

CHRISTMAS: TO MAKE VISIBLE WHAT WAS HIDDEN

1 John 1:1-4
December 19, 2010

INTRODUCTION: John wasted not time in this letter to speak of **“the Word of life, the life was manifested...”** to reveal, to make visible what was hidden. God did not reveal Himself in human flesh until Christ’s earthly ministry when the divine or eternal life became visible to mankind.

It is on thing to say it’s not about me, but about Him, however, John never mentions in **1 John** or the **Gospel of John** that he is the author. Instead, he dives right in to make Christ known through his own personal experience.

As John pens this letter, he is now in his early 90’s, it’s around 90-95 A.D. and he has known Jesus a lifetime; probably around 60 years.

John wrote knowing that he was stating truth that was diametrically opposed to the influence of the heretical views of Gnosticism. The Gnostic’s philosophical dualism taught that matter was inherently evil and spirit was good. They accept some form of Christ’s deity, but denied His humanity. He could not, according to them, have taken on a physical body, since matter was evil; therefore, the denial of the incarnation.

Others taught that Christ’s spirit descended on the man Jesus at His baptism, but left Him before the crucifixion. To them, the body was merely the prison in which the spirit was incarcerated. Therefore, sin committed in the body had no connection to or effect on the spirit.

John forcefully asserts in his letter that they had heard, seen, and touched Jesus Christ Who had truly come in the flesh.

1 John 4:2, “By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God”

John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John is the son of Zebedee, the brother of James. He was used by God to pen the **Gospel of John, I, II, & III John**, and **Revelation**.

♦ **John was with Jesus when He performed His first miracle in Cana of Galilee**

John 2:11, “This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.”

♦ **John was among the Apostles (sent ones), Luke 6**

♦ **John was one of three who were with Jesus on the Mt. of Transfiguration (Luke 9:28-29).**

John saw the glory that belonged to the Lord Jesus from all eternity, a glory veiled by His flesh

◆ **John sat at the Passover feast at which Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper (Luke 13:23-25).**

John was leaning on Jesus' bosom at His right hand, a place of honor.

◆ **John left the upper room and went to Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-33).**

John was in the shadows of the Garden when Jesus poured out His prayer to the Father.

◆ **When Jesus went to Calvary, all the disciples forsook Him, but one.**

On the cross, He saw His mother and the disciple He loved.

◆ **John was the first of the disciples to visit the empty tomb. John 20:2-5)**

John was intimately associated with the Lord Jesus Christ from the outset of His ministry until He rose from the dead. It is believed that after his return from Patmos he served as a Pastor in a church in Ephesus. He writes to his spiritual children to share what he had seen and heard of the abundant life.

I. HIS PERMANENCE. 1a

"That which was from the beginning..."

John wrote the Gospel to prove the deity of Jesus, assuring His humanity.

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"

John wrote **1 John** to prove His humanity, assuring His deity. The truth of the incarnation, when all creation came into existence, our Lord was in existence, **"from the beginning."**

If Jesus were not truly man as well as truly God when He suffered and died, He could not have been an acceptable substitutionary sacrifice for sin.

"Heaven opened herself and placed her most precious one in a human womb. The omnipotent, in one instant, made Himself breakable. He Who had been spirit became pierceable. He Who was larger than the universe became an embryo. And He Who sustains the world with a word chose to be dependent upon the nourishment of a young girl."

God Had Come Near – Max Lucado

John connects the Jesus Christ of his personal relationship to the very source and origin of everything. John is then telling us that this Jesus Christ of our experience is the One Who stands with the Father in the beginning before creation itself.

II. THE PERSONAL EXPERIENCE. 1b

“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, the life was manifested”

His main point is that one thing must be clear to us from John, the Word of life can be known and experienced by people.

The **“Word of life”** is the persona and work of Jesus Christ as proclaimed in the gospel.

John 1:14, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”

John had experienced that reality through his natural senses and was a true witness to the incarnation in its completeness. **Word** carries the sense of authority and disclosure. When God speaks we meet Him. By His Word He creates, by His Word He is known, by His Word He judges, forgives, and fulfills.

◆ **John heard**

Heard the parables, sermons, private words of instruction. Translates a verb indicating a completed occurrence in the past with an impact in the present. Even though it had been 60 years, what he heard was still a vivid truth in his heart.

◆ **“Seen with our eyes”**

Past action with ongoing impact; means to gaze; it is where we get our word for theater. He is emphasizing how real and actual his own experience is.

◆ **“with our eyes”**

Not referring to some kind of spiritual vision that was only in his mind. Christ was not a mystical, phantom image, as some alleged, but a real man whom John had observed daily for 3 years by means of normal eyesight.

John’s Greek is the simplest in the N.T. Referred to as “Dick & Jane” Greek; short, crisp sentences and plain, clear words. He is intensifying the power of what is written.

◆ **“We have looked upon”**

A long, searching gaze; to watch intently. John is saying that after several years of seeing the stunning and unmistakable realities of Who He is: the Lord and God; Messiah and Savior. They looked on as He, with supernatural power over demon, disease, nature, and death, and the authority to forgive sins, revealed His nature.

◆ **“Our hands have handled”**

(touched with our hands). To feel after, to grope (like a blind man). In **John 13 & 21**, John leaned on Jesus’ chest.

◆ **“The life was manifested”**

To reveal; to make visible what was hidden. The word for manifest is where we get our English word phenomenon. He wants his readers to know that the decision God made which is described as the **“Word of life”** has become vivid and clear, personal and knowable.

John, himself, had experienced a concrete personal relationship with the Word of life and those who read these words are invited to enter into fellowship with Him.

III. THE PROCLAMATION. 2-3a

“and we have seen and bear witness and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us, that which we have seen and heard we declare to you.”

That which was manifested to him, the Word of life, became the basis for his proclamation of truth.

John Stott said, *“The historical manifestation of the Eternal Life was proclaimed, not monopolized. The revelation was given to the few for the many. They were to disperse it to the world.”*

John 20:30-31, “And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

1 John 5:20, “And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.”

“He hideth our unrighteousness with His righteousness, He covereth our disobedience with His obedience, He shadoweth our death with His death, that the wrath of God cannot find us.”

Henry Smith

IV. THE PARTNERSHIP. 3b

“that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

“fellowship” – an authentic partnership with Jesus Christ and fellow believers. We have mutual participation in a shared life. It’s the word for generosity.

V. THE POSSESSION. 4

1 John 1:4, “And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.”

“Joy is something very deep and profound, something that affects the whole and entire personality. In other words it comes to this; there is only one thing that can give true joy and that is contemplation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He satisfies my mind; He satisfies my emotions; He satisfies my every desire. He and His great salvation include the whole personality and nothing less, and in Him I am complete. Joy, in other words, is the response and the reaction of the soul to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Lloyd-Jones

John wanted his readers to experience the **joy** that comes from understanding the reality of Christ, the saving truth of the gospel, and the fellowship that each Christian has with God and fellow believers. It is then that all true followers of Jesus will have His “joy” made full in themselves.”

CONCLUSION: Joy to the world, the Lord has come. Let earth receive her King.