

## **Bibles???**

### **The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority**

Amen and Amen

Turn your bibles with me to 1 John 1 –

By the grace of God, we finished out study through the gospel of John last Sunday morning – and now, we are moving on to 1,2,3 John – where we will be for the next couple of months.

Now –

Toward the end of John –

**[Jhn 20:30-31 NKJV] 30 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these 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.**

In other words – John seeks to bring the reader to faith in Jesus Christ.

“That you may believe”

But as we will see here in 1 John –

John will seek to confirm the reader in his faith.

And he will do this by going back to the fundamentals –

Who is God?

What does it mean to be a Christian?

And the importance of fellowship with God and fellowship with one another.

Let's pray...

According to church tradition – after Timothy left Ephesus,

John goes to Ephesus –

this is after the time he spent in Patmos – where he received his visions that came to be the Book of Revelation

And he lives his remaining years there – and this is where he writes his epistles –

Most biblical scholars seem to agree that these epistles/letters were probably the last written letters we have in the New Testament.

So, imagine the oldest apostle –

The last living apostle

The one who walked with Jesus and talked with Jesus.

The one who kept reminding us in his gospel account that – he was the one who Jesus loved.

The one who laid his head on Jesus' chest.

The one who witnessed His crucifixion.

The one who Jesus commissioned to take care of His mother

The one who ran to the tomb when he received news that Jesus had risen.

The one who saw Him ascend into heaven –

These are his final words – and these letters were circulated throughout the early church.

And the reason that John wrote these letters was because there were a lot of false teachings that had infiltrated the church –

False teachings about who God is?

False teachings about who Jesus is?

And false teachings about the Christian walk.

Now, what makes these letters different than some of the other letters we have in the New Testament is that they were not written to a specific congregation or group of people. (to the church in Rome, or to the church in Corinth, or the church in Philippi, or a group of Jewish believers like Hebrews)

There is no opening greeting.

John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit writes these letters and he gets straight to the point –

In fact, I know we call them letters – but when we look at them closely – the Holy Spirit inspired John to write them more like a sermon.

And so the best way to study this letter and read these letters and think about these letter is to approach these letter is it was specifically written to us individually.

To look at this letter – as our letter – written specifically to you and me.

**[1Jo 1:1-4 NKJV] 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—**

John opens his letter by reminding us that he is writing about things that he personally experienced.

John is telling us, “I was there”, “I touched Him”, “I saw Him heal people”, “I heard His announcements”

Remember, John was one of the three disciples that Jesus allowed special access to (Peter and James were the other two)

John was one of the three disciples that was there at Jesus’ transfiguration – he got to see Jesus in His glorified body.

John was there in the room when Jesus healed Jairus' daughter.

John was there hearing Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane

What John is telling us about is based on reality.

He has heard with his own ears, he has seen with his own eyes, and even touched Jesus.

There is no make-believe or fantasy here.

Yes, there is an element of faith required in the life of a believer.

We don't see Jesus now, and we don't always understand what God is doing.

But our faith is based on a truth.

God does not expect us to have blind faith –

Our faith is based on knowledge of God's nature and character, His promises in the Scriptures, and our personal experience walking with God every day.

Now, the bible teaches that the Lord Jesus has always existed.

He is eternal

He is immortal

So when John uses the phrase – that which was from the beginning – John is not referring to the beginning of Creation – like we find in Genesis 1

He is referring to that which existed prior to creation –

**[Jhn 1:1 NKJV] 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

Jesus in His own words – in the real Lord's prayer

**[Jhn 17:5 NKJV] 5 "And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.**

So what John is pointing out here in verse one is that Jesus is one Person with two natures.

A human nature – as John was able to see Him and feel Him and hear Him

And a divine nature –

He is both God and Man

Jesus walked the earth, died on a cross, and rose again, was fully a member of the human race with a fully functioning human nature (without sin).

At the same time, Jesus was fully God.

Who willingly humbled Himself and gave up His glory and the right to use His divine attributes apart from the direction of God the Father, but He never ceased to be God.

Why is this important –

It is important because – even in the first century, there were wrong teachings about the identity and the nature of Jesus.

The Gnostics were claiming that Jesus couldn't have become man – that He didn't have a real body - because they believed that everything in the material realm is inherently evil.

They were claiming that Jesus was a phantom – that He was an emanation from God – but not man.

One branch of Gnosticism claimed that Jesus appeared to have a body but didn't really have a body – and so, when He would walk, He would not leave footprints.

The problem with this teaching is that if we don't have a real Jesus – we can't experience real forgiveness of sin and we can't experience real fellowship with a real God.

John knows the implication of the accusation, "What if Jesus isn't real?"

I had you make a note of the phrase, "we have looked upon"

Earlier in the verse John said we have seen (Jesus) with our own eyes – and then he says, looked upon.

The word that is used here for looked upon is a word that means, to behold, to look at carefully and then consider completely.

It means to gaze intently for a prolonged period of time, or to study.

John is basically saying, “We had the opportunity to watch Jesus specifically and carefully, over a three-year period.

We studied Jesus

We gazed upon Him

To John, Christianity was not a secondhand experience.

Christianity was not a class or a course in theology.

It was to him a first hand experience.

He had a personal encounter with Jesus.

And that is his testimony / that is his eyewitness that he gives to us of the reality of who Jesus is.

So when people ask us – “How do we know that Jesus was real?”

We need to be able to say, eyewitness testimony has been given to us – a reliable account has been given to us - so that we may know the truth.

**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 expression, bear witness – means to testify.



And in order to be a witness – the witness needs to have three characteristics.

- They have to have a knowledge of the truth
- They have to be willing to tell the truth
- They have to have a reputation for honesty

And that is what John is doing here –

It is as if he is a witness in a trial

And he has his hand raised saying –

I swear to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth about Jesus.

Did Jesus ever exist?

John's answer – “yes and He has and will always exist”

That is what John is saying here in verse two –

At the end of verse one – the Word of life is referring to Jesus

John liked to refer to Jesus as the Word.

**[Jhn 1:14 NKJV] 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.**

Jesus existed before He came to the earth –

The Father sent the Son – and the Son was sent to reveal God and make fellowship possible.

And the is going to be John's argument.

Remember - fellowship is only going to be possible if God is willing to make it happen.

So John is going to tell the listeners of these letters

God loves you and wants to have fellowship with you and because He loves you and wants to have fellowship with you – God the Father prepared a plan to send the Son.

The Father sent the Son to reveal the Father.

To make fellowship possible.

Is this the only reason – no

John is going to bring up other reasons of why Jesus came.

**[1Jo 3:5 NKJV] 5 And you know that He was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him there is no sin.**

**[1Jo 3:8 NKJV] 8 He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil.**

**[1Jo 4:9 NKJV] 9 In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.**

So God the Father – sent His Son to us

So that we might have fellowship with Him

So that our sins would be taken away

So the He might destroy the works of the devil

And so that we might live through Him.

By the way, this is the same thing that Jesus spoke about when He made the announcement that He was the Good Shepherd.

**[Jhn 10:9-10 NKJV] 9 "I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have [it] more abundantly.**

Who is the recipient of this life?

The believer –

Now, later on John is going to write in his letter -

**[1Jo 5:11-12 NKJV] 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.**

The gift of eternal life God offers comes wrapped in a package called Jesus Christ.

If we are “in Christ”, meaning we’ve put our trust in Him, then we have eternal life.

If we haven’t put our trust in Christ, then we lack eternal 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.**

I had you make a note of the word fellowship here in verse three –

And the reason is that John uses the Greek word – koinonia –

And it is a word based on the word for “common” (koinos) and has the idea of describing what we have in common.

John is saying that as believers,

We have fellowship because we share a common Savior.

And because we share a common Savior, we share a common salvation.

And because we share a common salvation, we have a common forgiveness.

We have a common love.

We have a common hope.

We have a shared future.

This is the same thing that Jesus prayed for -

**[Jhn 17:20-21 NKJV] 20 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; 21 "that they all may be one, as You, Father, [are] in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.**

John is saying here that to be in relationship with God through faith in Christ means to be in a new relationship with other believers

And if we are in fellowship with God, then we will also be in fellowship with them!

Church - we cannot separate these two things – to be a believer of Christ means to be a vital part of the Body of Christ!

To be committed to God means to be committed to His people

To be in fellowship with the Lord means we will be in fellowship with other believers; even more, the level of our intimacy with God is reflected by the level of intimacy we have with other believers.

And so what John is saying here and it is also something that he is going to mention through this epistle - is that - this koinonia / this fellowship we have with one another becomes one of several signs of genuine saving faith.

Remember, one of the questions that John is going to answer for us is –

What does it mean to be a Christian??

And so the first test he provides for us is -

“Do you love God’s people?”

And if we don’t love God’s people.

And if we are fed up with God’s people.

Or we are fed up with people in general – then this becomes a problem.

If our answer is – “no” we don’t love God’s people, then John questions our fellowship.

Where does it say that?

**[1Jo 4:20 NKJV] 20 If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?**

Fellowship is not something that we can do by ourselves.

That makes sense, right?

John writes this letter so that we may have fellowship.

And in order to have fellowship what do we need to do – we need to be with each other.

Luke tells us in the book of Acts – regarding the early church -

**[Act 2:42 NKJV] 42 And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.**

Church – I don't want us to miss the point that John is stating here

Fellowship is not simply hanging out with someone –

John's description of fellowship is a common affection that we have based on our friendship and relationship with God the Father and the Son.

Can we have fellowship with someone from the LDS church that believes Jesus and Lucifer are brothers?

Can we have fellowship with someone who is a JW – who believes that Jesus is the brother of Michael?

Can we have fellowship with an atheist? Or an agnostic?

Any relationship we have with these individuals falls well below the biblical standard for fellowship.

If you are wrong about Jesus – it doesn't matter what you are right about.

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

The life Jesus gives is marked by an unshakeable joy!

Remember - There's a vast difference between joy and happiness.

Happiness is dependent on what happens – dependent on our circumstances.

When things are going well, I'm happy; when they aren't, I'm sad.

Joy is based, not on what happens, but what happened in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Joy is based on a PERSON, the person of Christ.

By the way – this is the only time that the word joy is mentioned in 1 John – however, the presence of joy is saturated throughout the entire letter.

is your life FILLED with JOY?

Usually we hear people about people searching for happiness – but happiness is external.

Joy is internal.

What brings lasting joy?

What brings permanent joy?



What brings deep seeded joy?

According to John – when the gospel is proclaimed – verses 1,2

When we have fellowship with each other (vs 3)

That is what produces joy –

But remember, it is a joy that is rooted in having a right understanding of who God is and who Jesus is and what salvation provides and the relationship that we have based on that.

Let's pray...

To Receive Christ do the following:

Admit, "I am a sinner."

Confess and be willing to turn from your sin.

Believe, by faith that Jesus Christ died for you on the cross.

Receive, through prayer, Jesus Christ into your heart and receive eternal life.



CALVARY  
Santa Cruz

Dear Lord Jesus,

I know that I am a sinner and need Your forgiveness. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins. Please forgive me for my sins and cleanse me by Your blood. I accept You by faith as my personal Lord and Savior. Give me a thirst for Your Word and Help me to follow You all of my days. In Jesus' name I pray, Amen.

When we're walking with God, we will want to spend time with God's people. But if we are not walking with God, then we probably won't want to be around God's people.

Fellowship with God and fellowship with other believers go together.

My prayer is that as we continue our study through this amazing book – that we may seek to find ways to cultivate fellowship to express our joy.

[Num 6:24-26 NLT] 24 '

May the LORD bless you and protect you.

May the LORD smile on you and be gracious to you.

May the LORD show you his favor and give you his peace.'