

Living in the Light (Fourth Secret)

Water of Life: Dr. John Niemelä | Guide to Zane Hodges, *Six Secrets of the Christian Life* | 2 Apr 2015

1. Where is the purpose statement of John's Gospel? Near the beginning? the middle? the end?
30 And truly Jesus did many other **signs** [sēmeia] in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but **these signs** are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:30-31 NKJ)

These [tauta] in 20:31 is a neuter form, pointing to a neuter word in context: **signs**.

2. Most ministers and seminary professors assume that 1 John's purpose is **also** late in 1 John (5:13):

{ } ? **These things I have written to you** who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue* to believe in the name of the Son of God.¹

By contrast with John 20:30-31, there is no neuter word to which *these things* [tauta] can point in 1 John 5:13. In cases like 1 John 5:13, *these things* [tauta] must point to: (1) a phrase, (2) a sentence, (3) a paragraph, (4) a section, or (5) the whole book. Most everyone accepts view 5 for 1 John 5:13, but view 3 for 1:4; 2:1; 2:26. I argue that (since view 3 is right for 1:4; 2:1, and 2:26) it is also right for 5:13.

Their assumption that 5:13 is the purpose statement of 1 John leads them to conclude (wrongly) that *these things* refers to the entire book of 1 John. However, similar statements appear elsewhere in the book. In each case, *these things* refers to paragraph that precedes the verse with the words *these things*:

- A. And **these things** [1:1-3] **we write to you** that your joy may be full. (1:4)
These things refers to the prior paragraph, 1:1-3: view 3.
- B. My little children, **these things** [1:5-10] **I write to you**, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. (2:1)
These things refers to the prior paragraph, 1:1-3: view 3.
- C. **These things** [2:18-24] **I have written to you** concerning those who *try to* deceive you. (2:26)
Clearly, the whole book is not about the deceivers. "These things" refers to 2:18-24 here.
These things refers to the prior paragraph, 1:1-3: view 3.
- D. **These things** [5:6-12] **I have written to you** who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God. (5:13)
These things refers to the prior paragraph, 1:1-3: view 3.
It is important to know that 5:6-12, not the whole book is the referent of *these things* here.

¹ Excursus: many Bibles incorrectly omit the final (non-underlined) part of 5:13. It belongs.

3. How big a deal is the referent of *these things* in 5:13?

A. Taking the referent of *these things* as the whole book:

These things [the whole book] **I have written to you** who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life...

Those holding such a view say things like: “If you always obey the whole book of 1 John, you can know that you have everlasting life. If you do not consistently obey, you might not have everlasting life, even if you thought that you believed in Jesus.”

B. Taking the referent of *these things* as 1 John 5:6-12:

These things

⁶ This is He who came by water and blood— Jesus Christ; not only by water, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit who bears witness, because the Spirit is truth. ⁷ For there are three that bear witness in heaven:² ⁸ the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree as one. ⁹ If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. ¹⁰ He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. ¹¹ And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹² He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God.

John wrote 1 John 5:6-12 to remind his original readers [who were pastors and other church leaders] to prevent them from losing their certainty that they possess everlasting life.³ I believe that the readers of 1 John were (1) pastors and other church leaders, who (2) were still rock-solid on their certainty that they possessed everlasting life, but ministered (3) to people who may have caved-in. Of course, John wanted to be sure (4) that none of these church leaders would cave-in.

4. The Message of 1 John 1:1-2:2

A. The Message of 1 John 1:1-4

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the **word of life** — ² the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us — ³ that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And **these things** **we write to you** that **our** joy may be full.

Arrows point to two important words: *word* should not be capitalized. It should be *our*, not *your*. Underlined words are all neuter, speaking about things—not about Jesus Christ. This passage uses the EM-dash twice: — Paired EM-dashes are like parentheses (). So, we need to determine to what each underlined “that which” and “which” refer: To do that, we will temporarily remove verse 2, which is between the EM-dashes.

² The King James and New King James include phrases in 5:7b and 5:8a that do not belong.
³ My article— “Initial Assurance or Reassurance (1 John 5:13)— appeared in *Grace in Focus* for May-June 2014. The link follows: <http://www.faithalone.org/magazine/y2014/Initial-assurance-or-reassurance.pdf>

¹ That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, **concerning the message of life**-----
³ that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. ⁴ And these things we write to you that **our** joy may be full.

What we have now has proper form (despite removing verse 2), but we do not know yet what the referent is for "that which" or "which." This proves, though, that verse 2 is a parenthesis.

As we look at verse 2, it will clarify the uses of "that which" and "which."

² the **life** was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us.

The referent of each "that which" or "which" is:

"**concerning the message of life**— [namely] ² the **life** was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us."

¹ That which [**message of life**] was from the beginning, which [**message of life**] we have heard, which [**message of life**] we have seen with our eyes, which [**message of life**] we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the **word of life**---
³ that which [**message of life**] we have seen and heard we declare to you, so that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

⁴ And **these things** **we write to you** that **our** joy may be full.

Note that John says in verse 3 that he wants the readers to have fellowship with us (the apostles) and that our (the apostles') fellowship is with the Father and with the Son.

Thus, fellowship is BOTH horizontal and vertical.

For believers to have fellowship both vertically and horizontally brought joy to the apostles (1:4).

My position is that no apostles exist today, but I believe that it is possible still today for believers to have fellowship both vertically (with God) and horizontally (with believers walking in the light).

1 John 1:5–2:2 will clarify how vertical and horizontal fellowship can be simultaneously attained.

Having fellowship with people cannot be at the expense of having fellowship with God.

How can believers (all of whom have the taint of sin) have fellowship with a holy God?

