



The Agape

Class 1 • 1st John 1

- 1st John 1

- 1) That which was from the beginning, which we have **heard**, which we have **seen** with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched - this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.
- 2) The life appeared; 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.
- 3) We proclaim to you what we have **seen** and **heard**, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.
- 4) We write this to make our joy complete.
- 5) This is the message we have **heard** from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.
- 6) If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.
- 7) But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.
- 8) If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
- 9) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.
- 10) If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

- There is a theory that I would like to move forward with:

- All of the epistles of John should be read against the background of the Breaking of Bread

- As we read through these in the next nine weeks, let's do so with a eye towards:

- The forgiveness of sins
 - The keeping of the commandments to "Do this in remembrance of me"
 - The love that Christ expressed for his brethren in the Memorial Feast

- By the time of the writing of John's epistles, the Jewish counter-revolution against Christianity was in full swing
- There was a carefully planned infiltration of Judaist agents into the ranks of Christians, with the intention of corrupting the movement from within
- You have to remember that at the beginning Christianity was essentially a branch of Judaism, and the Judaists wanted to get it "corrected" and back on track
- Pseudo-Apostles followed the preachers around and latched on to the new converts, urging them to conform to Judaist practices
- And a massive campaign of character assassination was waged against Paul
- One of the goals of John's epistles is to combat Judaism
- John uses the Breaking of Bread as a major weapon in his attack against the Judaists
- The Breaking of Bread signifies, more than anything else, the oneness of the Body of Christ
- The Breaking of Bread signifies a fellowship that is not to be broken by factions
- We'll see that John refers often to Agape
- He uses this phrase to refer specifically to "The Agape", the Love Feast, the Memorial Service of our Lord
- 1st John 1:1-4
- Just from reading the first four verses, tell me who the Author is?
- Who is the letter addressed to?
- ***There is no question what it is about, though, is there?***
- What is the beginning John is referring to?
- It clearly is in reference to the MAN Christ Jesus (our hands have touched), so it can't be referring to the Plan of God set forth from the beginning of creation
- John frequently referred to "the beginning" of Christ's ministry:
 - 1st John 2:24 That which ye heard from the beginning
 - 2nd John 5 The commandment we had from the beginning
 - John 15:27 Ye have been with me from the beginning

- John 16:4 These things I said not unto you at the beginning
- John 8:25 Even the same I said unto you at the beginning
- John 6:64 Jesus knew from the beginning who should betray him

- Look at the verbs here in verse 1 - Any meaning to you?

- heard
- seen
- looked upon
- touched

- It kind of seems like a natural progression he is referring to:

- **heard** his teachings
- **seen** his miracles
- **looked** upon him crucified
- **touched** his resurrected body

- Jesus is the Word of Life

- Jesus is the Logos, or Idea, or Purpose of God - The “Word” of Life

- This life was manifest and John saw it and bears witness of it

- That life is Eternal Life

- Look at the sentence construction

- Jesus is the Word of Life

- That Life is Eternal Life

- Jesus is Eternal Life

- Uh... Repeat in Verse 3

- Why would “seen and heard” repeat 3 times in the first five verses?

- Notice the order in Verse 3?

- First the correct and sound doctrine is ‘seen and heard’

- THEN, we have Fellowship

- What Joy was John making complete in Verse 4?

- “The fulfillment of Christian Joy depends on the realization of fellowship. Fellowship with Christ and with his brethren is the measure of the fullness of joy.” - Westcott

- Verse 5 - Start of the message:

- **God is light**

- The message was heard from Jesus - in his ministry and after his resurrection

- Consider John’s allusions to light:

- John 1:4-10 KJV

- 4) In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
- 5) And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.
- 6) There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.
- 7) The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.
- 8) He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.
- 9) *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.
- 10) He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

- “no darkness at all”

- There is an association between good and evil and light and darkness...

- Isaiah 45:7 KJV

- 7) I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these *things*.

- Isaiah 5:20 KJV

- 20) Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

- In him there is no evil at all...

- **IF**

- Now comes Five **IF**’s based on the message that was heard from Jesus

6) IF we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth

- What does this mean to us? What did it mean to them?

- Isaiah 9:2 KJV

2) The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

- I think John was talking about continuing in practice of the old self-reliant Judaism

- Isaiah 5:20 KJV

20) Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!

- For us, the darkness is evil

- Do we “Walk in Darkness,” or just visit?

- *peripateo* - to live, to deport oneself, to follow as a companion

- Let's say, Fellowship the Darkness

7) IF we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

- The antitheses of the first... The positive side of the negative...

- If we say we have Fellowship, but walk in Darkness we lie

- If we walk in Light, then it would follow that we have Fellowship

- Same word, *peripateo*, but this time it is continuous, thus emphasizing a way of life

- We get our first clear message of the Memorial Service here...

- Fellowship one another, and the blood of Jesus cleanseth us from all sin

- The forgiveness of sins, given in baptism, can be renewed at the Lord's Table

8) IF we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

- WHO is he talking about here?

- It's hard to think of any thinking man with even a modicum of understanding of the Bible to believe himself without sin
- This is the state of the Jews at the time of John
- Remember the rich man who came to Jesus, "All these things I have kept from my youth up"?
- If your focus is on self-made righteousness you can actually persuade yourself that just because you can't find anything wrong with yourself, then God can't either
- OK, but how would this apply to you and I?
- Some argue about being born with guilt or not, but we understand that correctly...
- Actions speak louder than words...
- What if we ACT like we have no sin?

9) IF we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- In the absolute sense this is true at baptism
- In the practical sense it is true every day of your life
- God is faithful to his promises, and he has promised to forgive us

10) IF we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

- Compare vs. 7 & 9 with Vs. 8 & 10
- Not only are you saying that you have no sin now, but you are saying that you have never sinned
- In what ways does this attitude make "God a liar?"
 - 1) By destroying the basic truth of God's word that Human nature is sinful
(By repeating the lie of the serpent)
 - 2) By destroying the basic truth that Chris died for all, because all are sinners