

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST – LESSON 1

I John 1:1, 2

Introduction: It is general knowledge that the gospel of John was written to prove the deity of our Lord while the first epistle of John was written to prove the humanity of our Lord, and to rebuke the Gnostics. The Gnostics believed because of their human wisdom they could be “critics” of the Word of God. The height of hypocrisy is for sinful man to think that he can correct the Word of God. The Gnostic taught that in human nature there is a principle of dualism – that of spirit and body – two separate entities – each hostile to the other. Bible believers know that man is a trinity and the three are connected, not separate. The Gnostics taught that sin dwelt in the flesh only, making it totally evil. Accordingly, an individual could live in wickedness in the body, and at the same time be pure and holy in the spirit. The Bible is clear on the doctrine that when we are saved, the Spirit of God living inside has an influence on the soul and body. We can’t convert the body but we can control the body. Nine times John presents tests for knowing the truth, and uses the verb *ginosko* from which the Gnostics get their name.

Lesson Goals:

1. Hear the eyewitness testimony of John concerning the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To refute the doctrine of Gnosticism by hearing John’s testimony of the perfect blending of the Lord Jesus’ humanity and deity.

Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:

1. Ethical – According to Webster’s Dictionary: Relating to manners or morals; treating of morality; delivering precepts of morality; as *ethic* discourses or epistles; a system of moral principles; a system of rules for regulating the actions and manners of men in society.
2. Gnosticism – *Gnostic* comes from the Greek word “gnosis” and means knowledge. According to Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary, the Gnostics accepted the Greek idea of a radical dualism between God (spirit) and the world (matter). According to their world view, the created order was evil, inferior, and opposed to the good. God may have created the first order, but each successive order was the work of anti-gods, archons, or a demiurge (a subordinate deity).

Things to Consider

The Gnostics believed that the earth is surrounded by a number of cosmic spheres (usually seven) which separate man from God. These spheres are ruled by archons (spiritual principalities and powers) that guard their spheres by barring the souls who are seeking to ascend from the realm of darkness and captivity which is below to the realm of light which is above.

The Gnostics also taught that man is composed of body, soul, and spirit. Since the body and the soul are part of man’s earthly existence, they are evil. Enclosed in the soul, however, is the spirit, the only divine substance of man. This “spirit” is asleep and ignorant; it needs to be awakened and liberated by knowledge.

According to the Gnostics, the aim of salvation is for the spirit to be awakened by knowledge so the inner man can be released from his earthly dungeon and return to the realm of light where the soul becomes reunited with God. As the soul ascends, however, it needs to penetrate the cosmic spheres which separate it from its heavenly destiny. This, too, is accomplished by knowledge. One must understand certain formulas which are revealed only to the initiated.

I. THE PROOF OF JESUS’ HUMANITY

A. What John Heard – vs. 1 – “...we have heard”

1. Heard is “akouo”. The importance of this word is that it is in the present tense. This tense, in the Greek, refers to a process completed in past time, but having present results (see II Cor. 5:17).
2. This stresses the fact that he heard Him, not one time, but many times, and at length. He had heard His voice over and over again. Like repeating a scientific experiment over and over again so as to check results.
3. The tense of the verb has this effect: John said, “I actually heard His words, and they are still ringing in my ears.” John is saying, “57 years ago I met the Lord and what happened then is still having an effect on my life.” “I heard Him speak and it is still ringing in my ears.”

B. What John Saw – vs. 1 – “...we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon.”

1. The word “seen” is *horao* in the Greek and refers to the physical act of seeing, giving prominence to the discerning mind.
2. This states that John not only saw Jesus with his naked eye, but he understood what he was looking at.

This was not an optical illusion or a hallucination.

3. The word "looked" is *theomai* and it means "to behold, view attentively, contemplate." We get our word "theater" from this Greek word. This implies that it was more than just a glimpse. It means an intense gaze. It is the idea of looking with examination. John looked long enough to discern that He must be God for no man could do what He did.

C. What John Felt – vs. 1 – "*our hands have handled, of the Word of life.*"

1. The word handled is *pselaphao* and means "to handle, touch, feel, to examine closely." The verb means, "to handle with a view to investigation."
2. The same word is used in Luke 24:39 "*Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle (pselaphao) me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*"
3. Our Lord's proof to the disciples, that He was raised in the physical body in which He died, was based on the scientific evidence of their sense of touch. They handled His body, investigating His claim to have a body of flesh and bones. This was first hand experience.

D. What John Knew – vs. 1 – "*...the Word of life.*"

1. The "Word" is the "logos". This is John's particular designation of our Lord. *Logos* comes from *legos*, "to speak", and refers to the total concept of something.
2. Our Lord is the Logos of God. He is the total concept of God as seen through a human medium. His humanity consisting of His human body, His human limitations, and His human life lived on earth in the power of the Holy Spirit. Any idea you have about God is found complete in Jesus.
3. Many times in the Scripture, we see Deity step out. Every once in awhile, Deity stepped out. He walked on the water, He raised Lazarus, He healed the sick etc.

II. THE PRISM OF JESUS' HUMANITY – vs. 2

A. A Visible Witness – "*For the life was manifested.*"

1. "Manifested" is *phaneroo* which means "to make manifest, visible or known what has been hidden or unknown." God who is invisible was made visible to the human race through the humanity of our Lord.
2. Illustrate. A prism is a three-sided crystal that separates white light passing through it into the seven colors of the rainbow; violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red.
3. Notice verse 5 says "*...God is light*". He is unseen light until He is seen through His prism, Jesus, and then we see Perfection, the number 7.

B. A Verbal Witness – "*...We...bear witness.*"

1. "Witness" is *martureo* which means "to bear witness, testify, to affirm that one has seen, heard, or experienced something, to give evidence, to bear record."
2. John is not merely using words. The word *martureo* is the base word for martyr. They did more than just give verbal accent to Jesus' deity, they literally gave their lives as a witness to His deity.
3. I ask the atheist and the agnostic, why did the Disciples become martyrs for just a man? They were crucified, bludgeoned, and burned, etc. Why die for just a man?

C. A Venerable Witness – "*...We...shew unto you that eternal life.*"

1. "Show" is *apaggello*, "to bring tidings from" a person or thing, "bring word, report."
2. "Eternal" or *aionios* means without beginning and without end, that which always has been and always will be, eternal.
3. "Life" is *zoe*. This is "the absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, which belongs to God." This states that God is more than just an Influence, He is a Person with the characteristics and qualities of a divine Person.
4. "*Which was with the Father*". "With" is an important word here. It is *pros*, which means "facing" and implies fellowship. All of which means, the life John is talking about is a Person, for it requires a person to have fellowship. The Life, the Lord Jesus, is of such a nature as to have been in fellowship with God the Father, of very God Himself, possessing co-eternally with God the Father and God the Spirit.
5. Point. The Truth John is getting across is this: The ethical and spiritual qualities of this life, which God is, are communicated to the sinner when the latter places his faith in the Lord Jesus as Saviour, and this becomes the new, animating, energizing, motivating principle which transforms the experience of that individual, and the saint **THUS LIVES A CHRISTIAN LIFE**.
6. The Message is this: Since the believer is a partaker of this life, it is an absolute necessity that he show the ethical and spiritual qualities that are part of the essential nature of God, in his own life. If these are entirely absent, John says, that person is devoid of the life of God, and is unsaved.

FELLOWSHIP – LESSON 2

I John 1:3-4

Introduction: One of the greatest benefits of being a Christian is the right to fellowship with God. The Bible is careful to distinguish between true and false fellowship. In other words, the Lord wants us to fellowship but only on the right basis. In a world where denominational and doctrinal barriers are being broken down, the believer needs to know the difference.

Lesson Goals:

1. To distinguish between what the Bible considers true or false fellowship.
2. Enlighten the student as to the means and meaning of true fellowship.

Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:

1. Fellowship – The Christian is brought into fellowship with God, Christ, and the household of faith through Jesus Christ. It implies companionship or mutual association of persons on equal or friendly terms, sharing things in common with others.
2. Discernment – To distinguish between; to perceive the difference between two things; to understand.

I. THREE EVIDENCES OF TRUE FELLOWSHIP – vs. 3-4

A. Outward Fellowship – vs. 3 – “*That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us.*” This is with men.

1. “Fellowship” is *koinonia* and means partnership, participation, benefaction, communication, distribution, etc...
 - a. *Koinonos* is the person who is a sharer, associate, partner, companion or partaker.
 - b. Fellowship is more than “friendly, social communication.” It’s more than a dinner.
2. Fellowship with a Family. The only way you get into the family is to be born into it.
 - a. Fellowship of the Spirit – Philippians 2:1 – “*If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies...*” We now enjoy the Spirit because He indwells us.
 - b. Fellowship of the Gospel – Philippians 1:5 – “*For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now...*” We now enjoy the Good News because that is what saved us.
 - c. Fellowship of the Scriptures – Acts 2:42 – “*And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*” The Bible is now an open book to those who have spiritual discernment.

B. Upward Fellowship – vs. 3 – “*...truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*” This fellowship is with God.

1. Fellowship with a Father. When we were lost, according to Ephesians 2:12, we were “aliens”, “strangers”, and “separated” from God. There is a difference now according to verse 13, “*But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.*”
 - a. Before we were saved, we were vagabonds. After we were saved, we became pilgrims and strangers. A vagabond is a man without a home, a stranger is a man away from home, and a pilgrim is a man on his way home.
 - b. We are not only “nigh”, but according to II Peter 1:4, we are “*partakers (fellowshippers) of the divine nature*”
2. How do we fellowship with the Father?
 - a. Prayer is talking to God. In an unconverted state we know that “*God heareth not sinners*” (John 9:31). But now “*we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father*” (Ephesians 2:18).
 - b. Reading the Bible is God talking to you. According to John 7:17 “*If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine...*” And I Corinthians 2:14 states “*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*”

C. Inward Fullness – vs. 4 “*And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.*”

1. “Joy” is *chara*. It means delight or gladness. It is a feeling of pleasurable emotion and exultation caused by the expectation of something good that is going to happen or the realization of something that has already happened. The believer can have inward worship and fellowship with God.

2. "Full" is *pleroo*. It means to cram a net, level up a hollow, to furnish or satisfy. It is satisfied joy, finishing joy, and verifying joy.
3. "*Be of Good Cheer*" is to be happy, delighted, and glad.
 - a. Matt. 9:2 – "...*be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.*" Realize something good has happened.
 - b. Matt. 14:27 – "*Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.*" Expect something good is going to happen.
 - c. John 16:33 – "*In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.*" Realize something good has already happened.
 - d. Acts 27:22 – "*And now, I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you.*" Realize something good has already happened – vs. 23 – "*For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve.*"

II. FOUR EVIDENCES OF FALSE FELLOWSHIP – vs. 5-10

A. The Person of God Reveals It – vs. 5 – "...*God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*"

1. Physical Light – God is surrounded by Glory. Every time He appears, there is light.
 - a. Malachi calls Jesus, "the Sun of righteousness". Sunlight has 3 rays: heat, light, and actinic rays. We can feel sunlight, we can see sunlight, and there is a sunlight that is unseen that makes chloroform in the plant.
 - 1) The heat rays are like God the Spirit – We can feel Him.
 - 2) The light rays are like God the Son – We can see Him.
 - 3) The actinic rays are like God the Father – We can neither see nor feel Him, but He is the source of all life.
 - b. Light travels over 185,000 mps. Einstein said that if a person traveled the speed of light, he would increase in weight and volume enough to fill the universe. God is omnipresent.
2. Intellectual Light – This is the knowledge or Omniscience of God.
3. Moral Light – This represents the Holiness of God. This is the primary reference here.

B. The Profession of People Reveals it – vs. 6 – "*If we say that we have fellowship with him*"

1. The Profession – I am saved; I am a partner with God. "With" is the Greek word *pros* which means literally "face to face."
2. The Practice – "*and walk in darkness*" – Notice "walk" is not a sidestep, not a stumble but a continual movement in darkness. Darkness is the opposite of Holiness. Here is an individual that is in continual practice of unholy living.
3. The Perversion – "*we lie, and do not the truth*" – John says if you say one thing and live another, you are a liar, a pretender, an impostor, a hypocrite, and a phony. There are three Perversions in this 1st Chapter.
 - a. In verse 6, if we pretend, we lie to others.
 - b. In verse 8, if we pretend we have no sin (claim to be sinless or say we have no sin nature), we lie to ourselves.
 - c. In verse 10, if we pretend we have not sinned, we lie to God and about God.

C. The Purity of People Reveals it – vs. 7

1. The Practice of Holiness – "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light.*" "As" is an important word. It means in the same pattern, the same mold. It is a "continuous" walk, not now and then.
2. The Partnership of Holiness – "*we HAVE fellowship one with another*". It proves that we are fellowshippers or partakers of His holy nature. "With" is *pros*; I'm looking God in the face.
3. The Purging of Holiness – "*and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son CLEANSETH us from all sin*"
 - a. The word "cleanseth" is *katharizo* and speaks of that which cleanses, clears, purifies, purges, washes, expiates.
 - b. It is where we get our word "catheter". A catheter is a slender metal or rubber tube that is inserted in a wound to remove impurities. The child of God has a spiritual catheter positionally implanted at the moment of salvation that keeps him pure.

D. The Proportion of People Reveals It – vs. 9 – "*If we confess our sins*"

1. There are some who say they have no inherent sin or no sin nature and others claim sinless perfection but the majority of Christians must hang their head in shame and confess "I have sinned." John said "If WE" and he included himself. The charismatic crowd claims more than John the Apostle.
2. The word "*confess*" is *homologeō* and is made up of two words: *homo* (fellow) *logeō* (reasoning) – means two fellows reasoning or thinking alike. In the context, two fellowshippers or partners with the same mind. It is to say about our sins what God (our partner) says about our sins and to agree with Him.
3. "*Faithful*" is *pistos* and implies a trustworthy pacifier or conciliator.

4. "*Just*" means that God is an equitable judge, fair and reasonable
5. "*Forgive*" is to send away and is an Old Testament term referring to the scapegoat that was led into the wilderness on the day of atonement.
6. "*Cleanse*" is *katharizo*. But in this context it means to keep on cleansing in the sense of not bringing them back. If God sends away, he does not bring them back.

THE FACT OF GOD – LESSON 3

I John 1:1-3

Introduction: There are three important subjects to be dealt with in I John chapter 1. We dealt with the primary theme in lesson 2; “the fellowship of God”. There are two secondary themes in this same chapter. We will deal with the first one which is “the fact of God” in lesson 3. The second one is “the forgiveness of guilt” (I John 1:9) which we will deal with in lesson 4.

We will deal with this subject as a topic rather than an exposition. For the individual that demands logical proof and evidence of the existence of God, we can only say what the Bible says: “*God is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him*” – Heb.11:6. But because men insist on evidence, we must be able to give an answer. In I Peter 3:15 we read “*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.*” Really, there is no such thing as an Atheist. According to Psalms 14:1, “*The fool (the agnostic) hath said in his heart, there is no God (atheist).*” The reason a man says he is an atheist is because he has no knowledge. Note: This lesson was compiled using Stephen Olford’s *Institute of Biblical Preaching* series.

Lesson Goals:

1. To help the student develop the ability to prove the existence of God from different viewpoints.
2. To reaffirm, for the Christian, the truth of the existence of God.

Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:

1. Cosmology – Cosmology is the science or study of creation and the universe as a whole. It is the study of the general nature of the universe in space and time – what it is now, what it was in the past and what it is likely to be in the future.
2. Teleology – The fact or quality of being purposeful. It is the doctrine that mechanisms alone cannot explain the facts of nature and that purposes have casual power. It is the doctrine that all things in nature were made to fulfill a plan or design.
3. Anthropology – The science of man, that deals with the origin, development, races, customs, and beliefs of mankind.

I. THE RECOGNIZED ARGUMENTS OF NATURAL REASONING – We don’t have any problem believing there is a God because we believe the Bible is God’s Word. What if you do not believe the Authority of the Bible? The three secular arguments one can use apart from the Bible to prove there is a God, are: cause, design, and morals.

A. The Cosmological Argument – This is known as the deductive argument; argument of cause and effect.

1. “Kosmos”, which is the Greek word for “world”, denotes order, arrangement, ornament, and adornment. If this world has an orderly arrangement, who arranged it?
2. We cannot stand back and observe this order and arrangement without postulating some great initial cause. There has to have been a beginning to what we see. Someone had to make it.
Example: A watch had to have a watchmaker.
3. Hebrews 11:3 – “*Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.*” How do you frame a building? You take a stack of lumber that is not in order, follow a blueprint, and make an orderly building. No one has ever just thrown down a load of lumber, and hocus pocus a building arises out of the pile. A building has a blueprint and a carpenter.

B. The Teleological Argument – This is the argument of design. Not only do things exist, but they are beautiful and organized.

1. Not only is there a sun, but there is the beauty of the colors in the sunset.
2. Not only is there a bird, but there are the colors of his feathers.
3. Psalm 19:1 – “*The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.*”
4. Matthew 6:28, 29 – “*Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.*”
5. Look at the balance of nature. Have you ever wondered why God put acorns on oak trees and pumpkins on vines? What if it was opposite?
6. God paints the sunset, suspends the rainbow in the sky, and colors and scents the petals of the rose. Not