



## BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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### The Sermons of Dan Duncan

1 John 1:1-4

"Blessed Assurance"

1 John 1

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] Thank you, Mark. And yes, we are beginning a new series this morning. We're going to be looking for the next few months in 1 John. It's a beloved book, but a book that has its challenges for the **exogeed** and the expositor, but I'm looking forward to it. It is a wonderful study that John has given us with a very significant reason and purpose behind it. We're going to look at the introduction this morning, verses 1-4.

"What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life - and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us - what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete."

May the Lord bless this reading of His word in our time to study in it together. Let's pray.

[Prayer] Father, we give You thanks for this time together. It's always something to be thankful for when we're gathered together as Your people, and we are here, really, for the same purpose. We're here to fellowship with one another and fellowship with You, the very thing John speaks about in this letter to enjoy our relationship with

one another and our relationship with You through the study of Your word. And so, Lord, we pray that You'd bless our time together this morning, that it would be profitable for each of us.

We begin a new study in a great book. I pray that You would bless not only today but throughout the course of this series, that it would be uplifting and beneficial to each of us. There are problem passages within it, as there are in every book of the Bible, but give us discernment. Give us wisdom. May we understand things correctly and make the proper applications to our lives. That really is something that we are ultimately incapable of. But then, we have given the spirit of God. We have what John calls the anointing. We have the Holy Spirit within us, the third person of the Trinity. He's our ultimate teacher, Lord. We give You praise and thanks for Him. He's in our hearts. We pray that He would guide us and direct us and open our hearts to receive the truth that's contained in this passage we'll consider this morning.

Bless us. Build us up in the faith. Sanctify us. Change us. Make us more like Christ. Give us wisdom and equip us for the week that's ahead of us. Lord, we look to you to do all of these things, and yet we're responsible to be men and women who give attention to the things of Your word, and we pray that we do that, not only today and not only this morning, but throughout the week, and we be men and women that are interested in Your word, we give our attention to it, and to seek to grow in our knowledge of the Lord and Savior Christ, of our triune God and Your ways for us. May we follow Your paths.

Well, we thank You for this time of study. We pray You'd bless it, but we pray also, Lord, for our material needs and they're great. We have in our bulletin a long list of prayer requests that we can't do through all of it. And even if we did, it wouldn't cover all the prayer needs that we have, because each and every one of us have needs and needs probably that go well beyond anything we are aware of. Who knows what's coming tomorrow? Who knows what's coming next

week? We may be resting comfortably and confidently today and tomorrow. Everything changes and changes radically.

Well, those things can happen. They do have. They have happened recently. And yet what doesn't change is You and Your good purpose for us. Sometimes Your purpose for each one of individually is to go through a dark valley, and that's never pleasant. Psalm 23 was written about that. It wasn't a pleasant experience in and of itself, but You made it secure for the Psalmist, and our lives are absolutely secure as well.

You are behind this. You are in front of us. You are beside us. You are protecting us and You're leading us. And that valley has an end to it. It has a glorious opening. It's dark but it ends in light, and that's true for our lives. They're secure in Christ, but that's true of every moment of our life. It has a meaning, a purpose, and while it's hard for us at times, it brings about good fruit and a good end. There's a purpose to it, so we give You praise and thanks for that and pray that those who have given us their names and have requested prayer that You'd bless them. Bless them physically, with recovery, or bless the procedures they're going through to give healing. Bless those who are discouraged. Some are without work. We pray that You'd open doors of opportunity. May they see Your providential hand in an unusual way.

And those who are simply discouraged by the turns of life and the pressures of life at work or in the home, help them to repair to Christ, to the promises that You've given in Your word. May the Spirit of God help them to remember the great promises we have and in whose hand we really are. It's not the circumstances that we're in. It's the hand of Christ, and Your hand. So they're secure, we're secure. We give You praise and thanks for that and pray that You'd bless with that understanding.

We have great privilege this morning to study Your word. We have great ministry going on this week and I pray that You would bless Vacation Bible School and all those who have prepared for it

and those who will teaching. Bless them. Bless the children who come. We pray that there will be many and that You'd open their hearts to receive the gospel. Build them up in the faith.

We thank You for all that we have from You. We thank You for Your word and the promises that it gives us. We thank You for it, because it's Your revelation. We thank You for the privilege of being able to read it and study it, and pray You'd bless our time in it together this morning. We pray these things in Christ name. Amen.

[Message] There are a few things more unsettling than uncertainty. Business leaders talk about that when there is uncertainty in the market about taxes or regulation. There is stagnation in the economy. The same is true in the Christian life. When there is uncertainty about what we believe or whether we are actually saved, there will be spiritual stagnation, lack of development, and lack of joy. Calvin put it more forcefully. He said, "There is no more terrifying agony than to tremble from fear and uncertainty."

Uncertainty is not an uncommon problem among Christians, especially among young believers. It happens because of immaturity or moral failure, or due to false teaching. We need certainty in the Christian life. We need assurance of salvation, and that's the reason that John wrote his letter, 1 John. It is about assurance, how I can know I am saved. That purpose is stated at the end of the book in 5:13. "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that You have eternal life."

Now, you may see a similarity there with the gospel of John, because it is very similar to the way John ended his book. Close to the end of the book, he wrote the purpose of that gospel. "These things have I written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name." The gospel was intended to lead people to salvation. The epistle was intended to assure people of salvation. The one tells us how we can be saved; the other how we can know we are saved. That's important. It's

very important. Assurance of salvation is essential for stability and growth and joy.

So it's understandable that the Holy Spirit would inspire such a book. We need it. But there was a historical reason for it. Something happened that moved John to write: A church split. Now, I'm saying John wrote, but you may have noticed from our reading that John's name does not appear in the introduction. In fact, his name doesn't appear anywhere in the book. But according to a very old tradition dating to the 2nd century, he is the author. The style, the structure, the vocabulary of the book supports that. It's very similar to the gospel of John.

So we're on good ground in assuming that he is the author of this book that is an obviously apostolic book. That's made clear from the very beginning. And it's a book that was probably written with some urgency. Sometime late in the 1st century a man of influence began teaching something new, something very intriguing and interesting. He explained the gospel in a way that seemed fresh and relevant to many, but not to all.

Some were troubled. The new explanation was different from the old gospel that they had believed. They resisted. The church divided and the teacher led his followers out to form a new sect or cult. These things happen. It's not altogether uncommon. Paul warned of this. He warned the Ephesian elders of this very thing in Acts chapter 20 when he met them for the last time at Miletus and he warned them that savage wolves would come among them, not sparing the flock. "From your own selves," he said, "men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." That's what happened to the church John wrote.

He explained it in 2:19, where he says, "They went out from us, but they were not really of us." It's possible John wrote this letter to the Ephesians church. It seems to be exactly what Paul had foretold would take place some years earlier. So it may be that. According to

tradition, John moved to Ephesians after Jerusalem fell and he ministered in the church there well into his old age.

Wherever it was, whether it was Ephesians or some other church in Asia Minor, the separation that occurred was bitter. Church splits usually are. I've never really been a part of one, but I can remember many years ago back in high school my parents coming in one evening after a meeting of the church in which the split occurred and one faction in anger got up and en masse left, and they came home in a state of shock. They'd never seen anything like that.

Well, that church was a Biblical-believing Christian church. It wasn't a division over doctrine, but it was a very unpleasant experience, and you can imagine how much more difficult this would have been, because this was over doctrine. This was over the truth of the gospel. What is the gospel?

And those who left, these individuals who we would all the heretics, boasted of their initiation into deeper truth, and they accused those who resisted it, the orthodox of shutting their eyes to the light, of clinging to tradition, of opposing the Holy Spirit. The result of it all was the Christians who remained were shaken by this split. It left them wondering who was right? These others were so confident, their teacher so gifted. This new teaching, it puzzled them. It had left them with great doubt. They were perplexed about everything, and that's what prompted John to write this letter and reassure the Christians.

No one in the world was better able to answer this new teaching than John himself. Well, that raises the question of what was this new teaching? What was this teaching that was so popular and so influential? Well, generally it is thought to have been a form of Gnosticism, and a I say a form of it because Gnosticism wasn't full blown until the 2nd century. So this would have been an early stage of a system of thought that was very much a philosophy, as much a philosophy as a theology. It was a system of thought that absorbed a lot of Greek philosophy, especially its belief about the physical world.

The Greeks thought that matter, that the physical realm, was corrupt, that material and the material realm was evil and the spiritual was good. The ideal state was to be free of the body, which the Greeks regard it as the prison house of the soul, and in being free of the body, to become a free and pure spirit.

Now, that belief is reflected in Acts 17 when Paul spoke to the Athenian intellectuals on Marinas Hill. They listened to him as he explained the gospel, and he begins with the unknown God. He'd seen the statue of the unknown God there in the market place and he used that sort of as his point of departure and he began to explain the gospel. And they listened until he came to the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, and that's when they turned him off and they began to scoff. The very idea of being shackled to a physical body for eternity was foolishness to them. It was the last thing they wanted. They wanted to be rid of the material. They wanted to be pure spirit. They wanted to be free from the body and have their soul released.

Well, that was a widely accepted belief, a common world view in the 1st century. And while it may seem odd to us, that was the way people thought, at least in the Greek part of the world, and that affected very much the Greek part of the church. Not so much the Jewish part - they didn't have that view at all about the body. They revered the body and the resurrection, but the Greeks and the Gentile Christians who were of that culture were very much influenced by that way of thinking, especially those in Asia and in places like Ephesus and Colossi.

So for those who believed that matter was evil, the problem was how could the true God be united to a physical body of flesh and blood? How could pure spirit mix with corrupt matter? One early form of Gnosticism had the answer: Christ didn't have a body. He only appeared to have a body.

They became known as docetists, or as the heresy was known as docetism. It's a name that's dedived from the Greek word meaning to think or to suppose, or to seem. Christ only seemed to have a body. He

was really a phantom. He was a spirit. And that fit very comfortably with the thinking of the day and was a Jesus that many Greeks found to be intellectually acceptable. It removed what many considered the crude idea of the incarnation. It denied the atonement, denied Christ's substitutionary death. And really, it restated the gospel as salvation through knowledge.

Gnosticism was about knowledge. In fact, the word "Gnosticism" is from the Greek word for knowledge. But it's a special knowledge. It's not greater knowledge of mathematics or Greek grammar or history or things of that nature. It's a special knowledge. It's secret knowledge. It's mystical knowledge. Through their knowledge, which only an elite group had, Gnostic teachers claimed to have reached such an advanced stage spiritually that they were beyond good and evil. Behavior that would be sin for other people wasn't sin for them, because they had reached a level of being completely spiritual, so much so that ethics wasn't important. Ethics was a very relative thing.

As a consequence, many of these Gnostic groups, which had a disregard for the body, actually indulged the body in all kinds of immoral behavior and \_\_\_ thinking was the body's irrelevant. What it does is irrelevant. What's important is the soul, and the soul doesn't touch the body, so whatever the body does is irrelevant. And so they engaged in all kinds of immoral behavior.

One of these early heretics was named Cerinthus, who was a contemporary. He was trained. He was educated in Egypt, but he lived in Ephesus for a while and he may have been involved in this problem and the commentators look to him as maybe that teacher that led the group or certainly one who would have influenced the teacher.

His Gnostic view was a little different from what I explained earlier. His view was that Jesus was only a man imbued with Christ at His baptism. When the gospel speak of the Holy Spirit coming down on Him like a dove, that's the Christ, and the Christ came upon this man, Jesus, and was with Him through His ministry. But then when



Jesus went to the cross and was crucified, the Christ left. So Jesus cried, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" It was a denial of the incarnation and a rejection of the penal substitutionary atonement. It was a rejection of the cross. The death of Jesus had no infinite value. It had no spiritual value at all. It doesn't save.

Cerinthus was heretic, but he's also immoral. He was described as devoted to the pleasures of the body and altogether sensual in his nature. That no doubt was one of the attractions of Gnosticism. It offered a relaxed morality. But also - and this is important - it offered a philosophy that was acceptable to the spirit of the age. And I think that is an application that we draw from this, at least by implication.

As odd as this may seem, the Gnostic ideas and the Greek ideas about the body and the physical and the material world, we don't think like that today. We're not influenced by that. But we have other ideas that are very current in our society that do influence us, and that is a principle that we need to understand, that the world around us, whatever the spirit of that age is - and it differs from age to age - has an influence on the church and we have to be on guard on that, that we don't let it subtly slip in and influence our thinking spiritually.

Well, you can see that those who believe that matter was bad, that the physical was evil, would be intrigued by this idea of Christ, that it separated the physical and the spiritual. This was a Jesus that many of those could accept in the 1st century. It was something like this, this heretical idea, these Gnostic ideas, that split a church. Maybe the church in Ephesus, maybe a church somewhere else, most likely in Asia Minor, when a respected teacher restated the gospel in a way that denied Christ was a man and devalued the cross.

This is the teaching that John refuted in this letter, a system of beliefs that had been described as a loveless, unethical intellectualism. John answers it by showing that Christianity is not loveless; Christians love the brethren. It's not unethical; Christians obey God. Christianity is intellectual, but it's based on Biblical doctrine, not philosophical speculation.

These are the three tests of a genuine believer - tests of truth, morality, and love. And John constructs his whole letter around them. They are what one writer has called the tests of life. In that way John reassured doubting Christians that they had salvation. They believe the truth about Christ. They obey His commands. They loved His people. Now, John is not saying - and this is somehow we deal with as we'll go through this series - he's not saying they understand everything about Christ fully and completely. He's not saying that they are fully and completely obedient without ever stumbling or falling. He makes clear that's not his point early on in this gospel. He's not saying we love the brethren without any reservation. We all fail in these areas, but the tenor of a person's life who's saved is that he does three things. These things are true of him or her. He or she understands the gospel, believes the truth about Christ, seeks to obey the commands. That's characteristic. And does love God's people.

So John structures his letter around that and he begins it with this first test of life, with truth, with doctrine, by affirming that Jesus was an historical person, a real man. John knew because he heard and saw and touched him. That's what he writes in verse 1. "What was from the beg, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life." And then he will go on to say he is proclaiming all of this to them. But he interrupts the end of his sentence at the end of verse 1, and in verse 2 explains how it is that he had this personal experience with the Word of Life.

He, Christ, became manifest, he says. That is, He came into the world. That's the reason John and the apostles knew Him. John then gives the reason he wrote to them in verses 3 and 4. It was "So that you too may have fellowship with us." And so he, John, would have joy, and so they would have it too. That is, those to whom he'd written. And he would have this joy and this fellowship with John and the apostles.

So the first verses of the book divide into two parts, if we want to give a very simple outline of it. In verses 1 and 2, John states the content of the gospel. And in verses 3 and 4 he states the reason for writing the book. The first words of the book, "What was from the beginning," resemble the opening of John's gospel, "In the beginning was the word." But while they're similar, they're not identical. The gospel of John begins in eternity before the material universe was, when the word, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son, existed with the Father. He was already in the beginning. John says, "In the beginning was the word." Go back to the very beginning and the word "was" - always eternally.

1 John begins with "what," not "who." And since the main verb of this sentence is the word "proclaim" in verse 3 - remember, verse 2 interrupts the sentence in verse 1, "What was from the beginning we proclaim to you." It is likely because that's the main verb of the sentence of what John is referring to here is the message of the apostles, rather than the person of Christ.

Now, as John explains the message, he explains that it is concerning the Word of Life. In other words, it's about the eternal word of John's gospel, who is the Lord Jesus Christ. So the gospel, the message that John is speaking of here, is the message of the person of Christ. Paul said that. He wrote in 1 Corinthians 1:23, "We preach Christ." The gospel is not a list of laws. It is not a system of thought. It is not a philosophy. It is basically a person and His work. It's Christ crucified. So the who is in the word here. Christ is the message. But the emphasis that John is making here is on the message. It's on the gospel about the Word of Life, about Christ.

And the message, the gospel, John says, was from the beginning. From the beginning of time or from the beginning of the apostolic ministry; it could be either. It's very difficult to be certain, but what is certain is John's point, which is the true gospel is the old gospel. It hasn't changed. It doesn't change. It cannot change. John was making it very clear from the outset, from the first verses, that he

rejected any novel interpretations or restatements of the gospel. What was from the beginning, from all eternity in the mind of God, from the very first day that these individuals to whom he was writing heard the gospel. It's the same message. The message they heard originally is the true message. What they had in the beginning is what they should continue believing.

And John knew what he was talking about. He was there when the Word, whom he describes in his gospel, became flesh and dwelt among us, or as he says here in verse 2, was manifested. He was there. He saw it. He witnessed it. He had firsthand knowledge of the Word of Life. He had personal contact with Him. John was an eyewitness to history. He heard Him. He saw Him. In fact, what he wrote here in verse 1 and verse 2 is very similar to what he and Peter said before the Sanhedrin in Acts 4:20. They were arrested in the temple, you will remember. They were brought before the authorities. They were told not to speak about Jesus anymore. They responded, "We cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard."

They couldn't keep quiet. They had heard Jesus. They had heard His teaching. They had heard His counsel. They sat with Him in personal conversation on many occasions, over a period of three years. They knew Him personally, intimately, and they saw Him. In fact, John lays some emphasis on that. "What we have seen with our eyes, what we had looked at." Now, that's not a mere repetition. He uses two different words there for "seen." The first word John uses here is of seeing with the eyes. It's used a physical sight. It's kind of seeing that you and I are doing right now as I look at you and you look at me. We see each other. And the point that he's making here is this was real sight. This was visual, physical sight. This isn't some kind of mystical vision of the mind's eye. It was real. We really saw Him.

And he studied Him, and that's the second word, "looked at" or "beheld." It means to look at carefully, to scrutinize. He not only saw Jesus, John is saying he studied Him. He investigated Him. But not only that, he touched Him with his hands. We handled him, the King

James version says. I like that translation. It gives a sense of the real contact that he had with the physical person of the Lord Jesus Christ. They rubbed shoulders with Jesus every day. They had physical contact with Him for three years.

The most famous incident of touching is when Jew told Thomas to touch the wounds in His hands and His side to remove the doubts that Thomas had about our Lord being a resurrected person, a physical person as well as the spiritual eternal person of the Son of God. And we know that incident. But Thomas wasn't the only one who was given that invitation and that proof. The other disciples were as well. Luke records that at the end of his gospel, in Luke 24:39 when the Lord appeared to them after the resurrection. They were frightened by His appearance. They thought He was a spirit, which is rather interesting, because that's kind of the issue that John is dealing within this first epistle. And He explains He's not a spirit, a phantom. He calmed them down and He told them, "See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have."

Now John was there. John spoke with complete authority. He heard Jesus. He saw Jesus. He touched Jesus. He was a real man with a true body and a reasonable soul. But not a man only. John calls Him the Word of Life. He is the eternal word, who was with the Father from all eternity. He is the God-man. And in Him is life everlasting. Eternal life is not in some philosophy or system of rules or book of mystics and secret knowledge. It's in the person and work of Jesus Christ, who was manifested revealed. John knew Him. In fact, the Lord had commissioned him and the apostles to proclaim Him to the world as the Life, as the one who gives eternal life. It's found in Him and in Him alone. That's the message. Christ is the life and that life is received by us through faith alone.

But that message that had been preached from the beginning had been changed. It had been restated by a teacher, evidently a very gifted teacher, a very persuasive teacher who had given it a new and a

dangerous explanation. In fact, we can say a deadly explanation. So John had to write this letter to correct the error and encourage the church to reassure confused Christians and establish them more firmly in the truth.

He states his reason for writing in verses 3 and 4. He actually gives two reasons: to promote fellowship and joy. First, he says, "so that you too may have fellowship with us." That is, with the apostles. Then he adds, "And indeed our fellowship is with the Father and the Son." Fellowship is what believers have with one another and with the triune God. It is union with Christ. It is partnership in Christ, in His life spiritually, in His service, privately and publicly. This word "fellowship" is really salvation in its widest sense.

In 1 Corinthians 1:9, Paul says that believers were called into fellowship with His Son. God's grace brought believers into union with Christ and with the people of Christ. So fellowship is salvation and the life of salvation, which really is a relationship with God and with God's people. Now that's how the Lord defines eternal life. In John 17:3, in His high priestly prayer, He prays to the Father and He says, "This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."

So what is eternal life? Well, it's a lot of things, but essential what Jesus says it, it is knowing God the Father and God the Son. It's having a relationship with them. That's what John is saying fellowship is. It's knowing the Lord, and he's written in order to strengthen and deepen that fellowship, that relationship. That's what he meant when he wrote, "So that you too may have fellowship with us." The idea is may continue having fellowship with us. They had fellowship with them in the past. They had it there in the present. And he writing so that they would continue in that fellowship. He wanted to confirm and establish these Christians more firmly in the truth and in that relationship that they had with one another and the relationship they had with the Lord God.

Well, we all need that. We will never progress in the Christian life, in our fellowship with the Lord and our fellowship with His people, with one another, if we are confused about the gospel or we doubt our salvation. Uncertainty results in stagnation. That's serious. John wrote this letter to prevent that from happening, to give assurance of salvation so that they would continue to enjoy fellowship with them, with the apostles, with the church, and with the Lord.

F.F. Bruce that there's nothing vague or merely sentimental about this fellowship. It is life in Christ and naturally involves bearing fruit, being faithful to the Lord's commands. That life - an active, faithful life, a life of obedience to the Lord, to the gospel, to the instruction of Scripture - that life is the only way to have joy in life.

That too was John's object in writing to them. He says in verse 4, he wrote, "So that our joy may be made complete." That would include their joy as well. That is, the joy of those to whom he wrote. What would make John happy, in other words, is their happiness. The idea here is joy that is filled up. In fact, joy that is so filled up it's overflowing. Nothing would make John happier than firmly establishing his friends in the faith and in their fellowship.

That's where joy is experienced. That's what the Bible teaches. Psalm 16:11, David wrote, "You will make known to me the path of life/In Your presence is fullness of joy." Joy's in Your presence, he's saying. Joy is in the Lord. It's in following His paths. It's in following His ways. It's in leading an obedient life. Joy is in fellowship with the Lord.

It's an amazing thing, when you think of it - and you should think about this often; I should think about this often - amazing thing that we can have fellowship with the Lord God, with the Father and the Son, Jesus Christ. Really, there are two amazing statements in this passage, at least two that stand out to me. First, that we as believers have fellowship with God Almighty. We creatures have fellowship with the Almighty God, the finite, frail, flawed creatures, have

fellowship with the infinite, perfect, pure God. That's an amazing thing.

And secondly, that God was manifested. God dwells in an approachable light, Paul tells us. No man has seen Him or can see Him. That's 1 Timothy 6:16. And yet the Lord God, the Son of God, left that light where He dwelt from all eternity, in perfect fellowship with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit, and became a man and manifested Himself to us. And He did that in order to give us life, in order to give us eternal life, which is knowing God. Knowing about God, certainly we must know about God in order to know Him personally, but ultimately that's eternal life. It's knowing God personally. That is the greatest of all blessings and it's completely undeserved.

And John has written in order to strengthen our fellowship with the Lord and with one another. He wrote that for that particular group, at that particular time, but down through the ages that's the purpose of this book. It's to strengthen us in our relationship with the Lord and our relationship with one another. So as we study this letter in the weeks to come and follow the teaching of the apostle, our relationship with the Lord will deepen.

But if you have any doubts that you are in the fellowship of the saved, that you have eternal life, John has written to clear the confusion and dispel the doubts. The first test is truth. It's Christ. Do you believe He is the eternal Son of God who became man? That question is as relevant today as it was in the first century. Cerinthus is long gone, but his ideas are with us. At least the essence of his ideas are with us. They are as common today as they were then. They are common among teachers who believe that Jesus is just a man, whose death was not a sacrifice, but only an example.

If that is your belief, then you do not have fellowship with the apostles and the church, and with the Father and the Son. Only those who believe that Jesus is the God-man are saved. If that is your belief, then you have fellowship, because the saved believe truth. They



believe in the Trinity. They believe that Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God who became man. They believe that He is the one who died for sinners, that His death was a substitutionary death, that He took our place in God's judgment, and in so doing, removed that judgment from all who believe in Him. And they recognize that they're sinners. They recognize that they have guilt, but that Christ has taken it, and that is His work, not ours.

The salvation is not the product of formulas, mystical ideas about things, and works and deeds of that. It is all the work of Jesus Christ. We simply receive it by faith. We trust in Him. And if you've not done that, we invite you to do that, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. All who do are saved. Trust in Him, and then by God's grace, grow in Christ, increasing your fellowship with Him. That should be the aim of everyone of us and hopefully that will be the result of our time of study in this great book of 1 John.

Well, may God bless us to that end and bless us as we close. Let's end with a word of prayer and give thanks to the Lord for all that He's given to us.

[Prayer] Father, we do thank You for what You've given us. You've given us much. You've given us far more than we can comprehend or will ever be able to comprehend. We'll spend eternity marveling at Your grace and the gift of life that You've given us, and that gift of life is in Your Son, the Jesus Christ. It's not in some mystical system. It's not in some list of rules and regulations. It's very simple: salvation is by grace alone, through faith, and Christ alone, Your eternal Son, who became a man and died in our place. We give You thanks for Him and thanks for the life that we have in Him, and it's in His name we pray. Amen.