

# I John 1:1-4

- Intro.**
- Does this document have the customary greetings and salutation that are usually indicative of an epistle or letter?
  - Does this paragraph serve as a prologue to the text that follows?
  - Why is this document usually categorized as a “catholic” or “general” epistle?
- 1:1**
- What is the “what” that is referred to four times in vs. 1 and once again in vs. 3?
    - Word of life - vs. 1
    - eternal life - vs. 2
    - Christian teaching or doctrine?
    - the interactive relationship of fellowship? - vs. 3
    - the commonality of spiritual union with God? - vs. 3
  - What is the “beginning” from which the above “what” has existed?
    - from eternity? beyond space and time?
    - from the commencement of what God set out to do?
      - in creation?
      - in redemption?
    - from the pre-creation beginning of the pre-existent Son of God? cf. John 1:1
    - from the beginning of time? ...creation beginning? cf. Gen. 1:1
    - from the incarnational beginning of Jesus’ life in Bethlehem?
    - from the beginning of Jesus’ ministry? cf. Lk. 1:2
    - from the beginning of the church at Pentecost? cf. Acts 11:15
    - from the beginning of our experiential relationship with Christ? cf. 2:7,24; 3:11
  - Who do the plurals “we” (3) and “our” (2) refer to?
    - John and unnamed co-authors?
    - John and his associates in the Johannine community?
    - John and the other disciples of Jesus, of whom John was the sole survivor?
    - John and the recipients of this letter?
    - John and all mankind?
    - John uses a rhetorical or editorial “we” and “our”?
  - Is there a progression or gradation of sensual awareness in the terms “heard”, “seen”, “beheld” and “handled”?
  - Explain what John might have meant by these terms.
    - “heard” - verbal statements
    - “seen” - visual observation
    - “beheld” - visceral interpretation
    - “handled” - verifiable contact
  - Are these terms used merely as an assertion of the incarnation and humanity of Jesus?
  - Was John combating a nascent Gnosticism and Docetism? Explain.
  - What is the “Word of life” that John refers to?
    - Is this the “word of the gospel”? cf. John 6:68; Phil. 2:16; Col. 1:5,6; II Tim. 1:1
    - Is this the pre-existent Word that John refers to in John 1:1?
    - Is this the incarnate Word that John refers to in John 1:14?
- 1:2**
- Is “the life that was manifested”...
    - the benefit of “eternal life”? vs. 2
    - the incarnated life of Jesus? John 1:14
    - the spiritual life that enlightens every man? cf. John 1:4,9
    - the divine/human life of the Person of Jesus? cf. John 11:25; 14:6; I Jn. 5:12

- How was this life “manifested”?
  - visible manifestation of the person of Jesus?
  - God’s revelation of Himself in His Son?
  - the revealing of the character of God to man?
- What is “eternal life”?
  - the pre-existent life of the Son?
  - the unending continuum of God’s life?
  - knowing God in a personal relationship? cf. John 17:3
  - God’s life as manifested in Jesus?
    - incarnationally?
    - spiritually?
  - the qualitative character of God’s life which has no quantitative beginning or end?
- What is meant by John’s statement that this eternal life was “with the Father”?
  - equal with the Father? cf. John 1:1; 10:30
  - present with the Father? cf. John 1:2
  - expressive of the Father?

- 1:3**
- What does John mean that “you may have fellowship with us”?
    - that you can join our “fellowship”?
    - that even though you weren’t with the historical Jesus, you can be a Christian?
    - that we can involve ourselves in interactive social participation?
    - that we can have a common relationship with Jesus Christ?
    - that we can have a common unity in the community of Christians?
  - Is John implying that the horizontal relationship of Christians with one another is based on the vertical relationship of Christians with the Father and Son?
  - How does a Christian have “fellowship with the Father and the Son”?
    - by striving to arrive at spiritual oneness with Father and Son?
    - by participating in prayer and communion with Father and Son?
    - by receiving the life of the Father and Son?
    - by sharing the life of the Father and Son in spiritual union? cf. I Cor. 6:17

- 1:4**
- What is the purpose of John’s writing this document?
    - that his readers may be filled with joy?
    - that he and his co-authors/associates may be filled with joy?
    - that the recipients might not sin? cf. 2:1
    - that the readers will not be deceived? cf. 2:26
    - that the readers may have assurance? cf. 5:13
  - How can a Christian’s “joy be made complete”?
    - when they abide in Christ? cf. John 15:11
    - when God answers their prayers? cf. John 16:24
    - when they are “in Christ” and Christ is “in them”? cf. John 17:13
    - when they see other Christians walking in truth? cf. III Jn. 4
    - when Christians are rejoicing together concerning their commonality in Christ?
    - when Christians enthusiastically appreciate the abundant life they have in Christ?

- Conc.**
- What is John’s primary objective in this prologue?
  - What application can be drawn from these verses to our lives as Christians today?