

1 John 1:1-4 | Sunday November 2, 2025

1 John 1:1-4 ESV

- (1) That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—
- (2) the Life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—
- (3) that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.
- (4) And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete.

As 1 John starts there are no introductions or greetings and it will not close with any salutations. In fact, the book more resembles a sermon or general update than a traditional letter. When He wrote His gospel John went out of His way not to use His name, and He does the same in 1 John. Yet, Church history and more importantly the theme and content of the letter reveal John as the author. Right at the start John is claiming to be an eyewitness of Jesus' ministry.

John was not just an eyewitness; he was a part of Jesus' inner circle. John was one of the three disciples that Jesus raised **the ruler's daughter** back to life in front of (Luke 8:51). He was one of the four that Jesus taught about the **end times** to (Mark 13). And he was one of the three that was invited to go further into the **garden of Gethsemane** and watch as Jesus suffered before the cross (Mark 14:33). From the cross Jesus asked John **to care for His mother**, Mary (John 19:27). John enjoyed such a close relationship with Jesus he was known as the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13:23). He was allowed to see Jesus' transfiguration.

Matthew 17:1-9 ESV

- (1) And after six days Jesus took with him **Peter and James, and John** his brother, **and led them up a high mountain by themselves.**
- (2) And He was **transfigured** before them, and **His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as light.**
- (3) And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with Him.
- (4) And Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for You and one for Moses and one for Elijah."
- (5) He was still speaking when, behold, **a bright cloud overshadowed them**, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is My beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; **listen to Him.**"
- (6) When the disciples heard this, **they fell on their faces and were terrified.**
- (7) But **Jesus came and touched them**, saying, "Rise, and have no fear."
- (8) And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.
- (9) And as they were coming down the mountain, Jesus commanded them, **"Tell no one the vision, until the Son of Man is raised from the dead."**

Jesus brought His inner circle up onto the mountain and had something amazing to show them, **His glory**. Peter, James, and John watched as Jesus was **transfigured, changed from the inside out**. His face shown like the sun and His clothes became blinding white. Moses and Elijah also appeared. I find it amazing that Peter, James, and John have no doubt as to who they are. If this was not enough God the Father instructed them to listen to His Son. **Instead of a humble**

carpenter, Peter, James, and John were seeing Jesus for who He had been from eternity past. Jesus' appearance and the voice of God are so amazingly overwhelming they fall down terrified. When Peter, James, and John came off the mountain they must have looked shell shocked. Jesus commanded them not to tell what they had seen until He was resurrected. All the other disciples had to wonder what happened to them. This will not be John's only experience with the glorified Jesus. He sees Jesus in His glory at the beginning of Revelation.

Revelation 1:16-17 ESV

(16) In His right hand He held seven stars, from His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and **His face was like the sun shining in full strength.**

(17) **When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as though dead.** But He laid His right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I Am the first and the last,

When John sees Jesus in His glory, He is overwhelmed again just as He was on the mountain. He does not run up to hug His friend but falls down as dead. John is still in a body of death/sin for both experiences. We need our resurrected body in order to be able to be in His glorified presence because Jesus is that incredible. **Right now God is wanting to grow us in being able to experience His glory.**

2 Corinthians 3:18 NAS95

(18) But we all, **with unveiled face**, beholding **as in a mirror the glory of the Lord**, **are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory**, just as from the Lord, the Spirit.

We have an unveiled face; through the blood of Jesus, we are given direct access to Him. In this body we are looking through a mirror at the glory of God. If we were to truly see Him glorified, we would fall down dead like John did. God is working on us and transforming us. **This is the same word of Jesus' transfiguration, a change from the inside out. God is transforming us as believes so that we can experience His glory.** In a sense John never recovered from seeing Jesus glorified and in the flesh. He is marveling about this truth in his introduction.

1 John 1:1 ESV

(1) That which **was from the beginning**, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—

Just as he started His gospel marveling at the Word who was with God in the beginning and became flesh, John is awestruck about Jesus. He was there in the beginning of everything. He always has been God and had no beginning.

Colossians 1:16-17 ESV

(16) **For by Him all things were created**, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him.

(17) **And He is before all things**, and in Him all things hold together.

We cannot fully understand what it means to be before all things. **Choose any starting point you want, from eternity past, and before that moment is Jesus.** This is the all existing Jesus that John interacted with.

1 John 1:1 ESV

(1) That which was from the beginning, which we have **heard**, which we have **seen** with our eyes, which we **looked** upon and have **touched** with our hands, **concerning the Word of Life—**

John emphasizes **3 different senses**. He heard the one that was from the beginning, but it doesn't stop with the ears. John saw with His eyes the one from the beginning. It is one thing to hear a voice, it is another to see who the voice came from. John says I not only saw Him but looked upon, beheld Him, and even touched Him. **This word for touched means to closely examine by feel.** John was in awe over Jesus who was from the beginning and yet sat down at a table and ate with him, or walked miles with him as they traveled. **Jesus is the Word of life that was from the beginning and yet came to be with us.**

1 John 1:2 ESV

(2) the Life was **made manifest**, and **we have seen it**, and testify to it and proclaim to you **the eternal life**, which was with the Father and **was made manifest to us—**

I really hope we can hear the awe in John's voice as he writes this. The Eternal Word of Life has been revealed to John. Some false teachers were starting to question Jesus. They started to change His full humanity or His full deity. **John cannot emphasize enough the eternal Jesus took on flesh.** John was an eyewitness and will not stop testifying and proclaiming how amazing Jesus is.

As he writes His awe for Jesus will continually show through and love will be a regular emphasis. At times we can forget what the personality of John used to be.

Mark 3:17 ESV

(17) James the son of Zebedee and **John the brother of James** (to whom He gave the name Boanerges, **that is, Sons of Thunder**);

Jesus gave James and John the nickname, Sons of Thunder. The two brothers were boisterous, loud, and quick tempered. Overall, they were rough fisherman.

Luke 9:52-55 ESV

(52) And He sent messengers ahead of Him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for Him.

(53) But the people did not receive Him, because His face was set toward Jerusalem.

(54) And when His disciples **James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"**

(55) But He turned and rebuked them.

James and John want to call fire down from heaven to smite the Samaritans. These brothers legitimately earned their nickname. They had a boastful, energy to them.

Mark 10:35-37 ESV

(35) And **James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to Him and said to Him,** "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you."

(36) And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?"

(37) And they said to Him, **"Grant us to sit, one at Your right hand and one at Your left, in Your glory."**

John and James approach Jesus and want extra treatment from Him. They want to sit in positions of authority and power next to Jesus. Matthew 20 says it was their Mom that made the request yet

Mark is clear that they were a part of it as well. **As we study 1 John it will be hard to remember this loud, prideful fisherman.** John will emphasize loving others, and stay in awe over Jesus. The more John knew Jesus the more He started to change. **John was being grown from one degree of glory to another. He knew it was fellowship with Jesus that changed Him,** and He desperately desired for other believers to experience the same fellowship.

1 John 1:3 ESV

(3) that which we have **seen** and **heard** we proclaim also to you, **so that you too may have fellowship with us;** and indeed our **fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.**

John's main purpose is to draw believers into the fellowship. This word fellowship means a **close association involving mutual interests and sharing communion and a close relationship.** He desired for believers to experience this fellowship with each other but that is only possible when they experience this fellowship with the Father and the Son. Fellowship is deeply on John's mind because false teachers have given up having fellowship with believers and are actively trying to get others to follow them. John wants to protect believers and guard the fellowship they can experience. **We have to be careful not to mistake being in fellowship for being saved.**

1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 20 YLT

(16) The cup of the blessing that we bless—**is it not the fellowship of the blood of the Christ?** the bread that we break—**is it not the fellowship of the body of the Christ?**

(17) because one bread, one body, are we the many—for we all of the one bread do partake.

(20) *no,* but that the things that the nations sacrifice—they sacrifice to demons and not to God; and **I do not wish you to come into the fellowship of the demons.**

If fellowship and salvation were the same thing then Paul would be teaching that we have to take the Lord's supper in order to be saved. This would violate so many other passages of scripture. Paul is emphasizing that taking the cup and the bread is having fellowship with the body and blood of Jesus. **He is saying through the Lord's supper we are enjoying an intimacy and closeness with who Jesus is and what He accomplished.** A believer can come in and out of fellowship. This is why believers should not worship an idol, because then they become in fellowship with the demon behind the idol. Walking in fellowship for believers is very important. **When a believer has assurance and walks in fellowship with Jesus and with other believers John is overjoyed.**

1 John 1:4 ESV

(4) And we are writing these things **so that our joy may be complete.**

Salvation is the first step for a believer. John deeply desires for these believers to grow in their fellowship with Jesus and with each other. It will fill up His joy. We can see this desire in his four purpose statements throughout the book.

1 John 2:1 ESV

(1) My little children, I am writing these things to you **so that you may not sin.** But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

1 John 2:26 ESV

(26) I write these things to you **about those who are trying to deceive you.**

1 John 5:13 ESV

(13) I write these things to you **who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.**

John's stated purpose for writing this book is for his joy to be completed, as believers grow in fellowship and not sin as he warns them about those who are trying to deceive them. **He wants these believers to know that they have eternal life.** Unfortunately, the book of 1 John is used by some to instill doubts and uncertainties. When fellowship with God is equated to being saved then the book becomes very difficult to understand. **John's desire for believers to know becomes a challenge "do you really know?"** Instead of joy and holy living, we are left with anxiety and worry. John will use two different Greek words for "know" 40 times. **He desires for this to be a book for believers full of certainty. He is writing to those who believe.** To those who understood and followed the stated purpose of His gospel.

John 20:31 ESV

(31) but these are written **so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.**

John specifically chose certain miracles for His gospel so that people would understand who Jesus is as the Son of God and what He accomplished as the Christ, the perfect blood payment. He desired for them to believe in Jesus and that through believing they would have life. Then for these believers who have trusted in Jesus for salvation John wants us to know that we have eternal life and be able to walk in a fellowship with Him. When properly understood 1 John is not a book that should create doubts, **but draw us to the fellowship with the word of life that was from the beginning and fellowship with each other in love.** John was changed as He walked in a fellowship with Jesus and he desires for us as believers to experience that same life changing fellowship.

Psalms 16:11 ESV

(11) You make known to me **the path of life; in Your presence there is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

It is in the presence of God, being in fellowship with Him, that we can experience a fullness of joy. **God desires such a close relationship with us,** my prayer is God would use 1 John to teach us what having fellowship with Him looks like in our lives. That we would know what it means to have eternal life and enjoy walking in that life increasingly each day.