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W. O. Vaught

Ouachita Baptist University

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Recommended Citation

Vaught, W. O., "Why God is Light!" (1978). *Vaught Sermon Notes: John*. 35.

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WHY GOD IS LIGHT!

A STUDY OF THE BOOK OF 1 JOHN
NUMBER 1
1 JOHN 1:1-5

Dr. W. O. Vaught
Immanuel Baptist Church
Little Rock, Arkansas

1 JOHN 1:1-5 "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; (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.) 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. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. 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."

With this paper we begin a new study. The human author of this book is the disciple and the apostle John. He is the same one who wrote the Gospel of John and The Revelation. This book was written sometime between 85 and 90 A.D. It was written in Ephesus where John was living when the Emperor Domitian had him arrested and banished him to the Island of Patmos, where he wrote the Revelation.

The Purpose

The purpose of this Epistle is Polemical, to answer controversy and misunderstanding. The objective was to combat Gnosticism which was rampant in John's day. Gnosticism was a satanic attack on the Church Age and from it has come almost every cult and false doctrine we have in the world today.

The Prologue

The first five verses of this Epistle we call the prologue, and in these verses we will see the reason why John wrote this message. The Greek is very simple, but the doctrine behind the words is very complex. "That what" is a neuter relative pronoun of hoti. When it is used to refer to Jesus Christ, it is masculine gender, but here it is neuter gender and immediately this presents a problem. Immediately we know that the writer is not speaking about Jesus Christ, but about the mind of Christ, about the doctrine which came from his mind. So the very first words here let us know this is going to be a doctrinal dissertation to help us understand our eternal relationship with Jesus Christ and also to help us in our temporal relationship with him. The word "was" is the imperfect, active, indicative of eimi which means that just as The Lord Jesus Christ always existed, so his doctrine always existed. This same imperfect tense is used of Jesus in John 1:1 when we read "In the beginning was the Word." There we have the masculine gender. But here the emphasis is not on the person of Christ, but on the mind of Christ, his doctrine. So thus far, we have "That which kept on existing from the beginning." It has a very fine descriptive preposition here apo and that means from the ultimate source of the beginning. "From the ultimate source of the beginning" and Jesus Christ is that source.

The Subject Of This Epistle

Therefore we can conclude from the very first line of this Epistle that this book is going to be a doctrinal discourse on the thinking of The Lord Jesus Christ. This is a book on the importance of knowing and

loving Jesus Christ. He uses three verbs here--we have heard, we have seen, and we have looked upon and if we didn't have this neuter gender, we would think this refers directly to Jesus Christ himself. "We have heard" is a perfect, active, indicative of akouo and this means that John had personally heard Bible doctrine and had taken it into his soul. The Holy Spirit had personally communicated this to John and he was writing it down. "We have seen" is a perfect, active, indicative of horao and this refers to the eyes of the soul. He had seen The Lord through the doctrine he had learned. "Which we have looked upon" is an aorist, middle, indicative of theoamai and it means "to look upon with the mind." John next says "and our hands have handled" and he says this to let us know that he did know Jesus personally, but this also refers to the handling of the truth that Jesus had brought to him.

1 JOHN 1:2 "(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;)" This verse is a parenthesis, and in this verse, John talks about the person he is going to discuss in this book. "For the life was manifest" and this is a direct reference to Jesus Christ. "Was manifest" is an aorist, passive, indicative of phoneroo and this refers to the first advent, the virgin birth and his 33 years on this earth in human form. Next John tells us that he saw Jesus personally. He can bear witness to something he actually saw. In court the judge asks the witness to tell only the things he saw personally. This is exactly what John is saying here. "Bear witness" is a direct reference to the Gospel of John which he had already written and sent out to the world. Eternal life is a name for Jesus Christ. This "which was" is the imperfect, active, indicative of eimi and here it refers to Jesus Christ personally. It literally means "which kept on being with the Father." "And was manifest unto us" means that all the apostles saw him and knew him personally.

1 JOHN 1:3 "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." In this verse we have a declaration of the principle of fellowship with God. After the parenthesis of verse 2, John now goes back and picks up the idea of verse one. "We have seen" and "we have heard" are both perfect, active, indicatives. "Declare we unto you" is from apaggello and means to announce or report from the ultimate source. So this is a declaration of how this book is going to be written, God the Holy Spirit gave this message to John and he wrote down exactly what the Holy Spirit had revealed. In other words, he is now giving us the mechanics of how this book came to be written. He is also telling us that this is to be distinguished from the Gospel of John.

Desire To Know More Details

You see, people have always had a desire to know more of the details of the human life of Jesus on this earth. All the other disciples who knew Jesus in the flesh were now dead (by 85 A.D.) and John was the only one still living who had seen Jesus in the flesh. They wanted John to go back and write about the childhood of Jesus. As you know, we have very little in the Bible about those many years Jesus spent at Nazareth.

LUKE 2:40 "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him."

LUKE 2:52 "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

Now that is about all we have, but people wanted John to write about these things. But in this book, John is cutting them off at the pass and he is not going to write about any of these details of the life of Jesus. He wrote all of that in the Gospel of John. In this Epistle, John is not going back to those physical details of the life of Christ. In essence John is saying this--"Look, I'm not going back and write about those personal details." So he will write 1st, then 2nd, then 3rd John and finally he will end up writing The Revelation, which will be entirely about the Second Advent of Christ. In these writings he never goes back to refer to those three years he spent with Jesus in his public ministry.

Don't Miss The Main Thing

It is possible to get so tied up with the personal details of the life of Jesus that we miss the real things Jesus came into the world to do. This is why John is going to write this message in order to interpret to us the mind of Christ. These little books will emphasize that which should be emphasized in between the first advent of Christ and his second advent. Here John will discuss the relationship a believer should have with "the Eternal Life." In this book John will discuss soul breathing so we can have fellowship with the living Lord. A little later on in The Revelation, he will discuss the decline of the Church Age, also The Tribulation, and will give the details of the events of the Tribulation, plus the second coming of Christ, the Millennium, and the final end of the age.

The word "declare" means to announce from an immediate source. This is information that will teach them how to function in the Church Age.

"That" introduces here a purpose clause. "You may have fellowship" then he adds "in association with us." John had fellowship with The Lord and he wants all believers to experience this same fellowship. Then he adds "And truly our fellowship is with The Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ." **THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN HAVE FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD AND WITH JESUS CHRIST IS THROUGH DOCTRINE.** Fellowship means to love him through doctrine.

1 JOHN 1:4 "And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full." Now we come to the result. We have a present, active, indicative of grapho which means "to write." This is a dramatic present. "That" introduces a purpose clause "your joy may be full." Now that's the purpose of 1st John. "Inner mental happiness" is the objective. Next we have a periphrastic and it is very strong. We have the present, active, subjunctive of eimi plus the perfect, passive, subjunctive of pleroo which means "to fill up a deficiency." This kind of construction says this--remember that this perfect joy and peace and fellowship is available to you.

A Very Personal Problem

Let us now look at the problem we have. We have a deficiency, but here is one who can move in and fill up that deficiency. Our deficiency is the lack of doctrine, and lack of doctrine means the lack of happiness. Inner happiness is possible, and here is the means by which perfect happiness is maintained. This little book might be called the little book which teaches us how to love God and how to have abiding fellowship

with him. John was never obscure in any of his writings. He always tells you exactly what he is about. In the Gospel of John he was very specific in stating the purpose of that book.

JOHN 20:31 "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." Here he does exactly the same thing. To have the perfect fulfillment, to have the perfect happiness God intended for us is the purpose of this little book. Since God loves us with a perfect love, we need to come into relationship with him so we can experience this perfect love. The intake of doctrine is absolutely necessary in order for you to have this love relationship with God.

The personal problem we have is that we are going to have many misunderstandings with God, and these misunderstandings come from the old sin nature. The great intruder is the old sin nature and the old sin nature brings mental attitude sins. John will discuss this in detail in the third chapter of this book.

How To Handle The Problem

How are we to handle this problem created by the old sin nature? When the Holy Spirit controls the life, then the old sin nature pulls in his horns and jumps right back in his little slot and stays where he is suppose to stay. Here we have the concept of the old sin nature intruding. When he intrudes the most obvious thing is that our personal thermometer registers "mental attitude sins." With the old sin nature in control, you sit there all filled up with mental attitude sins of bitterness, hatred, jealousy, etc. That means you are out of fellowship and that means that any spiritual truth that is taught does not get through to you. You can't take in spiritual truth as long as the old sin nature stands there blocking the flow of truth to your mind. Now when you sit in church about the only kind of sins you can commit are mental attitude sins. But that's all you need to commit to keep from taking in doctrine. And these mental attitude sins make you miserable and you can't be made full with the joy John is talking about in this verse. Once you confess your sins the old sin nature draws in his horns and slips back into his slot and you are ready to take in doctrine again. Carnality always cuts off joy in your life.

What is Joy?

Joy is not an emotional activity. It's not the singing of "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart." Any soft brain can sing that song and not have one ounce of joy in the soul. Just like people who can sing "There's a Sweet, sweet spirit in this place" and at the same moment they can have enough mental attitude sins that they actually hate someone in that same congregation. So John reaches back into the human mind and seeks to clear away our mental attitude sins so we can truly see The Lord and have fellowship with him. The purpose of this book is to make you a happy functioning Christian. To learn how to love The Lord is not a simple process.

1 JOHN 1:5 "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." This verse is going to tell us what God is like. We have a present, active, indicative of eimi and it means "This keeps on being the message." This keeps on being the doctrine. This is the doctrine "which

we have heard from the immediate source of him" and "we are going to report from this immediate source to you." So this is the inhale (The Holy Spirit breathed this message into the soul of John) and the exhale is the writing of this message down. Next we have "The God is light" and it is referring to all the members of the Godhead.

The Makeup Of Light

Light is divided into three primary colors--Red, yellow, and blue. Then we have secondary colors. Yellow and blue mixed make green. Red and yellow mixed make orange. Red and blue mixed make purple. Now every ray of light has all these colors in it, both the primary and the secondary colors. There never was a ray of light that wasn't complete. There isn't anything about God that isn't complete. However, you can't see the colors in a ray of light until it strikes an object. In other words, light has to have a relationship with an object, and when light strikes an object, then you see colors. Some of you are wearing red or orange and this means that these other colors are absorbed and the red and orange is reflected. Those of you who are wearing white means that everything is reflected. Those who are wearing black means that everything is absorbed. Light has a relationship with every object, and color is the manifestation of that relationship. You don't see all the colors at the same time except under certain conditions of refraction and moisture in the atmosphere breaks light up into all the colors and we call it a rainbow. In the Physics laboratory when a ray of light is broken down, then you can see the various colors in the spectrum. But the colors are always there all the time. Therefore, when John said that God is light, he gave us a perfect illustration.

Light Illustrates The Godhead

Light is one in essence, but three in characteristics. Light has three properties.

- a. Light is actinic. This is the power of light which can neither be seen nor felt. (This illustrates God The Father.)
- b. Light is luminiferous. This is the characteristic of light which causes beams to shine forth. (This illustrates God The Son. He is both seen and felt.)
- c. Light is calorific. This is the characteristic of light which can be felt. (This illustrates God The Holy Spirit.) He is not seen but felt.

This is the composition of light. All members in the Godhead have the same essence, yet we have three persons.

Two Kinds Of Darkness

There are two kinds of darkness. We have the darkness that comes into the soul from false doctrine. Paul makes this emphasis in Ephesians. But John here emphasizes the darkness that comes from the old sin nature. Therefore, walking in light is responding to God. Walking in darkness is failing to respond to God. You can't respond to light with darkness. Neither can you respond to God (light) with human good or with the fruit of the old sin nature (darkness).

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

1. These scriptures say that the Trinity is a fact.
1 PETER 1:2 "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied."

2 CORINTHIANS 13:14 "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen."

MATTHEW 28:19 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;"

JOHN 10:30 "I and my Father are one."

2. The Trinity can also be proved from the pronoun "us" in Scripture.

GENESIS 1:26 "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

GENESIS 3:22 "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever:"

GENESIS 11:7 "Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

3. Jesus Christ is the only visible member of the Trinity.

JOHN 1:18 "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."

JOHN 6:46 "Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father."

1 TIMOTHY 6:16 "Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen."

1 JOHN 4:12 "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." Christ had to become a man so we could see God. Since Christ is in heaven, the only way now for us to see God is through his Word.

4. Each member of the Trinity has identical essence but each is a distinct personality. When the Bible says, "God is one" it is referring to essence.
5. Each member of the Godhead performs a different function with reference to mankind.
In salvation--The Father planned it.
The Son executed it on the cross.
The Holy Spirit revealed the plan and gave power to it.
6. Each phase of the plan of God is carried out by different members of The Godhead.
Jesus Christ The Son provided salvation.
After salvation, the Holy Spirit moves in and empowers us.
In Heaven, God the Father will be in command. (Even then he will be revealed through Christ, The Son.)