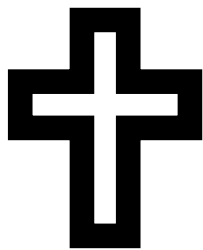


Twelve Lessons
on
Epistles of John
Volume I
(I John 1-3:10)

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ΧΑΡΙΣ

THE HUMANITY OF CHRIST – LESSON 1

I John 1:1, 2

Introduction: It is general knowledge that the gospel of John was written to prove the deity of our Lord while the first epistle of John was written to prove the humanity of our Lord, and to rebuke the Gnostics. The Gnostics believed because of their human wisdom they could be “critics” of the Word of God. The height of hypocrisy is for sinful man to think that he can correct the Word of God. The Gnostic taught that in human nature there is a principle of dualism – that of spirit and body – two separate entities – each hostile to the other. Bible believers know that man is a trinity and the three are connected, not separate. The Gnostics taught that sin dwelt in the flesh only, making it totally evil. Accordingly, an individual could live in wickedness in the body, and at the same time be pure and holy in the spirit. The Bible is clear on the doctrine that when we are saved, the Spirit of God living inside has an influence on the soul and body. We can’t convert the body but we can control the body. Nine times John presents tests for knowing the truth, and uses the verb *ginosko* from which the Gnostics get their name.

Lesson Goals:

1. Hear the eyewitness testimony of John concerning the humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. To refute the doctrine of Gnosticism by hearing John’s testimony of the perfect blending of the Lord Jesus’ humanity and deity.

Definitions of Important Terms and/or Phrases:

1. Ethical – According to Webster’s Dictionary: Relating to manners or morals; treating of morality; delivering precepts of morality; as *ethic* discourses or epistles; a system of moral principles; a system of rules for regulating the actions and manners of men in society.
2. Gnosticism – *Gnostic* comes from the Greek word “gnosis” and means knowledge. According to Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary, the Gnostics accepted the Greek idea of a radical dualism between God (spirit) and the world (matter). According to their world view, the created order was evil, inferior, and opposed to the good. God may have created the first order, but each successive order was the work of anti-gods, archons, or a demiurge (a subordinate deity).

Things to Consider

The Gnostics believed that the earth is surrounded by a number of cosmic spheres (usually seven) that separate man from God. These spheres are ruled by archons (spiritual principalities and powers) that guard their spheres by barring the souls who are seeking to ascend from the realm of darkness and captivity that is below to the realm of light that is above.

The Gnostics also taught that man is composed of body, soul, and spirit. Since the body and the soul are part of man’s earthly existence, they are evil. Enclosed in the soul, however, is the spirit, the only divine substance of man. This “spirit” is asleep and ignorant; it needs to be awakened and liberated by knowledge.

According to the Gnostics, the aim of salvation is for the spirit to be awakened by knowledge so the inner man can be released from his earthly dungeon and return to the realm of light where the soul becomes reunited with God. As the soul ascends, however, it needs to penetrate the cosmic spheres that separate it from its heavenly destiny. This, too, is accomplished by knowledge. One must understand certain formulas that are revealed only to the initiated.

I. THE PROOF OF JESUS’ HUMANITY

A. What John Heard – vs. 1 – “...we have heard”

1. Heard is “akouo”. The importance of this word is that it is in the present tense. This tense, in the Greek, refers to a process completed in past time, but having present results (see II Cor. 5:17).
2. This stresses the fact that he heard Him, not one time, but many times, and at length. He had heard His voice over and over again. Like repeating a scientific experiment over and over again so as to check results.
3. The tense of the verb has this effect: John said, “I actually heard His words, and they are still ringing in my ears.” John is saying, “57 years ago I met the Lord and what happened then is still having an effect on my life.” “I heard Him speak and it is still ringing in my ears.”

B. What John Saw – vs. 1 – “...we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon.”

1. The word “seen” is *horao* in the Greek and refers to the physical act of seeing, giving prominence to the discerning mind.

2. This states that John not only saw Jesus with his naked eye, but he understood what he was looking at. This was not an optical illusion or a hallucination.
3. The word “looked” is *theomai* and it means, “to behold, view attentively, contemplate.” We get our word “theater” from this Greek word. This implies that it was more than just a glimpse. It means an intense gaze. It is the idea of looking with examination. John looked long enough to discern that He must be God for no man could do what He did.

C. What John Felt – vs. 1 – “*our hands have handled, of the Word of life.*”

1. The word handled is *pselaphao* and means “to handle, touch, feel, to examine closely.” The verb means, “to handle with a view to investigation.”
2. The same word is used in Luke 24:39 “*Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle (pselaphao) me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.*”
3. Our Lord’s proof to the disciples, that He was raised in the physical body in which He died, was based on the scientific evidence of their sense of touch. They handled His body, investigating His claim to have a body of flesh and bones. This was first hand experience.

D. What John Knew – vs. 1 – “*...the Word of life.*”

1. The “Word” is the “Logos”. This is John’s particular designation of our Lord. *Logos* comes from *legos*, “to speak”, and refers to the total concept of something.
2. Our Lord is the Logos of God. He is the total concept of God as seen through a human medium. His humanity consisting of His human body, His human limitations, and His human life lived on earth in the power of the Holy Spirit. Any idea you have about God is found complete in Jesus.
3. Many times in the Scripture, we see Deity step out. Every once in awhile, Deity stepped out. He walked on the water, He raised Lazarus, He healed the sick etc.

II. THE PRISM OF JESUS’ HUMANITY – vs. 2

A. A Visible Witness – “*For the life was manifested.*”

1. “Manifested” is *phaneroo* which means “to make manifest, visible or known what has been hidden or unknown.” God who is invisible was made visible to the human race through the humanity of our Lord.
2. Illustrate. A prism is a three-sided crystal that separates white light passing through it into the seven colors of the rainbow; violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange, and red.
3. Notice verse 5 says “*...God is light*”. He is unseen light until He is seen through His prism, Jesus, and then we see Perfection, the number 7.

B. A Verbal Witness – “*...We...bear witness.*”

1. “Witness” is *martureo* which means “to bear witness, testify, to affirm that one has seen, heard, or experienced something, to give evidence, to bear record.”
2. John is not merely using words. The word *martureo* is the base word for martyr. They did more than just give verbal accent to Jesus’ deity, they literally gave their lives as a witness to His deity.
3. I ask the atheist and the agnostic, why did the Disciples become martyrs for just a man? They were crucified, bludgeoned, and burned, etc. Why die for just a man?

C. A Venerable Witness – “*...We...shew unto you that eternal life.*”

1. “Show” is *apaggello*, “to bring tidings from” a person or thing, “bring word, report.”
2. “Eternal” or *aionios* means without beginning and without end, that which always has been and always will be, eternal.
3. “Life” is *zoe*. This is “the absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, which belongs to God.” This states that God is more than just an Influence, He is a Person with the characteristics and qualities of a divine Person.
4. “*Which was with the Father*”. “With” is an important word here. It is *pros*, which means “facing” and implies fellowship. All of which means, the life John is talking about is a Person, for it requires a person to have fellowship. The Life, the Lord Jesus, is of such a nature as to have been in fellowship with God the Father, of very God Himself, possessing co-eternally with God the Father and God the Spirit.
5. Point. The Truth John is getting across is this: The ethical and spiritual qualities of this life, which God is, are communicated to the sinner when the latter places his faith in the Lord Jesus as Saviour, and this becomes the new, animating, energizing, motivating principle which transforms the experience of that individual, and the saint **THUS LIVES A CHRISTIAN LIFE**.
6. The Message is this: Since the believer is a partaker of this life, it is an absolute necessity that he show the ethical and spiritual qualities that are part of the essential nature of God, in his own life. If these are entirely absent, John says, that person is devoid of the life of God, and is unsaved.

