



02 The Word of Life - 1 John 1:1-4

So let us start this very exciting journey through the first epistle of John. It is thought by the majority of scholars to have been written by the Apostle John who was the son of Zebedee. He was also one of the original twelve disciples, **Mark 1:19-20**. John was called the disciple 'whom Jesus loved' because Jesus seems to have been closer to Him than the others, **John 13:23; and John 21:20**. Jesus also put the care of His mother into John's hands when he was dying on the Cross, **John 19:26**. Jesus must have known John's heart of love for Himself and the people of Israel. The Gospel of John, John's Three New

Testament letters, and the Book of Revelation were all written by the same Apostle John. John lived for many years after Jesus' death and he probably wrote this first letter around AD 80-90.

John had developed such a love for his '**dear children**' and as the elder statesman of the early Church he was very concerned about the heresy that was now creeping into the Church; that Jesus never really came to earth. False teachers were saying that Jesus was only a spirit being or a vision, but as we will see in this letter John knew with all his heart that Jesus was both fully God and fully man. John is reinforcing the vital importance of the deity of Christ which he also starts his Gospel with this point. We must acknowledge that Jesus was with the Father and the Holy Spirit at Creation. The deity of Christ forms the very foundation of our faith. Our salvation depends on it. If Jesus was not fully a man, then His death would have no meaning. He could not have offered Himself as the sinless sacrifice for all the sins of the whole world. So John wrote this first letter so that all readers might know that they have eternal life and have full assurance of their position in Jesus Christ, **1 John 5:13**. He wanted all his readers to know the reality of God in their everyday lives receiving His love through faith in Jesus Christ and to have fellowship with the Father and other believers.

John walked and talked with Jesus on a daily basis for three years, saw Him heal, raise the dead, feed the hungry, heard all His teachings and then watched Him die. He then talked with Him after He had risen, and saw Him ascend. John knew Jesus was the only Son of God and John had continued to have fellowship with the Father after Jesus' death by the power of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing like an eyewitness report for bringing the report to life.

Let us pray that as we commit to walking through this amazing Book of Truth the Holy Spirit will 'open our eyes to see wondrous things from God's Law' (**Psalm 119:18**)

Who is this Jesus?

John takes us back to his Gospel writing reminding us that he is talking about the Word of Life, Jesus Christ Himself. Although John does not introduce himself obviously the recipients know him. He reminds them that although it was years before, John had been there, seen Him, heard Him, and even touched Him. He was totally physically real for all to see and know. John was keen to declare that the Word which was made flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary was the same eternal Son of the Father who was before all time and who was the agent of all creation.

The Word of Life did not merely come into existence in Bethlehem; He already existed from the very beginning with the Father. His whole focus is on the reality of Jesus Christ as our focus should also be. John could never forget the time when Jesus was transfigured on the high mountain His face shone like the sun and His clothes became as white as the light, then a bright cloud enveloped them and a voice from the cloud said "This is My Son, whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him" **Matthew 17:1-9**.

Then after the Resurrection Jesus spoke to His frightened disciples who were convinced they were seeing a ghost and He told them 'See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself! Feel and handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones, as you see that I have' **Luke 24:39** John is pointing out that Christ is the Life, it is through Him that we have Eternal Life and so we will live with Him forever in a place He has prepared especially for us **John 14:1-3**.

The Word of Life John is talking about in **1 John 1:1-2** is the same Word of Life that is the Light of men he talks about in **John 1:4-5**. This is such an encouragement if we feel everything around us is dark and the devil is trying to overpower us we can remember that we have the very Light of Life living in us and there is no way all the power of hell would be able to overcome this living Light. Even when you are at your weakest even when you feel like the light within you is small, the devil's darkness is no match for you.

Imagine yourself in a totally dark room and you can't see anything, then someone turns on a small torch, your focus is immediately on the light and even though it is very small the massive blackness of the room has to change and has to yield to the light. So in our lives we have to look at Jesus Christ the Light in our world and so in our circumstances and as we meditate on this fact our hearts will fill with faith to expect His victory in our dark situation, **Ephesians 5:8-16**.

Gary Chapman in his book 'the **Love languages of God**' points out what John is pointing to here that Jesus understood that we all have different ways of expressing and receiving love so Jesus used words of affirmation; quality time; gifts; service and physical touch. All these can be seen in the life of Jesus as He shows the Love of His Father to all people. We will build on this in a later study.

This same Jesus was who John knew personally, he had cared for His mother, but also had called people through all the generations to today. Jesus did so many mighty works on this earth but at the same time stating 'Rather it is the Father, living in Me, who is doing His work' **John 14:10**

Jesus didn't go around proclaiming Himself as God during His thirty three years on earth. He acknowledged that He was the Son of God, the Messiah. He referred to God as His Father but He never made the assertion that He was the most High God. He told His disciples that the Father God was greater and mightier than He, **John 14:28**. He hadn't come to earth just as God, He had come also as man with all the limitations of humanity. Since God was His Father He was not born with the sin nature that had been passed along to the sons of Adam. By being born of a woman, in all other respects He became a man and called Himself the Son of Man or Son of Adam. He went before us and opened the way for us to live the same way He did. We are expected to do the same mighty works by the anointing and power of the Holy Spirit just like Jesus did, (**John 14:12**). **What a challenge for us today!!**

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

Man is something really special, made by God in His image to have fellowship firstly with Him and then with each other. Some people get the idea that God made man so He would have someone to dominate. But God is no dominator He is Love and love needs to have someone to give to. That's why God made man. He made Him so He could give him His love. God could have given His love to the angels, and He did that. But giving to angels didn't provide total fulfilment. Why? Because angels are not made in His image. It is the same for us with animals they are wonderful to have but there comes a time when we need communication on our own level and they don't provide that. We have a deep desire to have fellowship with someone like ourselves. Fellowship with the Father and Son means that God and Jesus come to us and dwell with us, **John 14:23**. When we have fellowship with God and Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, then we shall also have fellowship with other believers. Dare to believe you're something really special today – a one-of-a-kind creation made by God in His very own image. Dare to receive His love and dare to love Him back.

'We write this to make our joy complete' 1 John 1:4.

When believers have fellowship with God, they also have joy. If the readers of this letter come into fellowship with God then John will have joy and his readers will have joy too. Then John states his joy will be complete. Christ's gospel brings joy. Jesus said: 'I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.' Think about that, Christ's joy is in us as the fruit of the Holy Spirit. Joy is worked out as **J**esus, **O**thers, **Y**ourself. So what is your

10. Why is Light a helpful description of God? Is there a dark side to God? Give reasons.

11. What does John say is the reward of walking in the Light?

12. Which sins does John say we are purified from?

13. Who are we kidding when we say we are not sinning?

14. Is sin the same today as it was in Jesus' day or have traditions changed the goal posts?

15. What do we have to do to get rid of sin? **Psalm 32:5**

16. What does Jesus do with our sin?

17. Where is our sin now? **Psalm 103:11-12.**

18. Read **Psalm 51:1-17** as a wonderful example of a prayer of confession. What sin had David committed prior to this prayer and what sort of life did he have after the prayer? When did God find out about the sin?

Don't forget the prayer at the end of lesson 1

Learn by heart – 1 John 1:9 'If we confess our sin He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sin and cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness.'