

Dr. Bert Jones • North Carolina Capitol Commission • Bert.Jones@capitolcom.org

The book of 1John begins (1:1-3): *What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—²and the life was revealed, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was revealed to us—³what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.*

Life is not, as some would claim, man's quest to find God. Romans 3:11 tells us that it is not in human nature to seek after God. Rather, the fact is the God has revealed Himself to mankind.

First, God has revealed Himself through His creation, and man has no excuse for not believing God (*Romans 1:16-2:1*). Second, God has revealed Himself through His written word, the Bible (*2Timothy 3:16; 2Peter 1:21*). Finally, there is God's supreme revelation of Himself through His Son, Jesus Christ (*Hebrews 1:1-4*).

Both in the Gospel of John, and in 1John, John introduces Christ to the reader as the "Word" of God. We use words to reveal things to others that they cannot otherwise see. God is spirit, but through Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), God became a man as well.

Colossians 1:16 tells us that Christ, the Son of God, is the "image of the invisible God". Christ Himself said, "he that has seen Me has seen the Father" (*John 14:9*).

In the opening verses of this God-inspired letter, John also emphasizes the personal experience that he and the apostles had with Christ. He is saying that 'Christ is real'. As he writes this letter to present and future believers, about 60 years after Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension back to Heaven, John is reminding the reader that he is among the many eyewitnesses to Christ, the "Word of Life".

Memory Verse: *"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but by Me." (John 14:6)*

There were in John's day, as there remain today, many false teachings about who Christ is. John warns us several times in his letter not to believe such lies (2:22, 4:2-3). In his Gospel, John's emphasis is on Jesus Christ as the Son of God. In this epistle, John clearly refutes false teachers who were denying the humanity of Christ. The Gnostics were prevalent false teachers at the time as such. There are false religions today who still teach this.

So, as the last remaining living apostle at the time (one distinction of the "apostles" is that they were eyewitnesses of Christ and they were directly commissioned by Him to be apostles... since John died, there have been no more living apostles), John is clear in his identification and presentation of who Jesus Christ is. He is the "Word" (the living, human means of communication between God and man), and He is the Son of the Father (v. 3) - the Son of God. He is the final and complete revelation of God to men.

Any teaching about Jesus Christ that denies these must be rejected. 2Corinthians 11:4 reminds us that some will teach 'another Jesus' rather than the Jesus Christ the Bible teaches. There are many counterfeits, but only one true God. Christ said, *"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but by Me." (John 14:6)*

"I am... the Life". "In Him (Christ) was life" (John 1:4). "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11:25). "This is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1John 5:11-12).

People generally equate life with the life of the earthly body we inhabit. In John's first epistle, he expounds on the truth of the life that God is and that He offers - true life that is eternal (v. 2). It is not bound by a human body that will die. As we will further explore in this study, God is eternal, and the life He gives is eternal.