

THE GREAT TESTIMONY OF JOHN: THE SON OF GOD HAS COME TO EARTH 1 JOHN 01:01–05

Introduction

John jumps right into the great subject he wants to cover. There is no greeting and no salutation. What he has to say is of unparalleled importance; he must get right to the point: God's Son has come to earth. God is not living off in outer space someplace like so many people think and say; God has not forgotten the earth. God is not unconcerned and disinterested in the world. The very opposite is true. God loves and cares for us and He has proven it in the most supreme way possible: God has sent His Son into the world. This is the glorious testimony of John: God's Son has come into the world and His name is Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Messiah, the Saviour of the world.

- I. Jesus Christ has always existed (v. 1).
- II. Jesus Christ has proven who He is (v. 1).
- III. Jesus Christ has revealed who He is: the Word of Life (vv. 1-2).
- IV. Jesus Christ came to earth for the most glorious purpose (vv. 3-4).
- V. Jesus Christ preached the most wonderful message (v. 5).

Another Outline: The Son of God Has Come to Earth

- I. The basic fact: He has always existed (v. 1),
- II. The clear proof: Man heard, saw, looked upon and handled (v. 1).
- III. The most glorious revelation (v. 1-2).
 - a. He appeared, revealed Himself, revealed the life to us.
 - b. He identified with man: Gave man the opportunity to see Him.
- IV. The most glorious purpose (vv. 3-4).
 - a. That we might have fellowship together.
 - b. That our joy be complete (v. 4).
- V. The most wonderful message (v. 5).
 - a. That God is light.
 - b. That there is no darkness in God.

I. 1 John 01:01 Jesus Christ, the Son of God is Eternal

Jesus Christ has always existed. This is what is meant by the words "that which was from the beginning." Jesus Christ was existing before the world was ever created. He was living and had always been living. He possessed life – the energy, the force, the power of life.

He was the very being and essence of life, the very embodiment of life. Life was wrapped up in Him, for He was the very energy and force of life itself.

Thought 1. The point is clear: from the beginning Jesus Christ was already there. He did not have a beginning; He was not created. He “was from the beginning with God.” Our Lord and Saviour knows what the other world is all about, for He has come from there. Therefore, all that He told us is true. We can trust His Word.

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

Psa 90:2 *Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

Prov 8:23 *I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began.*

John 17:5 *“And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”*

Phil 2:6-8 *[Christ Jesus] Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!*

II. **1 John 01:01 Revelation of the Divinity of Jesus Christ**

Jesus Christ proved who He is. How? By partaking of human flesh, by becoming a man and letting people hear, see, look upon and handle him.

1. John and the early believers *heard the Son of God*. The Son of God actually partook of flesh and blood and became a man and *spoke to men* (cp. Heb 2:14-15). They heard Him teach and share the glorious news that God loves man, that man can be delivered from sin and death and live forever with God. The twelve apostles and thousands of others not only *heard about Him*, they actually *heard Him* proclaim the words of life. They heard Him deal with individuals and heard Him teach audiences of thousands. They themselves spoke to Him and heard Him speak to them. For three years John and the apostles and many others were in constant conversation with Him, listening and hanging on to every word He said.

Thought 1. One of the great needs of man is a Word from God — a Word that tells us the truth about God and about life — who we are, why we are here, and where we are going.

John 7:16-17 *Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.”*

John 8:31-32 *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

2. John and the early believers *saw the Son of God with their eyes*. The Son of God actually became a man. Men saw Him in the flesh just as they see all other men. Note: John says they saw Him *with their eyes*. He wants us to know that Jesus Christ was not a phantom, ghost or spirit. He was real; He had actually partaken of flesh and blood and become a man. He and the others saw Him with their eyes. They were as Mathew Henry says, “Eyewitnesses as well as ear-witnesses” (*Mathew Henry’s Commentary*, Vol. 6, p. 1061).

=> They were witnesses of His life upon earth for three years, from His baptism by John the Baptist to His resurrection from the dead. They saw all his wonderful works: the healings and miracles and good deeds that He ministered to people. They saw the most wonderful event of all, His resurrection and conquest of death for man.

Acts 1:21-22 “Therefore it is necessary to choose one of the men who have been with us the whole time the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from John’s baptism to the time when Jesus was taken up from us. For one of these must become a witness with us of his resurrection.”

=> They were eyewitnesses of His majesty and they declare the truth to us.

2 Pet 1:16 We did not follow cleverly invented stories when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

3. John and the early believers *looked at the Son of God*. This means more than just seeing Jesus Christ in a human body. The Greek word for “looked at” (*etheasametha*) means to gaze and look upon for a long time in order to study and understand and grasp. It means to look intensely and earnestly; it means to grasp the meaning and significance of a person. John is testifying that he and the other apostles and believers looked and gazed at Jesus Christ in order...

- to study and understand Him.
- to seek and grasp the meaning and significance of His person.

Thought 1. A person will never see and understand who Christ is by just glancing at Him. If a person wants to know Christ, he has to look intensely and seriously; he has to seek to understand if Christ really is who John and other believers claim He is.

Jer 9:24 “But let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight,” declares the LORD.

Hosea 6:3 “Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth.”

John 7:16-17 Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.”

John 8:31-32 *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*

4. John and the early believers *touched* Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The word “touched” (*epselaphesan*) means more than just touching. It means to grope and grasp after in order to understand; to handle in order to examine closely (John RW Stott. *The Epistles of John*. “Tyndale New Testament Commentary,” p. 60). A.T. Robertson, the Greek scholar, says that it is a graphic word, the very same word that Jesus used to prove that He was not a spirit after His resurrection (*Word Pictures In The New Testament*, Vol. 6, p. 205).

Luke 24:39 *“Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.”*

John 20:27 *Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”*

Thought 1. The Son of God came to earth; He partook of flesh and blood and became a Man just like all other men. He is called Jesus Christ or Jesus the Messiah, the Saviour of the world. He was heard, seen, intensely looked at and touched by John and the other apostles and by many others who believed and followed Him. Jesus Christ did everything He could to show man that the Son of God had come to earth — that He had come to save man, to deliver man from this corruptible world of sin and death — that He had come to give man life eternal, the glorious privilege of living in heaven with God forever and ever.

Heb 1:3 *The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

John 14:9 *Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”*

Rom 9:5 *Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*

Col 1:15 *He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

Col 2:9 *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*

1 Tim 3:16 *Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.*

1 Tim 6:15-16 *Which God [Jesus Christ] will bring about in his own time — God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen.*

Rev 19:16 *On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

III. 1 John 01:01–02 Revelation of Jesus Christ: The Word of Life

Jesus Christ revealed who He was. the *Word of Life*. This means two things:

=> First, Jesus Christ Himself is *the Word*. Remember what a word is: it is the expression of an idea, a thought, an image in the mind of a person. A word describes what is in the mind of a person. John is saying this: in the life of Jesus Christ, God was speaking to the world, speaking and demonstrating just what He wanted to say to man. This means the most wonderful thing. It means that God has given us much more than mere words in the Holy Scriptures. God has given us Jesus Christ, *The Word*. As *The Word*, Jesus Christ was the picture, the expression, the pattern, the very image of what God wished to say to man. The very image within God's mind of the *Ideal Man* was demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was the perfect expression of all that God wishes man to be. Jesus Christ was God's utterance, God's speech, *God's Word* to man. Jesus Christ was the *Word of life who came to earth to show us that the very energy, force, power and essence of life is in God and in God alone. Therefore, if a person wants life, he must trust and depend upon God for life. For life in all of its energy and force and being exists only in God.*

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

=> Second, Jesus Christ Himself is *the Word of life*, the very message of life, the good news (gospel) of life. He is the very embodiment of life, the energy and force of life; therefore, when He came to earth, He brought the Word of life to man. Jesus Christ — His life, His acts, His teaching — tells men how to live. In Jesus Christ and in Jesus Christ alone is the Word of life, the Word that tells man how to conquer death and to live abundantly both now and eternally. Jesus Christ is the *Word of life*. This is the great thing that He revealed to man. But note: How did He reveal this great message to man? Verse two tells us in clear language. The verse is here given just as it reads in the Greek text:

“(And the life was revealed, and we have seen and bear witness, and report to you the life, the eternal, which was with the Father, and was revealed to us).”

1. Jesus Christ *revealed* the life to us (v. 2). That is, He came to earth, appeared to us and showed us the life that was in Him. He showed us what life is...
 - that it is the very energy and force of living forever just as God Himself lives. Life never dies and never ceases to be.
 - that it is the very energy and force of living abundantly, of experiencing love, joy and peace just as God experiences. Life never lacks and never ceases to experience the fullness of life to the ultimate.

Thought 1. The point is this. Jesus Christ revealed who He was; He came to earth and showed us life — showed us that life is in God and in God alone. Therefore, if man wants to really live, he has to put his life into the hands of God, for life exists only in God. God alone can give man life.

2. But Jesus Christ did a second thing: He identified with man. He gave men the opportunity to see Him and the life which He was bringing to man. As covered in verse one, men heard, saw, looked at and touched Christ. He made Himself available to men, allowed them to use all their physical senses in order to prove that He was indeed the Son of God, the very embodiment of life eternal. He allowed men to use all their physical senses so they could have perfect proof and never be able to question that the Son of God had come to earth, not if they were honest and willing to study and know the truth.

Note the testimony of John: “we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us” (v. 2). There is compulsion here: the witnesses to the Son of God must proclaim the truth. The Son of God, Jesus Christ, has come to earth. He came to bring the glorious message of the Word of life. Men do not have to live in sin and the dread of corruption and death; men can live in the abundance of love, joy and peace with God, both now and eternally.

John 3:14-15 *“Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”*

John 3:36 *“Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”*

John 5:24 *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

John 6:40 *“For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”*

John 11:25-28 *Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” “Yes, Lord,” she told him, “I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world.” And after she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. “The Teacher is here,” she said, “and is asking for you.”*

John 12:25 *“The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.”*

Rom 5:21 *So that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Ga1 6:8 *The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.*

2 Tim 1:10 But it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Saviour, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death.

1 John 5:11-12 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

IV. 1 John 01:03–04 The Great Purpose of the Incarnation of Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ came to earth for the greatest of purposes.

1. Jesus Christ came that men might have fellowship with God and with His Son Jesus Christ and with one another. This is the most wonderful declaration, for it means that God is not far off in outer space someplace. God is not disinterested and uncaring about what happens to man. God has not left us to fend for ourselves upon earth with nothing but death and the grave to look forward to. The very opposite is true: God has revealed Himself in the Lord Jesus Christ and has shown us that He deeply loves and cares for us and that He wants to fellowship with us. Imagine! Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to earth to show us that we can know God personally and fellowship with Him. We can actually fellowship with God...

- become acceptable to Him
- relate to Him and talk and share with Him
- have Him walk with us throughout the day, looking after and caring for us step by step
- cast our problems upon Him
- trust Him to help us in meeting our needs
- ask Him for strength to conquer the trials and temptations of life
- know that He will constantly give us a life of love, joy and peace
- know that He will deliver us from sin and death and give us life eternal
- depend upon Him for righteousness so that we can be acceptable to Him

We can know both God and His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, know them personally just like all the above describes. And we can experience fullness of life with all other believers who truly give their lives to follow Christ. We can all have fellowship together, the kind of fellowship that exists within the greatest of all families — the family of God Himself.

2. Jesus Christ came that our joy might be made complete (see *Joy*, 1 Jn. 1:4).

1 JOHN 01:04 JOY (CHARA)

We write this to make our joy complete. 1 John 01:04

Joy is an inner gladness; a deep seated pleasure. It is a depth of assurance and confidence that ignites a cheerful heart. It is a cheerful heart that leads to cheerful behaviour.

Several things need to be said about the believer's joy.

1. Joy is divine. It is possessed and given only by God. Its roots are not in earthly or material things or cheap triumphs. It is the joy of the Holy Spirit, a joy based in the Lord. It is His very own joy (Jn. 15:11; Acts 13:52; Rom 14:17; Gal 5:22; 1 Th 1:6).
2. Joy does not depend on circumstances or happiness. Happiness depends upon happenings, but the joy that God implants in the believer's heart overrides all, even the matters of life and death (Psa 5:11; 2 Cor 6:10; 7:4).
3. Joy springs from faith (Rom 15:13; Ph 1:25; 2 Tim 1:4; cp. Mt 2:10).
4. Joy of future reward makes and keeps one faithful (Mt 25:21, 23; Acts 20:24; Heb 12:2).

The source of the believer's joy is several fold.

1. The fellowship of the Father and His Son brings joy (1 Jn. 1:3-4).
2. Victory over sin, death and hell brings joy (Jn. 14:28; 16:20-22).
3. Repentance brings joy (Lk. 15:7, 10).
4. The hope of glory brings joy (Rom 14:17; Heb 12:2; 1 Pet 4:13).
5. The Lord's Word — the revelations, commandments and promises which He made — brings joy (Jn. 15:11).
6. The commandments of Christ and the will of God bring joy. Obeying and doing a good job stirs joy within the believer's heart (Jn. 15:11, 32; 17:13; Acts 13:52).
7. Prayer brings joy (Jn. 16:24).
8. The presence and fellowship of believers brings joy (1 Jn. 1:3-4).
9. Converts bring joy (Lk. 15:5; Ph. 4:1; 1 Th. 2:19-20).
10. Hearing that others walk in the truth brings joy (3 Jn. 1:4).
11. Giving brings joy (2 Cor 8:2; Heb 10:34). □

V. *1 John 01:05 The Message of Jesus Christ: God is Light*

Jesus Christ preached the most wonderful message. It included two wonderful things.

1. *God is light.* What does this mean? It means several things.

a. God is light by nature and character. Light is what God is within Himself, within His being, essence, nature and character. God dwells in the splendour, glory and brilliance of light. Wherever He is, the splendour, glory and brilliance of light shines out of His being. In fact, there is not even a need for the sun when God's glory is present. The glory of His presence just beams forth the most brilliant light imaginable, so brilliant and glorious that it would consume human flesh.

Rev 21:23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

Rev 22:5 There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

b. God is light in that He reveals the light of all things, the truth of all things.

=> Jesus, the Light, tells us that God is holy, righteous and pure. Light is the symbol of purity and holiness. Light means the absence of darkness and blindness; it has no spots of darkness and blackness, of sin and shame.

=> Jesus, the Light, reveals. His light shows clearly the nature, the meaning, and the destiny of all things. His light beams in, spots, opens up, identifies, illuminates and shows things as they really are. The light of Jesus Christ shows the truth about the world and man and God. The light of Christ reveals that God loves and cares for man and wants man to love and care for Him.

=> Jesus, the Light, guides. His light allows a man to walk out of darkness. Man no longer has to grope, grasp and stumble about trying to find his way through life. The path of life can now be clearly seen.

=> Jesus, the Light, does away with darkness and with chaos. His light routs, wipes out, strips away and erases the darkness. The empty chaos of creation was routed by the light given by God (Gen 1:3). Jesus Christ is the Light that can save man from chaos (Jn. 14:1, 17; 12:46; 16:33).

2. There is no darkness in God. What does this mean? (See *Darkness*, 1 Jn. 1:5. Observe that none of the descriptions of darkness is true of God.) (Also see *Darkness*, Jn. 8:12.) ■

1 JOHN 01:05 DARKNESS (SKOTOS, SKOTIA)

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 1 John 1:05

The word darkness describes both the state and works of a person. It symbolizes evil and sin, everything that life should not be and everything that a person should not do.

1. The darkness means that man is ignorant of God.

=> The darkness means that a person is foolish; he is futile in his thinking about God.

Rom 1:21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened.

=> The darkness means that a person does not live and walk in the light of God and Christ.

John 8:12 When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

=> The darkness means that a person is blind to the light of Christ and stumbles about through life.

John 11:9-10 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours of daylight? A man who walks by day will not stumble, for he sees by this world's light. It is when he walks by night that he stumbles, for he has no light."

=> The darkness means that a person does not understand the light and is powerless to extinguish the light.

John 1:5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it [or extinguished it].

=> The darkness means that a person does not see the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

2 Cor 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

1. The darkness means evil behaviour and deeds.

=> The darkness means that a person's deeds are evil and that he hates the light.

John 3:19-21 "This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil

hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.”

=> The darkness means that a person walks in the darkness of hate and antagonism against others.

1 John 2:9-11 *Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.*

=> The darkness means that a person lives a secretive life, a life that is gripped by what is hidden in darkness, that cannot bear the light.

1 Cor 4:5 *Therefore judge nothing before the appointed time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.*

3. The darkness means man’s nature, that his nature is darkness.

=> The darkness means that a person is the very embodiment of darkness, that his very nature and character are that of darkness.

Eph 5:8 *For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light.*

=> The darkness means that a person’s eye is focused upon evil; therefore, his whole being is full of darkness or evil.

Mat 6:22-23 *“The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!”*

=> The darkness means that a person is an unbeliever and has fellowship with darkness.

2 Cor 6:14 *Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?*

4. The darkness means that man is fruitless in life.

Eph 5:11 *Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them.*

5. The darkness means that man dwells in darkness.

=> The darkness means that a person dwells in darkness and is blind to the glorious day of salvation and of the Lord’s return.

1 Th 5:4-5 *But you, brothers, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all sons of the light and sons of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.*

=> The darkness means that a person has rejected the call of God and still dwells in darkness.

2 Pet 2:9-10 *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment. This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the sinful nature and despise authority. Bold and arrogant, these men are not afraid to slander celestial beings [authority].*

6. The darkness means the influence and power of Satan.

=> The darkness means that a person is under the power of Satan and is guilty of sin; that his sins are not forgiven.

Acts 26:18 *'To open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'*

7. The darkness means the place of punishment and hell, the pit of darkness.

=> The darkness means the place of punishment and hell where all the ungodly shall be cast in the final judgment.

Eph 6:12 *For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.*

2 Pet 2:9 *If this is so, then the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from trials and to hold the unrighteous for the day of judgment, while continuing their punishment.*

Jude 1:13 *They are wild waves of the sea, foaming up their shame; wandering stars, for whom blackest darkness has been reserved forever. □*