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INTERNATIONAL

*TEACHING THE WHOLE COUNSEL OF GOD*

# 1 John 1

## Chapter 1:1-10

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- The author does not identify himself by name in this letter.
- There are clues as we read this letter that indicate the author claims to have spent time with Jesus when He physically walked the earth in Israel.
  - The author also uses the pronoun “we” when identifying these personal connections to Jesus
  - So it would be safe to conclude this author was one of the disciples of Jesus when He traveled throughout Israel.
- Tradition holds this author to be the disciple known as John, the same disciple who penned the gospel of John.

**1John 1:1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life —**

**1John 1:2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us —**

**1John 1:3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.**

**1John 1:4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.**

- How does this letter begin?
  - There are four clarifiers, all of which John says are concerning what?
    - The Word of Life
    - John says the Word of Life was what? From the beginning.
    - From the beginning of what?
  - For insight let’s look at how John begins in his gospel? John 1:1-3

**John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

**John 1:2 He was in the beginning with God.**

**John 1:3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.**

- In verse 1 John says in the beginning was what? (the Word)
  - The Word was what? (with God)
  - The Word was not just with God but was what else? (was God)
- In verse 2, what else is described about the Word? (He was in the beginning with God)
  - John says the Word is He. The Word is a being. This being was in the beginning with God.
- In verse 3, how is the beginning described? (All things came into being through Him)

- What does it mean for something to “come into being”? (It is created)
- It was not in existence and then it is created and now it is come into being.
- The person who was called the Word brought all things into existence, this moment in time we also call the creation. This creation is described in the book of Genesis.
- So we now have the answer to 1 John 1:1
  - The Word of Life was from the beginning of what? (The creation)
- Who is this Word of Life that was from the beginning of creation? See Colossians 1:

**Col. 1:12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.**

**Col. 1:13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,**

**Col. 1:14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.**

**Col. 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.**

**Col. 1:16 For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities — all things have been created through Him and for Him.**

- v.12 Who do we give thanks to? (the Father)
  - v.13 Who is the He? (the Father)
    - The Father transferred us to the kingdom of who? (His beloved Son)
    - Who is His beloved Son? (Jesus)
  - v.15 Who is the “He”? (Jesus)
  - v.16 Who is the “For by Him” all thing were created? (Jesus)
- Back in 1 John, Who was the Word of Life that was from the beginning? (Jesus)
  - v.1 What else was true about the Word of Life? (what we have heard)
  - John is giving witness to the fact that what he is going to testify to, he and the other apostles heard with their own ears.
  - This is not second hand information. The Word of Life spoke to them directly. Jesus spoke to the apostles in person.
- What else is true about the Word of Life? (what we have seen with our eyes)
  - The apostles saw the Word of Life (Jesus) with their own eyes and what they share is not a second hand account of what someone else saw.
  - What is the last thing John says is true about the Word of Life (Jesus)? (what we have looked at and touched with our hands) See also Luke 24:

**Luke 24:36 While they were telling these things, He Himself stood in their midst and said to them, “Peace be to you.”**

**Luke 24:37 But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit.**

**Luke 24:38 And He said to them, “Why are you troubled, and why do doubts**

**arise in your hearts?**

**Luke 24:39** “See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

**Luke 24:40** And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet.

**Luke 24:41** While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, He said to them, “Have you anything here to eat?”

**Luke 24:42** They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish;

**Luke 24:43** and He took it and ate it before them.

- When Jesus appears to his own disciples they had doubts it was Him in the flesh after the resurrection.
  - v.37 What did the disciples think they saw? (thought that they were seeing a spirit)
  - v.39 What does Jesus tell the disciples to do to help them deal with their doubts? (“See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see”)
  - Jesus also says “for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”)
- This account given in Luke confirms the disciples who became apostles to the church had in fact all seen Jesus after the resurrection with their own eyes.
- So in 1 John, the apostles were looking at Jesus while they touched Him with their own hands. John says clearly we saw the Word of Life (Jesus) with our eyes when we touched Him.
  - This was confirmed in the Luke 24 scripture.
- John has covered all the bases in the opening of this letter to be very clear about the testimony of the apostles as eye witnesses to the events revealed.
  - This sets them apart from many of the false teachers that will come after them.
- v.1 ends with “concerning the Word of Life”. How is this connected to v.2? (and the life was manifested)
  - Manifested means to make clear or evident to the eye or the understanding, show plainly
    - What was manifested? (the life)
    - Whose life was manifested? (the Word of Life)
    - Who is the Word of Life? (Jesus)
  - It is Jesus’ life that was manifested. This is confirmed in the gospel of John 21:

**John 21:1** After these things Jesus manifested Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and He manifested Himself in this way.

- This is the story of the disciples fishing and Jesus telling them to cast their nets and they bring in a huge net full of fish and then Jesus eats the fish and bread with them.

**John 21:14** This is now the third time that Jesus was manifested to the disciples, after He was raised from the dead.

- The scriptures say Jesus made clear and evident to the eye and the understanding of the disciples that He was alive in the flesh as described after He was raised from the dead.
  - In fact John says this was the third time for such a manifestation.
  - v.2 What else does John say about this life being manifested to them? (and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life)
  - John says they all had seen this life and testify to this life and proclaim this life.
  - How does John describe this life? (the eternal life)
- This testimony of the apostle's witness is that the life which Jesus manifested to them was not just a resurrected life but the focus is on the eternal life.
  - This would indicate there had be some teaching that put this eternal life promise in doubt. John is drawing clear lines that what the apostles proclaimed was eternal life.
    - Where had this eternal life come from? (which was with the Father)
    - What happened with this eternal life? (and was manifested to us —)
    - Remembering the definition of manifested we can take to read the eternal life was made clear and evident to the eye and the understanding of the apostles. The apostles now have this same eternal life that Jesus (The Word of Life) has.
  - v.3 What does John say to those reading this letter? (what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us;)
    - The eternal life the apostles have seen and heard, they proclaim or announce it can be had by others who would believe also.
    - When someone becomes a believer and has this proclaimed eternal life what else do they have with the apostles? (so that you too may have fellowship with us)
    - What does John declare is true for the apostles? (and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.)
  - v.4 What is the result of the apostles sharing this information with others? (These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.)
- When these apostles share what they have in eternal life and others join them in this eternal life it brings a joy in fellowship with them. Also 3 John 3-4:

**3John 3 For I was very glad when brethren came and testified to your truth, that is, how you are walking in truth.**

**3John 4 I have no greater joy than this, to hear of my children walking in the truth.**

- Let's read 1 John 1:5-10

**1John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.**

**1John 1:6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth;**

**1John 1:7** but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.

**1John 1:8** If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

**1John 1:9** If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

**1John 1:10** If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us.

- v.5 What does John share next? (This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.)
  - Who is the first ‘Him’ referring to? (Jesus)
  - See v.3 the fellowship is with the Father first and then finishes with His Son Jesus Christ. The last object is God’s Son Jesus Christ.
  - What did God’s Son Jesus Christ give? (This is the message we have heard from Him)
- There are words spoken by Jesus that did not make it into the written scriptures but his disciples would know what He spoke.
  - What were the apostles to do with this message? (announce to you)
  - What was the message? (that God is Light, and in Him (*God*) there is no darkness at all.)
- John introduces a contrast between light and darkness. He often uses this contrast in his writings, what do we know about this contrast in spiritual terms.
  - What does scripture have to say about light? One example John 8:12

**John 8:12** Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

- Where in scriptures can we see darkness defined. Isaiah 5:20, Daniel 2:22, Acts 26:14-18

**Is. 5:20** Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil;  
Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness;  
Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!

- We find darkness compared to evil and light to good.

**Dan. 2:22** “It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things;  
He knows what is in the darkness,  
And the light dwells with Him.

- In Daniel we learn He (God) knows what is in the darkness.
  - This is also seen in the story of Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus.

**Acts 26:14** “And when we had all fallen to the ground, I heard a voice saying to me in the Hebrew dialect, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me? It is hard for you to kick against the goads.’

**Acts 26:15** “And I said, ‘Who are You, Lord?’ And the Lord said, ‘I am Jesus whom you are persecuting.

**Acts 26:16** ‘But get up and stand on your feet; for this purpose I have appeared to you, to appoint you a minister and a witness not only to the things which you have seen, but also to the things in which I will appear to you;

**Acts 26:17** rescuing you from the Jewish people and from the Gentiles, to whom I am sending you,

**Acts 26:18** to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith in Me.’

- When Jesus reveals Himself to Paul to be a witness concerning Jesus and describes his assignment and calling, He describes the darkness as the dominion of Satan where sin is that must be forgiven.
- v.6 Why does John say it is important for us to know what darkness is?
  - (If we say that we have fellowship with Him (*God*) and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth)
  - What does it mean for someone to say they have fellowship with Him? (To know God and be in a relationship with God)
  - Someone can say they fellowship with God but then do what? (and *yet* walk in the darkness)
    - To walk in the darkness is to walk in the dominion of Satan in sin versus forgiveness of sin with Christ
  - What is true about someone who says they have fellowship with God but then walks in the dominion of Satan? (we lie and do not practice the truth)
  - What are we lying about? (about having fellowship with God)
- If we do not have this fellowship with God we can’t do what? (practice this truth.)
  - We can’t pretend to have this fellowship with God or claim we know God when we walk in the dominion of Satan in unforgiven sin at the same time.
- Let’s look at an example of this in our life experiences to see this truth.
  - In our personal relationships we can experience and display anger to others.
  - If we work through where this anger comes from we often find it is from a hurt or fear we have encountered or are enduring.
    - We can have the feeling of hurt or fear at the same time we feel angry. These emotions can exist at the same time even though they seem to be contrary.
    - The opposite would be looking at feelings that can’t exist at the same time

like anger and apathy or love and apathy. These emotions don't co-exist – you have either one or the other.

- John says you can't be in fellowship with God and walk in unforgiven or unrepentant sin at the same time; they can't co-exist.
  - Our behavior is not separate from our relationship with God.
- v.7 What must be present in our life to be in fellowship with God? (but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another)
  - We can only have this fellowship with God as we walk in the Light. This is not about fellowship of fellow Christians, the focus is on the fellowship with God the Father.
  - What allows us to walk in the Light? (and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin)
    - When we believe in the gospel and by faith believe our sin is taken away by the sacrifice, the blood, of Jesus we walk in the true Light.
    - The scripture uses the word sin in the singular to emphasis this is the sin that we are born in that needs the blood of Christ, it is not just the sins we commit.
- v.8 What can't co-exist? (If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.)
  - To declare we have no sin to be forgiven, John says we are doing what first? (deceiving ourselves)
  - What else does John say is true when we declare we have no sin to be forgiven? (the truth is not in us)
    - These two things can't exist together, you can't claim to have no sin and have truth in you at the same time.
- v.9 What truth needs to exist in us? (If we confess our sins)
  - This is an ongoing process – we need to learn what sin is by our study of the bible and through communion with God through prayer.
  - Once we recognize we have sin we then must confess that sin to God.
  - The scripture says “sins” in the plural to underscore that the confession of our sins is an ongoing process.
    - What is true about God when we confess our sins? (He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.)
- v 10 What is the opposite of confessing our sins? (If we say that we have not sinned,)
  - What does a declaration of someone claiming to have no sin do? (we make Him a liar)
  - God is not a liar so if we say we have not sinned what is true about us? (and His word is not in us.)
    - What word is His word? (v.1 says The Word of Life)
    - What is the “Word of Life”? (Jesus)
  - If we declare we have not sinned then we do not have the Word of Life (Jesus) in us, then we have no fellowship with God.
- If someone says they have no sin they would have no need for a savior.

- If someone says they have no sin then there was never any conviction of sin by the Holy Spirit and therefore no need of Jesus.
- As we move through this letter from John we will see a pattern unfold in what John is teaching about a true fellowship with God and a falsely declared relationship with God.
- We will review these patterns in regards to the false teaching present in John's day as well as the parallels to the false teaching over church history including what is clearly evident in current church teaching.