

2:24 What You Heard from the Beginning

You Will Abide.

Andreas: Rejecting ungodliness, John goes on to teach the doctrine of godliness and to encourage his listeners to accept it, saying that by it they will have fellowship with both the Father and the Son, as well as the promise of eternal life. Catena.²⁸

Fellowship with God.

Oecumenius: This means that if you do these things you will have fellowship with God. Commentary on 1 John.³⁰

2:25 The Promise of Eternal Life

What He Promised Us.

Hilary of Arles: Christ's promise is that we shall receive a hundred times over in this life, ³¹ and eternal life in the next. Introductory Commentary on 1 John.³²

Eternal Life.

Theophylact: What is eternal life? It is that we should know the one true God and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.³⁴ Commentary on 1 John.³⁵

2:26 Those Who Would Deceive You

A Warning Against Heresies.

Hilary of Arles: People want to deceive us in order to teach you some heresy or other. John has written in order to warn us about this. Introductory Commentary on 1 John.³⁶

2:27 Your Anointing Teaches You Everything

Awaiting in Faith.

Augustine: All who await him in faith will rejoice when he comes. Those who are without faith will be ashamed when what they do not now see has indeed come. Ten Homilies on 1 John 4.2.³⁸

The Oil Unmixed.

Andreas: Do not mix anything earthly with the oil of anointing with which you have been anointed, and the devil will not get hold of you. Catena.³⁹

2:28 Confidence When Christ Returns

When He Appears.

Clement of Alexandria: When the Lord appears at his second coming, the one who knows the Son and the Father according to knowledge will have confidence and will not be confounded, for confusion is a great punishment. Adumbrations.⁴²

The Holy Spirit as Teacher.

Andreas: Having the Holy Spirit as your teacher of godly knowledge, do not go after deceiving spirits, but think in the way that he has taught you, so that at his appearing in glory we may stand with confidence before him. Catena.⁴³

Confidence When Christ Appears.

Oecumenius: Why does John tell us to remain in Christ? So that we may have confidence in him when he appears. For what could be better or more desirable than to have confidence with which to show Christ the works we have done in this life and to do this with full assurance, not being ashamed of anything? Commentary on 1 John.⁴⁵

2:29 Everyone Who Does Right Is Born of Christ

Born by Faith.

Clement of Alexandria: To be born of him means to be born again by faith. Adumbrations.⁴⁶

The One Who Is Righteous.

Oecumenius: It is obvious that the One who is righteous produces offspring who are also righteous. Commentary on 1 John.⁴⁸

3:1 See What Love the Father Has Given Us

The World.

Clement of Alexandria: The “world” means those who live in pleasure. Adumbrations.¹

The Inheritance Given Us.

Andreas: God shows us the necessary patience because of the inheritance which he has given us. Here the “world” refers to wicked people. Catena.²

Children of God.

Oecumenius: John is telling us that we know from all that has been said above that we have been taken up by God as his children. Even if that is not immediately apparent, we should not be disturbed, for it will be fully revealed when he comes again. Commentary on 1 John.⁴

3:2 We Shall Be Like God

God's Children Now.

Didymus the Blind: By writing these things John is exhorting his readers to recognize what it means to be born again of God. He tells them that they are now worthy to be loved as children of God, even in this world, and that the adoption of sons is a reality here and now. For since we now know in part and have the first fruits of the Spirit, we already have something of the adoption of sons and can see what the fullness of it will be like when it arrives. Commentary on 1 John.⁵

We Shall Be Like Him.

Augustine: Despite the measure of likeness which we find in God's Word, we also recognize a great unlikeness to God and his Word in this enigma. We must admit that even when we are like him and shall see him as he is (words which clearly imply an awareness of our present unlikeness), we shall still have no natural equality with him. For the created nature must always be less than the Creator. On the Trinity 15.16.26.⁶

We Shall See Him As He Is.

Severus of Antioch: Therefore we live as children of God even in this present life, sanctifying ourselves by virtue and striving toward the likeness of something even better. Encouraged by this, we shall be fashioned according to the brightness of the resurrection, when we shall see him, insofar as that is possible, as he is. Catena.⁷

John Does Not Contradict Paul.

Maximus the Confessor: Is there any connection between what John says here and what Paul says when he writes: "God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the deep things of God"?⁹ What then shall we be like? The answer is that here John says that he does not know what form the coming deification through the virtues of faith will take for those who are children of God here on earth now. The independently existing nature of the good things to come has not yet been revealed in detail. Here on earth we walk by faith, not by sight. Paul on the other hand says that through revelation we have received the divine promise concerning the good things which are to come but does not claim to know what these are in any detail. Thus he says quite clearly that he examines himself and pursues the

higher calling as far as he understands what it is. ¹⁰ Any contradiction between the two apostles is merely apparent, not real, because they are both inspired by the same Spirit. Catena.¹¹

3:3 Purify Yourselves as God Is Pure

Faith Past and Present.

Hilary of Arles: We shall see him as he is because we shall be like him. This is our hope for the future, our love in the present and our faith in both the past and the present. Introductory Commentary on 1 John.¹²

The Image and Likeness of God in Humanity.

Andreas: Some people argue from this that God made man according to his image but not according to his likeness, which he will give us later on. We have supposedly believed in him according to the likeness which we have, and if that is worthy enough, then we shall receive God's likeness as well. But if you have believed according to the likeness and then turn away from it and destroy it, who will give you what belongs to the likeness? You will not be able to acquire the likeness unless you have fully perfected the image first. This is supposed to be why John adds the words: "Everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself, as he is pure." But my bishop, in his letter to Conon, has shown on the basis of the recognized Fathers of the church that the image and the likeness are one and the same thing and that John was speaking here of something which has already taken place. Catena.¹³

Purify Yourselves.

Theophylact: Note that John uses the present tense when he talks about our need to purify ourselves. The practice of virtue is an ongoing thing and has its own inner dynamic. If we stop living this way or put it off until some future time, there is nothing virtuous about that at all. Commentary on 1 John.¹⁵