

1 John 1:1-2:2 THE MESSAGE OF JESUS CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

Why was 1 John written?

Purpose # 1—Assurance of salvation

One reason why 1 John was written was that the believers would know absolutely for sure they were saved. God wants His children to have full assurance, without a doubt. They are to be settled in their understanding.

1 John 5:13, 2:5,13,21,3:14,4:13 John 20:31

Purpose # 2—Equip people to deal with error

Nothing is as valuable as God's truth. The most valuable reality in existence is God's truth. The Word of God is what brings us salvation and eternal life is the most necessary thing that exists.

John MacArthur

Since that is true, the greatest threat in the world is any idea that would differ from the truth.

You would think that during the first century there would have been purity in doctrine. But there was an assault on truth right at the outset. Jewish legalism was the first enemy of the Gospel. That had to be addressed at the first church council in Jerusalem. Paul had to address that in Galatians and other places.

By the time this was written John was an old man, as he wrote this near the turn of the century. He is the only one left who had a personal intimate relationship with Jesus. He was with Jesus for the whole time of Jesus' ministry. John was pastor of the church at Ephesus. Paul had started the church at Ephesus and he had written in Acts 20 that false teachers would come and infect the church with lies. This certainly happened. John writes this letter to arm people to deal with error. He wants his people to recognize error when it shows up.

What was the heresy? It was an early form of Gnosticism that John was fighting. At the time it was not known as this as it developed a little while later, but the roots of Gnosticism is what John had to deal with. Gnosticism comes from gnosis which means to know. It is based on the idea that some people had secret knowledge. It is high thinking which actually elevates self.

Gnosticism was a philosophical dualism teaching that all material substance is evil. Everything that is material was created by a bad god. Only the spirit is good. They taught that your only hope for salvation is through self-knowledge. As far as the material things which were bad whatever you do is meaningless so they would engage in unbridled indulgence of the flesh. It had no bearing on their goodness. If the body is bad because it is physical, then let it do what it wants.

Another thing that came along was the Docetist view which meant "to seem" they believed Christ was the good God who came down to earth but He could never take on a physical body, so he seemed to have a physical body. It was an illusion.

So, John exposes the false and reveals the true.

Purpose # 3—The New Commandment

John uses the idea of God's love all over his writings. This epistle continually show that if you don't have love for God and others, you are not a believer.

John uses three tests repeatedly throughout the epistle. John doesn't say that we are to be perfect but he proves that a Christian has to be going the right direction. If one said they were Christian but they failed these tests they really are not true believers.

It is impossible to overestimate the importance of these three elements in the Christian life. Truth, righteousness, love

Test #1-----Doctrinal Test—the test of belief in Jesus Christ

Test # 2-----Moral Test—the test of righteousness and obedience

Test # 3-----Relational Test---the test of love

1. EYEWITNESS TESTIMONY VV 1-4

A. THE ESSENCE OF CHRISTIANITY 1-2

The Word of Life He said this was from the beginning. It is nothing new. The Word of Life has not and never will change. The most important thing he has to say is that Christianity is Jesus Christ.

Word of Life makes us think of the Word in John 1:14

Later on in John, life is actually used of Jesus rather than Word

It's best to take Word as the gospel that centered in Christ.

Beginning referred to the beginning of the Christian era.

Jesus is the essential core of the Christian proclamation. The

Gnostics had a system, but a system is not life. Christianity has life, the life of Jesus

B. THE EVIDENCES FOR CHRISTIANITY 1-2

1. Objective Evidences

John had first-hand knowledge of Jesus as well as the other Apostles. The we refers to them and him.

This Word of Life, John experienced; heard Him, saw Him, looked upon Him, and touched Him.

Heard-Jesus spoke the words that came out of His mouth.

He spoke in parables, stories, and sermons. John is saying I actually heard Him speak not just one time but for over three years. What a privilege to actually listen to Jesus speaking.

Saw- The Greek word is *horaō*, which means the physical act of seeing. This was real and not some kind of vision.

Beheld-This may seem like a repeating of the word for saw.

Actually, it goes a little further in that it means to look long at, not to just have a glance. He really gazed at Him. We looked closely and deeply. As John says in John 1:14, we beheld His glory.

Touched-They had touched Him with their hands Luke 24:39

John is saying, I was a witness. I was there along with others. We heard Him, saw Him, felt all that He was.

We have to conclude that this is the Word Of Life. We bear witness to this eternal Life.

2. Subjective Evidences

Manifested-Phaneroō means to make visible what is hidden.

God was hidden until Christ became visible, that Life.

It is one thing to see this Life with your eyes, and another to perceive with understanding who He really is. They would not have known who He really was, unless God supernaturally opened their eyes, their spiritual eyes. Many people saw Jesus at that time but never knew that He was God. They saw His glory, or believed He was God in the flesh.

When Peter said the great confession, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God; Jesus said that flesh and blood did not reveal this to him, but the Father who is in heaven. God unveiled that truth to him. John is certain about the Word of Life. He had a valid experience.

We, today cannot repeat the objective evidence of the incarnate Christ, but we can in the subjective experience that John and the apostles had. The Holy Spirit makes Christ alive to us. The historical Jesus and the personal relationship with Him belong together.

C. THE PROCLAMATION 3-4

John was certain about the person of Christ. He then, had a responsibility to proclaim this truth. He wanted to proclaim to the world this great news. This differs from Gnosticism in that they only want the intellectually elite to know things. Christianity is not a matter of secrecy. It is to spread the good news to all.

1. Bear witness, testify (Martyrein) This word comes from the courts of law. It speaks of telling what you saw, heard and felt. That is what a witness does. The disciples were called to do this because they had experienced Him firsthand during those three years. John 15:27 The Apostles bore witness to Christ proclaimed what they heard and saw and wrote it down in writing which became the New Testament.

All the books of the new Testament written by apostles or associated with them give the apostolic eyewitness account. One example is Peter as he witnessed the Mount of Transfiguration incident.

Today we take those writings and have entered into a relationship that the apostles experienced, and we proclaim the Christ of the apostles to the world.

2. Proclaim

3. Write

D. THE PURPOSE 3-4

What is the purpose of all this? John speaks of fellowship

1. Fellowship-The full meaning of salvation is intended here.

Only when we have the relationship with Christ, can we have the right relationship with others. This is the reason why the Word has to be proclaimed, for it will bring people to Christ. But, we can't just be content with evangelism that wins men to God but fails to draw them into a vital and visible relationship with one another. What a privilege it is to fellowship and have relationship with brothers and sisters in Christ.

Koinos means to partner with. Partners with God and partners with others.

2. Joy-As we can all attest to, there is a result of fellowship, and that is true joy. The Word of Life provides joy, a fruit of the Spirit, that we all rejoice in together. There will even be the perfect joy as we fellowship together in the eternal state.

2. WHAT GOD IS V 5

The Westminster Confession has as the fourth question, What is God? God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. This helps us to know

about God but we still need to know Him.

In our 5th verse here, John says God is light, and there is no darkness in Him. This is a better way to define God.

John has a message to deliver. The Greek word is angelia. This word is a connecting link between verse 4 and verse 5. After stating that we have fellowship, he now states the conditions under which the fellowship with God is possible. In 1 John, we see that God is light, God is spirit, and God is love. James Boice says—“In this we have the broadest and most comprehensive definition of God that can probably be devised in human language.

A. THE POSITIVE

God is light. We see this throughout the Old testament and the NT.

Psalm 27:1, 36:9, Isa 49:6, John 1:4,3:19

Jesus is light. That would mean that those who follow Christ are said to be children of light. That is the practical implication, but it is because Jesus is the light.

B. THE NEGATIVE

If A is true, then B is false. God is good and he is not bad. God is holy

And He is not sinful. The eastern religions have the yeng and yang.

They say that good and evil mix together. They meet in the One.

The idea John has here is that we must be holy if we are to have fellowship with God.

3. ALL ARE SINNERS

VV 6-10

This is where we start our first test. It deals with sin. This is where one can measure if a person is a genuine Christian or not. It is how they deal with sin. True Christians confess their sins. Unregenerated hide their sin. The Gospel is about forgiveness of sin, so this is a good place to start. People today don't like to talk about sin. They will use the word sick as in emotionally sick, mentally sick. They are victims of addiction.

A. FALSE CLAIM OF RIGHTEOUSNESS 6-7

Coming in to that church then were people denying the reality of sin. Some denied that Jesus was a real person.

They would say sin is no issue. That is a part of my physical life and the physical is bad anyway. The spiritual is good and I'm pursuing the spiritual. They separated religion and ethics. They claimed to have fellowship with God and at the same time their lives were characterized by unrighteousness. To walk in the means to sin habitually. It is a continual practice that he is referring to. Truth in the inward being is what God desires, Ps 51:6 One walking in the light will find the blood of Jesus available for continual cleansing. Forgiveness has already been provided for Believers will find forgiveness provided for by the sacrifice of Christ. This encourages holiness.

B. CLAIM OF NO SIN 8-9

The first false teaching was that it's possible to have fellowship with God and still continue sinning. In this second claim there is an additional error in that they have ceased to sin at all. These people are deceived. They don't see the facts at all. If a person believes he doesn't sin, he leaves it open for excuses for sin, because he doesn't recognize sin.

Instead of denying sin, we need to admit and confess sin.

God is faithful in that He promised to forgive sin when it is confessed. He will do this because He promised.

He is just, because he punished our sin in Christ because He

He had to do something with sin. Jesus became the propitiation for our sin. That will be discussed a few verses later.

C. CLAIM OF NEVER SINNING 10

This is a display of the arrogance of man to make this claim.

This claim is the most serious of all. This means they have never sinned. John now calls them liars, not just being deceived. They are even calling God a liar. God says that all are sinners and are in the need of grace. Rom 3:23

God has contrasted the nature of God (He is light) with the nature of man. He has shown that there is a difference between those who walk in light and those who walk in darkness.

4. A CALL TO HOLINESS 2:1-2

John now begins a new form and addresses the problem of sin in the Christian. It is not now if we walk or if we confess.

A. THE PROMISE OF GOD 1

God promises to forgive sin. The concern for them is that they might not sin. He wants them to keep free from sin.

How does the assurance of forgiveness lead to holiness? The knowledge of God's forgiveness and love does lead us to want to be obedient.

We are won by that and we don't want to fail Him.

B. THE WORK OF CHRIST 1-2

Advocate, Righteous One, Atoning sacrifice

We approach God because of the work of Christ.

Advocate is a legal term—one called along side of, to help another

Paraklaton He still bears His concern for us

He makes intercession for us. Rom 8:34 The merit is on the part of the Advocate.

Righteous-The righteousness of His character governs the nature of His advocacy for us. He presents the case faithfully and with perfection.

Propitiation-Hilasmos-this is not expiation but propitiation. God has been satisfied with the sacrifice of Christ. The just demands of His holy law has been met. The sin has been taken away. It was paid for. God placates His wrath against sin. The OT sacrifices demonstrate this. The day of Atonement is a good picture of this. Now, the work has been finished. It has been accomplished. It is not just potential but is actually efficacious and particular for the elect. He atoned for particular people, not all people, because that would be universalism.

The world here, probably means the rest of the world that includes all kinds of people, tribes, tongues, nations. That would be the Gentiles as opposed to the Jewish Christians. it would not be between Christians and the as-yet-unsaved world, but between those Jews who Christ died for and those Gentiles for whom Christ died for, both of whom make up the church.

Jesus fulfilled the pattern of the OT sacrifices but He did in such a way that now Gentiles as well as Jews are saved.

If Jesus had done so much for us, and not only for us but also for people scattered all over the world and if this leads us to praise Him, should it not lead to holiness?