

## 1 John Chapter 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—

A. That which was from the beginning,

1. beginning- Gr. arche

- a. John is referring to the Word Who was in the beginning. [John 1:1](#) This is Jesus Christ. He was before the beginning of creation. He already was when creation began in [Gen. 1:1](#).
- b. John is alluding to the deity of Christ here. In his gospel John assumed Jesus was human but proved his deity. In this letter John assumes Jesus is deity but proves His humanity.

B. which we have heard,

1. heard- Gr. akouo

- a. John will use three of our five physical senses in this verse [hearing, sight, and touch] to prove that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. You could detect him with the physical senses. He came in a human body and was not just a spiritual appearance in human form.
- b. In this book John is refuting a cultish sect and false teaching of Gnosticism. Gnosticism was a mixture of Greek, Jewish, and Christian thought. This teaching states that spirit is good and physical matter is evil. They taught that the true God was good but out from him came an emanation that was less good and the same thing from that spirit and from that spirit and so one until there was an evil spirit that created the natural world and all matter. They call this the God of the Old Testament that is seen judging and killing people. This span of beings from the true God to the one who created the earth was called the pleroma- or fulness of God. Paul dealt with this heresy in the book of Colossians and there debunked this notion of a span of beings called the pleroma. Paul will state that Christ is the pleroma [fulness] of God!
- c. *The Docetic Gnostics denied His actual humanity. The word "Docetic" comes from the Greek word dokeō, "to seem." These argued that our Lord had only a "seeming" body, not a real*

*physical body.* - Believers Bible Commentary

d. John debunks this with the use of the words heard, seen, looked upon, and handled with our hands.

e. John will later teach that it is an anti-Christ spirit that denies that Jesus has come in the flesh.

f. In this first chapter John will be dealing with this false teaching and it is important to know this in properly interpreting this chapter and book.

**C. which we have seen with our eyes,**

1. **seen-** Gr. **horao**

2. **eyes-** Gr. **ophthalmos**

a. Jesus had a physical body you could see with your physical eyes.

b. *"Some Gnostics practiced asceticism, while others went to the other extreme of licentiousness. John deals with both classes in his first letter. The word "Gnostic" comes from a Greek word gnōsis, which means "to know." They claimed a superior, private knowledge over and above that of the Bible. Nine times John presents tests for knowing the truth, and uses the verb ginōskō from which the Gnostics get their name. Therefore, in stressing the fact that he and his fellow-apostles had had personal experiential knowledge of the humanity of Jesus of Nazareth through the senses of hearing, seeing, and touching, he is combatting a doctrinal error in the early church known as Docetism, the teaching that our Lord had only a seeming body, not a real one. -Wuest Word Studies*

**D. which we have looked upon,**

1. **looked upon-** Gr. **theomai-** *to behold, look upon, view attentively, contemplate (often used of public shows)*

**E. and our hands of handled,**

1. **hands-** Gr. **cheir**

2. **handled-** Gr. **pselaphao-** *feel, touch, handle, test, examine*

a. Even after resurrection Jesus still has a physical body.

b. The same word is used in [Luk 24:39](#), where our Lord said, "**Handle** Me with a view to investigation and see; because a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

**F. concerning the Word of life**

1. **Word-** Gr. **logos**

2. **life-** Gr. **zoe**

a. The "Word of Life" is title of divinity. Jesus was and is God!

**2. the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—**

**A. the life was manifested,**

1. **life-** Gr. **zoe**

a. This is a divine title. Jesus here is called THE LIFE. Jesus called Himself this in His earthly ministry. [John 14:6](#)

2. **manifested-** Gr. **phaneroo**

a. The Gnostics stressed spiritual manifestations, but John will say that Jesus was manifested in the flesh in the natural realm.

**B. and we have seen,**

1. **seen-** Gr. **horao**

a. John is again using terms that show the physical senses could detect Jesus when He was here in His earthly ministry because He was a physical man.

**C. and bear witness,**

1. **bear witness-** Gr. **martureo**

a. John was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus.

b. A witness is someone who bears witness or declares what they saw and heard. Here John is testifying of what he saw and heard.

**D. and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us**

1. **declare-** Gr. **apaggello**

2. **eternal life-** Gr. **aionios zoe**

a. This is a divine title. Jesus was fully man but also fully God at the same time. Jesus is called that ETERNAL LIFE.

3. **Father-** Gr. **pater**

4. **manifested-** Gr. **phaneroo**

a. Again, He was manifested in the flesh. [John 1:14](#), [1 Tim. 3:16](#)

**3. that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.**

**A. that which we have seen and heard we declare to you,**

**1. seen-** Gr. **horao**

a. One of the key aspects of being a witness. It is based upon what you have seen.

**2. heard-** Gr. **akouo**

a. This is another key aspect of being a witness. It is based upon what you have heard.

b. This is the third verse in row where John repeats these words to stress that Jesus Christ was God but also was fully a man that could be detected with the physical senses. He is coming against the heresy of Gnosticism.

**3. declare-** Gr. **apaggello**

a. A witness declares what they have seen and heard. [Act 4:20](#)  
John calls himself a faithful witness in Revelation. [Rev. 1:5](#)

**B. that you also may have fellowship with us;**

**1. have-** Gr. **echo-** *own, possess, use*

**2. fellowship-** Gr. **koinonia-** *association, partnership, a sharing in, participate with*

a. This is a very important bible word we need to understand it's meaning. Today when we say "fellowship" we talk about socializing with someone or getting along with someone. This Greek word goes much deeper. It means to partner with or participate in and with.

b. *This word "fellowship" is one of the important words in this letter. It becomes necessary for us right here to study the Greek word which is translated "fellowship," and for the following reasons: first, the word is used in two different senses in this epistle, and second, because the English word as it is normally used today has a different meaning from that in which it was used in A.D. 1611 when the A.V. was translated. The word is koinōnia. Moulton and Milligan give instances of its use in the papyri in their Vocabulary of the Greek Testament, as follows: "belonging in common to, with whom I have no partnership." The idea in the word is that of one person having a joint-participation with another in something possessed in common*

*by both.* -Wuest Word Studies

c. To have fellowship with God in bible terms means to be partnered with him and participating in Him. Only Christians can be in fellowship with God. Every Christian is in fellowship with God or they are not a Christian. We are participating in the life of Christ as a believer. That is what caused us to be born again.

d. Many teach that if we sin we break our fellowship with God. That is taking our 21st century definition of "fellowship" and trying to make it fit the biblical text. We do damage to the text when we do this. We need to understand what this word meant to the original audience.

### **3. with us- *believers***

a. John was writing to believers and unbelievers that were in the church. You will find both in every church! There were some false Christians in this church who were Gnostics. John is writing to them here so that they will see their error, repent, and receive Christ who is God manifested in the flesh. Without this faith one cannot be saved.

## **C. and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ**

### **1. fellowship- Gr. *koinonia***

a. Again, this word does not mean merely to get along with someone. It means to have an active participation in and with. When we got saved we entered into fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. To lose this fellowship [partnership] would mean you would be cut off from God and Jesus and be lost.

### **2. Father- Gr. *pater***

a. One can only have a participation in God the Father through His Son Jesus Christ.

### **3. Son- Gr. *huios***

a. Jesus Christ

## **4. And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.**

### **A. write- Gr. *grapho***

1. Here we see the purpose of John's writing. It addresses gnostic "Christians" but also true believers. Gnosticism was a mixture of Greek thought, Jewish thought, and Christian aspects. If you were to ask these Gnostics if they were Christians, they would say "yes" but they were not in reality. They proclaimed that they had fellowship with God and Christ, but they really did not. If you don't believe Christ came in the flesh you cannot have fellowship with God or Jesus.

**B. joy- Gr. chairo**

1. This is a fruit produced by the Spirit of God joined to your spirit.

**C. full- Gr. pleroo**

1. John wrote to unbelievers that they might have fellowship with God and Christ and also to believers that their joy might be full. Not every Christian is filled with joy. Only Christians filled with the Word of God and the Spirit of God are full of joy.

2. Jesus spoke of the Vine and the branches. [John 15:5](#) The branches have no life of themselves but draw life from the Vine. So, believers have no life in themselves. They draw their life from Christ. When we are saved we become a branch vitally attached to the Vine of Christ. However, we must choose to abide in the Vine and draw from the Vine to bear fruit. Jesus said this would cause one's joy to be full.

[John 15:11](#) Joy is one of the fruit that comes from abiding and drawing from the Vine.

**5. This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.**

**A. This is the message which we have heard from Him.**

1. **message-** Gr. *epaggelia- announcement*

2. **heard-** Gr. *akouo*

3. **declare-** Gr. *anaggello- to make known*

a. Have you ever played the game where you whisper to a friend something and they in turn whisper to their neighbor and around it goes in a circle? How often did the message change? More often than not! We must be careful to faithfully repeat exactly what we heard from the Word to others.

b. Peter faithfully declared what he heard from Jesus.

**B. that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.**

1. **light-** Gr. **phos-** *God is light because light has the extremely delicate, subtle, pure, brilliant quality*

a. It has been proven mathematically that at the speed of light time stands still. God is light. He is eternal. We are light in the Lord. We are also eternal.

2. **darkness-** Gr. **skotia**

a. Darkness is the absence of light. Any darkness in our lives is a by-product of the absence of light, God, and His Word.

b. God is light, and God is love. [1Jn 4:8](#) If God is light and God is love then it is a mathematical fact that love must be light as well!

c. If you are not walking in love you are walking in darkness.

**6. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.**

**A. If we say that we have fellowship with Him,**

1. **We**

a. John includes himself. This is a polite way to bring correction rather than pointing the finger and saying "you". It is important to note that although John uses the word "we" he is not one of this group. John will use the word "we" in the upcoming verses and each time he is not one of the group that he is speaking of. This will be important to see when we get to verse 9.

2. **say-** Gr. **epo**

a. There are many professors, not as many possessors.

b. Sitting in church does not make you a believer or saved.

3. **fellowship-** Gr. **koinonia-** *to share in, have participation in*

a. Again, this word speaks of believers that are in union with God through Christ.

b. Fellowship is likened to being yoked together in a union or bond. [1 Cor. 6:14](#)

**B. and walk in darkness,**

1. **walk-** Gr. **peripateo**

2. **darkness-** Gr. **skotos**

a. This speaks of an unbeliever who walks in unbelief in Christ.

b. Jesus said that those who follow Him will never walk in darkness but have the light of life. Those who are born again are Christ followers.

c. Even Peter after he denied Jesus he still followed Him **at a distance**. [Matt. 25:68](#) Some believers follow closer than others but if you are born again you are a Christ follower and have the light of life- eternal life.

**C. we lie and do not practice the truth**

1. **lie-** Gr. **psuedomai**

a. Only God can absolutely tell if someone is born again. We can see the fruit of person, but not their heart. There have been preachers in pulpits that preach the Word of God, but they have never been born again.

2. **practice-** Gr. **poieo-** *to do-* present tense- *habitual practice*

3. **truth-** Gr. **aletheia**

a. Those who do the truth are those who believe upon Christ. [John 6:29](#)

**7. But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

**A. But if we walk in the light as he is in the light,**

1. **walk-** Gr. **peripateo-** *lifestyle*

a. People can't see our born-again spirit, but they can see our what we do and our lifestyle.

2. **light-** Gr. **phos**

a. This is a believer walking in faith in Christ.

**B. we have fellowship with one another,**

1. **fellowship-** Gr. **koinonia**

2. **one another**

a. The context is fellowship with God and God with us not Christian to Christian.



**C. and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.**

**1. blood-** Gr. **aima**

a. Jesus blood is the blood of God. His divinity and humanity meet in His blood. [Acts 20:28](#)

**2. Son-** Gr. **huios**

**3. cleanses-** Gr. **katharizo**

a. The blood of bulls, sheep, and goats covered sins, but Jesus' blood cleanses from sin. His blood was shed one time for all time and it continually keeps us clean from the contamination of sin.

b. This is a present tense verb, but it is not applied to a single individual. This is written to the church [plural]. As a new person accepts Jesus they are cleansed from all sin. As time goes His blood continually cleanses US [the church] from all sin as new members are added each day.

c. As an individual we are cleansed one time for all time from all sin.

**4. sin-** Gr. **hamartia**- *The principle of sin in all its forms and manifestations*

**8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.**

**A. If we say that we have no sin,**

**1. we**

a. Again, John uses the polite and softening word "we" in bringing correction.

b. Although John uses the word "we" he is not classed in the same group as those who say they have no sin and deceive themselves and do not have the truth in them. This is important to see when we look at the next verse when John again uses the word "we".

**2. say-** Gr. **epo**

**3. no sin-** Gr. **ou hamartia**

a. This refers to people who claim they do not have sin nature, therefore are in no need for redemption or salvation.

b. The Gnostics taught that the spirit of a person was not at all connected to physical matter so the real person they were had no sin and had no need for salvation.

c. We see in Genesis that sin in the natural realm led to spiritual death. God told Adam that in the day he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in dying he would die.

d. The physical act of eating of the forbidden tree produced a spiritual death that led to his physical death.

e. God told Adam that in the DAY he sinned he would die. To the Lord a day is a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day. It is interesting Adam died at 930 years old which is within the 1000 year period- which is a day unto the Lord.

f. Every human, even Christians, has the sin principle in their bodies. This is what is called the flesh.

**B. we deceive ourselves,**

**1. we**

a. Again, John uses the polite word "we" here. Of course, he is not one of those who said he had no sin and deceived himself.

**2. deceive- Gr. planao**

a. It is a bad thing to have someone deceive us, however it is much worse when we deceive ourselves!

**C. and the truth is not in us**

**1. truth- Gr. aletheia**

a. John uses the polite word "us" but did not belong to the group that did not have truth in them.

**9. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**

**A. If we confess our sins,**

**1. we**

a. We have brought out in the previous verses that John uses the polite word "we" in bringing correction. He does it here again. In the other times he uses it he is not included in the group he is speaking about. Why is this important to see?

Because many have looked at the word "we" here and applied it to "we" believers. John actually is speaking to unbelievers here. He uses the polite word "we" as in the previous times but is not one of the group. John will do the same thing in the next verse.

2. **confess-** Gr. **homologeō-** *to say the same thing, to acknowledge*

a. This word means to make a general acknowledgement of something. In this case it means to admit you have sins that need forgiven.

b. This word does not mean to confess out specific and individual sins. There is another Greek word for that. It is the Greek word **ekhomologeō-** *to confess out specific sins*. This Greek word is used of those who came out to John the Baptist to be baptized. There it says they were confessing [**ekhomologeō**] their sins. [Mark 1:15](#)

c. Someone who does not admit they are a sinner or have sins cannot be saved. You can't be saved if you don't know or admit that you are lost and are in need of it! The Gnostics believed they were only a spirit and that what was done in the body did not impact them at all and they were not held responsible for anything done in the body.

3. **sins-** Gr. **harmartia-** *to miss the mark*

a. This verse is almost universally taught that you must keep up confessing your sins to God in order for them to be forgiven. Dear saint, let me tell you something. If any of your sins are not forgiven, then you are lost! When you got saved all your sins and trespasses were forgiven- past, present, and future! How do we know that our future sins were forgiven? When Jesus died 2000 years ago all your sins were future tense! If he did not forgive you of all your sins then he would have to come back, get back up on the cross, and shed His blood again. Jesus died one time for all sins forever! [Heb. 10:12](#)

b. Many teach that if you don't confess all your known sins then you are out of fellowship with God and he can't or won't bless you. Again, that is using our modern western understanding of fellowship, which is to be in good

communication standing with someone. No, this word means to have a partnership or sharing in together. A Christians does not lose his participation in Christ when they sin. It is true that sin will harden a person's heart towards God, but it does not sever the partnership or relationship because every sin has been paid for and forgiven by God based upon the shed blood of Jesus 2000 years ago.

c. The teaching that you must confess your sins to be forgiven is a HUGE doctrine! If this was the case then this would be clearly taught in every NT epistle written to the church, however, you can't find it taught anywhere at all! The larger and the more important doctrine it is it should have more supporting scripture to undergird it. Paul never taught that a Christian must confess their sins in order to be forgiven. Not one time! You think that if your salvation or even you being blessed by God is dependent on confessing your sins that Paul would have mentioned it at least once! Paul taught repentance from sin but never in order to be forgiven of sin. Repentance means to change your mind. You need to repent of sin as Christian not to be saved, but because you are forgiven. To be saved means you have been forgiven. There is no such thing of being saved and not forgiven!

d. Those who teach that you must continually confess all your sins to be forgiven are hypocrites. They don't do that themselves. No one perfectly and always confesses every sin, even their known ones. Sin is not just the big items. It is anything against the will of God. Whatever is not of faith is sin. [Rom. 14:23](#) To know to do good and not to do it is sin. [James 4:17](#) Those that teach this doctrine water it down to mean that we are to confess whatever bugs our conscience. Really? Are we to lower the bar of holiness to your own indiscriminate level? Whatever you do to establish or maintain a relationship with God you must do absolutely perfectly all the time! Have you perfectly confessed every known sin you have ever done? No, you have not. To account for this a teacher will say then just ask God to forgive you for all the sins you have committed even if you forgot them. Who said that? Again, it is lowering

the bar! No, if you do something to establish or maintain your vertical relationship with God you must do it perfectly. This is a huge weight you can't bear. Jesus carried the weight of being perfect for you! Accept His perfect forgiveness based upon His perfect finished work!

e. If you think you must confess your sins to stay in fellowship and be blessed by God then you must do it perfectly all the time. This would make you only sin conscience. God does not want you to have a sin consciousness, but rather to have a righteousness consciousness! In the OT the people never got free from sin consciousness because the blood of bulls and goats never took away sins, but in the NT, we can be free from a sin consciousness through faith in the blood of Jesus which was once shed for our sins forever! [Heb. 10:12, 14](#)

**B. He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**

**1. faithful-** Gr. **pistos**

a. God is faithful to His Word and promises.

**2. just-** Gr. **dikaios**

a. God is just in forgiving a sinner who accepts Jesus because Jesus took their place and died in their place. He satisfied the debt of every sinner righteously and legally. God is now both just and the justifier of those who put their faith in Jesus! [Rom. 3:26](#)

**3. forgive-** Gr. **apheimi-** *to send away*

**4. cleanse-** Gr. **katharizo**

a. The blood of Christ does not cover our sins but cleanses them! [1 Cor. 6:11](#)

**5. all unrighteousness-** Gr. **adikia**

a. This happens once for all time forever when you get saved! [Heb. 10:2](#)

**10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.**

**A. If we say that we have not sinned,**

**1. we**

a. Again, John uses the polite word "we" but is not included in the group that say they had not sinned. We see in verse 8 and verse 10 John uses the word "we" but is not included in the group referred to. Then why do we include him in the group in verse 9?

**2. sinned- Gr. hamartano**

a. The Gnostics again believed they were not responsible for sins of the body. They said they had no sins that needed forgiveness because they were totally separate from the physical world.

**B. we make Him a liar,**

**1. liar- Gr. psuestes**

a. Those who say they have not sinned call God a liar, because God says all have sinned and fall short of His glory. [Rom. 3:23](#)

**C. and His word is not in us.**

**1. word- Gr. logos**

a. If the Word of God was the final touchstone of truth in your life you would agree with God that you have sinned and need salvation. The Gnostics did not hold God's Word as supreme and the benchmark for truth. They walked according to their own private "revelation" which did not agree with God's Word.