

Introduction

FOLLOWING THE PLAUSIBLE VIEWS of a few others, I will treat the three letters of John as a unified epistolary package.¹ Accordingly, I will consider 3 John as a letter recommending Demetrius as well as Gaius to the audience of 1–3 John, a sister church to the church of the implied author, “the elder” (3 John 1:1; 2 John 1:1, 13). As an introductory cover letter for 1 John, 2 John places 1 John in an epistolary context. Originally written to be orally performed as a hortatory sermon for the church led by the elder at Ephesus, 1 John, together with 2 and 3 John, was possibly delivered by Demetrius to an outlying sister church.² Although the order in which they were authored was most likely 1–2–3 John, the order in which they were to be listened to by the sister church in the context of a communal worship service was most likely 3–2–1 John.³ The close affinities between

1. “The three letters were probably sent at the same time to the same destination, for it would be difficult to account for the preservation of letters as unassuming as 2 and 3 John were they not the companions of a more significant writing. . . . The Johannine letters thus make most sense when viewed as parts of the same epistolary package” (Johnson, *Writings*, 497–98). See also Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 329; Schuchard, *1–3 John*, 19–35; Jobes, *1, 2, & 3 John*, 28–29.

2. Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 263–70.

3. On the characteristics of 1 John, Edwards (*Johannine Epistles*, 45) notes: “The memorable, rhythmic, antithetical style and frequent repetitions suggest the inclusion of material designed for oral delivery and perhaps memorization.” On 1 John as a sermon to be read during a worship service, see Hengel, *Johannine Question*, 48. For a recent discussion of the oral dimension of biblical texts, see Horsley, *Text and Tradition*.

the letters and the Gospel of John suggest that the elder authored all four documents. At any rate, the elder seems to presuppose that most of the members of the audience of 1–3 John were familiar with the content in the Gospel of John.⁴

In what follows I will propose two new contributions to the study of 1–3 John. First, I will present new comprehensive chiasmic structures for each of the three letters of John based on concrete linguistic evidence in the text.⁵ These chiasmic structures will serve as the guide for my audience-oriented exegesis of these letters.⁶ Secondly, I will treat these letters from the point of view of their worship context and themes. Not only were 1–3 John intended to be performed orally as part of liturgical worship, but together these three letters exhort their audience to a distinctive ethical worship. In accord with the subtitle of this book, I will propose that the three letters of John are concerned with giving their audience an experience of living eternally by the worship that consists of loving God and one another.

The Structures of 1–3 John

The Structure of 3 John

The Brothers Have Testified to Your Love before the Church (1:1–8)

- A ¹The elder to Gaius the beloved [ἀγαπητῶ], whom I love [ἀγαπῶ] in truth. ²Beloved [ἀγαπητέ], concerning all things I pray that you are prospering and are in good health, just as your soul is prospering. ^{3a}For I rejoiced greatly at brothers [ἀδελφῶν]

4. “It is clear then that the most significant ‘influence’ on the Johannine Letters is John’s Gospel, or the traditions that came to be written in that Gospel” (Trebilco, *Early Christians*, 603).

5. For past discussions regarding the structure of 1 John, see Jensen, “Structure,” 54–73; Jensen, *Affirming the Resurrection*, 196–97; Yarbrough, *1–3 John*, 21–24; Lieu, *Commentary*, 14–17; Kruse, *Letters*, 31–32; Marshall, *Epistles*, 22–27; Schnackenburg, *Epistles*, 11–13; von Wahlde, *Letters*, 19–20; Brown, *Epistles*, 116–29; Bigalke, “Unravelling the Structure of First John,” 1–10; Bigalke, “First John Structure Resolved,” 1–7; Thomas, “Literary Structure of 1 John,” 269–81. On the structure of 3 John, see Clark, “Discourse,” 109–15.

6. For the chiasmic structures of other NT letters, see Heil, “Philemon,” 178–206; Heil, *Ephesians*; Heil, *Colossians*; Heil, *Philippians*; Heil, *Hebrews*; Heil, *James*; Heil, *1 Peter*, *2 Peter*, and *Jude*; Heil, *Book of Revelation*.

coming and testifying [μαρτυρούντων] to your truth [τῆ ἀληθεία],

B^{3b} just as you in truth are walking [περιπατεῖς].

C^{4a} Greater joy than these things I do not have,

B'^{4b} that I hear that my children in the truth are walking [περιπατοῦντα].

A'⁵ Beloved [Ἀγαπητέ], a faithful thing you are doing in whatever you accomplish for the brothers [ἀδελφούς] and this even for strangers, ⁶who have testified [ἐμαρτύρησάν] to your love [ἀγάπη] before the church, whom you will do well to send forth in a manner worthy of God. ⁷For on behalf of the name they have gone out, receiving nothing from the pagans. ⁸We then ought to support such as these, so that we may become co-workers to the truth [τῆ ἀληθεία].⁷

An A-B-C-B'-A' chiasmic pattern establishes the integrity and distinctness of this first unit (1:1–8). Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (1:1–3a) and A' (1:5–8) elements of this chiasm. First of all, these elements contain the only occurrences in this unit of expressions for love—“beloved” (ἀγαπητῶ) and “I love” (ἀγαπῶ) in 1:1, “beloved” (Ἀγαπητέ) in 1:2, 5, and “love” (ἀγάπη) in 1:6. These elements also contain the only occurrences in this unit of the term “brothers”—ἀδελφῶν in 1:3a and ἀδελφούς in 1:5, as well as of the verb “testify”—μαρτυρούντων in 1:3a and ἐμαρτύρησάν in 1:6. And in 1:3a, 8 these elements contain the only occurrences in 3 John of “the truth” (τῆ ἀληθεία) in the dative case with the article but without a preceding preposition (cf. 1:3b, 4).⁸

The only occurrences in 3 John of the verb “walk”—“you are walking” (περιπατεῖς) in 1:3b and “they are walking” (περιπατοῦντα) in 1:4b—determine the parallelism between the B (1:3b) and B' (1:4b) elements. Finally, the unparalleled central and pivotal C element (1:4a) contains the only occurrence in 3 John of the noun “joy”—“greater joy [χαράν] than these things I do not have.”

7. All translations are my own. The aim is to present a strictly literal translation that attempts, as far as possible, to follow the Greek word order and to render the same Greek words with the same English equivalents.

8. Some of these chiasmic elements form chiasmic sub-units in themselves, which will be illustrated in the subsequent exegetical chapters of this study.

*Diotrephes Does Not Acknowledge the Brothers
But Demetrius Is Testified by All (1:9–15)*

- A⁹ I have written [Ἐγραψά] something to the church, but that one who likes to be first [φιλοπρωτεύων] among them, Diotrephes, does not acknowledge us [ἡμᾶς].¹⁰ Therefore, if I come, I will draw attention to his works which he is doing, with evil words disparaging us [ἡμᾶς], and not being content with these things, he himself does not acknowledge the brothers and those wishing to do so he hinders and expels from the church.
- B^{11a} Beloved, do not imitate the bad [κακόν]
- C^{11b} but the good [ἀγαθόν].
- C'^{11c} The one doing good [ἀγαθοποιῶν] is from God;
- B'^{11d} the one doing bad [κακοποιῶν] has not seen God.
- A'¹² Demetrius is testified by all and by the truth itself, and we [ἡμεῖς] also testify, and you know that our [ἡμῶν] testimony is true.¹³ Many things I have to write [γράψαι] to you, but I do not want through ink and pen to write [γράφειν] to you.¹⁴ I hope instead soon to see you, and we will speak face to face.¹⁵ Peace to you. The friends [φίλοι] (here) salute you. Salute the friends [φίλους] (there) by name.

An A-B-C-C'-B'-A' chiasmic pattern establishes the integrity and distinctness of this second unit (1:9–15). Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (1:9–10) and A' (1:12–15) elements of this chiasm. First of all, these elements contain the only occurrences in 3 John of the verb “write”—“I have written” (Ἐγραψά) in 1:9 and “to write” (γράψαι) as well as “to write” (γράφειν) in 1:13. These elements also contain the only occurrences in this unit of the first person plural pronoun—“us” (ἡμᾶς) in 1:9, 10 and “we” (ἡμεῖς) as well as “our” (ἡμῶν) in 1:12. And these elements contain the only occurrences in 3 John of words beginning with the Greek root φιλο—“likes to be first” (φιλοπρωτεύων) in 1:9 and “friends” (φίλοι) as well as “friends” (φίλους) in 1:15.

The only occurrences of expressions for “bad” in 3 John—“bad” (κακόν) in 1:11a and “doing bad” (κακοποιῶν) in 1:11d—determine the parallelism between the B (1:11a) and B' (1:11d) elements. Finally, the only occurrences of expressions for “good” in 3 John—“good” (ἀγαθόν)

in 1:11b and “doing good” (ἀγαθοποιῶν) in 1:11c form the parallelism between the pivotal C (1:11b) and C' (1:11c) elements at the center of this chiasitic unit.

The Structure of 2 John

I Ask that We Love One Another (1:1–13)

- A¹ The elder to an elect [ἐκλεκτῆ] lady and her children [τέκνους], whom I love in truth, and not I only but also all who know the truth,² because of the truth that remains in us and with us will be forever.³ Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father in truth and love.⁴ I rejoiced [Ἐχάρην] greatly because I have found some of your children [τέκνων] walking in truth, just as we received [ἐλάβομεν] a commandment from the Father.⁵ But now I ask you, lady, not as one writing [γράφων] a new commandment to you but that which we have had from the beginning, that we should love one another.⁶ And this is the love, that we walk according to his commandments. This is the commandment, just as you heard from the beginning, that in it you should walk.⁷ For many [πολλοί] deceivers have gone out into the world, those not confessing Jesus Christ as coming [ἐρχόμενον] in flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist.⁸ Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we worked [εἰργασάμεθα] for but may obtain a full [πλήρη] reward.
- B^{9a} Everyone going ahead and not remaining in the teaching [μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ] of the Christ does not have [ἔχει] God.
- B' ^{9b} The one remaining in the teaching [μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ], this one has [ἔχει] both the Father and the Son.
- A'¹⁰ If anyone comes [ἔρχεται] to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive [λαμβάνετε] him into a house and do not utter a greeting [χαίρειν] to him.¹¹ For the one uttering a greeting [χαίρειν] to him shares in his evil works [ἔργους].¹² Many things [Πολλά] having to write [γράφειν] to you, I do not wish to do so through paper and ink, but I hope to be with you and to speak face to face, so that our joy [χαρά] may be fulfilled [πεπληρωμένη].¹³ The children [τέκνα] of your elect [ἐκλεκτῆς] sister salute you.

An A-B-B'-A' chiasmic pattern establishes the structure of 2 John. Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (1:1-8) and A' (1:10-13) elements of this chiasm: the only occurrences in 2 John of the adjective "elect"—ἐκλεκτῆ in 1:1 and ἐκλεκτῆς in 1:13; of "children"—τέκνοις in 1:1 as well as τέκνων in 1:4 and τέκνα in 1:13; of the verb "rejoice" or "greet" and the noun "joy"—"I rejoiced" (Ἐχάρην) in 1:4, "greeting" (χαίρειν) in 1:10, 11, and "joy" (χαρά) in 1:12; of the verb "receive"—ἐλάβομεν in 1:4 and λαμβάνετε in 1:10; of the verb "write"—γράφων in 1:5 and γράφειν in 1:12; of the adjective "many"—πολλοί in 1:7 and Πολλά in 1:12; of the verb "come"—ἐρχόμενον in 1:7 and ἔρχεται in 1:10; of expressions for "work"—"we worked" (εἰργασάμεθα) in 1:8 and "works" (ἔργοις) in 1:11; and of expressions for "full"—"a full [πλήρη] reward" in 1:8 and "may be fulfilled" (πεπληρωμένη) in 1:12.

Finally, the only occurrences in 2 John of "remaining in the teaching" (μένων ἐν τῇ διδαχῇ) and of the third person singular verb "has" (ἔχει) in 1:9a, 9b determine the parallelism of the pivotal B (1:9a) and B' (1:9b) elements at the center of the chiasm.

The Thirteen Microchiasmic Units of 1 John

In what follows I will first demonstrate how the text of 1 John naturally divides itself into thirteen distinct literary units based upon their microchiasmic structures as determined by very precise linguistic parallels found in the text. Where applicable I will point out how other lexical and grammatical features often confirm the integrity of these units. Second, I will demonstrate how these thirteen units form a macrochiasmic pattern based upon very precise linguistic parallels found in the text of the parallel chiasmic units. Third, I will point out the various transitional words that connect a unit to the immediately preceding unit. These various transitional words, which occur at the conclusion of one unit and at the beginning of the following unit, indicate that the chiasmic units are heard as a cohesive sequence. These various transitional words are italicized in the translation of the units below.

1. *He Will Cleanse Us from All Unrighteousness (1:1–10)*

IF IN THE LIGHT WE ARE WALKING, WE HAVE
FELLOWSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER⁹

- A ^{1:1}What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we observed and our hands touched concerning the word [λόγου] of the life—²indeed the life was manifested and we have seen and testify and declare to you the life eternal which was with the Father and manifested to us—³what we have seen and heard, we declare also to you, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And the fellowship that is ours is with the Father and with his Son Jesus [τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ] Christ. ⁴And these things indeed we are writing, so that our joy may be fulfilled. ^{5a}And this is the message which we have heard from him and announce to you,
- B ^{5b}that God is light [φῶς] and there is no darkness in him at all. ^{6a}If we say that fellowship we have [κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν] with him yet in the darkness are walking [περιπατῶμεν],
- C ^{6b}we are lying and not doing the truth.
- B' ^{7a}But if in the light [φωτί] we are walking [περιπατῶμεν] as he is in the light [φωτί], fellowship we have [κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν] with one another
- A' ^{7b}and the blood of Jesus his Son [Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ] cleanses us from all sin. ⁸If we say that sin we do not have, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. ⁹If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous, so that he will forgive us the sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰If we say that we have not *sinned*, we make him a liar and his word [λόγος] is not in us.

An A-B-C-B'-A' chiastic pattern establishes the integrity and distinctness of this first unit (1:1–10). The only occurrences in this unit of the term “word”—λόγου in 1:1 and λόγος in 1:10—and of references to Jesus as God’s Son—“his Son Jesus” (τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ) in 1:3 and “Jesus his Son” (Ἰησοῦ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ) in 1:7b—constitute the parallelism

9. The main heading of each unit is intended to summarize the unit as it relates to its parallel unit within the overall macrochiastic structure of 1 John, while the subheading of each unit is intended to summarize or characterize the microchiastic dimension of each unit.

between the A (1:1-5a) and A' (1:7b-10) elements of this chiasm. The only occurrences in this unit of "light," φῶς in 1:5b and φωτί twice in 1:7a, of "we are walking" (περιπατῶμεν) in 1:6a, 7a, and of "fellowship we have" (κοινωνίαν ἔχομεν) in 1:6a, 7a determine the parallelism between the B (1:5b-6a) and the B' (1:7a) elements. Finally, the unparalleled central and pivotal C element (1:6b) contains the only occurrence in 1 John of the verb "we are lying" (ψευδόμεθα).

*2. If We Keep His Commandments the
Love of God Has Been Perfected (2:1-14)*

YOU HAVE KNOWN THE ONE WHO IS
FROM THE BEGINNING

- A ^{2:1}My little children [τεκνία], these things I am writing to you so that you may not *sin*. But if anyone sins, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one. ²And he himself is the expiation for our sins [ἀμαρτιῶν], not for ours only but also for the whole world. ³And in this we know [γινώσκομεν] that we have known [ἔγνώκαμεν] him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴The one saying, "I have known [ἔγνωνκα] him," but not keeping his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in this one. ⁵But whoever keeps his word, truly in this one the love of God has been perfected. In this we know [γινώσκομεν] that we are in him.
- B ⁶The one saying that he remains in him ought, just as that one walked [περιεπάτησεν], he himself thus to walk [περιπατεῖν].
- C ^{7a}Beloved, not a new commandment am I writing to you [ἐντολήν καινήν γράφω ὑμῖν] but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment
- D ^{7b}is the word which you heard.
- C' ^{8a}On the other hand, a new commandment I am writing to you [ἐντολήν καινήν γράφω ὑμῖν], which is true in him and in you,
- B' ^{8b}because the darkness is passing away and the true light already is shining. ⁹The one saying that he is in the light but

hating his brother is still in the darkness. ¹⁰The one loving his brother remains in the light and there is no fault in him. ¹¹But the one hating his brother is in the darkness and in the darkness is walking [περιπατεῖ] and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

A' ¹²I am writing to you, little children [τεκνία], because the sins [ἁμαρτίαι] have been forgiven for you on account of his name. ¹³I am writing to you, fathers, because you have known [ἐγνώκατε] the one who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have conquered the evil one. ¹⁴I have written to you, young children, because you have known [ἐγνώκατε] the *Father*. I have written to you, fathers, because you have known [ἐγνώκατε] the one who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong and the word of God in you remains and you have conquered the evil one.

“So that you may not sin [ἁμάρτητε]” at the beginning of this unit in 2:1 recalls “if we say that we have not sinned [ἡμαρτήκαμεν]” at the conclusion of the preceding unit in 1:10. These first two occurrences in 1 John of the verb “sin” thus serve as the transitional terms linking the first unit (1:1–10) to the second unit (2:1–14).

An A-B-C-D-C'-B'-A' chiasmic pattern secures the integrity and distinctness of this second unit (2:1–14). Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (2:1–5) and the A' (2:12–14) elements of this chiasm: the only occurrences in this unit of “little children” (τεκνία) in 2:1, 12; of the noun “sins”—ἁμαρτιῶν in 2:1 and ἁμαρτίαι in 2:12; and of the verb “know”—γινώσκουμεν in 2:3, 5; ἐγνώκαμεν in 2:3; ἔγνων in 2:4; and ἐγνώκατε in 2:13, 14 (2x). The only occurrences in this unit of the verb “walk”—περιεπάτησεν as well as περιπατεῖν in 2:6, and περιπατεῖ in 2:11—determine the parallelism between the B (2:6) and the B' (2:8b–11) elements. The only occurrences in 1 John of “a new commandment am I writing to you” (ἐντολὴν καινὴν γράφω ὑμῖν) in 2:7a, 8a establish the parallelism between the C (2:7a) and the C' (2:8a) elements. Finally, the unparalleled central and pivotal D (2:7b) element contains the only occurrence in 1 John of the expression “the word which you heard” (ὁ λόγος ὃν ἠκούσατε).

3. *Do Not Love the Things in the World* (2:15-17)

THE ONE DOING THE WILL OF GOD REMAINS FOREVER

A ¹⁵Do not love the world [τὸν κόσμον] or the things in the world [τῷ κόσμῳ]. If anyone loves the world [τὸν κόσμον], the love of the *Father* [τοῦ πατρός] is not [οὐκ ἔστιν] in him, ^{16a}because all that is in the world [τῷ κόσμῳ]—the desire [ἡ ἐπιθυμία] of the flesh and the desire [ἡ ἐπιθυμία] of the eyes

B ^{16b}and the arrogance concerning the livelihood,

A' ^{16c}is not [οὐκ ἔστιν] from the Father [τοῦ πατρός] but is from the world [τοῦ κόσμου]. ¹⁷Yet the world [ὁ κόσμος] is passing away and the desire [ἡ ἐπιθυμία] concerning it, but the one doing the will of God *remains* forever.

“The love of the Father [τοῦ πατρός]” at the beginning of this unit in 2:15 recalls “because you have known the Father [τὸν πατέρα]” toward the conclusion of the preceding unit in 2:14. These successive references to God as the Father serve as the transitional terms linking the second unit (2:1-14) to the third unit (2:15-17).

An A-B-A' chiasmic pattern establishes the integrity and distinctness of this third unit (2:15-17). Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (2:15-16a) and the A' (2:16c-17) elements of this chiasm: the only occurrences in this unit of “the world”—τὸν κόσμον twice in 2:15, τῷ κόσμῳ in 2:15, 16a, τοῦ κόσμου in 2:16c, and ὁ κόσμος in 2:17; of “the Father” (τοῦ πατρός) and of “is not” (οὐκ ἔστιν) in 2:15, 16c; and in 1 John of “the desire” (ἡ ἐπιθυμία) in 2:16a (2x), 17. The unparalleled central and pivotal B (2:16b) element contains the only occurrence in 1 John of the expression “the arrogance concerning the livelihood” (ἡ ἀλαζονεία τοῦ βίου).

4. *The One Confessing the Son Also Has the Father* (2:18-27)

REMAIN IN HIM WHO PROMISED US LIFE ETERNAL

A ¹⁸Young children, it is the last hour, and just as you heard [ἠκούσατε] that the antichrist is coming, so now many

antichrists have appeared. Thus we know that it is the last hour.¹⁹From us they have gone out but they were not from us. For if they were from us, they would have *remained* [μεμενήκεισαν] with us, but rather so that they may be manifested that they all are not from us.²⁰But you have an anointing [χρῖσμα] from the holy one and all of you know.²¹I have written to you [ἔγραψα ὑμῖν] not because you do not know the truth [ἀλήθειαν], but because you know it, and because every lie [ψεῦδος] is not from the truth [ἀληθείας].

B^{22a}Who is the liar but the one who denies [ἀρνούμενος], saying, “Jesus is not the Christ [οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός]?”

B'^{22b}This is the antichrist [ἐστὶν ὁ ἀντίχριστος], the one who denies [ἀρνούμενος] the Father and the Son.²³Everyone who denies [ἀρνούμενος] the Son does not have the Father. The one confessing the Son also has the Father.

A'²⁴As for you, what you heard [ἠκούσατε] from the beginning, in you let it remain [μενέτω]. If in you remains [μείνη] what from the beginning you heard [ἠκούσατε], you also will remain [μενεῖτε] in the Son and in the Father.²⁵And this is the promise that he himself promised to us—the life eternal.²⁶These things I have written to you [ἔγραψα ὑμῖν] concerning those deceiving you.²⁷And as for you, the anointing [χρῖσμα] that you received from him remains [μένει] in you and you do not have need that anyone teach you. But as his anointing [χρῖσμα] teaches you concerning all things, indeed it is true [ἀληθές] and is not a lie [ψεῦδος], and just as it has taught you, *remain* [μένετε] *in him*.

“They would have remained [μεμενήκεισαν] with us” near the beginning of this unit in 2:19 recalls “but the one doing the will of God remains [μένει] forever” at the conclusion of the preceding unit in 2:17. These successive occurrences of the verb “remain” serve as the transitional terms linking the third unit (2:15–17) to the fourth unit (2:18–27).

An A-B-B'-A' chiastic pattern secures the integrity and distinctness of this fourth unit (2:18–27). Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (2:18–21) and the A' (2:24–27) elements of this chiasm: the only occurrences in this unit of “you heard” (ἠκούσατε) in 2:18 and twice in 2:24; of the verb “remain”—μεμενήκεισαν in 2:19, μενέτω, μείνη, and μενεῖτε in 2:24, μένει and μένετε in 2:27; in 1 John of “anointing” (χρῖσμα) in 2:20, 27; in this unit of “I have written to you” (ἔγραψα ὑμῖν) in 2:21, 26; of “truth/true”—ἀλήθειαν as well as ἀληθείας

in 2:21 and ἀληθής in 2:27; and in 1 John of “lie” (ψεῦδος) in 2:21, 27. The only occurrences in 1 John of “denies” (ἀρνούμενος) in 2:22a, 22b, 23 and of the antithetical statements “is not the Christ” (οὐκ ἔστιν ὁ Χριστός) in 2:22a and “is the antichrist” (ἐστὶν ὁ ἀντίχριστος) in 2:22b establish the parallelism between the B (2:22a) and the B' (2:22b–23) elements at the pivotal center of this chiastic unit.

5. *You Know Whoever Does Righteousness Has
Been Begotten from Him (2:28–3:6)*

EVERYONE WHO SINS HAS NEITHER
SEEN HIM NOR KNOWN HIM

A ²⁸And now, little children, *remain in him* [μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ], so that when he is manifested [φανερωθῆ] we may have confidence and not be shamed away from him at his coming. ²⁹If you know [εἰδῆτε] that he is righteous, you know [γινώσκετε] that also everyone who does [πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν] righteousness from him has been begotten. ³¹See [ἴδετε] what sort of love the Father has given us, that we may be called children of God, and indeed we are. For this reason the world does not know [γινώσκει] us, because it did not know [ἔγνω] him. ²Beloved, now we are children of God, but it has not yet been manifested [ἐφανερώθη] what we will be. We know [οἴδαμεν] that when it is manifested [φανερωθῆ], we will be like him, because we will see [ὀψόμεθα] him just as he is.

B ^{3a}And everyone who has this hope in him purifies [ἀγνίζει] himself,

B' ^{3b}just as that one is pure [ἀγνός].

A' ⁴Everyone who *does* [Πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν] *sin* also does lawlessness, indeed sin is lawlessness. ⁵And you know [οἴδατε] that that one was manifested [ἐφανερώθη], so that he might take away sins, but sin is not in him. ⁶Everyone who in him remains [ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων] does not sin. Everyone who sins has neither seen [ἑώρακεν] him nor known [ἔγνωκεν] him.

“Remain in him” (μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ) at the beginning of this unit in 2:28 repeats “remain in him” (μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ) at the conclusion of the preceding unit in 2:27. These identical exhortations to remain in the

Son of the Father serve as the transitional terms linking the fourth unit (2:18–27) to the fifth unit (2:28–3:6).

An A-B-B'-A' chiastic pattern secures the integrity and distinctness of this fifth unit (2:28–3:6). Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (2:28–3:2) and the A' (3:4–6) elements of this chiasm: the only occurrences in this unit of expressions for “remaining in him”—“remain in him” (μένετε ἐν αὐτῷ) in 2:28 and “who in him remains” (ὁ ἐν αὐτῷ μένων) in 3:6; of the verb “manifest”—φανερωθῆ in 2:28 and 3:2 as well as ἐφανερώθη in 3:2, 4; of the verb “know”—εἰδίητε and γινώσκετε in 2:29, γινώσκει and ἔγνω in 3:1, οἶδαμεν in 3:2, οἶδατε in 3:5, and ἔγνωκεν in 3:6; of “everyone who does” (πᾶς ὁ ποιῶν) in 2:29 and 3:4; and of the verb “see”—ἴδετε in 3:1, ὁψόμεθα in 3:2, and ἑώρακεν in 3:6. The only expressions in 1 John of “purify/pure”—ἀγνίζει in 3:3a and ἀγνός in 3:3b—determine the parallelism between the B (3:3a) and the B' (3:3b) elements at the pivotal center of this chiastic unit.

6. *We Should Love One Another* (3:7–12)

THE ONE NOT LOVING HIS BROTHER IS NOT FROM GOD

A ⁷Little children, let no one deceive you. The one doing righteousness [ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην] is righteous [δίκαιός], just as that one is righteous [δίκαιός]. ⁸The one *doing sin* is from the devil, for from the beginning [ἀπ' ἀρχῆς] the devil has been sinning. For this the Son of God was manifested, so that he might destroy the works [τὰ ἔργα] of the devil. ⁹Everyone [πᾶς] who has been begotten from God [ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ] does not do sin, because his seed remains in him, and thus he is not able to sin, because from God [ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ] he has been begotten.

B ^{10a}In this is manifest the children [τὰ τέκνα] of God

B' ^{10b}and the children [τὰ τέκνα] of the devil.

A' ^{10c}Everyone [πᾶς] who does not do righteousness [ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην] is not from God [ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ], that is, the one not loving his brother. ¹¹For this is the message which you heard from the beginning [ἀπ' ἀρχῆς], that we should love one another, ¹²not like Cain. He was from the evil one and slaughtered

his brother. And why did he slaughter him? Because his works [τὰ ἔργα] were evil but those of his *brother* righteous [δικαία].

“The one doing sin” (ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν) near the beginning of this unit in 3:8 recalls “everyone who does sin [ὁ ποιῶν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν]” near the conclusion of the preceding unit in 3:4. These identical references to one who does sin serve as the transitional terms linking the fifth unit (2:28–3:6) to the sixth unit (3:7–12).

An A-B-B'-A' chiastic pattern secures the integrity and distinctness of this sixth unit (3:7–12). Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (3:7–9) and the A' (3:10c–12) elements of this chiasm: the only occurrences in this unit of “doing righteousness”—ποιῶν τὴν δικαιοσύνην in 3:7 and ποιῶν δικαιοσύνην in 3:10c; of “righteous”—δίκαιός twice in 3:7 and δίκαια in 3:12; of “from the beginning” (ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς) in 3:8, 11; of “the works” (τὰ ἔργα) in 3:8, 12; of “everyone”—“everyone [πᾶς] who has been begotten” in 3:9 and “everyone [πᾶς] who does not do righteousness” in 3:10c; and of “from God” (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ) in 3:9 (2x), 10c. The only occurrences in this unit of “the children” (τὰ τέκνα) in 3:10a, 10b determine the parallelism between the B (3:10a) and the B' (3:10b) elements at the pivotal center of this chiastic unit.

7. *We Ought to Lay Down Our Lives for the Brothers* (3:13–17)

WHOEVER HATES HIS BROTHER DOES NOT HAVE
LIFE ETERNAL REMAINING IN HIM

A ¹³And do not be amazed, *brothers*, if the world [κόσμος] hates you. ¹⁴We know that we have moved from death to life, because we love the brothers. The one not loving remains in death. ¹⁵Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that every murderer does not have [ἔχει] life eternal in him remaining [ἐν αὐτῷ μένουσαν].

B ^{16a}In this we have known love, that that one for [ὕπέρ] us his life [ψυχὴν] laid down [ἔθηκεν];

B' ^{16b}so we ourselves ought for [ὕπέρ] the brothers our lives [ψυχάς] to lay down [θεῖναι].

A' ¹⁷But whoever has [ἔχη] the livelihood of the world [κόσμου] and observes his brother having [ἔχοντα] a need and shuts off

his compassion from him, how does the *love* of God remain in him [μένει ἐν αὐτῷ]?

The address “brothers” (ἀδελφοί) at the beginning of this unit in 3:13 recalls the reference to the “brother” (ἀδελφοῦ) of Cain at the conclusion of the preceding unit in 3:12. These successive occurrences of the word for “brother” serve as the transitional terms linking the sixth unit (3:7–12) to the seventh unit (3:13–17).

An A-B-B'-A' chiastic pattern secures the integrity and distinctness of this seventh unit (3:13–17). Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (3:13–15) and the A' (3:17) elements of this chiasm: the only occurrences in this unit of the word “world”—κόσμος in 3:13 and κόσμου in 3:17; of the verb “have”—ἔχει in 3:15 and ἔχη as well as ἔχοντα in 3:17; of the expression “remain in him”—ἐν αὐτῷ μένουσαν in 3:15 and μένει ἐν αὐτῷ in 3:17. The only occurrences in 1 John of the expression “to lay down one’s life for someone”—“for [ὑπέρ] us his life [ψυχὴν] laid down [ἔθηκεν]” in 3:16a and “for [ὑπέρ] the brothers our lives [ψυχὰς] to lay down [θεῖναι]” in 3:16b—determine the parallelism between the B (3:16a) and the B' (3:16b) elements at the pivotal center of this chiastic unit.

8. *Believe in the Name of His Son Jesus Christ and Love One Another (3:18–24)*

IF OUR HEART DOES NOT CONDEMN,
WE HAVE CONFIDENCE WITH GOD

- A ¹⁸Little children, let us not *love* [ἀγαπῶμεν] with word or with the tongue but in work and truth. ^{19a}And in this we will know [ἐν τούτῳ γνωσόμεθα] that we are from the truth,
- B ^{19b}and before him [ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ] we will assure our heart [καρδίαν ἡμῶν], ^{20a}that if our heart [ἡμῶν ἡ καρδία] condemns [καταγινώσκει], that God [θεός] is greater than our heart [καρδίας ἡμῶν]
- C ^{20b}and knows all things.
- B' ²¹Beloved, if our heart [καρδία ἡμῶν] does not condemn [καταγινώσκει], we have confidence with God [θεόν] ²²and whatever we ask we receive from him, because we keep

his commandments and do the things pleasing before him [ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ].

A' ²³And this is his commandment, that we should believe in the name of his Son Jesus Christ and we should love [ἀγαπῶμεν] one another, just as he gave the commandment to us. ²⁴And the one keeping his commandments in him remains and he in him. And in this we know [ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν] that he remains in us, from the *Spirit* which to us he gave.

The verb for love in the exhortation “let us not love [ἀγαπῶμεν] with word or with the tongue” at the beginning of this unit in 3:18 recalls the noun for love in the question of “how does the love [ἀγάπη] of God remain in him” at the conclusion of the preceding unit in 3:17. These successive references to love serve as the transitional terms linking the seventh unit (3:13–17) to the eighth unit (3:18–24).

An A-B-C-B'-A' chiastic pattern secures the integrity and distinctness of this eighth unit (3:18–24). Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (3:18–19a) and the A' (3:23–24) elements of this chiasm: the only occurrences in this unit of the verb for love—ἀγαπῶμεν in 3:18, 23, as well as of the similar expressions “in this we will know” (ἐν τούτῳ γνωσόμεθα) in 3:19a and “in this we know” (ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν) in 3:24. The only occurrences in 1 John of the prepositional phrase “before him”—ἐμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ in 3:19b and ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ in 3:22, of “our heart”—καρδίαν ἡμῶν in 3:19b, ἡμῶν ἢ καρδία as well as καρδίας ἡμῶν in 3:20a, and καρδία ἡμῶν in 3:21, of the verb “condemn”—καταγινώσκει in 3:20a, 21, and in this unit of the term “God”—θεός in 3:20a and θεόν in 3:21—determine the parallelism between the B (3:19b–20a) and B' (3:21–22) elements of this chiasm. Finally, the unparalleled central and pivotal C (3:20b) element contains the only occurrence in 1 John of the expression “knows all things” (γινώσκει πάντα).

9. *In This You Know the Spirit of God (4:1–6)*

THE ONE KNOWING GOD HEARS US

A ⁴¹Beloved, do not believe every *spirit* [πνεύματι] but test whether the spirits [πνεύματα] are from God [ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ], because many false prophets have gone out into the world. ²In this [τούτῳ] you know [γινώσκετε] the Spirit [πνεῦμα] of God.

Every spirit [πνεῦμα] that confesses Jesus Christ as having come in flesh is from God [ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ], ^{3a}but every spirit [πνεῦμα] that does not confess Jesus is not from God [ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ]. ^{3b}And this [τοῦτό] is that of the antichrist, which you have heard [ἀκηκόατε] that he is coming,

B ^{3c}but now is already in the world [ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ].

C ^{4a}You are from God, little children, and you have conquered them,

B' ^{4b}because the one in you is greater than the one in the world [ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ].

A' ⁵They are from the world, on account of this [τούτο] from the world they speak and the world hears [ἀκούει] them. ⁶We are from God [ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ], the one knowing [γινώσκων] God hears [ἀκούει] us, whoever is not *from God* [ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ] does not hear [ἀκούει] us. From this [τούτου] we know [γινώσκομεν] the Spirit [πνεῦμα] of truth and the spirit [πνεῦμα] of deceit.

The command “do not believe every spirit [πνεύματι]” at the beginning of this unit in 4:1 recalls the reference to “the Spirit [πνεύματος] which he gave to us” at the conclusion of the preceding unit in 3:24. These successive occurrences of the word for “spirit” serve as the transitional terms linking the eighth unit (3:18–24) to the ninth unit (4:1–6).

An A-B-C-B'-A' chiasmic pattern secures the integrity and distinctness of this ninth unit (4:1–6). Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (4:1–3a) and the A' (4:5–6) elements of this chiasm: the only occurrences in this unit of the word for “spirit”—πνεύματι and πνεύματα in 4:1, πνεῦμα in 4:2 (2x), 3a, 6 (2x); of the phrase “from God” (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ) in 4:1, 2, 3a, 6 (2x); of the demonstrative pronoun “this”—τούτω in 4:2, τοῦτό in 4:3b, 5, and τούτου in 4:6; of the verb “know”—γινώσκετε in 4:2, γινώσκων and γινώσκομεν in 4:6; and of the verb “hear”—ἀκηκόατε in 4:3b and ἀκούει in 4:5, 6 (2x). The only occurrences in this unit of the phrase “in the world” (ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ) in 4:3c, 4b determine the parallelism between the B (4:3b) and B' (4:4b) elements of this chiasm. Finally, the unparalleled central and pivotal C (4:4a) element contains the only occurrences in this unit of the noun “little children” (τεκνία) and the verb “you have conquered” (νενικήκατε).

10. *God Has Sent His Son so that We
Might Live through Him (4:7–12)*

IF WE LOVE ONE ANOTHER, GOD REMAINS IN US
AND HIS LOVE IS PERFECTED IN US

A ⁷Beloved [Ἀγαπητοί], let us love one another [ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους], because love is *from God*, and everyone who loves from God has been begotten and knows God. ⁸The one not loving does not know God, because God is love.

B ^{9a}In this [ἐν τούτῳ] the love of God was manifested in us, because his Son [υἶόν αὐτοῦ], the unique one, God has sent [ἀπέσταλκεν] into the world

C ^{9b}so that we might live through him.

B' ¹⁰In this [ἐν τούτῳ] is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent [ἀπέστειλεν] his Son [υἶόν αὐτοῦ] as expiation for our sins.

A' ¹¹Beloved [Ἀγαπητοί], if God so loved us, then we ourselves ought to love one another [ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν]. ¹²No one has ever observed God. If we love one another [ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους], God *remains* in us and his love is perfected in us.

The phrase “from God” (ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ) at the beginning of this unit in 4:7 recalls the same phrase at the conclusion of the preceding unit in 4:6. These successive occurrences of the identical phrase “from God” serve as the transitional terms linking the ninth unit (4:1–6) to the tenth unit (4:7–12).

An A-B-C-B'-A' chiasmic pattern secures the integrity and distinctness of this tenth unit (4:7–12). Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (4:7–8) and the A' (4:11–12) elements of this chiasm: the only occurrences in this unit of the address “beloved” (Ἀγαπητοί) in 4:7, 11; and of the exhortation to “love one another”—ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους in 4:7, 12 as well as ἀλλήλους ἀγαπᾶν in 4:11. The only occurrences in this unit of the phrase “in this” (ἐν τούτῳ), of “his Son” (υἶόν αὐτοῦ) in 4:9a, 10, and of the verb “send”—ἀπέσταλκεν in 4:9a as well as ἀπέστειλεν in 4:10—determine the parallelism between the B (4:9a) and B' (4:10) elements of this chiasm. Finally, the unparalleled

central and pivotal C (4:9b) element contains the only occurrence in 1 John of the verb “live”—“so that we might live [ζήσωμεν] through him.”

11. *Just as That One Is so We Are in This World (4:13–5:2)*

THE ONE LOVING GOD SHOULD LOVE
ALSO HIS BROTHER

- A ¹³In this we know [Ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν] that in him we *remain* and he in us, because he has given us from his Spirit. ¹⁴And we ourselves have observed and testify that the Father sent the Son as savior of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God [θεοῦ], God [θεός] in him remains and he in God [θεῶ]. ¹⁶And we ourselves have known and believed [πεπιστεύκαμεν] the love which God [θεός] has in us. God [θεός] is love, and the one remaining in love in God [θεῶ] remains and God [θεός] in him remains.
- B ¹⁷In this has love been perfected [τετελειώται] with us, so that we may have confidence on the day of the judgment, because just as that one is so we ourselves are in this world. ^{18a}There is no fear [φόβος] in love but perfect [τελεία] love drives out fear [φόβον],
- B' ^{18b}because fear [φόβος] has to do with punishment, and one fearing [φοβούμενος] has not been perfected [τετελειώται] in love.
- A' ¹⁹We ourselves love, because he first loved us. ²⁰If anyone says, “I love God [θεόν],” but hates his brother, he is a liar. For the one not loving his brother whom he has seen, is not able to love God [θεόν] whom he has not seen. ²¹And this commandment we have from him, that the one loving God [θεόν] should love also his brother. ^{5:1}Everyone who believes [πιστεύων] that Jesus is the Christ, from God [θεοῦ] has been begotten, and everyone who loves the one begetting loves also the one begotten from him. ²In this we know [ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν] that we love the children of God [θεοῦ], whenever we *love God* [θεόν] and do his commandments.

“In him [God] we remain [μένομεν]” at the beginning of this unit in 4:13 recalls “God remains [μένει] in us” at the conclusion of the preceding

unit in 4:12. These successive occurrences of the verb “remain” serve as the transitional terms linking the tenth unit (4:7–12) to the eleventh unit (4:13–5:2).

An A-B-B'-A' chiastic pattern secures the integrity and distinctness of this eleventh unit (4:13–5:2). Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (4:13–16) and the A' (4:19–5:2) elements of this chiasm: the only occurrences in this unit of the expression “in this we know” (ἐν τούτῳ γινώσκομεν) in 4:13 and 5:2; of “God”—θεοῦ in 4:15 and 5:1, θεός in 4:15, 16 (thrice), θεῶν in 4:15, 16, and θεόν in 4:20 (2x), 21 and 5:2; and the verb “believe”—πεπιστεύκαμεν in 4:16 and πιστεύων in 5:1. The only occurrences in this unit of expressions for “perfect”—“in this has love been perfected [τετελείωται]” in 4:17 as well as “perfect [τελεία] love” in 4:18a and “has not been perfected [τετελείωται] in love” in 4:18b—and in 1 John of the noun and verb for fear—φόβος in 4:18a, 18b, φόβον in 4:18a, and φοβούμενος in 4:18b—determine the parallelism between the B (4:17–18a) and the B' (4:18b) elements at the pivotal center of this chiastic unit.

*12. This Is the Love of God that We
Keep His Commandments (5:3–12)*

LIFE ETERNAL GOD HAS GIVEN TO US,
AND THIS LIFE IS IN HIS SON

- A ³For this [αὕτη] is the *love of God* [θεοῦ], that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not burdensome, ⁴because everyone begotten from God [θεοῦ] conquers the world. And this [αὕτη] is the conquering power that conquers the world—our faith [πίστις]. ⁵Who is the one conquering the world except the one believing [πιστεύων] that Jesus is the Son [υἱός] of God [θεοῦ]? ^{6a}This is the one who came through water [ὑδατος] and blood [αἵματος], Jesus Christ, not in the water [ὑδατι] only but in the water [ὑδατι] and in the blood [αἵματι].
- B ^{6b}And the Spirit is [τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν] the one who testifies,
- B' ^{6c}because the Spirit is [τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν] the truth.
- A' ⁷For three are they who are testifying, ⁸the Spirit and the water [ὑδωρ] and the blood [αἷμα], and the three are as the one. ⁹If we

receive the testimony of human beings, the testimony of God [θεοῦ] is greater, because this [αὕτη] is the testimony of God [θεοῦ] that he has testified concerning his Son [υἱοῦ].¹⁰ The one believing [πιστεύων] in the Son [υἱόν] of God [θεοῦ] has the testimony in himself, the one not believing [πιστεύων] God [θεῶ] has made him a liar, because he has not believed [πεπίστευκεν] in the testimony which God [θεός] has testified concerning his Son [υἱοῦ].¹¹ And this [αὕτη] is the testimony, that life eternal God [θεός] has given us, and this [αὕτη] life is in his Son [υἱῶ].¹² The one having the Son [υἱόν] has the life. The one not having the Son [υἱόν] of God [θεοῦ] does not have the *life*.

The phrase “love of God” (ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ) at the beginning of this unit in 5:3 recalls “whenever we love God [τὸν θεὸν ἀγαπῶμεν]” at the conclusion of the preceding unit in 5:2. These successive occurrences of expressions for the love of God serve as the transitional terms linking the eleventh unit (4:13–5:2) to the twelfth unit (5:3–12).

An A-B-B'-A' chiasmic pattern secures the integrity and distinctness of this twelfth unit (5:3–12). Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (5:3–6a) and the A' (5:7–12) elements of this chiasm: the only occurrences in this unit of the demonstrative nominative feminine singular pronoun “this” (αὕτη) in 5:3, 4, 9, 11 (2x); of “God”—θεοῦ in 5:3, 4, 5, 9 (2x), 10, 12, θεῶ in 5:10, and θεός in 5:10, 11; of expressions for faith/believing—the noun “faith” (πίστις) in 5:4, the verb “believing” (πιστεύων) in 5:5, 10 (2x), and the verb “believed” (πεπίστευκεν) in 5:10; of “Son”—υἱός in 5:5, υἱοῦ in 5:9, 10, υἱόν in 5:10, 12 (2x), and υἱῶ in 5:11; in 1 John of “water”—ὕδατος in 5:6a, ὕδατι in 5:6a (2x), and ὕδωρ in 5:8; and in this unit of “blood”—αἵματος as well as αἷματι in 5:6a and αἷμα in 5:8. The only occurrences in 1 John of “the Spirit is” (τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν) in 5:6b, 6c determine the parallelism between the B (5:6b) and B' (5:6c) elements at the pivotal center of this chiasmic unit.

13. All Unrighteousness Is Sin (5:13–21)

GUARD YOURSELVES FROM THE IDOLS

A¹³ These things I have written to you so that you may know that [εἰδῆτε ὅτι] you have *life* [ζωήν] eternal [αἰώνιον], you who believe in the name of the Son of God [υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ].¹⁴ And this is the confidence which we have with him that if we ask

anything according to his will, he hears us. ¹⁵And if we know that [οἶδαμεν ὅτι] he hears us in regard to whatever we ask, we know that [οἶδαμεν ὅτι] we have the requests which we asked from [ἀπ’] him.

B ^{16abc}If anyone sees his brother sinning a sin [ἁμαρτίαν] not resulting in death [πρὸς θάνατον], he should ask and he will give to him life, to those sinning not resulting in death [πρὸς θάνατον].

B’ ^{16de}There is a sin resulting in death [πρὸς θάνατον]. Not concerning that do I say that he should request. ¹⁷All unrighteousness is sin [ἁμαρτία], but there is a sin [ἁμαρτία] not resulting in death [πρὸς θάνατον].

A’ ¹⁸We know that [Οἶδαμεν ὅτι] everyone who has been begotten from God does not sin, but the one begotten from God, he keeps him, and the evil one does not touch him. ¹⁹We know that [οἶδαμεν ὅτι] we are from God but the whole world lies in the evil one. ²⁰And we know that [οἶδαμεν ὅτι] the Son of God [υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ] has come and has given us understanding so that we might know the true one, and we are in the true one, in his Son Jesus Christ. This one is the true God and life eternal [ζωὴ αἰώνιος].
²¹Little children, guard yourselves from [ἀπό] the idols.

The word “life” in the expression “you have life [ζωήν] eternal” at the beginning of this unit in 5:13 recalls the same word in the expression “does not have the life [ζωήν]” at the conclusion of the preceding unit in 5:12. These successive references to eternal life serve as the transitional terms linking the twelfth unit (5:3–12) to the thirteenth and final unit (5:13–21).

An A-B-B’-A’ chiasmic pattern secures the integrity and distinctness of this thirteenth unit (5:13–21). Several linguistic occurrences constitute the parallelism between the A (5:13–15) and the A’ (5:18–21) elements of this chiasm: the only occurrences in this unit of the expression “know that”—εἰδῆτε ὅτι in 5:13 and οἶδαμεν ὅτι in 5:15, 18, 19, 20; of “eternal life”—ζωήν . . . αἰώνιον in 5:13 and ζωὴ αἰώνιος in 5:20; of the “Son of God”—υἱοῦ τοῦ θεοῦ in 5:13 and υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ in 5:20; and of the preposition “from” (ἀπό) in 5:15, 21. The only occurrences in this unit of “sin”—ἁμαρτίαν in 5:16a and ἁμαρτία in 5:17 (2x)—and “resulting in death” (πρὸς θάνατον) in 5:16a, 16c 16d, 17—determine the parallelism between the B (5:16abc) and the B’ (5:16de–17) elements at the pivotal center of this chiasmic unit.

The Macrochiastic Structure of 1 John

Having illustrated the sequence of the various microchiastic structures operative in the thirteen distinct units of 1 John, I will now demonstrate how these thirteen units form an A-B-C-D-E-F-G-F'-E'-D'-C'-B'-A' macrochiastic structure unifying and organizing the entire document.

A He Will Cleanse Us from *All Unrighteousness* (1:1–10)

A' *All Unrighteousness Is Sin* (5:13–21)

The only occurrences in 1 John of the expression “all unrighteousness” indicate the parallelism between the opening A unit (1:1–10) and the closing A' unit (5:13–21) within the macrochiastic structure of 1 John. The statement that “all unrighteousness [πᾶσα ἀδικία] is sin” (5:17) recalls that if we confess our sins, Jesus “will cleanse us from all unrighteousness [πάσης ἀδικίας]” (1:9).

B *If We Keep His Commandments the Love of God Has Been Perfected* (2:1–14)

B' *This Is the Love of God that We Keep His Commandments* (5:3–12)

The first and last occurrences in 1 John of the expressions “we keep his commandments” and “the love of God” provide the chiastic parallels between the B (2:1–14) and the B' (5:3–12) units. “In this we know that we have known him [Jesus Christ], if we keep his commandments [ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν]” (2:3) as well as “whoever keeps his word, truly in this one the love of God [ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ] has been perfected” (2:5) occur in the B unit. And “for this is the love of God [ἡ ἀγάπη τοῦ θεοῦ], that we keep his commandments [ἐντολὰς αὐτοῦ τηρῶμεν]” (5:3) occurs in the B' unit.

C Do Not Love the Things *in the World* (2:15–17)

C' Just as That One Is so We Are *in This World* (4:13–5:2)

The first and last occurrences in 1 John of the phrase “in the/this world” provide the chiastic parallels between the C (2:15–17) and the C' (4:13–5:2) units. “The things in the world [ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ]” (2:15) as well as “because all that is in the world [ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ]” (2:16) occur in the C

unit. And “we are in this world [ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ τούτῳ]” (4:17) occurs in the C' unit.

D The One Confessing *the Son* Also Has the Father (2:18–27)

D' God Has Sent *His Son* so that We Might Live through Him (4:7–12)

The first and last occurrences in 1 John of the term “the/his Son” in the accusative case in reference to Jesus as the Son of God provide the chiasmic parallels between the D (2:18–27) and the D' (4:7–12) units. The phrase “the Son [τὸν υἱόν]” (2:22, 23 [2x]) occurs in the D unit and “his Son [τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ]” (4:9, 10) in the D' unit.

E *You Know* Whoever Does Righteousness Has Been Begotten from Him (2:28–3:6)

E' In This *You Know* the Spirit of God (4:1–6)

The only occurrences in 1 John of the second person plural indicative active verb “you know” provide the chiasmic parallels between the E (2:28–3:6) and the E' (4:1–6) units. “You know [γινώσκετε] that also everyone who does righteousness has been begotten from him” (2:29) occurs in the B unit. And “in this you know [γινώσκετε] the Spirit of God” (4:2) occurs in the B' unit.

F *We Should Love One Another* (3:7–12)

F' We Should Believe and *We Should Love One Another* (3:18–24)

The first two occurrences in 1 John of the exhortation “we should love one another [ἀγαπῶμεν ἀλλήλους]” (3:11, 23) provide the chiasmic parallels between the F (3:7–12) and the F' (3:18–24) units.

G We Ought To Lay Down Our Lives for the Brothers (3:13–17)

The G unit (3:13–17) functions as the unparalleled central and pivotal unit within the macrochiasmic structure of 1 John. This unit contains the statements that “we know that we have moved from death to life, because we love the brothers” (3:14) and “in this we have known love, that that one for us laid down his life; so we ourselves ought for the brothers to lay down our lives” (3:16). These unique statements at the center of 1 John provide the pivot from the F (3:7–12) to the F' (3:18–24) units for the exhortations that “we should love one another” (3:11, 23).

Outline of the Macrochiastic Structure of 1 John

- A 1:1–10: He Will Cleanse Us from *All Unrighteousness*
- B 2:1–14: If *We Keep His Commandments the Love of God Has Been Perfected*
- C 2:15–17: Do Not Love the Things *in the World*
- D 2:18–27: The One Confessing *the Son* Also Has the Father
- E 2:28–3:6: *You Know* Whoever Does Righteousness Has Been Begotten from Him
- F 3:7–12: *We Should Love One Another*
- G 3:13–17: We Ought To Lay Down Our Lives for the Brothers
- F' 3:18–24: We Should Believe and *We Should Love One Another*
- E' 4:1–6: In This *You Know* the Spirit of God
- D' 4:7–12: God Has Sent *His Son* so that We Might Live through Him
- C' 4:13–5:2: Just as That One Is so We Are *in This World*
- B' 5:3–12: This Is *the Love of God* that *We Keep His Commandments*
- A' 5:13–21: *All Unrighteousness* Is Sin

Preliminary Indications of Worship as the Main Theme of 1–3 John

As mentioned above, the subtitle chosen for this study, *Worship by Loving God and One Another to Live Eternally*, articulates what I am proposing as the main theme and overall concern of 1–3 John. In this section I will present an introductory overview of the indications that worship, understood in its most comprehensive and dynamic sense as including not only

liturgical but ethical worship, serves as the main theme that organizes and unifies the whole of 1-3 John.

First of all, like the other epistolary literature in the New Testament, 1-3 John would have been performed in a setting of communal worship, heard by their audience in the order 3-2-1 John.¹⁰ In 3 John the implied author, “the elder,” the leader of the main Johannine community probably in Ephesus, addresses Gaius, evidently a leading member in one of the outlying churches within the Johannine network (1:1). Although addressed personally to Gaius, 3 John is nevertheless a communal letter meant to be heard by his entire local community assembled for worship. It concerns Gaius’ relationship to his fellow believers within the Johannine community. After the elder affirms Gaius for the hospitality he has and will continue to extend to missionary “brothers,” fellow believers (1:3-6), he draws his attention to “something I have written to the church” (1:9a), an apparent reference to the other two letters, 1-2 John.¹¹ The elder is implicitly authorizing Gaius to oversee and facilitate the public performance of 1 John in the sister church in which he is a leader and coworker of the elder (3 John 1:8).¹²

The elder, however, alerts Gaius of a possible hindrance to a favorable reception of 1 John by the church due to a certain Diotrephes, who does not properly receive and thus acknowledge the authority of the elder (3 John 1:9b). Not only does Diotrephes disparage the elder, but he does not properly receive or acknowledge the brothers (1:10) whom Gaius has assisted as a coworker of the elder (1:3-8). After the warning regarding Diotrephes, the elder recommends to Gaius a certain Demetrius, a universally attested individual either already in the sister church of Gaius or sent to it by the elder along with 1-3 John.¹³ The implication is that Gaius ought to rely upon Demetrius to assist him in the implementation of the public performance of 1 John, the hortatory sermon written by the elder for the entire Johannine community, as part of a worship service in this

10. Heil, *Letters of Paul*; Heil, *Worship*; Heil, *James*; Heil, *1 Peter, 2 Peter, and Jude*; Heil, *Book of Revelation*.

11. Lorencin, “Hospitality,” 165-74.

12. “The epistolary aorist (‘written’) seems not to refer to a previous communication but to the exhortation that the elder now wants read in the assembly—1 John” (Johnson, *Writings*, 498-99).

13. According to Marulli (“Letter,” 203-23), Demetrius is not necessarily a letter bearer and 3 John is not a letter of recommendation but a rhetorical attempt to restore the elder’s honor discredited by Diotrephes. But these are not necessarily mutually exclusive features of 3 John. See also Campbell, “Honor,” 321-41.

local sister church. The communal nature of 3 John is confirmed at its conclusion when the elder directs Gaius to salute the friends by name in the sister church (1:15).

The elder addresses 2 John to “an elect lady and her children” (1:1). This is an apparent reference to the church, personified as a “lady,” in which Gaius is a leader and whose “sister” is the church of the elder (1:13). This letter of 2 John is to function as an introductory cover letter for the performance of 1 John as an epistolary hortatory sermon to be heard in a context of worship. In 2 John the elder briefly introduces the topic of the commandment that we should love one another (1:4–6), which will be more fully developed in 1 John (2:3–4, 7–8; 3:22–24; 4:21; 5:2–3). In 2 John the elder directs his sister church not to receive or greet anyone who does not bring to them the teaching that implicitly includes the commandment that we should love one another (1:10). This underscores that 1 John, sent by the elder to the members of his sister church, does indeed bring them this teaching and thus prepares them to favorably receive it.

Second, acts of worship are performed within 1–3 John. Regarding Gaius, the addressee of 3 John, the elder performs a prayer of petition implicitly directed to God, “I pray [εὐχομαί] that you are prospering and in good health” (1:2),¹⁴ and at the conclusion of the letter pronounces a prayerful greeting—“Peace to you” (1:15). At the beginning of 2 John the elder pronounces an epistolary greeting that functions as a petitionary prayer for the entire community—“Grace, mercy, and peace will be with us from God the Father and from Jesus Christ the Son of the Father in truth and love” (1:3).

An emphatic communal testimony regarding eternal life initiates 1 John: “What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked upon and our hands have touched concerning the word of the life—and the life was manifested and we have seen and testified and declared to you the life eternal which was with the Father and manifested to us” (1:1–2). This authoritative testimony functions as a confession that amounts to an act of worship. It draws the audience into a fellowship of communal worship—“what we have seen and heard, we declare also to you, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship

14. Although God is not explicitly mentioned, this can be considered a prayer rather than simply a wish, since “Gott gewährt Wohlergehen im umfassenden Sinn an Leib and Seele und in der Wahrheit” (Schnelle, *Johannesbriefe*, 36). “[I]n view of the content of 3 John as a whole, the verb [εὐχομαί] probably heralds the beginning of an actual prayer” (Smalley, *3 John*, 331).

is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ” (1:3). That 1 John is concerned with true worship is confirmed by the warning against false worship at its conclusion—“guard yourselves from the idols” (5:21).

And third, what the Gospel of John declares about true worship provides the background for additional preliminary indications of the prevalent concern for the dynamics of worship in 1–3 John. Regarding the controversy between Jews and Samaritans concerning the proper location for true worship in the Gospel of John, Jesus replied that “an hour is coming and now is, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth, for indeed the Father seeks such as those who worship him. God is Spirit, and those who worship him must worship in Spirit and truth” (John 4:23–24). To worship “in Spirit and truth” is to worship “in the Spirit of truth” that Jesus promised to send his disciples after his death and resurrection (14:17; 15:26; 16:13) as the advocate, the holy Spirit (14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7), who will represent him and guide them in matters regarding the truth. Since there is a sense in which Jesus himself personifies the truth (14:6), to worship in Spirit and truth or in the Spirit of truth is ultimately to worship in very close union with Jesus.¹⁵

Central to the “truth” in John is the life eternal that came to be through Jesus Christ as the Word full of the divine gift of truth that came through him (1:4, 14, 17). In accord with this truth, “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, so that everyone who believes in him might not perish but might have life eternal” (3:16). Included in this truth is the divine commandment that is life eternal (12:50), the commandment that gives life eternal to those who love one another as Jesus loved his disciples (13:34; 15:12) by laying down his life for them in his death on the cross (15:13). Eternal life is to know the only true God and the Jesus Christ (17:3) who loved by laying down his life so that believers might have eternal life. Believers may already live eternally, then, by practicing the commandment included in the truth, the commandment to love God, and thus worship God in an ethical way, by loving one another. Practicing this commandment of the truth is what it means

15. “Jesus reveals to the Samaritan woman the need to ‘worship the Father in spirit and truth’ (or ‘Spirit of truth,’ 4:23). . . . The friends of Jesus offer worship and adoration to the Father, through Jesus, as their part of the covenant, a worship that produces in disciples life, growth, and fruit” (Lee, “Friendship,” 70–71). See also Thettayil, *In Spirit and Truth*, 106–65; Köstenberger, *Theology*, 429–30.

to worship the Father in Spirit and truth or in the Spirit of truth, and thereby experience life eternal through loving one another.¹⁶

What it means to be a true worshiper who worships God in Spirit and truth by loving one another and thereby living eternally is further developed in 1–3 John. The vocabulary of “truth/Spirit of truth,” “life (eternal),” and the “commandment that we should love one another” occurs throughout 1–3 John. In 3 John “truth” (ἀλήθεια) occurs six times (1:1, 3 [2x], 4, 8, 12), in 2 John five times (1:1 [2x], 2, 3, 4), and in 1 John nine times (1:6, 8; 2:4, 21 [2x]; 3:18, 19; 4:6; 5:6). In 1 John 4:6 is a reference to “the Spirit of truth [τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας]” (cf. John 14:17; 15:26; 16:13), and in 1 John 5:6 is a statement that “the Spirit is the truth” (τὸ πνεῦμά ἐστιν ἡ ἀλήθεια). Regarding the commandment that we should love one another, see 2 John 1:5; 1 John 2:10; 3:10–11, 14, 18, 23; 4:7, 11–12, 19–21; 5:1–2; cf. John 13:34; 15:12, 17.

The topic of eternal life is introduced at the very beginning of 1 John (1:1–2) and remains a primary theme throughout its discourse (2:25; 3:14–15; 5:11–13, 16), climaxing with a worshipful communal confession: “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding so that we might know the true one, and we are in the true one, in his Son Jesus Christ. This one is the true God and life eternal” (5:20). The topic of eternal life thus forms a literary inclusion framing the entire hortatory sermon that is 1 John. In addition and most noteworthy, however, are the statements in the central and pivotal unit of the macrochiastic structure of 1 John (3:13–17): “We know that we have moved from death to life, because we love the brothers” (3:14); and “in this we have known love, that that one for us laid down his life; so we ourselves ought for the brothers to lay down our lives” (3:16; cf. John 15:12–13).

These preliminary indications that “worship by loving God and one another to live eternally” expresses the main theme and concern of 1–3 John will be confirmed by the remainder of my exegetical, audience-oriented investigation into the chiastic structures of 1–3 John in the chapters to follow.

16. Moloney, *Love*, 192–203; Morgan-Wynne, *Cross*, 241–53.

Summary

1. There are thirteen distinct units in 1 John with each exhibiting its own microchiastic structure. Both 2 and 3 John also exhibit chiastic structures.
2. The thirteen units comprising 1 John operate as a macrochiastic structure with six pairs of parallel units and with the pivot of the entire macrochiastic structure occurring as the unparalleled central G unit in 3:13-17.
3. That 1-3 John was heard by their audience in a setting of worship, contain epistolary acts of worship, and develop the theme of worshiping God in Spirit and truth or in the Spirit of truth from the Gospel of John provide preliminary indications for worship, both liturgical and ethical, as their main organizing and unifying theme. More specifically, the subtitle, *Worship by Loving God and One Another to Live Eternally*, expresses the central and main concern of 1-3 John.