to addressing the three categories of believers he is probably using the epistolary aorist (rather than referring to a previous correspondence).
31. In his second mention of “young men” John adds that they are “strong” in the faith due to the fact that “the word of God abides in [them].”
32. Young men are typically strong of body as so a believer in this category is someone who has attained to a high confidence in the plan of God.
33. Again, these type believers are fully adjusted to the fact that they are 100 % confident that they are out from under Satan’s dominion (cf. Col. 1:13 “For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son.”).
34. “Young men” know the particulars.
35. Verses 15-17 constitute a warning to all believers.
36. Believers are not to be overconfident with regard to their Ph 2 standing, such as fathers and young men (1Cor. 10:12 “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.”).
37. Love of the cosmos and love of the Father are incompatible, hence that admonition of vv. 15ff.
38. The world refers to a system that is dominated top-down with evil under the dominion of Satan.
39. The world beckons us to conformity to its priorities and humanistic viewpoint.
40. We are in it, but not of it, based on positional sanctification (Jn. 13:1 “...having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.”).

41. The path to avoidance of love of the world is spiritual growth so that the believer can see through the propaganda of the cosmos (Rom. 12:2 “And do not be conformed to this world, be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may discern what the will of God is, that which is acceptable and perfect.”; 2 Cor. 3:18 “But we all, with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.”).
42. Regarding the proper attitude toward “the things of the world” see Lk. 12:30 “For all these things the nations of the world eagerly seek, but your Father knows that you need these things.”
43. The cosmos is not your friend (Jn. 15:18-19 “If the world hates you (and it does), you know that it has hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world (and you are not) the world would love its own, but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because the world hates you.”)!
44. This truth demands social separation from the world (Jam. 4:4 “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship [*philia* with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”).
45. Believers who love the cosmos do not possess love for God, that is, the filling of the Spirit.
46. The problem with “all that is in the world” isn’t the things themselves, as all that is in the world was created by God for man’s benefit.
47. The problem arises from the ISTA with its lusts.
48. The lust pattern does not go away as a result of the three adjustments to God as it is always seeking to enslave the soul to its desires (Rom. 6:12 “Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey its lusts.”; 13:14 “But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lust.”; Gal. 5:16-17 “But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire/lust of the flesh. For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please”; 1 Pet. 2:11 “Beloved, I urge you as aliens and strangers to abstain from fleshly lusts which wage war against the soul.”).
49. The sense of sight is a principal avenue for lust to kick in (cf. Matt. 5:29 “but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”).
50. Looking is not a sin as long as the believer exercises self-control and detachment under the FHS.
51. The third item in v. 16 is the fact that people crave attention and boast in their attainments.
52. This type of lust is approbation lust.
53. The STA salivates over what it sees and boasts in what it will at has acquired or is going to acquire.
54. The grace oriented believer boast in the Lord as it goes to one’s mental attitude.
55. He reminds the readers that none of this type behavior is sponsored by God, but is strictly from the cosmos.
56. Regarding the cosmos as it has been conducting itself throughout the course of human history John reminds them that the cosmos as they experience it has a limited life expectancy (v. 17).
57. John asserted this in v. 8: “the
58. The word of God is replete with reference to this overthrow of the cosmos and its ruler.

59. “The cosmos is passing away” (pres.pass.ind. *parago* pass by/pass away) doctrine is referred to in v. 8 (“...the darkness is passing away and the true light is shining.” The presence of truth in the devil’s world).
60. Also, 1 Cor. 7:31 “and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it, for the form (*schema* outward form, likeness cf. Phil 2:7) of this world is passing away.”
61. “And the lust of it” refers to rampant STA activity running unchecked, which will be dramatically reduced during the 1000 years, and totally eliminated in the eternal state.
62. The details are given in the prophecies of the second advent in Scripture.
63. Those who survive as unbelievers to the second half of the Tribulation will not like this one bit (Rev. 11:10).
64. By contrast (v. 17b), “those who do the will of God will abide forever.”
65. The old order will perish from the earth but believers will enter the eternal kingdom on earth.
66. The new order ushered in by the coming of Christ will be characterized by—“Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”
67. “The one who abides forever” is he “who does the will of God” which refers to believing in Christ for eternal life (Jn. 3:15-18, 36; 5:24; 6:35, 40, 47; 7:38; 11:25, 26-27; 12:46; Acts 10:43; 16:31; Rom. 4:5; 8:33; 10:4; 1 Jn. 5:5).