



1 John 1

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Tape #8232
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Let's turn to First John chapter one.

Three times the Bible speaks of the beginning. In Genesis 1:1, He speaks of the beginning of the universe. Not the beginning of God. It's not the original beginning. It's the beginning of the universe.

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). Just how long ago that was, we don't know. When I was in school, I was taught that it was four billion years ago. Now they say it was fifteen billion years ago. That means I was in school eleven billion years ago. I'm older than you think. There are some scientists that believe that the universe is much younger than what the estimates are. There are those who postulate a young earth, rather than one that is fifteen billion years old.

The Bible doesn't tell us when it was. It just says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." And if it were fifteen billion years ago, I wonder what God did in all of the billions of years that existed before He created the heavens and the earth. He has existed forever. And surely He just didn't sit around doing nothing in that eternity past. And it causes you to wonder. What else has God created? What other things have existed that God brought into existence and there's so much that we don't know.

In John 1, the gospel of John, he begins it with another beginning. That is, at the beginning, whenever that was, if there indeed was, "In the beginning was." You see, in the beginning was, word is "was" is past tense. So whenever that was, the word already existed. "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). Now that goes far back beyond the fifteen billion years. That goes back to eternity past. And that is something that our minds just cannot grasp or comprehend because of the finite nature of man. We just cannot comprehend eternity. Infinity of time.

Now John begins his first epistle as he declares Jesus Christ as the One that existed from the beginning. It is interesting that in the prophecy of Micah, where he prophesied the coming of the Messiah, he said, "And thou, Bethlehem, though you are little among the provinces of Judah, yet out of thee shall come he who is to rule my people, Israel; whose going forth has been from old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2). So the prophet declared that the Messiah that would be born in Bethlehem, had always existed. "Whose going forth has been from old, from everlasting."

And so Jesus is eternal. He is the eternal God. He is One with the Father. "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God. And the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:1-3). The remarkable thing is that One, whose going forth from old, from everlasting, the eternal One, entered into time, into this universe.

As Solomon was dedicating the temple, he declared, "The heavens of heavens cannot contain Thee; how much less this house that I have built" (1 Kings 8:27)? He is saying that God transcends space, beyond space. The Bible tells us in figurative language—and yet you wonder, Is it indeed figurative?—that God measured out the heavens with His span. The span is the distance between your thumb and little finger when it is stretched out. And it says that God measures the heavens with His span. We understand that they have discovered galaxies now that are some fifteen billion, some say seventeen billion light-years away. Not miles, light-years away.

In other words, if you would travel on a ray of light at a hundred and eighty-six thousand miles a second it would take you seventeen billion years to get out to some of those galaxies. How vast is the heaven? I don't know. Thus we really don't know what the distance is between His thumb and little finger. "He measured out the heavens with the span, He weighed the waters in His palm" (Isaiah 40:12). The awesome, eternal God. The infinite God. Beyond our comprehension. Beyond our ability to conceive.

That which was from the beginning (1:1),

Entered into time. God transcends time. He's eternal. But He entered into time and He entered into this world that He created. As John tells us in the first chapter of the gospel, "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, but the world knew Him not. He came to His own, and His own received Him not." So He came into space, He came into time and for a time lived among men. As John tells us in the gospel, "For the Word became flesh, and He dwelt among us." The word there is He tabernacled or He made His tent with us. "(and we beheld His glory, as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. No man," he said, "has seen God at any time; but the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath manifested or made Him known to us" (John 1:10,11,14,18). He has revealed Him.

And so He came for the purpose of revealing God to man in order that we might understand the purpose and the desire of God for our lives. So "that which was from the beginning," John said,

who we heard, who we saw, who we gazed upon (1:1),

There are two different Greek words used for "we saw Him and we gazed upon Him." The word translated, looked upon, is to gaze steadfastly, to study or to have studied. The Greek word is a word from which we get our English word, theater. Where you go and you're transfixed as you look at the play and you get involved in trying to understand the plot and the whole thing. You're transfixed by it and that's the word that is used, We looked upon, as the theater or gazing and studying and looking steadfastly.

whom we have handled (1:1),

We touched Him. And this probably is a reference to after His resurrection. You remember Thomas said, I will not believe unless I can see the prints, till I can feel His side. I will not believe that He's risen. And Jesus said, Touch Me, see if it isn't Me. We've touched Him.

What an awesome thing for them to come to the consciousness and the awareness that that One who tabernacled with them, that One who walked the dusty paths through the holy land with them, that One that they listened to as He taught about the kingdom of God, it was God Himself who had come to tabernacle among us.

We heard God speaking. That One that we saw was God. The One that we gazed steadfastly upon was actually the eternal God. The One that we touched. We touched God. The One who touched us was God. God touched us. This awesome awareness as whom Jesus really was. God in the flesh. As Paul said, "Great is the mystery of godliness: for God was manifested in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). That One who was from the beginning, He came and His life was manifested.

When Jesus was with His disciples at the last supper before the crucifixion and there was a deep concern, they were confused, He was talking about going away and where He was going they couldn't come now. They would come later. And they were really confused about this whole issue. And Jesus said, Don't let your hearts be troubled. They were troubled. He was saying things that they didn't understand. I'm going to go away. I'm going to leave you now. But He said, "Don't let your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. Because in my Father's house there are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. And I'm going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, then I will come again and I will receive you unto Myself that where I am, there you may be also. And where I'm going, you know and the way you know. Thomas said, Lord, we don't know where You're going. We're confused. And how can we know the way? And Jesus answered and said, I am the way, the truth and the life. And no man cometh to the Father but by me.

And then He went on to say that you have seen the Father and you have known Him. And Philip said, Lord, just show us the Father and we will be satisfied. Jesus answered and said, Philip, have I been so long a time with you? Haven't you seen me? Don't you realize that if you have seen Me, you have seen the Father? How sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believeest thou that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the very works' sake. For verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also and even greater works than these shall he do because I'm going to the Father (John 13:33-John 14:12).

Jesus said, If you have seen me, you have seen the Father. He manifested, He was manifested. God was manifested through Jesus Christ. The book of Hebrews opens with these awesome words.

"God, who at sundry times, different times, and in divers ways spoke unto our fathers by the prophets,

Has in these last days spoken unto us by His own dear Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things; who is the express image and the effulgence or the outshining of His glory” (Hebrews 1:1-3). Jesus is the express image of God. He said, If you have seen me, you have seen the Father. He is the outshining of His glory.

As we mentioned this morning, people talk about looking up at the sun shining in the sky. Oh, I saw the sunrise this morning. No, you really didn’t see the sun. The light that emanates from the sun is so bright that you can’t see the sun. You see the light that shines forth from the sun. You see the outshining or the effulgence. The Bible says, “No man has seen God at any time; but the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath manifested Him” (John 1:18). He was the outshining. We see the light in Jesus.

He said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). And so we see the outshining of God in Jesus.

(The life was manifested, and we have seen it, [and He uses now this word again for the theater, gaze at Him] and we bear witness, and we show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us (1:2):)

So he actually begins his first epistle much like he began the Gospel. “In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God. And then, the Word was made flesh and He dwelt among us and we beheld His glory as of the only begotten.” So “the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and we bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.”

That which we have seen and that which we have heard declare we unto you (1:3),

So we were eyewitnesses. We heard Him. We saw Him. And that which we saw, that which we heard, we now are relating or declaring unto you.

that you may have fellowship with us (1:3):

This word fellowship is an interesting Greek word that really has no English equivalent. It is the Greek word, *Koinonia*. And it is translated many different ways in the New Testament because the word is so rich in the Greek, there is no single English word that can fully bring into our English consciousness the meaning of *Koinonia*. It means oneness, a complete oneness. It means communion. It means an inner relationship. It means fellowship of the deepest, richest sort. A sharing. And thus within the Christian body, within the lives of those who believe in Jesus Christ, we are brought into a oneness. We are brought into a communion. We’re brought into a sharing. Because the word means all of these things. And the whole purpose is that we might be one. That we might have this sharing. Sharing a common faith. Sharing a common experience. Sharing a common hope for the future.

As Paul writes to the Ephesians, he speaks about “one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one calling and one hope of our calling” (Ephesians 4:4,5). The communion, the *Koinonia*. As he writes to the Corinthian church, he talks about the inner workings of the body of Christ. How there is that inter-dependency upon each other. How that no part can function by itself. That there is the necessity for the whole body in order to be functioning. “The eye cannot say to the ear, I have no need of you. For then where would the hearing be” (1 Corinthians 12:16)? Every part of the body is important. And thus, the inter-relationship and the inter-dependency that we have in the fellowship of the believers.

As God has bestowed upon each man severally as He wills, the gifts and the manifestations of the Spirit that we make up the one body, the completeness, the totality is made up by all of us and never in a single individual. Thus this *Koinonia*, this fellowship that we’ve been brought into through Jesus Christ. Where as Paul wrote, “There is neither Jew nor Greek, nor Barbarian, nor Scythian, nor bond or free: but Christ is all, and in all” (Colossians 3:11). The body of Christ. But then he takes a quantum leap.

“That which I’ve seen and heard I declare unto you that you might have fellowship with us.” That you might come in to this communion. That you might come in to this oneness with us.

but truly our fellowship is with the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ (1:3).

An awesome quantum leap! That we, finite man, could live in communion with the infinite God. Again, that which was from the beginning, that goes back before the universe. The universe is only maybe fifteen, seventeen billion years old. But the One who existed long before the universe has ever existed, the One who transcends space and time, has chosen to become one with man as far as communion and fellowship and a sharing goes! What a beautiful thing that I can fellowship with God! That becomes all the more awesome when you realize how vast and great God is! Coming into a real understanding of the nature of God. He fills

the universe and yet, He will fellowship with me.

I have difficulty when I try and comprehend this. *O, the wonder of it all, to think that God loves me.* David said, “When I consider the heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; What is man, that You are even mindful of him? or the son of man, that You should visit him” (Psalm 8:3,4)? Oh God, You’re so vast. I look up at the heavens. I see the myriad stars shining out there. I look at the planets and I wonder, Oh God, who am I that you should even be conscious of me or aware of me; or more than that, desire to fellowship with me? And yet the amazing teaching of the Bible is that God loves you and longs for fellowship with you and seeks to draw you into fellowship with Himself.

As we study the Bible more carefully, we realize that this is the very purpose of God’s creating man. That man does exist for the purpose of living in fellowship with God. That’s why God made you. That’s why God made me. For the purpose of fellowship. Sharing in the love, sharing in the goodness and the grace of God. Truly our fellowship is with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. Tremendous, tremendous words. I can have fellowship with God. Awesome! And John said,

And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full (1:4).

John, when he sat down to write this little epistle, had three things in mind. Three things that prompted him to write it. The first he expresses here. “These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”

In chapter two, verse one he said, “These things write we unto you, that you sin not” (1 John 2:1). And then in chapter five, verse thirteen he said, “These things have we written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13). So the third reason was to give them assurance of their salvation. But notice in chapter 5:13, “These things have we written unto you that believe.” First John is written to believers and it is important for you to know that because there are doctrinal issues that will be brought up here and we need to know that he’s writing to those who believe. To the believers he is writing these things.

Writing to bring them fullness of joy. Writing to bring them freedom from sin. And writing to bring them assurance of their salvation. Fullness of joy, it’s something that Jesus spoke about. And he speaks about the fullness of joy that comes through abiding in Him, in John 15. In John 16, he speaks of the fullness of joy that comes in the prayer life. “Henceforth you’ve asked nothing in My name: ask, that you may receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:24). And so it’s related with our abiding in Him. It’s related to our prayer life. And now John relates this fullness of joy with fellowship with God.

What joy to realize that I can fellowship with the eternal God who created this universe and that He desires fellowship with me! That’s too much! I know a lot of people don’t want to be around me. But God desires to fellowship with me! He longs for this fellowship! That’s wonderful! The fact that the Lord desires to fellowship with you! And oh, what joy!

“These things we write unto you that your joy may be full.” It’s related to fellowship and the fellowship is related to a freedom from sin, as John will take us into the next thought here. But he said,

This then is the message (1:5)

Jesus in the gospels has preached many sermons. We’re going through the Sermon on the Mount presently on Wednesday night. And this is often called the great manifesto of the Christian faith. But as John seeks to just sort of sum up the ministry of Jesus and the teachings of Jesus, just sort of summarize the heart and the essence of the message of Jesus, this then is the message,

that we have heard of him, and we declare it unto you (1:5),

The heart of it is,

that God is light (1:5),

A little further on in this epistle he’s going to tell us that God is love. But here, God is light. This is speaking of the essence of the character of God. As light in contrast with darkness stands for knowledge rather than ignorance. Light is a revealer. It reveals the things that are in the dark.

You can go into a room that is dark and you can’t see the things that are in the room. If it is a strange room, if you’ve never been in it before and you walk in it and it’s dark, you have no idea what is there until you turn on the light and then those things that are in the room are revealed.

Dr. McGee speaks about a squirrel hunting trip that he was on back in Tennessee and he said that it

started to rain and so he saw some caves. And so he went up and got into the biggest cave and sat there while this rain poured down outside and he began to get a little cold so he decided to take some of the leaves and sticks that were there and make a fire. And as he did, he found out that he wasn't the only occupant in the cave. There were spiders there, there were all kinds of bugs and there was even a snake coiled over there. Now he didn't see those when he went into the dark cave. But when the light was turned on, he saw these things. He said he got out of that cave in a hurry because he said they were there before he was and he thought they might feel a little put upon that a stranger would come into their domain.

But light reveals and of course, as God's light is turned on in our hearts, it reveals the dark recesses. As God gave to Ezekiel the opportunity to go into the minds of the leaders of the people and see the corruption that was there. God illuminated the darkness that they said that God couldn't see. But God showed it to Ezekiel. The light of God penetrates and it reveals the truth. "God is light and,"

and in him is no darkness at all (1:5).

Pure light. Revealing light.

If we say that we have fellowship with God (1:6),

This is the first of many declarations that John will tell us that people make. Declarations that in and of themselves are wonderful. They are things that we should say and should be able to say and it is marvellous to say these things. But oftentimes, people say things but their lives do not back up what they say. So this is one of these contrasting things where a person is saying one thing but doing another thing. And John shows us the folly of saying one thing while doing another thing. "If we say we have fellowship with God," isn't that a glorious thing to be able to say, I am living in fellowship with God? Wonderful! But if I say that,

and yet I'm walking in darkness (1:6),

Walking in disobedience to God, to the commandments of God. Though I may say, I still have wonderful fellowship with God. I still pray. I'm still close to God. And yet if I'm walking in darkness, walking contrary to the commands of God, John said that,

we lie, and we do not the truth (1:6):

What we are doing is not truth. I'm not really fellowshiping with God. I am being deceived by Satan. And unfortunately, there are many, many, many people in this condition who still affirm that they have fellowship with God though they are walking contrary to the commands of God. They're walking in darkness. And yet they make an affirmation, I have wonderful fellowship with God. Wrong! That's a lie! You're not doing the truth!

But [in contrast] if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, then we do have fellowship one with the other, as the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son cleanses us from all sin (1:7).

Walking in the light. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world." And "if we walk in the light as He is in the light." This is the message, God is light. Thus if I walk in this light, as He is in the light, then we have true Koinonia, fellowship, sharing, oneness, communion "as the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us." The word cleanses is in the present tense. And thus it is continually cleansing us "from all sin." It is sin that breaks a man's fellowship with God. Back in the garden of Eden, it was sin that caused a severing of man's relationship with God.

The prophet Isaiah said, "God's hand is not short, that He cannot save; neither is His ear heavy, that He cannot hear: But your sins have separated you from God" (Isaiah 59:1,2). That's always the case. Walking in sin is walking in darkness. And so if I say I have fellowship with God and yet I'm walking in darkness, that's a lie. That's not true. "But if I will walk in the light, as He is in the light, then we will have fellowship with each other, as the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son is cleansing me from those things that would break the fellowship." So the cleansing through Jesus Christ and through the blood of Jesus Christ.

If we say (1:8).

Here's the second thing that people say, "If we say"

we have no sin, we deceive ourselves (1:8),

You don't deceive your wife or your husband or your kids or your neighbors, you deceive yourselves.

There was back in the thirties and twenties and it goes back the first part of the century, a group that believed in sanctified holy. That is, sinless perfection. I was sanctified last year and I've never sinned since.

And I'm living in sinless perfection. That pretty much is past. It used to be that you met people who would claim that they were sinless and they were living in sinless perfection. And their argument goes somewhat like this.

Do you believe that you could live for one minute without sin? Without a sinful thought? Do you believe you could live a whole minute without sin? Well yeah, I think I could live a minute without sin. Well then, if you can live for one minute without sin, you ought to be able to live for two minutes without sin. Well yeah, that makes sense. If you can live for two minutes without sin, then you ought to be able to live ten minutes without sin. Well, little tough but maybe. And if you can live ten minutes, you can live an hour. If you can live an hour, you can live a day. Live a day, you can live a year. And so the possibility of sinless perfection.

This word sin here is in the singular and probably has a reference to the root nature of sin. That is, if I say that I do not have a sinful nature. Now David said, I was born in sin. Shapen in iniquity as he talks about the sinful nature. Unfortunately, we were born with sinful natures. That is, a nature that is bent towards sin. A nature that has self at the center and self-fulfillment as the master passion. And it is manifested very early in the bassinet.

We say, Oh, look at that pure, beautiful little innocent child. You'd better be thankful that he's as small as he is or he would rip that bassinet apart when he gets hungry. The way he flails and cries and carries on, wanting attention, wanting to be taken care of. And it only gets worse as we grow older. The sinful nature, wanting to have my way. Sinful nature. Paul talking to the Ephesians or writing to the Ephesians said that "you who were dead in your trespasses and sins: Who in times past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, that is even now working in the children of disobedience: Among whom you all once lived, as you were controlled by the lust of your flesh, and the lust of your mind; and you were by nature, [notice, by nature] you were the children of wrath, even as others" (Ephesians 2:1-3). The sinful nature.

Here John is saying, "If you say that you have no sin," that is, the denial of the sinful nature; you're deceiving yourself.

the truth is not in you (1:8).

But then in contrast,

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1:9).

If I say I have fellowship and I'm walking in darkness, I lie. I do not the truth. But if I will walk in the light, then I will have fellowship. If I say I have no sin, I'm deceiving myself, the truth isn't in me. But if I will confess my sin, then He is faithful and just to forgive my sin, and to cleanse me from all unrighteousness.

If I say that we have not sinned (1:10),

This is a denial that the sinful root has ever borne any fruit. The denial of sin. Then this is a step in the wrong direction because it's going down a little further. In the first one, I'm lying. In the second one, I'm deceived. But by making this third allegation that I have not sinned, then I make God a liar. Why? Because God said, All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There is none righteous, no, not one. So if I deny having sin. Now again remember, and this is why we pointed out earlier, John is writing to believers. To those who believe on the name of the Son of God. He's writing to us. And he's saying, If you say that you haven't sinned,

you make God a liar, and His word is not in you (1:10).

God says all have sinned and come short. But the glorious truth back in the previous verse, "If we confess our sins, He is then faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." And this is because Jesus paid the price for our sins. And thus can offer us full atonement, complete forgiveness, absolute cleansing from all of our sin and all of our unrighteousness.

For the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, is cleansing us from all sin. What a glorious, wonderful life, God has made possible for us a life of fellowship with Him through the eternal Son who is also the eternal God, who was manifested in this world and who gave His life for the sin of mankind! To redeem the world back to God! Beautiful truths! May God hide them in our hearts!

Father, we thank You tonight for these wonderful words of hope, of instruction, of enlightenment. Lord, there are those who are walking in darkness and deceived, thinking that they have fellowship with You. Help them, Lord, to forsake the way of darkness and to truly walk in the light as You are in the light. Lord, help us to really deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow You. For we know that those that seek to save their lives will lose them. But if we will just lose our lives for Your sake, we'll find out what real living is. And so Lord, draw us unto Yourself. And may we enjoy that beautiful communion and fellowship with You. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.