

FIRST BAPTIST, 6-14-15 AM NOTES  
"ASSURANCE IS ROOTED IN REALITY"  
1 JOHN 1:1-4  
#1 in Series, "Absolute Assurance"

**1 John 5:13 (NKJV)** "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God."

I. The Reality of Christ Is Historical (v. 1)

**John 1:1 (NKJV)** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

**Revelation 19:11-13 (NKJV)** "11 Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. 12 His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. 13 He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God."

**John 4:24a (NKJV)** "God *is* Spirit..."

**John 14:8a (NKJV)** "Lord, show us the Father..."

**John 14:9a (NKJV)** "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father..."

Gnosticism—Denied the humanity of Christ and also taught that that salvation is by mystical knowledge that only a few could actually attain.

II. The Reality of Christ Is Manifested (v. 2)

**John 3:16 (NASB)** "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."

**Romans 6:23 (NKJV)** "For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."

**Colossians 3:4 (NASB)** "When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory."

**1 John 5:20b (NKJV)** "...Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life."

**Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)** "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the *life* which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

III. The Reality of Christ Brings Blessings (vv. 3-4)

A. The Blessing of Fellowship (v. 3)

Fellowship—*Koinonia*

**1 Corinthians 1:9 (HCSB)** “God is faithful; by Him you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”

**Luke 19:10 (NKJV)** “for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

**John 20:21 (NKJV)** “So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’”

**1 Corinthians 3:9a (HCSB)** “For we are God’s co-workers.”

B. The Blessing of Joy (v. 4)

**John 15:11 (NKJV)** “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full.”

**John 16:22 (NKJV)** “Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.”

“Joy is something very deep and profound, something that affects the whole and entire personality. In other words it comes to this; there is only one thing that can give true joy and that is contemplation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He satisfies my mind; He satisfies my emotions; He satisfies my every desire. He and His great salvation include the whole personality and nothing less, and in Him I am complete. Joy in other words, is the response and the reaction of the soul to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.”  
—Martyn Lloyd-Jones

**Nehemiah 8:10b (NKJV)** “...the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

**Habakkuk 3:18 (NKJV)** “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.”

**Romans 5:11a (NKJV)** “And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ...”

**Philippians 3:1 (NKJV)** “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. For me to write the same things to you *is* not tedious, but for you *it is* safe.”

FIRST BAPTIST, 6-14-15 AM  
“ASSURANCE IS ROOTED IN REALITY”  
1 JOHN 1:1-4  
#1 in Series, “Absolute Assurance”

Today we begin a journey through a small book with a big, life changing truth – assurance of salvation. We are not talking about being “fairly certain”; we are talking about absolute assurance! To some, that sounds like arrogance, but as we will see, it is not arrogance; it is faith standing on God’s promises. The human author of this book is the same John who wrote the Gospel of John, 2 and 3 John, and the book of Revelation.

The key to open the central theme of the book of 1 John is found close to the back door. The key verse is **1 John 5:13 (NKJV)** “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life, and that you may *continue to* believe in the name of the Son of God.” There are several “sub-themes” in 1 John. Some of the sub-themes are fellowship, false teachers, a holy life, and joy. But the primary theme is assurance. Without assurance there is hampered fellowship, a lack of boldness in confronting false teachers, striving for a holy life with a wrong motive, and no joy because when your eternity isn’t settled, joy is elusive.

There’s primarily two reasons people lack assurance of salvation. First, some have no basis for assurance because they don’t know the Word and what it says about assurance and who has it. Some have never understood or accepted the Scriptural teaching about the eternal security of a true Christian’s salvation. Second (and by far the most common reason for the lack of assurance), many lack assurance because their doctrine of salvation is out of line with Scripture. Most people’s view of salvation involves the necessity of at least some human works in procuring salvation. For instance, Roman Catholicism says that salvation is by grace through faith in Christ, plus our own merit. Therefore even Popes have admitted that they do not have assurance. Mother Teresa was very open with the fact that she had no assurance of being saved. Those who depend on their own works for salvation are not saved. **Titus 3:5 (NKJV)** “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit”.

Not only am I concerned about people who lack assurance, I am concerned about people who have a false assurance. In the Bible belt, this false assurance is probably a larger problem than a lack of assurance. There are so many who base their assurance on an experience, a ritual, or some human being that has “pronounced” them saved. Often when we ask someone about salvation, we get answers focusing on a time they remember when they “asked Jesus into their heart”. Some will point back to a feeling they had, or the fact that they were baptized, or that they went through a confirmation class when they were a child. Many are surprised to find out that in a book that has as its theme assurance, a book that uses the word “know” over 30 times, a book that even states that the reason it was written is that we might know that we have eternal life, doesn’t take us back to an experience we can remember, a class we attended, a prayer we prayed, an act like baptism or “walking down the isle”. In fact, this book on assurance tells us that assurance is evidenced by the pattern of our life. Don’t misunderstand. John is not saying that salvation is gained by good works being the pattern of our life; salvation is **evidenced** by certain patterns in one’s life.

Through this series, I long to see God do three things. First, I long to see saved people who struggle with assurance of their salvation be liberated from their doubt and fear. Spiritual growth for a true believer is stymied until the matter of assurance is settled. Second, I long to see those who have a false assurance have their eyes opened and recognize that they do not have genuine salvation and repent of their sin and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved. Third, I want to see you equipped to share confidently with those in either of the two conditions just mentioned how they can be reconciled to God and walk in the assurance of that glorious relationship with God.

With those truths in mind, let’s examine this introduction to the book that John gives us.

## I. The Reality of Christ Is Historical (V1)

Let’s begin by looking at that title that John gives to Jesus at the end of verse 1 – “the Word of life”. This name or a variation of it is one of John’s favorite titles for Christ. We see it in **John 1:1 (NKJV)** “In the beginning was the **Word**, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” We see it in **Revelation 19:11-13 (NKJV)** “<sup>11</sup> Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. <sup>12</sup> His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. <sup>13</sup> He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called **The Word of God**.” John calls Jesus the “Word”, the “Word of God”, and here in our text, the “Word of Life”. Only John uses these

titles, these names for Jesus Christ. Let's examine that description of Jesus, "the Word of Life". Word's communicate. Jesus Christ (God the Son) communicates God the Father to us. Jesus articulates the Father to us. **John 4:24a (NKJV)** says, "God *is* Spirit". Jesus Christ, who was eternally God the Son, took on human flesh in the womb of a virgin and was born in Bethlehem. Was it so that He could save us? Yes, but it was also so that He could show us God. The disciple Philip said to Jesus in **John 14:8a (NKJV)** "Lord, show us the Father..." Jesus answered in **John 14:9a (NKJV)** "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father..." Jesus Christ makes visible the invisible God. When Jesus speaks, we are hearing God speak. When we see the love of Jesus, the holiness of Jesus, the power of Jesus, we are seeing the love, holiness, and power of God. John says that He is "the Word of life". We will see later that the life Jesus gives is eternal life. He is the Word of life.

In verse 1, John is making a point of the fact that Jesus was no myth, no embodiment of an ideal; He was (and is) a historical person with a real, physical body. One of the primary principles of interpretation (hermeneutics) is called "the historical grammatical principle". What is the historical context that John was writing in? There was a heresy (false teaching) that was running wild in the last part of the first century when John wrote this book we call 1 John. The heresy has been changed a little and is being recycled today by the devil. The heresy is called Gnosticism. It gets really complicated, but I'll try to simplify it without distorting it. The word "Gnostic" is from the Greek word that means "to know". Many Gnostics taught that all matter is inherently evil and spirit is good. Most of the Gnostics accepted the fact that Jesus was deity (God), but they denied His humanity. Based on their false beliefs, the purity of spirit would never be combined with the evil of a physical body. Consequently, some of the Gnostics taught that Jesus only appeared to have a body, but it was not real. Today we would say that Jesus was like a hologram. If you tried to touch Him you would find no physical substance. The Gnostics also taught that salvation is by deep mystical knowledge that only a few could actually attain to. So the Gnostics denied the humanity of Christ. It is interesting that in the Gospel of John (and primarily today), John was battling those who denied the deity of Christ. The enemy attacks the truth about Christ from all sides. His desire is to get you to believe in "another Jesus" (2 Corinthians 11:4) – either one who is not God and is only man or one that is God, but not man. The only true Savior is the one who is fully God and fully man. He is as much God as though he were not man at all and as much man as though He were not God at all. He is not half God and half man. He is not all man and no God or all God and no man. He is the God Man.

Notice what John says in verse 1 with that background in mind. Jesus had no beginning. "That" in verse 1 refers to the person of Christ. He was not created at the beginning. At the beginning of time, at the beginning of creation, He already was. That is called the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ. That statement evidences His deity. Only God has no beginning. Now John begins to confront those teachers who denied His humanity. John said, "We [the apostles] heard Him". John probably heard Jesus as much as any man. He was one of the first that Jesus called and he was in the inner circle and he heard Jesus even on the cross when Jesus entrusted the care of His mother to John. The tense of the word "heard" is one that indicates something in the past with results continuing into the future. It is the sense of, "I heard Him and His words are still ringing in my ears." John goes on to say that they had seen Jesus. He doesn't stop with seeing Him; he said that he had looked upon Him. That word translated "looked" is a word that means to look with a searching gaze. It was no surface look at Christ. He was no apparition or hologram. But then came the knockout blow to the Gnostics. He said "We touched Him and He was a real person with a real human body."

Jesus Christ was a historical person. He had a literal human body. John says that He was more than a mere man, but He was a man. The world is full of phonies, but Jesus is real.

## II. The Reality of Christ Is Manifested (V2)

The word "manifested" means to reveal or make known. It refers to making visible what was previously hidden. God has revealed some about Himself in creation, but creation cannot reveal to us God's love and pity and unchangeableness. Creation manifests His wisdom and power, but that's about all. The written Word reveals God more fully, as well as His purposes. But Jesus Christ is God's final and most complete

revelation. John now makes a declaration (“proclamation” in some translations) about this manifested Savior. Don’t miss this! This Jesus Christ who revealed the Father to us **is** eternal life. He doesn’t just give eternal life; He **is** eternal life. “Eternal” means no beginning and no end. Christ’s life has no beginning and no end. In this context, eternal life is not a reference to an amount of time; eternal life is a person. This is a glorious truth. When we come to God in repentance and faith in Christ and His finished work on Calvary’s cross, we receive eternal life. **John 3:16 (NASB)** “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have **eternal life.**” **Romans 6:23 (NKJV)** “For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* **eternal life** in Christ Jesus our Lord.” When you are saved, you don’t **just** get the privilege of going to heaven when you die (though you do get that). You become a partaker of Christ’s eternal life. **Colossians 3:4 (NASB)** “When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.” In the last chapter of 1 John we read in **1 John 5:20b (NKJV)** “... Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.” When you are saved, you become a partaker of Christ’s life. **Galatians 2:20 (NKJV)** “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me...” If you have true salvation, you have eternal life right now. You are in union with Christ and Christ lives in you and He is eternal life. Eternal life is not something that we strive for; eternal life is in a person – Jesus Christ. When you have Christ, you have eternal life as a present possession.

### III. The Reality of Christ Brings Blessings (V3-4)

Having seen and heard and touched the Lord Jesus, John now tells us two things that the historical Christ makes available to those who are partakers of His eternal life.

#### A. The Blessing of Fellowship (V3)

“Fellowship” is one of the greatest words in the Bible. The Greek word for fellowship (*Koinonia*) means a mutual participation in a common cause and / or a shared life. This common cause and shared life are on two levels. First, we have fellowship with one another. When I speak of “one another”, I am speaking of those who have been united to Christ. We share a common life – eternal life, Christ’s life. If Christ is your life (eternal life) and Christ is my life, we have a common life which is Christ’s life. That sharing of this common life between two believers is closer than the relationship between biological siblings when one is not a believer. Not only do we share a common life with other believers, we share a common cause. Our passion is to glorify God and make His name famous. As we look at the world, we have the common cause of being His instrument in turning rebels into worshippers, to make disciples from every tongue, tribe, people, and nation. If that’s not your cause, either you are extremely spiritually immature or your heart has never been changed by an encounter with the Savior. Second, we have fellowship with the Savior. **1 Corinthians 1:9 (HCSB)** “God is faithful; by Him you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.” We now have a common life and a common cause with Jesus Christ, the Word of life. The Common life is His eternal life and the common cause is to join Him in seeking and saving the lost. **Luke 19:10 (NKJV)** says, “for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” We read in **John 20:21 (NKJV)** “So Jesus said to them again, ‘Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.’” How glorious is that! We have become partakers of Christ’s eternal life and we are told in **1 Corinthians 3:9a (HCSB)** “For we are God’s co-workers.” That is the blessing of fellowship.

#### B. The Blessing of Joy (V4)

The word “full” means total or probably the best translation is “complete”. John is just repeating what he heard Jesus say before the cross. **John 15:11 (NKJV)** “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and *that* your joy may be full.” **John 16:22 (NKJV)** “Therefore you now have sorrow; but I will see you again and your heart will rejoice, and your joy no one will take from you.” When we are united to Christ, we not only have fellowship with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we have Jesus’ joy that no one can take away from us (and I might add, no circumstance can take away from us). Because nothing can take us away from Christ, and He is the source of our joy, nothing can take away our joy.

Not many people have heard of the English evangelist, Billy Bray (1794-1868). He was a little on the “unique” side, but he was greatly used of God. He was a coal miner and a drunkard who lived an evil life. When he was about 29 years old, he was converted to Christ while reading John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*. Billy Bray became an evangelist, though not a typical one. He was so full of joy that at times he would just stop preaching and start singing and dancing. People made fun of him and laughed at him, but nothing could stop him. One day he was asked, “Why, Billy Bray, are you so joyous all the time? Suppose you discovered that you are not saved at all, you are really not a child of God, and suppose when you die you go to hell?” Billy Bray answered, “Well I suppose that if I die and I discover that I am not a Christian and I go to hell, Jesus has been so real and so wonderful and precious in my life I will have to shout all the way to hell. When I get down to hell I will have to run up and down the streets of hell shouting, ‘hallelujah, praise the Lord’. The devil will come over to me and say, ‘Billy Bray, we cannot stand that down here; we cannot put up with that. We will just have to send you to heaven.” [Jerry Vines, *Exploring 1-2-3 John*, page 23-24). This joy that the historical Christ gives us is not something that the world can manufacture or give. What is this joy at its essence? You cannot go to the dictionary to find a definition. It is something that the world cannot experience. It is quite different from temporal happiness that is grounded in what has happens.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones has a good word that sheds some light on real joy. “Joy is something every deep and profound, something that affects the whole and entire personality. In other words it comes to this; There is only one thing that can give true joy and that is contemplation of the Lord Jesus Christ. He satisfies my mind; He satisfies my emotions; He satisfies my every desire. He and His great salvation include the whole personality and nothing less, and in Him I am complete. Joy in other words, is the response and the reaction of the soul to a knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.” [Martyn Lloyd-Jones, *Life in Christ*, page 30]. Over and over in Scripture we see the phrases “Rejoice in the Lord” or “the joy of the Lord”. With a quick glance in a concordance, I counted at least 30 and I am sure that there were many more. Here are a few examples. **Nehemiah 8:10b (NKJV)** “...the joy of the Lord is your strength.” **Habakkuk 3:18 (NKJV)** “Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” **Romans 5:11a (NKJV)** “And not only *that*, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ...” **Philippians 3:1a (NKJV)** “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord.” Joy is not primarily found in circumstances or people, but in the historical Lord Jesus Christ. But without assurance of salvation, there is no real joy.

## CONCLUSION

Adoniram Judson (1788-1850) was the first American foreign missionary. The Lord directed him to Burma. When you read his biography, it is doubtful that anyone suffered more than he did to get the Gospel to the unreached Burmese. Not only was he imprisoned and tortured, he saw his family suffer for the furtherance of the Gospel. In spite of all that he went through, he never lost the joy of the Lord. His circumstances were not the source of his joy and so painful circumstances could not rob him of joy. When Judson was in the US on furlough, he was in Stonington CT and a young boy was struck by the joyful countenance of this man who had been through so much pain and agony. That boy became a famous preacher (Henry Clay Trumbull) and wrote a book that included a chapter on that meeting with Adoniram Judson. The title of the chapter was “What a Boy Saw in the Face of Adoniram Judson”.

Jesus Christ is real! He is no myth or some bodiless spirit. He is eternal life and when we repent of sin and trust in Him alone for salvation, He saves us and we become a partaker in His life and so we have eternal life as a present possession. That relationship enables us to have genuine fellowship with Him and with one another. There is in Him a joy that no person or circumstance can ever take away. We don’t have to wander in doubt and fear as to whether we have this relationship. We can have absolute assurance. That is why this book was written.