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April 27, 2003

The Authenticity of the Incarnation
I John 1:1-4

INTRO: I John is a letter to the family of God. As we study this Epistle, we will see that it is a warm, loving, yet searching letter for it deals with sin in the lives of believers and shows the inconsistency of being loved and not loving in return.

In the first four verses of I John, the Apostle sets forth three important goals:

- I. Belief in the reality of the incarnation of Christ (vss 1-2),
- II. Fellowship with God and His family (vs 3),
- III. Fullness of joy (vs 4),

I. VSS 1-2, THE REALITY OF THE INCARNATION

A. Vs 1, the personal experience of John and the other Apostles is testified to. They had heard, seen, looked upon, and handled the incarnate Son of God.

1. "That which was from the beginning..." When we read this our mind goes back to the Gospel of John where verse one says: "In the beginning was the word."

a) Vine says: "This does not imply that Christ was originated. What the Apostle is there setting forth is His eternal pre-existence....Wherever a beginning is in view there Christ was, having been pre-existent of it. Before creation....He was with God, and was Himself God" (10).

b) In the Gospel of John, we learn that the Word existed before creation; now here in I John, we find that the Word existed before the incarnation.

c) "That which was from the beginning..." became flesh and dwelt among men (John 1:14 "The word was made flesh.....") Jesus is the incarnate Son of God.

(1) Keep in mind this fact, the virgin birth of Christ was the means by which He acquired a human nature without affecting His holy, sinless deity.

(2) Jesus Christ by way of the virgin birth was physically related to Mary but not Joseph. Note with me the wonderful reliability of the scripture: "And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ" (Matt 1:16). Usually a genealogy only mentions the names of the fathers. The phrase "of who" in Matthew 1:16 is in the feminine gender showing that Christ was virgin born and related physically only to Mary.

2. John and the other Apostles were eyewitnesses to the life of Christ. As we look at what John says here, we see a progress of experience, a

deepening degree of intimacy. The aorist tenses of “beheld” and “handled” mark the definiteness of the events John writes of. These words point to the reality of the incarnation the God became flesh.

a) “Which we have heard.” This speaks of all that Jesus said to them. He spoke of His deity (John 10:30), of His mission (Lk 19:10), of His death and resurrection (John 12:24), of His ascension and return (John 14:1-3).

(1) What they heard Jesus say deeply affected the Apostles. So deeply were they affected that they had an unshakable assurance of His identity.

(2) “Have heard” implies that His words were still ringing in John’s ears. “There’s within my heart a melody, Jesus whispers sweet and low.....”

b) “Which we have seen with our eyes.” Think of all that John and the others had seen! The miracles of water turned to wine, of the feeding of the five thousand, of the healings. They had seen enough to prove that He is the Son of God.

c) “Which we have looked upon.” This is not mere repetition of what goes before it.

(1) This speaks of careful and deliberate vision which sees the significance of the object considered.

(2) It is deeper than merely seeing with the eye for it speaks of great pleasure in what is seen. John and the ten looked upon Jesus with satisfaction. What they saw in the life of Jesus, His words, the miracles, His living actions, pleased them to the point of bringing joy.

d) “Our hands have handled.” Here is evidence that Jesus was a man not a myth, a man not a phantom, a man who they prayed with, a man they had touched— real flesh, blood, and bone (John 20:24-27).

3. “Of the Word of Life.” The word which is the source of life, the Word in which life resides.

a) The word is Jesus.

b) The message of the Gospel centers around Him! Without Him there is no Gospel.

c) He is the Word which is life (John 17:2-3).

B. Vs 2, The manifestation of life eternal.

1. “For the life was manifested.”

a) “The life” was manifested. He became flesh, lived a sinless life, and died for sinners.

b) The One who is life and the origin of life was manifested, made known, to men by the incarnation (John 1:14; I Jn 5:11).

2. “And we have seen it.”

a) Jesus had a real existence on earth.

b) John was a personal witness that Jesus is the Savior. And he bears record of what he saw and heard.

3. “We.... show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father.”

- a) This declares the eternity of Jesus Christ.
 - b) Jesus is “that eternal life.” He is from everlasting to everlasting, the Alpha and Omega.
 - c) Before He was manifested on earth, He was with the Father (Jn 1:1-2).
4. “And was manifested unto us.”
- a) Jesus Christ the life appeared unto men as a man.
 - b) In John 14:6, Jesus says: “I am... the life.”
 - c) In I John 3:5, we see why He was manifested.

II. VS 3, FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD, FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD’S FAMILY

A. “That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you....”

- 1. The Apostles could not keep it to themselves. The saved, those indwelt of the Spirit, must tell others.
- 2. Spurgeon said: “Having found the honey we cannot eat it alone; having tasted that the Lord is gracious, it is one of the first instincts of the newborn nature to send us out crying, ‘Ho everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters...’” (Vaughn 23).

B. “That ye also may have fellowship with us....”

- 1. John wants all believers to have the same fellowship with Jesus that the Apostles had to talk with Him, to walk with Him, to touch Him.
 - a) He wants us to have and continue to have sweet fellowship.
 - b) The idea is enjoyment in our fellowship.
- 2. “Truly our fellowship is with the Father.”
 - a) Fellowship with God is the purpose of life.
 - b) What a wonderful privilege, fellowship with the Father.
- 3. “And with His Son Jesus Christ.”
 - a) We have fellowship with the Son because of redemption.
 - b) The Holy Spirit indwelling us assures His presence Rom 8:9.
 - c) Christ is in us (Col 1:27).
 - d) Without the blood of Jesus, without belief in His death, burial, and resurrection, there is no fellowship with the Godhead.
 - e) “Fellowship”– the Christian life is not to be lived in a monastery.
 - f) The word fellowship means to participate among other things.

III. VS 4, JOY TO THE FULL

- A. Fellowship (vs 3) and fullness of joy (vs 4) depends on our true fellowship with God the Father and God the Son, to know and to live for them.
- B. The Lord wants us to have abundant life (John 10:10).
- C. Happiness depends on happenings. Joy is of the Lord; joy is a spring within no matter what happens.
- D. The desire of God, the will of God for you is joy (John 15:11).

CONCLUSION: Jesus is the incarnate Son of God, God the Son, and in Him we have life and it more abundantly.