

1 John
(Lesson 1)

Introduction:

1. We are beginning a study of 1 John, one of "the general epistles."
 - a. It was not addressed to any specific group.
 - b. It was written for the benefit of all Christians.
2. A number of credible witnesses have identified John as the writer.
 - a. John was one of the Lord's apostles -- "*the disciple whom Jesus loved.*"
 - b. He also wrote the Gospel of John, 2 John, 3 John, and the Revelation.
3. John stated several times why he wrote this letter:
 - a. that the joy of Christians may be full (1:4)
 - b. that Christians may not sin (2:1)
 - c. that Christians may guard against false teachers (2:26)
 - 1) In the first century, some heretics known as the Gnostics denied that:
 - a) Jesus is the Christ
 - b) Jesus came in the flesh.
 - 2) John identified the "*antichrist*" (2:18, 22-23).
 - 3) John showed Christians how to detect "*antichrist*" (4:1-3).
 - d. that Christians may know that they have eternal life (5:13).
4. We need to study this letter because it contains some helpful instructions on a variety of important subjects.
5. In this lesson we are covering the introduction (1:1-4).

Discussion:

- I. (vs.1-3) JOHN DECLARED THAT JESUS WAS MANIFESTED IN THE FLESH
 - A. John began in vs.1 by referring to someone as "*that which was from the beginning*" and "*the Word of life.*"
 1. John was referring to Christ (see John 1:1-3, 14).
 2. John said:
 - a. we have heard Him
 - b. we have seen Him with our eyes
 - c. we have looked upon Him
 - d. we have touched Him with our hands.
 3. John declared that Jesus [the Word who existed at the beginning] was made flesh.
 - B. Vs.2 is a parenthetical statement that explains vs.1.
 1. Jesus *was "with the Father"* throughout eternity [this refers to His divinity].
 2. Jesus *"was manifested unto us"* [this refers to His humanity].
 - C. (vs.3) John declared the truth about Christ so men might have fellowship with the Father and His Son.
 1. John declared what he had experienced with his senses [hearing, seeing, and touching].
 2. The Gnostics based their denial that Jesus was human and divine on their "superior knowledge" which was influenced by pagan philosophy.
 3. John based his teaching on personal contact with the Lord.
 - D. John stated the main thesis of his letter in the opening verses.
- II. (vs.4) JOHN DECLARED ONE OF HIS PURPOSES FOR WRITING HIS LETTER
 - A. "*That your joy may be full.*"
 - B. If Jesus did not come in the flesh as God's Son,:
 1. there is no cleansing from sin
 2. everyone is in darkness
 3. there is no reason for joy.
 - C. The good news is that Jesus the Son of God came in the flesh, and He made it possible for us to experience joy to the fullest extent.