

5 Greek Words in 1 John

Parrhsia – The original meaning of this word is ‘freedom of speech’. If you were a citizen in a Greek city-state you had the right to speak out freely at a public assembly. The word came to mean frankness or outspokenness, and then confidence and boldness. In the start of this passage John explains his purpose for believers: that they lead lives that please the Lord and so be confident when Christ appears. At the beginning of this letter the word arxhs was used which brought our minds back to creation. After the fall Adam and Eve were embarrassed and hid when God came to them in the garden because of their sin. In contrast believers should live righteous lives so that when Christ appears they may be confident and not need to hide or be embarrassed.

Paurosia – In New Testament times parousia was used to describe the arrival of an important person such as a governor, king or emperor. Such a coming would have been a significant occasion and costly and elaborate preparations would have been made. Similarly Christians need to be ready for Christ’s parousia. The coming of Christ is mentioned several times. We need to remain in God so that we will not be ashamed at his coming. Also, we are told that when he appears we will be like him for we shall see him as he is. Thus believers should live in hope of this great event.

Tekna – This word means children and is used to describe the believers as children of God. The believers may have been ignored and misunderstood by the world, but this is because they are children of God. They have a very special identity. Teknia, the diminutive of Tekna, is used by John to speak to the believers. This means ‘little children’. The believers are in a sense his little children and he is concerned for their welfare. He is especially concerned that they lead lives that please the Lord and that they don’t live in ignorance of the great things that God has done for them.

Idete – This means behold or see. Some amazing things are being talked about: being children of God, one day being like Christ, being dearly loved by God, being free from sin. John reminds us not to let these things go over our heads and get used to super religious talk. Stand back and wonder – these are amazing things.

Pas – This word is used frequently and one of its key uses in this passage is that it makes things black and white: Everyone who has this hope purifies themselves; anyone who continues to sin has not seen him or known him; anyone born of God does not continue to sin. It is used to say how all Christians should behave: they should live righteous lives. There is no grey area. Also, John says that it is clearly seen from someone’s behaviour whether they are a child of God or of the devil.