

COUNTRY BIBLE CHURCH

1ST JOHN

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LESSON 1 – Introduction (2-25-25)

Like most of the Epistles in the New Testament, all three of these letters are special. They are not written as books commonly are at the present time, to elucidate some subject in which the writer is specially interested, without much reference to current events. They are produced for a special occasion, to meet an existing difficulty and danger. The First Epistle is written to grapple with the **insidious** ^{adj.} [harmful but enticing] **seductions** [something that attracts or charms], of **antinomian** ^{adj.} [one who rejects a socially established morality], **Gnosticism**, [the practice of various cults whose conviction is that matter is evil and deliverance comes through **gnosis** (esoteric knowledge of spiritual truth essential for salvation)] as Gnostics threatened the Church at large.

The Second Epistle deals with the same danger as it affected a particular family. The third threats of a corresponding danger arising from lawlessness of another kind—high-handed rebellion against apostolic authority.

The First Epistle is a companion to the Gospel, and lays the foundations of Christian conduct as a whole. The other two have no special relation to the Gospel, and deal with only one or two points of conduct, the duty of hospitality, and its limits; and the treatment of those who promote heresy and schism.

Humanly speaking, we may say that, but for the pressure of Gnosticism upon the Church, the First and Second Epistles, and perhaps also the Gospel of St. John, would never have been written; and again that, but for the turbulence of Diotrephes, the Third Epistle would never have been written.

[The name Diotrephes, means “*nourished by Zeus.*” A church member whom John reprimanded for his contentious behavior (3 John 9). He spoke against John “*with evil words*” (v 10); had resisted John’s authority by refusing to receive an earlier letter; and refused to show Christian hospitality, urging others to do likewise. He may have been an official in the church who abused his position since he liked “*to put himself first*” (v 9).] Walter A. Elwell and Barry J. Beitzel, “Diotrephes,” in Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 629.

[The paragraph below represents the thinking of the Gnostics.]

The gospel was very good as far as it went; but the Gnostics had “*a more excellent way.*” They understood the gospel better than the apostles themselves. It was a mistake to suppose that the historical facts and moral precepts of the Scriptures were to be taken literally. It was a still greater mistake to suppose that the Scriptures contained all that was necessary for man’s spiritual well-being. There was a higher knowledge, a more profound gnosis (knowledge); which the Gnostic could attain to and impart.

The philosopher whose mind was enlightened by this esoteric (superior knowledge) need not trouble himself much about his conduct. His soul was steeped in light, everything else was comparatively of unimportance. Good actions could not greatly increase his enlightenment; bad actions could not seriously detract from it.

This is how the Gnostic regarded the root of truth and morality of Christian teaching. **(1)**

Righteousness was made of no account in comparison with intellectual illumination. **(2)**

Scripture was made of no account in comparison with a knowledge which superseded it. **(3)** The work of Christ was made of no account; for there could be

no need of an atonement if there was no real evil in sin.

Besides this Greek doctrine of the supremacy of intellect and the all-importance of intellectual enlightenment, most Gnostics also taught the Oriental doctrine that matter, with everything material, is evil. This principle also entailed a complete subversion of Christian doctrine and Christian ethics. **(1)** If the material universe is utterly evil, it cannot have been created by the supremely good God, but by some evil, or at least some inferior, power. **(2)** The supremely good God must be utterly removed from such a universe. **(3)** The Incarnation is impossible; for the Deity could never consent to be united to a material body that is incorrigibly (incapable of being corrected) impure.

In morals opposite conclusions were drawn from this Gnostic premise of the inherently impure character of everything material. **(1)** If the human body is utterly evil, it must be subdued and chastised to the utmost, that the enlightened spirit may be freed from the burden of so vile an instrument. **(2)** If the human body is utterly evil, it is a matter of indifference what it does; and so worthless an instrument may be made to

commit any act from which the spirit can derive additional knowledge.

Thus the “*more excellent way*” of these advanced thinkers “turned the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denied our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ” (Jude 4). Can we wonder at the stern, unyielding attitude which St. John adopted in confronting it? “Liars,” “seducers,” “false prophets,” “deceivers,” “antichrists,” seem not too strong appellations to give to the promoters of teaching such as this. The apostle’s reiterations of the impossibility of light without holiness and without love, of the impossibility of love without obedience, of the impossibility of combining birth from God with love of the world and its lusts, or with hatred of one’s brethren,—become doubly understandable when we remember the (false) doctrines at which these repeated assurances are aimed. Over and over again, first from this point of view and then from that, St. John solemnly asserts our need of the atoning work of Christ, the necessity of believing in it, and the obligation to act on it. To deny or trifle with these great truths is to leave the family of God for the dominion of the evil one.

Gnostics may boast of their knowledge; but believers in the Incarnation have their knowledge too. They know

that they have passed over, out of death into life (*1 John 3:14*). They know that they are children of God, and as such are freed from sin by his Son (*1 John 5:18-19*). They know that the Son of God has come in the flesh, and has given them a mind wherewith to know, not the remote abstraction (a theoretical idea rather than physical) which the Gnostic calls God, but the loving Father in whom believers can abide through his Son Jesus Christ (*1 John 5:20*). “St. John has been called the apostle of the absolute. Those who would concede to Christianity no higher dignity than that of relative and provisional truth, will fail to find any countenance for their doctrine in the New Testament. But nowhere will they encounter more earnest opposition to it than in the pages of the writer who is pre-eminently the apostle of charity. St. John preaches the Christian creed as the one absolute certainty” (Liddon, “Bampton Lectures,” lect. 5.). H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., *1 John*, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), v–vi.

What do we know about John?

Throughout church history it has been assumed on the basis of tradition and the witness of some of the early church fathers that this first epistle was written by John, the same man who wrote the **Gospel of**

John, as well as **2 John** and **3 John**. This is because of the vocabulary, the style, many of the major themes and emphases in this epistle are also found in the Gospel of John. We know that he is called the son of Zebedee, the author of the Gospel of John and two other epistles, and he is the brother of James who was also a disciple. He was called the Greater or James the elder. This is mentioned in *Matthew 4:21; 10:2; Mark 1:19; 3:17*. He was probably younger than James and his mother was Salome, *Matthew 27:56* cf. *Mark 15:40*. He was born in Bethsaida. Since Salome, according to *John 19:25*, was the sister of Mary, the mother of the humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, that tells us that John was a first cousin to Jesus.

Zebedee was clearly a successful and wealthy businessman. He owned several ships and a fishing fleet (*Mark 1:20; Luke 5:3; John 19:27*) and he also had servants operating on the boats. We also know that when Jesus was arrested and taken to the Praetorium and then to the house of the high priest, that John went into the house of the high priest because he knew the high priest. So apparently it was a wealthy aristocratic family that was connected and known by the people in the highest places of power in

Judea. So John is not just some small fisherman who has a boat and goes out and throws a new net out by himself on occasions and barely makes ends meet. We also can infer that from an early age John was positive to doctrine. It is very likely that he was only eighteen or nineteen years of age when Jesus first called him to be one of His disciples. So he is the youngest of the disciples. We know that he was responsive to the teaching and ministry of John the Baptist and became involved with John as one of his disciples.

John, Peter, and John's brother **James** are the three disciples closest to the Lord. We see them on the Mount of Transfiguration with the Lord. John is always close by; he is always involved intimately with what is going on in our Lord's ministry. He is an interesting character. We know from his background he has a good education. He writes very simple Greek but it is good Greek. He has a profound use of vocabulary that can be and should be interpreted with several meanings. He chose words that were loaded with nuance because he was trying to communicate several things, and it shows he was a deep thinker, a profound thinker who had thought things through for years. We know that he was a passionate man and

zealous for the Lord. He and his brother are called "*the sons of thunder.*" We often note that he was a man of character and courage. When Jesus is arrested and all of the disciples leave, who are the two that hang back? Peter and John. But Peter hides out in the courtyard and he denies the Lord, but John is the one who says, "I'm John the son of Zebedee, let me in; I know the high priest and his family." He is the only disciple that we know of that stood at the foot of the cross. Everyone else scatters but he stays there and Jesus commits to John the care of His mother Mary.

It is to John and Peter that Mary Magdalene goes after she discovers that our Lord's body is missing from the tomb, so he and Peter are the first of the disciples to come to the empty tomb and discover that Christ has been resurrected from the dead. After the ascension of our Lord we find that Peter and John are frequently together in the early days of the church. In Acts chapters 3 & 4 we find Peter and John going throughout Jerusalem evangelizing. Peter and John go to Samaria, Peter and James are at the interview with Paul mentioned in Galatians chapter two, and Peter and James and John are all described by Paul as the pillar apostles of the

church in Galatians chapter two, verse 9. By Acts chapter 15 where he is seen as one of the leaders in the church he passes off the scene, and we don't see John anymore until suddenly he appears as the author of his three epistles and we find him exiled to the island of Patmos by Domitian and that is when he receives the Revelation of Jesus Christ. There are no dates assigned to the other epistles.

In his epistles John is concerned for the sheep because of the influx of false teaching that is coming in and threatening. If they succumb to the false teachers that will mean they break fellowship with apostolic doctrine and then break fellowship with God, and they will be failures then in the Christian life and there will then be shame at the judgment seat of Christ.

1 John is a further development for us of the mechanics of the spiritual life as outlined by the Lord in John chapter fifteen. Two of the words that are going to be prominent here are going to be abiding and love. The reason he emphasizes love is because love represents the highest stage of the spiritual life. Love, then, is a term that describes the mature Christian life. So, the importance of love must also be taught to the secondary, adolescent and the lesser childhood stages

of the Christian life. So John is going to push us into a greater understanding of these things so that we can employ the mechanics of fellowship with God.

Abide in English relates to the concept of an abode. An abode is where we live. When we reside in the **Divine Dynasphere**, our soul's fortress, that God has provided for us, is protected. When we are in an abode that is where we eat, where we sleep, where we are protected from the elements, from adversity. When we eat, we are communing with one another, it is a picture in Scripture of fellowship, that is where we have fellowship with the Lord. But when we are outside the abode we are not abiding, that is where we are vulnerable to the assaults of adversity, of the sin nature, of the **Cosmic System**, and that is outside of the fortress of our soul that God has provided for us. John is going to emphasize the importance of abiding in Christ and what characterizes the person who is abiding.

When we are "in Christ", we are abiding in the **Divine Dynasphere**, which is where our soul's fortress is located.

Psalm 18:2 *"The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."*

Psalm 28:7 “The LORD is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; Therefore my heart exults, And with my song I shall thank Him.” Dr. Robert Dean NT-23-1 John

LESSON 2 – Introduction Part 2- (2-27-25)

Why First John?

The point is that there are four purpose statements in the epistle, and each relates only to that section of the epistle where they are found. None of these, control the entire scene of the epistle.

1 John 5:13 is not the only purpose statement in the epistle: ***“These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.”*** There is another purpose statement found in **1 John 1:4** ***“These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.”*** Then there is another in **1 John 2:1** ***“My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.”*** The last purpose statement, which relates to salvation and knowing that we are saved, only covers the section from **1 John 5:6-5:12.**

Since the fall of man in Genesis 3 the human race has been continuously under assault. We have been

under assault because of our involvement as extensions to the angelic conflict. As part of that Satan has a plethora of concepts, philosophies, religions, ideas, rationales, which he continuously promotes among the human race in order to deceive mankind, to blind our minds. That involves thought, ideas, beliefs, and Satan is involved in blinding our minds to captivate the human race and to destroy the witness of believers. John writes this first epistle to church age believers who are threatened with false teaching coming from those who at one time had been associated with the apostles and with truth, those who had at one time had known doctrine and were squared away doctrinally and are now teaching pseudo systems of spirituality which threatens the spiritual life of these believers to whom John is writing.

There are a lot of parallels to what was being taught in that day in terms of false doctrine and what is being taught today. This comes under the general category for the most part of the **Cosmic System**. Christians throughout the church age have been under assault from the outside and from the inside—internally within the church. The external assault that comes from the world or the **Cosmic System** are seen mirrored and

reflected back and echoed by strange doctrines, new theological developments and concepts that are promoted within Christianity and under the guise of spirituality, Christianity, and the truth. So it is vital for Christians to be able to spot these deceptions so that we are not taken in by false doctrine, so that we are not distracted from the spiritual life, and so that our fellowship is not broken. The main idea in *1 John* is the concept of fellowship and the one thing that comes across that just ought to smash every modern Christian right between the eyes is that John is saying that it is false belief that that breaks fellowship with God, not simply wrong behavior. John's emphasis throughout this epistle that it is going to be more on the wrong beliefs that produce wrong behavior than the wrong behavior or sin itself.

So for believers in the church age we are assaulted from the outside and from the inside. The outside assault comes from what the Bible calls the world. The Greek word for world is *kosmos* and it has to do with an orderly systematic arrangement of something. God is looking at this from the fact that Satan has various systems of pseudo-truth that he uses to influence, distract and deceive the human race. This is a major theme in the first epistle of John. In **1 John 2:15** John

writes ***“Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”*** Worldliness is ideological, it has to do with the way we think. That, of course, culminates in certain actions, but the emphasis is kosmos is thinking.

1 John 2:16 “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. [17] The world is passing away, and (also) its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.”

In ***1 John 3:13*** he writes ***“Do not be surprised, brethren, if the world hates you.”*** This emphasizes the fact as a believer, we are going to be in conflict with cosmic thinking. It is a war! What we think is antithetical (being in direct and unequivocal opposition) to what the world thinks. In ***James 3:13-15*** worldly thinking is identified as ***earthly, natural*** (ψυχικός - psychikos)—related to the soulish man (unbeliever) not the spiritual man (believer) — and ***demonic***, i.e. it is the same kind of thinking that Satan has, it is rooted and grounded in arrogance. There is going to be a battle; there is a conflict that rages between the way a Christian is supposed to think and the way the world

wants us to think. This is a manifestation of the Angelic Conflict.

John hits us with this strong emphasis on the reality of doctrinal absolutes: that we can know certain things and they are true, and the solution to the problems in life are based on the absolute truth of God's Word. He further goes on to say that fellowship with the apostles is based on doctrinal agreement with the apostles. Fellowship with the apostles is based on agreement with their doctrine. If you can't have fellowship with the apostles you can't have fellowship with Christ. That is the logic. The only way to have fellowship with Christ is to have right doctrine; wrong doctrine means no fellowship. It is not just behavior, it is belief, and that is what was being attacked at that time.

We must understand what John means by fellowship. It is not a matter of social interaction, it is not a matter of having fun times, dinner together, going out and having a good time or just simply enjoying good conversation with other believers. That is not what the Bible means by fellowship. What the Bible means by fellowship is the behavior and activity that is specifically centered and under girded by doctrine, by a relationship with Christ where even the subject of

conversation is doctrinal. Over against society that is immersed in relativism John asserts that we can know things absolutely, and that gives us confidence. Thirty-six times John uses one of the two Greek words for knowledge. So a major theme in the epistle is on what we know, and this then gives us confidence. Four times John asserts that we can have confidence is our knowledge. ***1 John 2:28 “Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.”***

1 John 3:21 “Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God.”

“***Heart***” is the mental function of our soul where doctrine resides, and if the doctrine doesn’t condemn us we can have confidence before God.

1 John 4:17 “By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world.”

1 John 5:14 “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.”

Therefore, as believers we can know certain things that are true and have confidence in that knowledge. The Bible, biblical truth, is not based on the subjective, shifting sands of subjective impressions, experiences, emotions, psychological theories, or sociological methods, but on the correct understanding of God's Word. John is saying that right belief produces right behavior which culminates in maximum happiness. Joy is the end product of the spiritual life. But to get to that point we have to start with right belief that then produces right behavior, and only then will we ever get to the goal of having the maximum happiness that Jesus Christ promised.

LESSON 3 (3-6-25)

Reduced to a formula: **The filling of the Spirit + knowledge of doctrine + application of doctrine = maximum happiness.**

That is the only way we can get to stability, contentment, and maximum joy in life. But if it stops with knowledge of doctrine and it never eventuates in changed thinking and changed behavior, then all it is, is an intellectual trip which is tantamount to Gnosticism.

We have to understand the purpose for this epistle. There are four purpose statements in the epistle. The first is **1 John 1:4** *“These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.”*

What we will see as we go through our verse-by-verse analysis is that each purpose statement comes at the conclusion of that section. Fellowship and the message of eternal life is the subject of the first three verses, and he is writing that so that our joy may be complete. The next purpose statement is **1 John 2:1** *“My little children, I am writing these things [1:5-10] to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.”*

The next purpose statement is **1 John 2:26** *“These things I have written to you concerning those who are trying to deceive you.”*

There is a warning to those in this epistle to those who have *“gone out from us but were not of us”* and who were deceptive. That statement governs the section from **2:18-2:24**. The last purpose statement, which relates to salvation and knowing that we are saved, only covers the section from **5:6-5:12**.

When we look at this epistle there are ten things that are denied by the false teachers.

1. They denied a connection between behavior and fellowship with God. It doesn't matter what I do, as long as I confess my sins, I'm in fellowship. The point of the Christian life, however, is to stay in fellowship. There are the antinomians who deny any connection between behavior and fellowship: 1:6; 2:29; 3:6, 10.
2. They denied the idea of personal sin and the sin nature. "They say we have no sin," John 1:8-10.
3. They denied the reality of Christ's sufferings on the cross to propitiate the righteousness and justice of God.
4. They denied the need to obey the commandments of Scripture, which is ultimately a rejection of the authority of Christ in the every-day life of the believer.
5. They denied the importance of application of doctrine beyond just a certain academic intellectual or idealized level, 2:6. That was typical of Gnosticism.

6. They denied the mandate to love one another, 2:9.
7. They denied the need to confess sin for restoration of fellowship and filling of the Holy Spirit.
8. They denied the necessity of identifying and removing human viewpoint thinking from the soul and replacing it with divine viewpoint doctrine, 2:15-17.
9. They denied that Jesus was the Messiah, the eternal second person of the Trinity, 2:2, 21; 5:15.
10. They denied the reality of the incarnation in 4:2.

The problem with denying the reality of the incarnation is that in the incarnation Jesus Christ establishes the precedent for living the spiritual life. It is in the incarnation that Jesus Christ demonstrates eight of the ten stress-busters. He doesn't have to demonstrate confession because he never sinned. He showed that through the filling of the Holy Spirit, man can face and surmount any adversity or problem in life. That is the sufficiency of doctrine. If you reject the incarnation then basically what you are doing is attacking the foundation not only for salvation but for the entire spiritual life. That is why the thrust of 1 John is not about salvation; it is about the spiritual life.

THE EPISTLE OF 1st JOHN

The early church attributed this book to the Apostle John. The vocabulary and writing style do match that of the Gospel of John. The book was written in circa 95 AD. John was living in Ephesus at the time and wrote the letter to the churches of Ephesus and Laodicea and another unknown church probably at Pergamos.

In this Epistle, John is taking us from oral traditions of what he and others witnessed and is moving us to a written deposition . . . that is to a finished canon of Scriptures by 96 AD.

It seems to be easier to understand 1 John:1-4, if we start with the gospel of John 1:1-4. This was the **first** “in the beginning.”

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Expanded verse

John 1:1 - In a beginning (which was not a beginning in eternity past, there always existed the) **Word/Logos of God, and the Word/Logos was with God** (the Father in eternity past) **and the Word/Logos was** (always) **God.**

Logos – λόγος, ① a communication whereby the mind finds expression, word

Note: Logos means 'communication by which ideas are transmitted/transferred'. Christ is the One who expresses all bible doctrine (1 Cor 2: 16). Logos is the concept that controls the universe . . .infinity . . . the supreme mover is the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is also the outward manifestation/appearance of the invisible God the Father. Logos represents the intelligence, express thought and vocabulary by which thinking species organize words into concepts, categories etc. Finally, Logos expresses Order-design-purpose.

John 1:2 He was in the beginning with God.

Expanded verse

John 1:2 He always existed in eternity past, face to face with God...

John 1:3 All things came into being by Him and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Expanded verse

John 1:3 All things came into being by Him (God the Son), and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

John 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

Expanded verse

John 1:4 In Him, kept on existing life (eternal life) . . .and the life was the Light of men.

I John 1:5 demonstrates that the message from the gospel of John carried on to the epistle of 1 John:

1 John 1:5 And this is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

Now we will turn to **1 John and start with 1 John 1:1-4.** The message of 1 John includes the doctrine pertaining to the incarnation of Christ, all things relative to the first advent. Also, the Divine Dynasphere was provided by God the Father for the true humanity of Christ, not an optical illusion. Our Lord Jesus Christ in His humanity, functioned under this power system - the Divine Dynasphere, rather than relying on the essence of His deity and it was the means of challenging the Cosmic System with its power systems on which Satan utilizes and administers the rulership of this world.

LESSON 4 (3-13-25)

This “from the beginning” is **the third beginning.**

1 John 1:1 What *was* from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—

What was from the beginning - ΕΙΜΙ, εἰμί, (v. imperfect, active. indicative) The imperfect tense means that “something is ongoing in the past. That means that “**was**” was already in existence, not that it “came into existence at creation.”

Verb - A word that describes an action, state of being, or the production of a result.

Imperfect tense - The imperfect tense is called a progressive imperfect which denotes action in progress in past time.

active voice - Our Lord Jesus Christ produced the action of the verb during His incarnation by functioning inside of the Divine Dynisphere.

Indictive mood – It is declarative for the reality of the hypostatic union at the point of the virgin birth, plus the humanity of Christ relying upon the Divine Dynasphere rather than the independent function of His own deity. This is a very important point which is emphasized in the first three verses and becomes a

major issue in the conflict between God's sphere of power and Satan's sphere of power.

from the beginning – ARCHE, ἀρχή, (n. gen. sing. fem.). ① the commencement of something as an action, process, or state of being, beginning, i.e. a point of time at the beginning of a duration. ② beginning, origin in the absolute sense.

Here “*from the beginning*” does not connote eternity past as John uses it in the Gospel of John 1:1. Here it connotes, not eternity past but to a specific beginning, the virgin birth, the first advent of Christ who is the manifest person of the Trinity.

Here we have the point of the virgin birth and a specific beginning in time. What was from the beginning was the first advent of Christ, the hypostatic union, our Lord' humanity functioning inside of the divine dynasphere. The emphasis of this epistle is on the first advent of Christ because the Gnostics denied it in part or in total.

There is another very important “***in the beginning.***”

Genesis 1:1 “***In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.***”

This was the **second beginning** which was the creation of the heavens and earth, but not the beginning of God.

Isaiah 43:13 ***"Even from eternity I am He, And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?"***

Matthew 19:4 ***And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning (of the restoration of earth.) **MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,*****

"Genesis 1:1 is not dated. This is the "second "in the beginning" mentioned in the Bible. All that the first verse in Genesis declares is that God created the heaven and the earth. Until you are ready to accept that fact, you are not prepared to read very much further in the Word of God, because the remainder of the Bible rests upon that first verse.

Did God create this universe or is it a happenstance? It is ridiculous to think that the universe just happened. As Edwin Conklin put it, "The probability of life originating by accident is comparable to the probability of the unabridged dictionary originating from an explosion in a print shop.

We don't know what God was doing before He created the heaven and the earth, but He was certainly doing something.

*This "in the beginning" we have already addressed which is the "first beginning which wasn't a beginning." It is found in the first verse in John's gospel: "**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**" He adds, [verse 2] "**The same was in the beginning with God.**" Then he comes to the act of creation: [verse 3] "**All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made**" (John 1:1–3).*

My friend, go back as far as you can think, beyond creation, back billions and trillions of years, and out of eternity comes the Lord Jesus Christ. Way back there He is already past tense; He is the "Ancient of Days" (Dan. 7:9, 13, 22).

*Notice that John has written, "**In the beginning was [not is] the Word.**" In other words, this is a beginning that doesn't even have a beginning because He (Christ) had no beginning. That is big stuff; it is bigger than my little mind can comprehend.*

*I am unable to grasp the immensity of it until I come to John 1:14 "**And the Word was made** [born]*

flesh....” That takes me back to Bethlehem where He was born, and I begin to catch on at that time.

This is the point: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have always existed and there was never a time when they did not exist.

Another important “*from the beginning*” is the **third beginning** which is found in **1 John 1:1** ***What was from the beginning, what we have heard*** (*In our day we cannot see Christ with our physical eyes, but we can see Him with the eye of faith.*), ***what we have seen with our eyes*** (the disciples were eyewitnesses to all that our Lord did), ***what we have looked at*** *(miracles, wonders, and signs) ***and touched with our hands*** (proving that Jesus was a human and not just a spirit), ***concerning the Word of Life*** (the Lord Jesus Christ).

****Acts 4:20 for we cannot stop speaking what we have seen and heard.***

John relied on empiricism (relying on observation, especially from the five natural senses of humans) to describe his experiences with Jesus Christ.

The third beginning is the one we started with 1 John 1:1— “That which was from the beginning,” which refers to the time Christ came into this world at

Bethlehem. When He was about thirty years old, John became acquainted with Him. John and his brother James met Him in Jerusalem. Later they were with their father, mending nets, when Jesus came by and called them to follow Him.” J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Commentary, electronic ed., vol. 5 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 756.

1 John 1:2 and the life was *manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was *manifested to us--

The “Word” (Jesus Christ) was in existence before the world was created; He was in existence before He was manifested (to make evident or certain by showing or displaying). Jesus is the eternal life that is manifested.

* manifested – PHANEROO, φανερώω, (v.api); ① to cause to become visible, reveal, expose publicly

LESSON 5 (3-18-25)

“For the life was manifested.” That is, the life was brought out into the open where men could see it. John is talking about the Word of Life, the Lord Jesus Christ, as we shall see in the next verse.

On one occasion after I had given a message, a man whom I would call a smart aleck came to me with this

question: “You talked about eternal life. What is eternal life? I would like to know what eternal life is.” So, I gave him this verse: “The life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.”

Then I said to him, “The eternal life that John is talking about is none other than Jesus Christ. If you want a definition, eternal life is a Person, and that Person is Christ. It is so simple that even you can grasp it. You either have Christ, or you don’t have Christ. You either trust Christ, or you don’t trust Christ. If you do trust Christ, you have eternal life. If you don’t trust Christ, you don’t have eternal life. Now, since that’s eternal life, do you have eternal life?” He turned and walked away without answering, which was evidence that he did not have eternal life, and he did not want to pursue the matter any further.

J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Commentary, electronic ed., vol. 5 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 758.

“We declare to you a Being both eternal and yet seen and known by us.” That of ver. 2 is, “This Being, in his character of the Life, became visible, and in him are centered all the relations between God and man.”

H. D. M. Spence-Jones, ed., 1 John, The Pulpit Commentary (London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909), 2.

This refers to Jesus Christ Who is the mediator between God and man. We must go through Him in order to have access to God the Father (G.F.)

1 Timothy 2:5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.

Matthew 11:27 "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father; and no one knows the Son, except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.

1 John 5:20 And we know (v.rai) that the Son of God has come, and has given (v.rai) us understanding, in order that we might know Him (G.F.) who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

*"A person who knows God has an intimate personal relationship with Him. And that relationship is eternal, not temporal. Eternal life is not simply endless existence. Everyone will exist somewhere forever *(Matt. 25:46), but the question is, In what condition or in what relationship will they spend eternity?" Edwin A.*

Blum, "John," in The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.), 331.

****Matthew 25:46 "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."***

LESSON 6 (3-20-25)

Read: **1 John 5:6-12**

John 17:3 "This is eternal life, that they may know You (GF), "the only true God", and Jesus Christ whom You (GF), have sent.

"the only true God" - Read: John 5:41-44

This phrase can also be used to verify that our God is the only true God and there is no other.

1 John 2:25 And this is the promise which He Himself made to us: eternal life.

The people needed a promise like this so they could continue to rely on the divine promise of God concerning eternal life. There were many unbelievers who sought to undermine the believers' conviction that Jesus is the Christ and that they had eternal life. *John 5:1–18* is one example of this; however, believers could be sure they possessed eternal life on the basis of God's testimony to that fact.

Read: **John 5:1–18**

“John dramatically reemphasizes through repetition of these terms in vv. 2, 3 (v. 1) the authority of his own personal experience as an eyewitness of Jesus’ life. Such repetition pointedly reminds his readers that John’s personal testimony refutes the false teachers who boasted arrogantly and wrongly about the Christ they had never seen or known.” *John MacArthur Jr., ed., The MacArthur Study Bible, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1964.*

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

Verses 1, 2, & 3 uses the word “seen” to make the point that the disciples were eye witnesses to Jesus Christ and all the wonderful things He did. Verses 1 & 3 also include the word “heard” which highlights the fact that they heard Christ Himself making promises, giving commands, declaring prophecies, and teaching Bible Doctrine (BD).

1 John 1:3 ...so that you too may have fellowship with us

John wanted believers to have fellowship with him and others who knew Jesus Christ because that could lead

them to have fellowship with the Father and the Son which would also strengthen their relationships.

It is a considerable mistake to treat the term “fellowship” as though it meant little more than fellowship and social relations with fellow believers. There is nothing wrong with that, but it can mean much more. It can also mean to be partakers or, partners with John in possessing eternal life.

The people were already saved, but they needed this letter if they were to enjoy real fellowship with the apostolic circle to which the author belonged.

fellowship – KOINONIA, κοινωνία, (n. nsf); ① close association involving mutual interests and sharing, association, communion, fellowship, close relationship.

This is also the same word that refers to “communion” that we take on the Lord’s Supper.

1 Corinthians 10:16 The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?

communion – KOINONIA, κοινωνία, (n. nsf); ②
attitude of good will that manifests an interest in a
close relationship,

④ participation, sharing

LESSON 7 (3-25-25)

Fellowship expresses the most intimate kind of relationship. Joy increases as believers become more intimate in their fellowship with God

What exactly does he mean by fellowship? That is crucial for understanding this passage and this epistle. He is setting up a flow of logic here and he is saying basically that we apostles have fellowship with God, and we want you believers to have fellowship with us. The logic is that if believers are in fellowship with the apostles, then they are also going to be in fellowship with God. Ultimately, what he is going to do is the basis of having right doctrine, and flowing from that right doctrine, right behavior, or application. It is not just a matter of right behavior; that's simple morality—go out and do right. It has to flow from a right belief system.

The apostles had fellowship with the believers so they could also have fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 1:9 God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

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

John 3:29 "He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. And so this joy of mine has been made full.

Extended verse

John 3:29 "He Who keeps on having the Bride (Church Age believers) . . . keeps on being the Groom (Jesus Christ – not John, is the groom who owns the bride). *But the friend of the groom – (John) who stands* (doing his job as unto the Lord) *and listens to Him* (concentration under a relaxed attitude) - *rejoices with great joy, because of the groom's voice* (teaching). *Therefore this joy of mine* (John) *was fulfilled in the past with the result that it is completed* (end of John's ministry/job as unto the Lord)."

Now, the Church is the “body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:12). We will become the “bride of Christ” at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb (Revelation 19:7-9). Jesus Christ is the groom. So here John is anticipating the Church Age. John is only a friend of the Groom which means he is only a minister in the Jewish Age.

Some males do not want to be wedded to Jesus Christ need to read Galatians 3:28.

LESSON 8 (3-27-25)

Joy, Emotion, Inner Happiness

Everything from 1 John 1:1 to the last verse of 1 John 5 is “*what we are communicating to you.*” Verse 5. That is the message. It is called the message of life in 1 John 1:2 which relates to the fact that this is necessary to experience the abundant life, the Christian life, of the believer. The purpose is “that you may have fellowship with us,” verse 3. In other words, if you want to have fellowship with us, you have to understand and apply the doctrine that is in this epistle or there is no fellowship. That means that fellowship in the Bible is something profound. This is not an advanced understanding of doctrine; this basically is related to understanding the person and work of Jesus Christ and

the importance of staying in fellowship with Him as part of advancing in the spiritual life. John is saying: “If you agree with us on this and you believe this and are applying in your life the things explained in this epistle, then you have fellowship with Him primarily, and secondarily the apostles.”

The purpose clause: *“that our joy may be made complete.”* The purpose for the readers is *“that they may have fellowship with us and with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ,”* and the purpose of John’s writing is *“that their joy might be made complete.”*

What does he mean by this? There are two categories of joy in the Scripture. One is emotional and has emotional dimensions and one does not. We should not confuse the two. There is a subtle idea that spirituality is evaluated by how we feel, and so emotion becomes that criterion. But there is a right and proper place for emotion. Emotion is the response or reaction to positive or negative things that go on around us and often they are glued to what we are thinking and what we believe, and many other factors, but they are not a standard or evaluation system and we should not make decisions in life based on emotions, that is where we get into trouble. But there is nothing wrong with emotion per se.

Emotions change because of the mentality of the soul, they are not the independent leader of the soul. So when John was writing here, he is not just talking about that inner happiness Jesus promised us, he is also talking about the fact that he is going to be downright happy if these folks he is writing to, get with the program and go forward in the spiritual life. There is nothing wrong with that.

There are some examples in Scripture which are the absolute of inner happiness. This is an inner happiness that is based on doctrine and it gives us stability no matter what the circumstances are.

Philippians 4:11–13 *Not that I speak from want, for I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am. I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.*

This is a product of the fruit of the Spirit, Galatians 5:22. This is not a joy that is based upon circumstances, upon

the presence or absence of friendships, upon monetary prosperity or any other human factor; it is based exclusively and totally on the word of God and orientation to His plan, and orientation to grace. This is joy that we can have that no matter what is going on in our life we can experience this kind of tranquility, contentment, and stability, and we are not knocked off our feet by negative circumstances. But at the same time that we have that kind of joy we can also be sad. There is a legitimacy to emotional sadness, as Paul says in 1 Thessalonians chapter four over the loss of a loved one: “*We grieve but not like those who have no hope.*” But at the same time we have the fruit of the Spirit which is joy. At the core of our being there is tranquility, contentment, and joy but there is also a sadness and sorrow over loss, but it is not like the unbeliever.