# “The Appearance of God”

November 3 2019

John 3:1-10

I appreciate the opportunity to present a message from God’s Word again today. So, thank you.

Please find with me the first chapter of the John’s First Epistle; I John 1.

Have you ever said this “I can’t wait to have you meet so-and-so”? Obviously, you’ve got a very high regard for them. And, you want your friend to know them.

There’s an account of a man in the Bible by the name of Andrew. This man, Andrew, just as soon as he met Jesus, immediately ran right back home. He walked through his front door and got his brother Peter. And, because he quote “couldn’t wait,” he brings Peter to meet Jesus. The phrase “can’t wait” is an idiom. It means “I’m eager to have you do this.”

Well, here in this first chapter of this First Epistle of John you will find this very same thing. John. This is John, the same John that, who, along with his brother James, had become a disciple of Jesus on the very same day as fellow fishermen, Peter and Andrew (see Mark 1:16-19). This John is eager to have his readers, you and me, join him in his wonder at Someone he met.

Now, the Bible does many things. But, one thing it does *not* do is argue or debate the existence of God. He leaves that up to people.

Follow me as I read the first five verses of a letter that assumes God; but it’s also a word from a man who is eager for you to know the One he knows. And he begins by telling us about the LORD’s appearance. So, I’ve titled today’s message “The Appearance of God.” Shall we pray?

Follow with me at verse one. I John 1:1 *“****That which*** *was from the beginning,* ***which*** *we have heard,* ***which*** *we have seen with our eyes,* ***which*** *we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (2) (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and* ***shew unto you******that eternal life, which*** *was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*

*(3) That* ***which*** *we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

*(4) And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. (5) This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”*

Now, can you go back with me mentally to the Prophet Daniel? Here’s Daniel 11:32 *“…but* ***the people that do know their God*** *shall be strong, and do exploits.”*

John is the Apostle John; the fisherman John. He wants people, you and me, to know his God. But, it’s not know-ledge *of* God that John is after, but personally knowing God. Why do you attend a worship service? Isn’t it because you want to hear about God? Isn’t it to learn about God? Isn’t this, at least, part of why we attend a worship service? You want to *know* your God and you want to *know Him better*.

John was one of Christ’s earliest disciples. Actually, as you read the accounts of the early disciples of Jesus; he’s the first one; the first disciple. And this John is the man who wrote this letter.

And, of course, like John, when you meet Jesus Christ, your life, like John’s, is forever changed, as John’s was.

Let me show you what I mean.

The first book he wrote we call the Gospel according to John. In his first writing, in the Gospel, John tells us just Who this Jesus is.

Who is Jesus? “…In John 1:35-51 we see that Jesus is proclaimed by the Baptizer as the Lamb of God (1:36). He’s Rabbi (Teacher) (1:38, 49). He’s the Messiah (1:41). He’s the Authoritative Lord (Who changes people for His sovereign purposes) (1:42).

He’s the one of Whom the Old Testament speaks (1:45). He’s Jesus is of Nazareth, the son of Joseph (1:45); He is the Omniscient One Who knows each individual (1:47-48). Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus is the King of Israel (1:49).

He’s the only bridge between heaven and earth. He’s also the God Who chose to dwell among us (1:14). And He’s the soon-coming Son of Man (1:51).” [Found on <https://bi-ble/.org> “Meeting Jesus” Steven J. Cole].

That’s quite a list – all from the first chapter of the Gospel according to the Apostle John. So, John is some-what of an apologist. He very simply lays out the facts. This is Jesus. But, the Gospel of John is also a record of miracles. Not all, just some of the perfect miracles that Jesus per-formed, are recorded for us by John. And here’s why he wrote the Gospel; so that you and I might become Believers in Christ. John 20:30 *“And many other signs [miracles] truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: (31) But these are written,* ***that ye might believe*** *that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;* ***and that believing ye might have life*** *through his name.”*

So, John has already written a magnificent account of the life and miracles of Jesus.

Now, then; what is this first epistle? In the Gospel, John that tells us Who Jesus is. And, it’s the Epistle of First John where we find an explanation of what it means to know God, the Father; and to know God, the Son.

Let me read it again; verse one. I John 1:1*“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (2) (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*

*(3) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”*

John wrote so that people would read. He wants his readers, you and me, to know what he knows and Who he knows. Isn’t that what happens when you take the message of salvation to a friend or neighbor? Don’t you want that person to know what you know; to know the Person you know?

You see, when you tell the Good News to somebody, you aren’t just inviting them to hear about a religion. That *is* what people often think. But, it’s not true. You want them to *know* the Person you know. So, when you take the Gospel to somebody this week, make sure you go with the right pur-pose in mind. It’s not just “I want them to be saved.” Rather, I’m like Andrew and I’m like John. “I want you to know the Person I know.”

Let’s see if we can find that here in this first chapter?

First, then, His existence before His appearing; verse one. I John 1:1*“That which was from the beginning …”*

To tell someone about Somebody Who existed in the beginning is a bit daunting, isn’t it? But Somebody did exist in the beginning. Somebody had to be here before all the creation existed.

How do we know that? Here’s how. Where did the complexity of the universe originate? Isn’t it simply a logical conclusion that it had to come from Someone Who was more complex than the creation?

How is it that the sun has its own power and light? How is it that the earth is located just where it is in the universe? The earth is actually at the perfect place in the solar system for us to exist. The energy the earth gets from the sun is perfect for life on earth. Without the sun, plants and animals couldn’t survive.

But it would not be possible for us to live on the sun because it’s a gaseous star made of hydrogen and helium. And the sun itself rotates, which means to spin while it revolves.

“If the Earth were any further away from the sun, we’d all freeze. Any closer; we would burn up. Even a fractional variance in the Earth's position to the sun would make life on Earth impossible. The Earth remains this per-fect distance from the sun while it is rotating around the sun at a speed of nearly 67,000 mph (while everything inside the Milky Way Galaxy is flinging around the center of the galaxy at 490,000 miles per hour). It also rotates on its axis (at a speed of 1,038 mph every single day), which allows the entire surface of the Earth to be properly warmed and cooled every day.” [Found on [https://www.everystudent.com](https://www.everystudent.com/) “Is There A God” by Marilyn Adamson].

Where did such complexity originate?

Then there’s the moon. “The moon is the perfect size and the perfect distance from the Earth so as to create a perfect gravitational pull. The moon creates ocean tides so the ocean waters don’t stagnate. And the oceans are held back from spilling over across the continents.” [The Wonders of God's Creation, Moody Institute of Science (Chicago, IL)].

Just the complexity of the location of the earth and the speed of the earth and the existence of the moon and the power of the moon; all of which you see every single day of your life, says to you that Someone much more complex has created all this.

Then, you’ve got water. Then, you’ve got your brain. Then, you’ve got your eye; your two eyes. And the light around you enters the eye and you see color and shapes and letters and pictures and everything around you.

Is it even possible that so much complexity originated by chance?

Complexity says a very intelligent Person existed before complexity.

Then, there are numbers? Why do numbers explain the universe?

Richard Feynman, a Nobel Prize winner for quantum electrodynamics, said, *“Why nature is mathematical is a mystery ...The fact that there are rules at all is a kind of miracle.”* [Richard Feynman, *The Meaning of It All: Thoughts of a Citizen-Scientist* (New York: BasicBooks, 1998), 43].

*“The greatest scientists have been struck by how strange this is. There is no logical necessity for a universe that obeys rules, let alone one that abides by the rules of mathematics. This astonishment springs from the recognition that the universe doesn't have to behave this way.”* [Found on <https://www.every-student.com> by Dinesh D'Souza, *What's So Great about Christianity?* (Regnery Publish-ing, Inc., 2007, chapter 11].

So, says John, I want to say a word to you about *“That which was from the beginning…”*

Yes, there *was* a beginning; a beginning to everything. And there *was* a Person at the beginning. And that Person was is the One John wants to say something about.

So, John takes you back to a point in time; the beginning. And he takes you back to a Person before time, the Son of God. Yes, everything had a beginning except for the One Beginner Himself; the One Who was there at the beginning; the One Who made it all.

The very first word of the Bible is the word “beginning.” The Hebrew word is “Bereshith” in English means “in the beginning.”

By the way, this is similar to the way John started his first book; the Gospel of John. John 1:1 *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) The same was in the beginning with God. (3) All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.”*

First, then, His existence before His appearing.

Second, His physical existence as a man; verse one.

I John 1:1*“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled …”*

One of the greatest joys that is yours when it comes to the truth of the Bible is this; eye-witness testimony.

You know, hard evidence is called hard evidence because it’s generally hard to dispute. Facts always precede faith. And John had personally been with the LORD while He was here on earth. He heard Him with his own ears. He saw Him with his own eyes; looked upon Him. And he touched Him with his own hands.

The invisible Jesus was in “the beginning.” The visible Jesus was here while the Apostle John lived in this world.

Now, let’s say you have firsthand knowledge about an event that took place in your neighborhood. You saw it. You were there. You heard the ruckus. You ran from your house right to the scene. And a policeman asked you if you saw anything. Then, as you told him your story, you noticed that he was not writing anything down. He wasn’t really paying much attention to you. You complete your tale and he simply says “I don’t believe it.” How do you respond to that? Shock and disbelief.

Yet, how many people are there in your life right now who reject Jesus, the Bible, and the Church simply because they “choose not to believe it”?

But, what do you have in the Bible; especially here in I John? You have eyewitness testimony. You have ear witness testimony. You have a man who was personally with the Son of God while He walked this earth.

Do you see what’s important to John here? It’s the truthfulness and the accuracy of the facts that pertain to the Person of Jesus. It’s like “I knew Him personally. Listen to me. This is what I know. This is Who I know. This is what I saw. This is what I heard.”

If my calculations are correct, no less than 84,681 books have been written about Jesus Christ. [“In July 1997 missions researcher David Barrett reported that worldwide 65,571 books had been written about Jesus with an average of 4 new books coming out every single day. If his data is accurate, by July 2002 right at 73,000 books will have been written about Jesus.] [Found on [http://www.danielakin.com](http://www.danielakin.com/) “What A Life” by Dr. Daniel Akin].

Yet, how many of those books reflect the simplicity of John the fisherman from Galilee? I John 1:1*“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled …”*

John says “we heard Him; we saw Him; and we touched Him.” So, in essence, Christianity is based upon and rooted in the truth, the facts, and the eyewitness testimonies of people who were right there with the LORD.

John saw Jesus multiply the loaves and the fishes. He watched Him turn water into wine. He saw the blind healed of their blindness and he saw the lepers cured of leprosy. He was there when the deaf now being able to hear while the dumb could speak. He was there for miracle after miracle. John saw and personally knew Jesus, the God-man. And he’s eager to tell you about Him.

So, first, then, His existence before His appearing.

Second, His physical existence as a man.

Third, His essence, verse one.

I John 1:1*“That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of* ***the Word of life****; …”*

This is a true story. “On September 11, 2001, when the now infamous plane crashed into the Pentagon, a Police Officer, Isaac Hoopii, was nearby but outside the building. Immediately, he began helping people straggle out of the building – in some cases, carrying them out.

But Hoopii wanted to do more. Wearing only his short-sleeved, blue, police uniform – no mask, no protective coat, not even a handkerchief – he ran into the inky blackness of the Pentagon. Someone yelled at him to stop. “We gotta get people,” he shouted back.

Suffocating on smoke, Hoopii heard the building crack-ing. He called out, “Is anybody in here? Anybody here?”

Wayne Sinclair and five coworkers were crawling through rubble and had lost all sense of direction when they heard Hoopii's voice. They cried out, and Hoopii responded. *“Head toward my voice. Head toward my voice.”* So following his voice, Sinclair and the others soon made their way out of the crumbling building. (Steve Gertz, Wheaton, Illinois, U.S. News & World Report, 12-10-01, pp. 24-32; www.PreachingToday.com)

Hoopii’s words were literally “words of life” to those people.” [Found on [https://www.sermoncentral.com](https://www.sermoncentral.com/) “The Word of Life” by C. Philip Green April 25, 2019].

Yes, when we listen to Jesus Christ we hear words of life. Whoever listens to His Words will find eternal life. But that is only a part of what John is saying here. He’s saying that which was from the beginning, which we heard, which we saw, which we touched, This One is The Word of Life.

So, initially John tells us that he and the other Apostles knew this Person personally. But now he tells us Who He really is. He’s “The Word of Life.” He’s saying “I knew Him personally on this physical earth. But, He’s not like any other person on this earth. He’s “The Very Word of Life.”

Have you ever wondered what a “word” is? It’s a means of communication. Every single word communicates something from one person to another person.

What does that mean? It means that there is a Person Who is Life and Who brings life into existence and Who sustains life. He is “The Eternal Life.”

Who then, is this Jesus? He’s the One Who commun-icates the Invisible God to human beings. Jesus is the Perfect Communicator. If you want to know God, look at Jesus. Listen to Jesus. Believe Jesus. Respond to Jesus.

Jesus Christ is The One and Only Communication of God.

Everywhere we look in creation we see God’s power and God’s goodness and His authority. We can’t deny those things. But, life is more than just externals. What we really want to know is “how can we know God personally?” One way; turn to Jesus; period.

How can John, his friends, the other Apostles, you and me; how can we know the true and living God? One way; by listening to One Person, Jesus Christ, The Eternal Life.

Jesus is two things at least. He’s the One Who commun-icates God to human beings. And He’s the One Who imparts life to human beings. As the Word, He is the One Who conveys life. The Word of Life and The Word is Life.

Here’s what Jesus says about Himself.

John 10:10 *“…I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”*

Here’s another Apostle’s testimony. John 6:68 *“Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”*

And here’s John again in this same epistle. I John 5:11 *“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. (12) He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. (13) These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”*

Everything about Jesus is Life. He is the Author and Creator and the King of life. He’s sovereign over life. He’s the Water of Life. If you are thirsty to know God, you need to go to the Water of Life. If you are hungry to know God, you need to go to the Bread of Life.

Folks, God’s free gift to you and me is eternal life. And the way to have this free gift is to receive His Son. He, the Son, has life because He is the Word of Life. And everyone who believes on His Name has eternal life. Jesus is the True God and He is Eternal Life.

I John 5:20 *“…This is the true God, and eternal life.”*

One, His existence before creation is as Creator of everything.

Two, His physical existence as a man; John and those around him knew Jesus personally. They saw, heard, touched, and knew Him as the God-man.

And His Essence. In His Essence, Jesus is Life. He is the Creator of life. He is the Sustainer of Life. He is the Giver of Life. He is the One and Only One you truly. Apart from Him you are on your own. Apart from Him you will die in your sins. But, in Him, you will find all you need both for this life and for the life to come.

So, ask yourself this question “Do you enjoy *life*?” God’s intention is that you enjoy life. Life, folks, is bound up in a Person, Jesus Christ.

Go to Him today; this One Who is Eternal Life? Will you turn to Him? Will you receive Him as your LORD and Savior? Will you trust Him? Will you receive the free gift of Eternal Life? Or, like so many today, will you choose to not believe? God puts the choice into your hands. What will you do?

Shall we pray?

Hymn # 505 “He Touched Me”