

## ~1 John~

## Lesson 2- The Word of Life

Let's begin by reading our text today- **1 John 1:1-2**

Last week was our introduction to this letter and today we will start digging in verse by verse. But as we are studying the details of every verse, we also need to keep in mind the entire scope of the letter. (how many of you read this epistle this week?) This is crucial to gaining an understanding of John's heart as he writes this letter. Remember, the style of this epistle is more like a conversation instead of a systematic flow, so we have to approach this letter a little differently and look at it as whole.

Last week I showed you 3 main points that are the underlying theme of this letter:

- 1) Jesus is the pre-existent One who was sent by the Father and manifested in the flesh to give us Life
- 2) True believers abide in God. They are born of God and have fellowship with Him, being one in Him
- 3) To expose the darkness and discern between the Spirit of Truth and the spirit of error

Now today we will be looking at the first two verses and we will see all 3 points in the opening of the letter

John begins his first epistle in a manner very similar to his gospel with no introduction, no salutation, no mention of his authorship. John is focused on one thing, and that is the Truth, and he is so straight forward in his approach to the Truth. There is an uncompromised stance for the Truth. John is unwavering in his convictions for Truth and his writing reflects this. He has to be unwavering because he was battling the false teachings of the Gnostics that were trying to tear down the pillars of Truth in the church. And we too, in our life, must be unwavering in our convictions of Truth because the enemy is attacking from all directions: government, news, social media, schools, and even within our churches. I love John's response to these attacks. He responds with unwavering Truth. Much like we saw in Paul when we studied 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy.

This first verse has one subject, that is "the Word of Life". John begins with this because this is the subject of the entire epistle, **1 John 5:13**. Eternal life, given to us through the Word of Life is the premise of the entire letter.

1 John 1:1 †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—

† *That which was from the beginning...* "Ὁ ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς"

- "that which"- ha, "Ὁ", singular masculine pronoun referring to a previous subject. Usually, you see this pronoun used after the subject has been established, but this is how John starts his letter. It's right at the beginning, so what is the previous subject? We know it's "*that which was from the beginning*". So, who or what was in the beginning? John 1:1, the Word, ha logos, ὁ λόγος, was in the beginning with God.
- That which... "*was from the beginning*" - , "Ὁ ἦν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς", This is such a simple statement, but has huge theological implications.
  - Firstly, the word "was"- ἦν, is the word eimi, εἶμι, in the imperfect tense. This word eimi, εἶμι, means "to be or to exist". The imperfect tense shows progressive action in the past. In this case we could say, "*that which was existing from the beginning*". This is the exact same tense used in John 1:1. "*In the beginning was existing the Word*" - Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος. I love this translation because it shows that the Word didn't start existing in the beginning, but rather that He "was already existing" in the beginning. And it is not that he "was begotten" or "made" in the beginning or that He "existed" in the beginning, but that which "was existing" in the beginning.
  - Secondly, John says that which was existing "from" the beginning. This word "from" is apo, ἀπό, meaning "away from". Away from the beginning. This is a very common way to state time, as in, "I knew you from the beginning". John is not saying that Jesus came out from the beginning. He doesn't say, ἐξ ἀρχῆς, out from the beginning. This would mean that Jesus was a created being that came out from time, when in fact we

know that Jesus created time, so time actually came out of Jesus, **Jn 1:3; 17:5, 24**; Col 1:15-17.

- John is stating a point of time that we can understand. There is no beginning with God, so he says, “the beginning”, as in where all physical life started, but he refers to Jesus as “*that which was already existing from the beginning...*”

† *That which was from the beginning (the Word)... which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled...* ὁ ἀκηκόαμεν, ὁ ἐώρακάμεν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς ἡμῶν, ὁ ἐθεασάμεθα, καὶ αἱ χεῖρες ἡμῶν ἐψηλάφησαν

John continues to use this same singular masculine pronoun: That which we have heard... which we have seen... which we have looked upon... all referring to the Word, “*that which was from the beginning*”.

Also, these four verbs are in the first person plural, saying “**we**” have heard... **we** have seen... **we** have beheld and **our** hands handled. Who is we? I believe he is referring to all the apostles that witnessed His appearing. “We” collectively saw Him and walked with Him for three years and this is our eye witness report.

- “**which we have heard**”- ὁ ἀκηκόαμεν. John is making a point to say that he is a personal witness of the Christ, who manifested Himself.
  - Many times, Jesus said, “*he who has an ear, let him hear...*”, Rev 2:7. This hearing that John speaks of is not only hearing with their physical ears, but they also heard and received it into their soul.
  - Romans 10:17- “*faith comes out from hearing, and hearing through the Word of God*”
  - This word is in the perfect tense and implies a completed action with lasting results that are still in effect.
    - So John is saying, we have heard Him and have received Him and we have everlasting effects because of Him
- “**which we have seen with our eyes**”- (ὁ ἐώρακάμεν)- horao, ὁράω, to become physically visible
  - John is saying, this wasn’t just a vision that we saw or some apparition. We physically saw Him with our physical eyes.
- “**which we have (did) look upon**”- (ὁ ἐθεασάμεθα)- theaomai, θεάομαι, to behold
  - In the English, you might think that to see with our eyes and to look upon mean the same thing, these are two different Greek words. This word means more than just to physically see. This is a word meaning “beheld”, as in John 1:14, “*we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and Truth*”. It is a word to gaze in awestruck amazement and to behold in wonder. theaomai, θεάομαι... we get the word theater from this word. Gazing at a theatrical appearance.
  - This word is in the aorist indicative tense meaning that it is a fact that something “did” happen in the past. So I like the word “did” in the translation instead of “have”.
    - John is making a point that he was an eye witness and he did gaze upon and he did behold the Word of Life.
- “**and our hands have (did) handle**”- this word is also in the aorist indicative. He did handle the Word of Life, pselaphao, ψηλάφάω, This word is also used in Luke 24:39, when Jesus says, “*handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have*”. John is using the same words as our Lord said, “*handle Me*”

† *concerning the Word of life...* περὶ τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς

- John’s focus is the **Word of Life** that was manifested and became flesh.
  - Tying back perfectly with John 1:4- “*In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*” This is the Word of Life, and that Life has shined out and brought Light to the world.

1 John 1:2 †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 life was manifested...* This life was with the Father, and now manifested to us... The Word, that was existing in the beginning with God became flesh and dwelt among us. This is Word of Life, so that He might give eternal life to all those who would believe in Him, **John 6:32-35, 40, 47, 51, 53-58**, Jesus is talking about feeding on the Word of Life, **60, 61-64, 66-69**.

† *the life was manifested, and we have seen...* και ἡ ζωὴ ἐφανερώθη, καὶ ἐώρακαμεν

- “and the life was manifested”- phanerao, φανερώω, to bring to light, to shine
  - This is what we see in his gospel. John 1:5, 12- The light shined in the darkness and the darkness didn’t receive it, but as many as received Him (by receiving His Light) to them gave he the right to become children of God.
- The life was manifested... “and we have seen”- same word as in verse 1, horao, ὁράω, to become physically visible. He is saying it again... we have physically seen the Word of Life

† and we have seen...and bear witness, and declare to you... μαρτυροῦμεν, καὶ ἀπαγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν

- This is in the present tense saying, “and (now) we are continuing to bear witness”- martureo, μαρτυρέω, to testify, bear witness
  - He is actively testifying to us by writing this letter. John is an eye witness of the Christ and he is testifying to us the things concerning the Word of Life.
- “and (now) we are continuing to declare to you”- Also in the present tense, apangello, ἀπαγγέλλω, compound of ἀπό + ἀγγέλλω – to announce a message away from ~ to announce or proclaim a message that a person is charged with and shares is with others
  - What is the message? Lets keep reading in verse 2...

† we declare to you...that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us. τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον, ἣτις ἦν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, καὶ ἐφανερώθη ἡμῖν).

- This is the message we are proclaiming to you... the eternal life, that was existing, ἦν, with the Father, has become flesh. I have heard Him, I have seen Him with my eyes, I have beheld Him and my hands have touched the Word of Life. And if you receive Him, if you feed on His Words of Life, you will have eternal life and have eternal fellowship with Him.

### Why did Jesus have to come in the flesh?

The Gnostics denied that Jesus came in the flesh, namely because Satan knows that this is the fundamental principal of Christianity. And if he can tear down that Truth, then the gospel and has nothing to stand on. This is why John makes this statement in 1 John 4:2-3- <sup>2</sup> *By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God,* <sup>3</sup> *and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God.*

There are three reasons Jesus had to come in the flesh.

- 1) To be our Kinsman Redeemer
- 2) To be the Lamb of God
- 3) To be our High Priest

- 1) Jesus came in the flesh to be our kinsman redeemer. How many of you watched the Bits of Truth I sent out earlier this week? It was a small excerpt from a teaching of my dad’s when he taught on the book of Ruth. He explained the Law of Redemption and the necessity of our redemption through our kinsman redeemer. In the Law, this close relative, called a kinsman-redeemer, could pay the debt of their relative and release them from their bondage and they would be set free. This is the story of Ruth and it foreshadows Jesus as our Redeemer. Man was in bondage to sin and death and the only way he could legally be redeemed and

released from the bondage of sin was if a kinsman-redeemer would pay for his debt to sin.

- a. Our kinsman redeemer had to be a flesh and blood man, but a direct son of God. A kinsman to Adam. A man who was born into this world but without sin.
  - b. John describes God incarnate in **1 John 5:7-8**
- 2) Jesus came in the flesh as the Lamb of God to be the perfect payment for sin, **1 Jn 2:1-2; 3:5, 8; Heb 2:17**
- a. The payment for sin is death- Rom 6:23, Heb 9:22
  - b. When Jesus died on the cross He became that perfect sacrifice completing the payment for sin.
    - i. Tetelestai! It is finished, paid in full
- 3) Jesus came in the flesh and was resurrected so that He might be our eternal High Priest, **Heb 2:17; 1 Jn 4:10**
- a. Jesus offered the perfect payment, the perfect sacrifice, His blood, in the heavenly Holy of Holies to the Father.

**ONLY** a kinsman of Adam who could legally pay for the debt of sin.

**ONLY** the death of a pure sinless Lamb of God that could be the eternal payment for that debt of sin

**ONLY** an eternal High Priest who could present this sacrifice to the Father

**ONLY JESUS**

Jesus came in the flesh. He gave us the Words of Eternal life. This is why we have eternal Life in Him

Jesus is the One who prevailed. He is the One who fulfilled all this,

and He alone is the One who is worthy of all our praise

John 5:24-27; **Rev 5:1-10**

In summary lets read these two verses again with what we have learned today.

That which was existing from the beginning, the Word of God, who is Jesus, the Son of God, which we have heard, which we have seen with our physical eyes, which we did behold and gaze upon, and our hands did handle concerning the Word of Life. And the Life was manifested, appearing by shining the Light of Life to the world, and we have seen and we are continuing to bear witness and continuing to declare and announce the message of life that was given to us and we are proclaiming to you that eternal Life. That which was existing with the Father and was manifested, having appeared to us to take away our sins, so that we might have eternal fellowship with Him who is the Word of Life.