

I John 1:1-4 - Concerning the Word of Life

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 6-12-19

That Which Was “From the Beginning” - 1:1-4

John’s desire: strengthen their commitment to what they already _____: the gospel of Jesus Christ.

V. 1 - “from the beginning”

- In his gospel’s prologue (John 1:1): “beginning” = time _____ the creation of the world
- In Johannine letters, “from the beginning” (Gk. ἀπ’ ἀρχῆς, “ar arches”) has different meanings
 - 1:1 - connection with the “Word of life” that was heard, seen, handled by eyewitness
 - 2:24 - denotes message of the gospel as it was first heard by John’s readers
 - 2:13, 14 - refers to Christ who was from the beginning (cf. John 1:1)
 - 3:8 - connection with the devil, who is described as having “sinned from the beginning”
 - 2:7ff.; 3:11; II John 5, 6 - used in relation to the command to love one another, which was part of the gospel message they heard from the beginning
- In v. 1 = relative clause describing the Word of God _____, Jesus Christ
 - (Closer to John 1:14 than 1:1)
 - v. 1b - language of firsthand _____
 - 2 verbs in perfect tense:
 - “what we have heard” - from Gk. ἀκούω (“akouó”) - to hear
 - “what we have seen” - from Gk. ὁράω (“horaó”) - to see
 - “with the eyes” = no metaphor
 - Perfect tense emphasizes the present, ongoing result of a completed action
 - This = language of an _____
 - 2 verbs in aorist tense:
 - “what we have looked at” - from Gk. θεάομαι (“theaomai”) - to behold intelligently, to grasp the meaning/significance of something
 - “touched with our hands” - from Gk. ψηλαφάω (“psélaphaó”) - not momentary contact, but to feel about or grope, to handle or examine closely.
 - Aorists here emphasizes a particular time in the past, namely when the apostles had the opportunity to gaze thoughtfully upon the resurrected Lord and examine him intimately (cf. Luke 24:39; John 20:27)
 - This = the inspection of an _____
 - This Word of life = more than a spoken message. He _____ a message; one that was seen, touched, experienced with the senses.

1:2 - “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 life was manifested” or _____ → revelation: what God makes known
- What was manifested/seen was “testified” and “proclaimed”
 - Not monopolized, but shared. Given to few for the sake of the many.
- John’s unique credentials:
 - “testify” - from Gk. μαρτυρέω (“martureó”) - the authority of _____
 - “proclaim” - from Gk. ἀπαγγέλλω (“apangelló”) - the authority of _____
 - Herein lies all _____ authority

- This “eternal life” that he witnesses to/proclaims was “with the Father.” See John 1:
 - V.1 - “...the Word was **with** God...”
 - V. 2 - “He was in the beginning **with** God.”
 - Note: vv. 6-8, 15 - JtB = a “man sent” to “witness” and “testify”
 - V. 14 - “...glory as of the only begotten **from** the Father”
 - V. 18 - “...the only begotten God who is **in the bosom** of the Father...”
- “eternal life” ≠ an impersonal quality of life, but eternal Son of God
 - Not a “thing,” but God himself (triune life)
 - Communion = life (John 17:3)
 - Life is “___” Christ - the life of the Father is in the Son (John 1:4; I John 5:11-12)
 - Christ “___” life - the embodiment of the life of God, offered to us (John 11:25; 14:6; I John 5:12, 20)
 - Distinguish from biological life (*bios* vs. *zoe*)
 - Biological life ≠ eternal (Gen. 1:1)
 - “breath” of God (Gen. 2:7) distinguished Adam/Eve from bios
 - Relational reality: Face to face, mouth to nose

1:3 - John’s reason for witnessing/proclaiming: “_____” - Gk. κοινωμία (“koinónia”)

- Not a loose association based on mutual assent to a common purpose
- _____ that originates within God that he produces in his people (Eph
 - Ephesians 4:3b - “the unity of the Spirit” - a relational oneness defined by _____
- Expressed through commitment to a common _____ (v. 6; II John 11)
- *Koinonia* in John I = both relational and missional _____
- Only 4x in the Johannine letters (all 4 are here in vv. 3, 6, 7)
 - Confronting the belief that church is non-essential to the Christian life
 - There is no eternal life that is not personal communion with Christ and his church
 - Salvation is always personal/relational.
 - The church
 - Where it is received and experienced.
 - The visible manifestation of the invisible reality of who God is and what he desires to do in the world.
 - John: Fellowship with God means fellowship with _____.

The church is the one place in the world where the spiritual life of God, offered to us through Christ in the Spirit, is _____, _____, and _____.

- John Zizioulas, *Being as Communion*: “Academic theology may concern itself with doctrine, but it is the communion of the Church which makes theology into truth.”
- The true message produces true fellowship

1:4 - “These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.”

- Not “their” joy, but “ours”
- Apostolic joy is incomplete if fellow believers are lost to a false fellowship/community (cf. II John 4; III John 4)