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By Dan Maines

1 John 1

1 John 1:1

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.

† John stresses the reality of Christ's incarnation, appealing to eyewitness experience.

† Against false teachers who denied Christ's humanity, John testifies that he heard, saw, and touched Him.

† Ignatius (Letter to the Smyrnaeans 1) also defended Christ's real flesh against early docetic heresies.

1 John 1:2

And 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.

† Christ is eternal life revealed, both with the Father and manifested to men.

† The apostles proclaimed this testimony so others might share in it.

† Origen later affirmed that eternal life is not future alone, but revealed in Christ's coming.

1 John 1:3

What 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.

† The purpose of apostolic proclamation was fellowship in God through Christ.

† Fellowship with God cannot be separated from fellowship with His people.

† Clement of Rome (1 Clement 46) emphasized unity and fellowship as central to the faith.

1 John 1:4

These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

† Joy is the result of fellowship with God and His people.

† John's joy was fulfilled in seeing others walk in truth and light.

1 John 1:5

This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all.

† God's nature is pure light, without mixture of darkness.

† Light represents truth, holiness, and life, while darkness represents sin and death.

† The Dead Sea Scrolls (1QS 1.9-10) spoke of the sons of light versus the sons of darkness, showing how John used familiar imagery.

1 John 1:6

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

† Claims of fellowship mean nothing if contradicted by behavior.

† Walking in darkness reveals falsehood.

† Josephus (Wars 4.5.2) described leaders in Jerusalem who claimed piety but walked in corruption, an example of hypocrisy.

1 John 1:7

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

† Walking in the light produces fellowship with one another and cleansing through Christ's blood.

† Cleansing is continual for those abiding in the light.

† Clement of Rome (1 Clement 49) connected love, unity, and cleansing through Christ.

1 John 1:8

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us.

† To deny sin is to be self-deceived and devoid of truth.

† The presence of sin requires humility and confession.

† Philo (On Dreams 1.22) admitted that even the righteous stumble, aligning with John's teaching.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous, so that He will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

† God's faithfulness ensures forgiveness for confessed sin.

† Confession leads not to despair but to cleansing and restoration.

† This reflects Proverbs 28:13, which says he who confesses and forsakes sin finds mercy.

1 John 1:10

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

† Denying sin calls God a liar, contradicting His revealed word.

† Such denial shows His truth has not taken root.

† Augustine noted that confession aligns us with God's truth, while denial opposes Him.

How it applies to us today

† 1 John 1 reminds us that faith rests on the historical reality of Christ, who was heard, seen, and touched.

† God is light, and walking in Him means living in truth, love, and fellowship.

† Confession of sin brings cleansing, but denial of sin brings self-deception and separation from God.

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

Source Index

† Josephus, Wars 4.5.2 - hypocritical leaders in Jerusalem

† Philo, On Dreams 1.22 - even the righteous stumble

† Dead Sea Scrolls, 1QS 1.9-10 - sons of light and darkness

† Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 46 - unity and fellowship

† Clement of Rome, 1 Clement 49 - cleansing and love

† Ignatius, Letter to the Smyrnaeans 1 - Christ's real flesh

against heresy

† Origen, Commentary on John - eternal life revealed in Christ

† Augustine, Homilies on 1 John - confession versus denial of sin

† Proverbs 28:13 - confessing sin brings mercy

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