

3. In 1 John 1:2, John verifies his testimony

- a. *For the life was manifested.* Jesus, the Word of life, was manifested. In other words, He, being God, became visible to the human race by taking on the form of a human (John 1:14; Php 2:5-8). This describes the incarnation of Jesus. Because God is a spirit, man cannot see Him, but Jesus took on a visible human body that He might die for us (1Ti 3:16).
- b. *And we have seen it.* John had seen Jesus with his own eyes. The fact that Jesus lived in a human body was absolutely unquestioned by John.
- c. *And bear witness.* John is here bearing witness or giving a sure testimony to what years earlier he had heard, seen, gazed upon, and touched of the Word of life.
- d. *And shew unto you that eternal life.* John said he was showing (proclaiming or declaring) to his readers the eternal life. Here he calls the **Word of life** the **Eternal Life**. **Just as Word of Life is a synonym for Christ, so is Eternal Life.** It is important that we remember this as it will come up again later in the book.
- e. *Which was with the Father.* Jesus, the Eternal Life, was with (or had been near) the Father. Before Christ's incarnation, He was continually in the presence of the Father in heaven as the second Person of the Trinity.
- f. *And was manifested unto us.* John repeated what he said earlier in the verse for emphasis. Jesus was truly manifested (or made visible) to John and to others in Israel during His earthly ministry.

Conclusion: John knew that before we can enjoy close fellowship with Christ, we must know Christ. Not only must we know Him as our Saviour, but we must know HIM intimately. The descriptions of Christ in John's Gospel were not of an imaginary being, but of a REAL person who REALLY was the eternal God in human flesh. The Bible is not a fiction storybook, but a divine inspired history book. As you read the Gospels, ask God to help you get to know the Lord Jesus Christ intimately. Place yourself in the events of Jesus' life. Walk with Him in your mind. Listen, see, gaze upon and touch the Lord as if you were right there with Him. Examine His character. Listen to His words. Feel His tenderness.

Song: Tell Me the Old, Old Story 229

Introduction to 1 John

13 January 2019 PM – 1 John 1:1-2 – 1Jn2019 – Scott Childs

Introduction: First John is a wonderful book for the Christian, but it is not without its share of difficult passages that have often lead to confusion and misunderstanding. John the apostle is the author. He walked and talked with Jesus during His earthly ministry. He wrote the Gospel of John about the salvation provided by Jesus Christ and the necessity to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved (John 20:30-31). His epistle of 1 John builds on the foundation laid in Gospel of John. While the Gospel of John tells us how to obtain salvation in Christ, the Epistle of 1 John tells us **how to maintain fellowship with Christ** (1John 1:3).

Not everyone, however, believes that First John is about maintaining fellowship with Christ. The popular view is that First John presents **evidences of true salvation**. One of their key arguments is John's use of present tense verbs (3:6). They claim that the present tense refers to continual or habitual action. Based on John's use of the present tense, they conclude that a true Christian will **not** habitually walk in the darkness, **not** habitually love the world, **not** habitually sin, **not** habitually hate his brother, but **will** habitually confess his sins, **will** habitually keep God's commandments, **will** habitually keep God's Word, **will** habitually abide in Christ, **will** habitually love his brother, and so on.

This interpretation has several problems. **First**, while the Greek present tense may refer to habitual action, lexicons tell us that it represents a simple statement of fact or reality viewed as occurring in actual time. It often does not convey habitual action. **Second**, the most obvious problem is the fact that no Christian lives a perfect life. **Third**, the reader must decide how many failures constitute a habit. Where do we draw the line between a continual lifestyle and an occasional sin? **Fourth**, those who hold this view must be consistent in always translating the present tense as habitual, yet that is not realistic. **Fifth**, we find a serious contradiction with this view when we read the Apostle Paul's testimony of his daily struggle with sin (Romans 7:15-20). Paul uses the present tense to describe his struggle. Does this mean that Paul was not truly saved? Certainly not!

On the other hand, John said in the opening verses of this book that he wrote about **fellowship with God** and with other Christians (1 John 1:3). By accepting this statement as John's purpose for writing and viewing the book as instruction to help Christians maintain fellowship with God, we avoid many of the problems found in the "**evidence of salvation**" view. God's desire is that every Christian walk in His light and enjoy His fellowship every day. However, Christians still struggle with sin. Genuine Christians often lose their fellowship

with God by walking in the dark, disobedience, loving the world, not loving each other, and doing things that are sinful. *Abiding* describes a sojourning or tarrying that is apt to change. John shows us that by abiding in Christ or in close harmony with Christ we can overcome all sin and live in fellowship with God. It is God's promise found in Galatians 5:16.

Those who hold the "*evidence of salvation*" view claim that the purpose of the book is found at the end in 1 John 5:13. They say that the purpose of the entire book is "*that we may know that we have eternal life*." However, as we examine what John actually said was his purposes for writing, we find that the majority of them point to the "*maintaining fellowship*" view not to the "evidence of salvation" view.

Identifying the recipients of this book will also help us determine John's purpose. Did John write the book to true Christians or did he write to professing Christians who were not truly saved? Most of the names given to the recipients point to true Christians (e.g., ye, we, little children, brethren, brother, father, young men, young children, sons of God, beloved, born of God). I believe John wrote to genuine Christians about fellowship with God.

Transition: In the first two verses of this book, John introduces us to Jesus Christ and tells us how he knew Him.

FELLOWSHIP DEFINED (1 John 1:1-4)

1. In 1 John 1:1, we see the subject is the Word of Life

- a. The subject of this verse is at the end – *of the Word of life*. Though John does not yet name Him, the Word of life can refer to none other than Jesus Christ. Jesus was **the living Word of God** (Jn 1:1) and He was the Life (Jn 14:6). Jesus not only is life, but He gives life (Jn 6:33).
- b. Humans describe things with words. Jesus being the Word, describes God for us through His physical life (Jn 1:14).
- c. *That which was from the beginning*, I believe that John had a dual thought in mind when he wrote this. Jesus existed from the absolute beginning (John 1:1). He eternally existed before creation in Genesis 1:1. Thus, He is **eternal life** (v.2).
- d. However, in the present context I believe John also had another beginning in mind. The neuter pronoun "which" used repeatedly in the verse better describes facts than a person. John knew the facts about Christ's **physical life** from the beginning of His ministry, the beginning of the Gospel. John described many of those facts for us in the Gospel of John. Jesus is God, life, eternal and a physical description.

2. John explains how he knew Christ

- a. *Which we have heard*, John heard (and still recalls) the words of Christ. John was not telling secondhand stories. He sat at Jesus feet and heard him speak for more than three years. He heard him pray in the garden. He heard him preach in the synagogues. He heard him rebuke the hypocritical Pharisees. He heard the words of salvation from his lips.
- b. *Which we have seen with our eyes*, John saw with his own eyes (memories still vivid) the miracles of Christ. He saw Jesus walk on the water. He saw Jesus heal the lepers, blind, crippled, deaf, and paralysed. He saw Jesus raise a dead son and a dead daughter and his dead friend Lazarus. He saw Jesus feed thousands with a small lunch. He saw the raging sea calmed and the demons depart at the command of Jesus. He saw Jesus crucified. He also saw Jesus after his resurrection.
- c. *Which we have looked upon*, John watched the life of Christ. The word actually means to gaze upon or to look upon attentively. He watched him as they walked the dusty roads and climbed the mountain to Jerusalem. He watched Him as He prayed, ate, sang, and slept. He looked at His character. He saw Jesus transfigured on the mountain.
- d. *And our hands have handled*, John's hands handled Christ. John knew that Jesus was truly the God/man. Without question, Jesus truly had a body. John had touched Jesus many times. It is likely that many times John reached out a hand to pull Jesus into a boat or shook His hand in greeting. John often leaned on Jesus as they reclined to eat. Even after His resurrection, Jesus encouraged His disciples to touch Him. He said, "*Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*" (Luke 24:39)
 - 1) What was John trying to get across to us? He was telling us that being the Word, Jesus is God. He is eternal, from the beginning. He was made flesh (Jn 1:14). He spoke. He was visible. John observed Him carefully. He even touched His incarnate body. He fellowshiped with Jesus.
 - 2) Jesus is not a myth. He is God with us. We can know Him.