

Session 1

*An Exposition of I John*

*I John 1:1-4*

Scriptures

<i>I John 1:1</i>	<i>II Peter 1:16</i>	<i>I John 5:12</i>
<i>Romans 10:9-10</i>	<i>John 3:1-2</i>	<i>I John 1:3</i>
<i>Hebrews 5:9</i>	<i>I John 1:2</i>	<i>I John 1:4</i>
<i>Ephesians 1:4</i>	<i>I John 5:11</i>	<i>John 15:11</i>
<i>Isaiah 9:6</i>	<i>John 6:27</i>	<i>Psalms 16:11</i>

*I John 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, of the Word of life;*

In a book which details what is necessary to gain fellowship with the Father and the Son, and was written to confirm if a man has eternal life or not, this verse is remarkable in that the emphasis is directly centered upon the personal, albeit spiritual, relationship the apostle John had with Jesus Christ. He is the One Whom John hopes to expose the world to, and He is the One Whom John knows holds the keys to gaining eternal life.

Christ is the *Word of life*, that manifested form of God Who leads to life.

John gives Jesus Christ this title because through Him God's knowledge of the way to gain eternal life is revealed.

As the Word, Christ is God's revelation to man, revealing God to a world completely separate from Him.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 1:1

The Son of God may be called "the Word," because he is the medium by which God promulgates His will and issues His commandments.

The reason that a man is saved by Jesus Christ is because He is the living Word of God.

Ultimately, to hold Jesus as Lord is to obey all of God's commandments.

Where through the Mosaic Law obedience to the law is what previously was purposed to lead men to life, now the lordship of God's Son is how men can eternally be saved.

*Romans 10:9-10 That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

<sup>10</sup> *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

The Greek word for *confess* is #3670 *homologeó*. Its definition is "to speak the same."

*HELPS Word-studies* defines the word as "*homologéō* (from 3674 */homouí*, 'together' and 3004 */légō*, 'speak to a conclusion')—properly, to voice the same conclusion, i.e. agree ('confess'); to profess (confess) because in full agreement; to align with (endorse)."

These definitions reveal that to confess Jesus Christ as Lord is to agree with God that His Son is Lord.

The Greek word for *Lord* is #2962 *kurios*, which is defined as “lord, master, sir; the Lord.”

*HELPS Word-studies* further defines the word as “properly, a person exercising absolute ownership rights; lord (Lord).” The origin of *kurios* is “from *kuros* (authority).”

What we observe from these definitions of both *confess* and *Lord* is that for a man to be saved, Jesus must be given full authority over the soul. Because God has given His Son authority over all things, to be saved men must agree with God’s transfer of divine authority to Christ, and subsequently make Him Lord and Master of their lives.

Accepting the Word and yielding fully to Christ’s present heavenly authority are viewed by God as subjection to His will for man.

Christ’s lordship over a man’s life takes the place of needing to obey every commandment of God. This obedience was necessary in the Old Testament in order to be saved, but in fact it is impossible, simply because of man’s weak fleshly ability to keep divine law.

*Barnes’ Notes on the Bible*, Rom. 10:9

“And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” Here it means to acknowledge him as Lord, that is, as having a right to rule over the soul.

To make Jesus Christ your Lord is to give Him full authority over your life. By this it is meant that both His Word and His Spirit must rule the inner being.

Rejection of either Christ’s words or Christ’s Spirit reveals rejection of divine law and cannot result in receiving the salvation promised by God through His Son.

It should also be noted that to receive Christ’s lordship partially is to receive it not at all.

Consequently, not until Jesus is given full and complete dominion over our lives can God’s salvation be given to us.

It is obedience to the Son of God, via His Word and His Spirit, that produces true salvation for the soul.

***Hebrews 5:9 And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.***

*That which was from the beginning.*

It is important to recognize that before we were, Christ was.

Just as the heavens and earth were created before man, so did Christ exist with God in the beginning.

It is also at this time, before the world was formed, that God’s purpose for the saved came into being.

***Ephesians 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, Eph. 1:4

*In him*—In Christ. The choice was not without reference to any means of saving them; it was not a mere purpose to bring a certain number to heaven; it was with reference to the mediation of the Redeemer, and his work. It was a purpose that they should be saved “by” him, and share the benefits of the atonement. The whole choice and purpose of salvation had reference to him, and “out” of him no one was chosen to life, and no one out of him will be saved.

*Before the foundation of the world*—This is a very important phrase in determining the time when the choice was made. It was not an “afterthought.” It was not commenced in time. The purpose was far back in the ages of eternity.

The Lord’s predestination of His people is what makes the Christian’s salvation so secure.

The purpose of the Son of God coming into the world was to save those purposed by God for heaven, and it has proved to be astoundingly successful.

Well did Isaiah state that unto us (or for our purpose), Christ was born.

***Isaiah 9:6 For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.***

*Benson Commentary*, Isa. 9:6

*Unto us a child is, or, shall be, born . . .* The human nature of the Messiah is here first set forth. He shall be the *child born, the Word made flesh*, and that *for us*; not only for us *Jews*, but for us *men*, for us *sinners*, and especially for us *believers*. *Unto us a son is given*—Or, *the son*, namely, of the virgin, spoken of [in] Isaiah 7:14; the *Immanuel*, the *Song of Solomon of God*, so called, not only on account of his miraculous conception, but because of his eternal generation, the Word, *who was in the beginning with God*, had glory with the Father *before the world was*, was loved by him *before the foundation of the world*, and *by whom he made the worlds, and created all things*. See John 1:1–3; John 17:5; John 17:24; Hebrews 1:2; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:16. This person, the Father’s *own Son*, his *only-begotten Son*, *is given*, John 3:16; *sent forth*, Galatians 4:4; *sent in the likeness of sinful flesh*, Romans 8:3; though *rich*, and *in the form of God*, made *in the likeness of men, poor*, and *of no reputation*, Php 2:7; 2 Corinthians 8:9; given to be our infallible Teacher, our prevalent Mediator, our almighty Saviour, our righteous Ruler, and our final Judge. Accordingly, *The government*—Of the church, of the world, yea, *of all things*, for the church’s benefit, Ephesians 1:21–22; *shall be upon his shoulder*—That is, upon him, or in his hands; *all power being given to him in heaven and on earth*. In mentioning *shoulder*, he speaks metaphorically; great burdens being commonly laid upon men’s shoulders, and all government, if rightly managed, being a great burden, and this especially being, of all others, the most weighty and important trust.

*Which we have heard.*

Here John reveals what was the basis of his faith in the Son of God—it was what the apostle had *heard* Jesus speak.

We can tell the depth and nature of a man by the wisdom and words which proceed out of his mouth. The words Jesus Christ spoke revealed an understanding and an enlightenment of heavenly truths previously unknown to man.

Jesus revealed that for any to be saved they must be born again, and that for a man to save his life he must first lose it, and that for any man who believes upon the Son of God, out of his belly shall *flow rivers of living water*.

To John, Christ's words and the wisdom He spoke are what became the initial proof that Jesus was in fact God's Son and God's revelation of Himself to man.

*Which we have seen with our eyes.*

Like John, Peter equally attested that he was an eyewitness; he had seen Christ's majesty.

***II Peter 1:16 For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.***

As much as John and Peter had heard Jesus speak, equally did they have the same opportunity to observe Jesus' person and the Son of God's walk in this world.

The apostle observed with his own eyes multiple instances of Jesus' compassion, His divine power, and Christ in His resurrected body.

Seeing was believing, and thus, for John, there was absolutely no doubt that Jesus was exactly Who He claimed to be.

Other miracles the apostle observed included Jesus feeding the five thousand (John 6:5–13), His calming of the sea (Luke 8:23–25), His casting out demons into a herd of pigs (Matt. 8:28–33), and His raising Jairus' daughter to life (Luke 8:41–42; Luke 8:49–56).

Like Nicodemus, the apostle knew that no man could do these miracles except God was with him (John 3:1–2).

The validity that Jesus was the Messiah rested on the wisdom of Christ's heavenly words, the power He manifested, and that God resurrected Christ from the dead.

Observance of the Savior proved to John and the other disciples that God was indeed in Christ and that Christ was in fact the Son of God.

***John 3:1–2 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: <sup>2</sup> The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.***

*Benson Commentary, John 3:1–2*  
"His miracles were his credentials."

*Which we have looked upon.*

This implies not simply seeing the Son of God and all that He has both said and did, but an even deeper contemplation that John and the other disciples experienced as they became illuminated to the wonderful identity of the Savior.

Just as Mary pondered the glory of the Son Whom she brought into the world (Luke 2:10–19), so also the apostles marveled and were amazed at Christ's person and the divine power exercised by Him.

***I John 1:2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)***

Ultimately, the apostle knew that Jesus represented to the world the eternal *life* of God. It was this eternal life that John sought to show and bear witness to.

John confirms Christ's own words that since He possessed eternal life, He could give it to those who believed upon Him.

The Son of God holds great spiritual power, such power that He can give eternal life to any who through faith believe in Him.

Jesus' words *I give unto them eternal life* are authoritative and agree with Christ's purpose in coming into the world.

Thus, if a man desires to receive eternal life, he must share a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. This is done by hearing Christ's words and obeying them as well as by believing in the Father, Who sent Him.

There is but one door, one access point, by which sinners can find the hope of heaven, and it is through the very One sent by God to reveal God's spiritual and eternal life to the world.

That which a man has, he can give. Jesus, the Son of Man and the Son of God, can therefore give God's eternal life to as many as make Him their Lord.

***I John 5:11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.***

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, I John 5:11

*And this is the record*—This is the sum, or the amount, of the testimony (μαρτυρία *marturia*) which God has given respecting him.

*That God hath given to us eternal life*—Has provided, through the Saviour, the means of obtaining eternal life.

*And this life is in his Son*—Is treasured up in him, or is to be obtained through him.

***John 6:27 Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.***

A man's labor should not merely be regulated to feeding his body and the things that might please it; rather, it should be directed toward that spiritual world that leads to the saving of the soul. It is this meat, which is the real sustenance of life, that provides the opportunity to receive eternal life.

*Barnes' Notes on the Bible*, John 6:27

*The meat that perisheth*—The food for the supply of your natural needs. It perishes. The strength you derive from it is soon exhausted, and your wasted powers need to be reinvigorated.

*That meat which endureth*—The supply of your spiritual wants; that which supports, and nourishes, and strengthens the soul; the doctrines of the gospel, that are to a weak and guilty soul what needful food is to the weary and decaying body.

*To everlasting life*—The strength derived from the doctrines of the gospel is not exhausted. It endures without wasting away. It nourishes the soul to everlasting life.

*And shew unto you that eternal life.*

The purpose of the apostles' earthly ministry was that all men might know that in Jesus Christ is life and that He is the light of all men, without which they can only stumble in darkness.

***I John 5:12 He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.***

In this one single maxim is contained the entire Christian gospel. If men would believe and rely upon this truth, then very little other preaching would be needed to bring them to salvation.

This also is the question that all who profess to believe in Jesus need to ask themselves, "Do I hold true belief in the Son of God in my heart, or do I merely know Christ's name in my head?"

There is a great difference, then, between a man who only mentally knows the Lord's name and he who has allowed Christ's full authority over his life.

The answer to this spiritual and contemplative question ultimately reveals whether a man is saved or not.

***I John 1:3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.***

The Book of I John records certain immovable truths necessary for spiritual fellowship with God and the Son of God, Who came to reveal Him to the world.

These divine revelations cannot be compromised if a man truly desires sincere and genuine communion with both the Father and the Son. Each truth must be carefully considered and thoughtfully reflected upon, simply because each will reveal what is necessary for spiritual connection to the higher, heavenly, and more holy realm of the Spirit.

Minimizing or neglecting even one of these great truths easily can result in forfeiting fellowship with the heavenly Father. He, then, who will not hear and choose to believe John's message, which is directly linked to John's own personal relationship with Jesus Christ, cannot be saved.

For this reason, I John is an indispensable work, worthy of our highest interest and continued spiritual study. Ultimately, it was Jesus Who taught John, and it is Jesus Who has chosen to use John to teach us.

Therefore, not to heed the inspired and spiritual words of Jesus' apostle John, is the same as rejection of Christ Himself.

***I John 1:4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.***

The Greek word for *joy* is #5479 *chara*. Its definition is "joy, delight."

John teaches us that those who sincerely maintain fellowship with the Father through His Son will possess a joy and inward spiritual happiness not found anywhere else in the world. This is that same indescribable *joy* that Jesus said He would give to His true followers. It is this spiritual joy that all who are truly pious will possess.

**John 15:11** *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.*

*Ellicott's Commentary for English Readers, John 15:11*

*These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you.*—The better reading is, ... *that My joy may be in you.* The joy thought of is that which Christ Himself possessed in the consciousness of His love towards the Father, and of the Father's love towards Him. The brightness of that joy lit up the darkest hours of His own human life, and He wills that it should light up theirs. In the consciousness of their love to God, and of God's love to them, there would be in them, as part of their true life, joy which no sorrow could ever overcome. They were as men with troubled hearts. He has told them of the true source of peace. His own peace He has given to them. He tells them now of the source of joy, and has spoken the word that they may possess the very joy which was the light of His own heart.

Though Christ suffered in the flesh, He possessed a joy completely foreign to His accusers, betrayers, and political murderers.

It is this joy that every believer of the Son of God will experience, filling his soul, refreshing his spirit, and encouraging his walk with God.

**Psalm 16:11** *Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.*

When a man truly believes, he will experience for the first time in his life the joy and peace of God that only the Son of God can impart to men.

He who genuinely exercises faith in the Son of God will experience spiritual joy in his soul, a heavenly joy that proves not only the existence of a heavenly Father but also the true nature and disposition of heaven itself. The joy given to us by Christ teaches us that heaven is not a gloomy or oppressive habitation but rather a place of supreme happiness, freedom, and delight. Spiritual joy is an element of the nature of God, and it is what all of heaven reflects.

By believing in the Son of God, men can experience a portion of that joy, which will be their full possession when they are received by Christ into heaven.

This joy is aptly called *the joy of the LORD* because its source is the Lord, and it is a possession that only He can give to those who believe upon Him.

