

Lessons From I John

Introduction

(I Jn 1:1-4)

INTRODUCTION

1. Good Morning
 - a. Greeting...
2. Starting a series of lessons covering I, II, III, John.
 - a. We will begin by looking at the introduction to I John.
3. When Jesus came to earth, it was not only to "live" a life, but to "give" life.
 - a. **Jn 10:10** "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."¹ (NKJV)
4. The gospel according to John was designed to produce faith so that we might have life.
 - a. **Jn 20:30-31** "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."
5. I John was to discuss the nature of that life in greater detail.
 - a. **I Jn 3:14** "We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death."
 - b. So that we were sure to live the sort of life God offers through His Son only.

I. Background

- A. The author
 1. The author is the apostle John ie the apostle of love.
 - i. Also known as the apostle whom Jesus loved.
 2. Similarities between the gospel according to John and this leads us to this conclusion also.
 3. We also have outside evidence that it is the apostle John.
 - i. Polycarp, a close associate of John, appears to make reference to this epistle at the beginning of the second century, in a letter to the Philippians.
 - ii. Irenaeus, a student of Polycarp, quoted from it and attributed it to John.
- B. The recipients
 1. No one is specifically mentioned.
 2. John most likely was in Ephesus, and thus wrote this to those Christians in Asia Minor.
 - i. However there is some evidence that suggests that John may have been writing specifically to a particular group of Christians possessing certain spiritual gifts.

¹ All Scriptures are taken from the ESV unless otherwise noted.

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- a. **I Jn 2:20, 27** "But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge...27 But the anointing that you received from him abides in you, and you have no need that anyone should teach you. But as his anointing teaches you about everything, and is true, and is no lie—just as it has taught you, abide in him."
- C. Date
1. Early date 60 A.D. to no more than 70 A.D.
 2. Late date places it from 95 A.D. to 100 A.D.
 - i. Most modern scholarship place it around 95 A.D.
- D. Positive purposes
1. Was that your joy may be filled.
 - i. **I Jn 1:4** "And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete."
 2. Was that you may not sin.
 - i. **I Jn 2:1** "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."
 3. Was that you may know that you have eternal life.
 - i. **I Jn 5:13a** "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life..." (NKJV)
 4. Was that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God.
 - i. **I Jn 5:13b** "...that you may continue to believe in the name of the Son of God." (NKJV)
- E. Negative purpose
1. Though John writes for many positive reasons there is a negative one.
 - i. Gnosticism
 - a. **I Jn 2:26** "I write these things to you about those who are trying to deceive you."
 2. Those that claim to follow Gnosticism are known as Gnostics.
 - i. They claim to have a superior knowledge.
 - a. They get their name from the Greek word "gnosis" meaning knowledge.
 - ii. They believe all physical matter is evil.
 - a. If this is the case Christ could not have come in the flesh.
 1. **I Jn 4:1-3** "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you heard was coming and now is in the world already."

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- iii. One branch of Gnosticism "Docetism" said Jesus only "seemed" to be physical.
- iv. Cerinthus taught that Jesus was physical, but that the "Christ" came upon him at his baptism, and left before his death, so that the "Christ-spirit" never suffered.
- v. Gnosticism took two different school of thoughts on living.
 - a. Some thought one should abstain altogether from anything that would satisfy the flesh.
 - b. Others claimed it did not matter what one did in the flesh because it was evil anyway, and to have a full knowledge it was proper to explore everything.

II. The Purpose Of The Book

- A. Concerns the Word of life (1)
 1. Mostly likely a reference to Jn 1:1.
 2. The Word of life was...
 - i. Heard
 - ii. Seen with their own eyes
 - iii. Looked upon
 - iv. Handled
 3. All of this was used to emphasize the "Word was flesh."
- B. To declare the eternal life (2)
 1. Which was...
 - i. With the Father
 - ii. Manifested to the apostles
- C. That you may have fellowship with us (3)
 1. Here is why John was declaring the Word of life, the eternal life.
 - i. By asserting this life, fellowship is possible.
 2. Fellowship is the idea of sharing or communing.
 - i. Being in complete unity.
 3. The fellowship the apostle John had with the Father he wanted for his brethren.
 - i. He wanted them/us to experience what he experienced.
- D. That your joy may be full (4)
 1. It is the fellowship with the Godhead that makes the life of a Christian full of joy.
 - i. Just as Jesus came to give us abundant life (**Jn 10:10**) John is now writing to inform us that we can be sure to have fellowship with the Godhead through "eternal life, that our joy is made full.
- E. Notice neuter gender throughout this passage.
 1. Therefore the emphasis is on the life which Jesus had ie eternal life.
 - i. This is the same life we can have if we believe in the name of the Son of God.

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- a. **I Jn 5:11-13** "And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. 13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God that you may know that you have eternal life."
2. Thus we see that eternal life is the focus not the physical Christ though He is the reference.

CONCLUSION

1. From **I Jn 1:1-4** we learn that fullness of joy comes only when we are in fellowship with the Godhead.
 - a. Only then do we have that "eternal life" which was first manifested in the flesh by Jesus Himself, and now given only through Jesus.
2. Question: Do you have eternal life?
 - a. If so continue there in.
 - b. If no why not. Correct it, make it right, time is of the essence.
3. Invitation²
 - a. For those that are Christians but are not living for Christ repent by confessing your sins to God that He may forgive you and dedicate your life/time back to Him.
 - i. **I Jn 1:7, 9** "But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin...9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."
 - b. For those that are not Christians or for those that think they are Christians and want to know for sure notice what is required to become a child of God or Christian according to God and God only.
 - i. Hear/Study **Rom 10:17; II Tim 2:15**
 - ii. Believe Jesus Is The Christ **Jn 3:16; 8:24**
 - iii. Repent/Turn To God **Ac 17:30; Lk 24:47**
 - iv. Confess Jesus As Lord **Mt 10:32; Rom 10:9**
 - v. Immersed For The Forgiveness of Sins **Ac 2:38; 22:16; I Pt 3:21**
 - vi. Live A Faithful Life **I Jn 1:7; Eph 5:8**

² Mark Copeland's sermon outline "Introduction To First John" was a great benefit to this outline.