

- *Koinonia* is a shared life, a closeness in life, a knowing and being known.

This “fellowship” is created by our being joined to the Father and the Son. We have a shared life because we share in the life of Jesus. John wants the churches to know this Jesus, the One they experienced, in order that they too might share in this life of the coming age, together. You can’t experience the life of the coming age alone.

- B. John’s opening invites us to participate in the shared life of the coming age now which begins, and can only begin, with adherence to the teaching about Jesus Christ given by those who had the authority to speak it... the apostolic witness.

LIVE THE STORY

The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community. The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.

- How might you answer the question, “What is the Gospel?” Would you rely more on Paul than other NT writings? Why might it be good to hear the apostolic message freshly from John?
- What are some of the things we might glean from the opening phrase, “What was from the beginning...”?
- Explain: *To the degree that we veer away from the message delivered by the apostles, we veer away from the person of Jesus.*
- How does the phrase “the life of the coming age” communicate differently than “eternal life”? Which fits the context better?
- Does it seem odd that John thinks “fellowship” will happen as a result of writing a message which will be read to them? How does this differ from ways we may think about “fellowship”?
- Why can’t the life of the age to come be experienced alone?

Light, Life, Love: the Gospel We Heard from Him That Which Was From the Beginning

Jerry Cisar — August 23, 2020

Text: 1 John 1:1-4

Keyword: Beginning

Introduction

I. From the Beginning of Time (1a)

- A. This is a very unusual way to begin anything.
 - i. Maybe John wants the object of His proclamation, Jesus, to come first in our thoughts and minds.
 - ii. Maybe it’s because nothing can come before what is from the beginning.
 - iii. The “what” or “that which” is...
 - a) The Word of Life (τοῦ λόγου τῆς ζωῆς)
 - b) Life Itself (the life of the coming age) (τὴν ζωὴν τὴν αἰώνιον)
 - c) Jesus (the One they heard, saw, and touched)
- B. “From the Beginning”
 - i. John 1:1-4

John wants us to understand that the beginning of the Gospel has its origins in the One who Created all things in the Beginning. This is no invention of man.

- ii. Micah 5:2 “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, [LXX from the beginning of eternal days].”

- iii. Habakkuk 1:12 “Are you not from everlasting [LXX: from the beginning], O LORD my God, my Holy One? We shall not die.”
- iv. The Wisdom of Solomon, says regarding idols, “they did **not** exist **from the beginning**, nor will they last forever.” (14:13)
 - a) Does the last line of this letter corresponds to the first line: “Dear children, keep yourselves from idols.” (5:21)

C.S. Lewis: “Athanasius begins his exposition of the Word of the Cross with the origin of idolatry, emphasizing that idolatry... is not ‘from the beginning,’ that is, is not a proper characteristic of created existence, but is rather a deviation from the right relationship between God and creation.”

- b) The beginning of the Gospel has its foundation in the Creator God who was from the beginning.

II. From the Beginning of the Gospel (1b-2)

- A. The Gospel is no private revelation!
- B. Heard, saw, looked at, felt,
 - i. The Gospel, the Message about Jesus Christ, is rooted in His actual humanity, His place in human history, and the fact that He chose witnesses to explain the true significance of His life, death, and resurrection.
 - ii. John hints at a second level seeing (1c, d).

Though John is an eyewitness, he refers to Jesus “in categories that go beyond what one could have known about Jesus from mere physical observation, with phrases such as ‘what was from the beginning’ and ‘the eternal Life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.’” (Zondervan Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament – ZECNT)

- C. “We proclaim...” in v3 is the controlling verb of this long sentence.
 - i. What is it that John and the apostles proclaim?
 - a) The One Who was from the beginning.
 - b) The One Whom they had heard, seen, and put their hands on.
 - c) The Life of the coming age, which was evident, manifest, in Jesus Christ.
 - d) Jesus!
 - ii. John proclaimed the same Gospel as Paul in his own way.
 - a) Col. 1:28
 - b) The Gospel is Jesus.

D. The Life of the Coming Age

- John 1:4

III. For the Beginning of *Koinonia* (3-4)

- A. The “So what?” Question
 - i. There is always a built in answer to the “So what?” question.
 - a) It is called doxology... truth like this should cause us to stop and worship! We should stand in awe of God.
 - b) We should want to make sure our version of the Gospel passes the test, so to speak, with John’s.
 - c) “So that you may have **fellowship** with us... [and when that happens] it will make our joy complete.”
 - BDAG describes the word *koinonia*: close association involving mutual interests and sharing, association, communion, fellowship, close relationship.