

Chardon Christian Fellowship
Wednesday Night Bible Study

1 John

Lesson 2: The Nature of Jesus

In this lesson we will examine one of the key focal points of the First Epistle of John, that is, the nature of Jesus.

We will examine the unfolding of the verses about the nature of Jesus, and then after we have examined what the First Epistle of John reveals about Jesus, we will examine the probable heresies that existed in the Church at that time (~85 A.D.).

I. First Epistle of John verses About Jesus

A. Jesus's nature

1. Jesus is God as God's Son

1 John 1:1 Jesus was from the beginning = *claims equality with God and pre-existence*

1 John 2:13,14 Him who has been from the beginning = *same as above*

1 John 1:7 Jesus is God's Son

1 John 4:9 only begotten Son of God = *the only One to come*

1 John 3:20 God is greater than our heart, and God knows all things

1 John 1:1 He is the Word of Life *literally "logos of life giver"*

logos (λόγος); *logos* means literally word or words; however, in reference to Jesus, it connotes He is THE Word of God, THE utterance of God.

2. Jesus is the Messiah

Jesus Christ (*Iēsous Christos*). *Iēsous* (Jesus; Ἰησοῦς) occurs 917 times in the New Testament, and except for one occurrence, refers to Jesus of Nazareth. *Christos* (Christ; Χριστός) occurs 529 times in the New Testament and refers to the Christ, the Anointed One, the Messiah. It is a Greek translation of the Hebrew word *mashiach* which means God's Anointed One.

1 John 2:1 Jesus is the Christ = *either Messiah or not; John states Jesus IS the Mashiach*

1 John 2:22 Jesus is the Christ

1 John 5:1 Jesus is the Christ



1 John 5:20 Son of God came, He is true, Son of God is Jesus Christ

1 John 4:14 He is the Savior (*sōtēr*) of the world
= savior, redeemer, deliver

This is strong declaration that Jesus of Nazareth is The Messiah proclaimed by the Old Testament prophets.

3. Jesus was here in the Flesh

1 John 1:1 Jesus was physically present (heard, seen, touched) = cannot be aparition

1 John 4:2 Jesus came in the flesh (proclaimed by Spirit of God) = flesh

1 John 4:14 we beheld Him = theomai = to gaze upon something tangible

4. Jesus is Righteous

dikaios (*δικαιος*); righteous by all accounts and “rightness with God”; however, when speaking of Jesus, the Just One (*ho dikaios*), one of the distinctive titles of the Messiah (see **Acts 3:14**; **Acts 7:52**; **Acts 22:14**)

1 John 1:5 In Him there is no darkness light is opposite of dark

1 John 2:29 He is righteous

1 John 3:7 He is righteous

1 John 3:5 in Him there is no sin good definition of righteous (= no sin)

5. Jesus died on the Cross

1 John 5:6 Jesus came by water and blood: baptism & sacrifice

1 John 5:8-9 God bears witness that Jesus was baptized (water) and died on cross (blood)

B. Jesus mission, purpose and outcome

1. Death paid for our sins

There is a penalty for sin. Sin is worldliness and inconsistent with Holiness of God.

1 John 2:2 propitiation for sins of whole world

1 John 4:10 Jesus is the propitiation for our sins

1 John 3:16 He laid down His life for us

2. Advocate for man to the Father

1 John 2:1 advocate for us with the Father *parakletos, Paraclete; who can ascend to the Father to plead our case but Jesus The Messiah and Savior*

3. Cleanse us from sins

1 John 1:7 Blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin

1 John 3:5 appeared in order to take away sins

1 John 3:8 appeared so that He would destroy works of devil

4. Changes our spiritual nature

1 John 4:13 He gives us His Spirit; *claim of Deity*

1 John 4:4 He is greater than anything in the world; *claim of Deity*

1 John 5:1 We can be born of God, if we believe He is the Christ

1 John 5:5 If we believe Jesus is the Son of God, we will overcome the world

1 John 5:11 eternal life is hidden in His Son; *claim of Deity*

1 John 3:24 He will abide in us

1 John 3:2 when He appears, we shall be like Him

1 John 3:2 We shall see Him just as He is

II. Some of the heresies confronting the church

The Middle East religions at this time was “everything from soup to nuts”. The Old Testament is replete with occurrences of local religions affecting Israel (the Hebrews). This is why John wrote they “... *are separate from the world* ...” encouraging them not to let the world ‘contaminate’ the Gospel (**1 John 2:15-17**).

There were many heresies ‘popping up’ at this time. In fact, John calls those spreading the heresies ‘antichrists’ (*antichristos*; **1 John 2:18**), some of which came from the very church John is writing (**1 John 2:19**).

These heresies arise from second-hand accounts of Jesus (like a gossip chain). John addresses that he witnessed and beheld the Christ, and that he was a first-hand witness, and therefore to be trusted (**1 John 1:1-4**).

A. One focus of the heresies regards the nature of Jesus. Some declared that He was not the messiah (**1 John 2:22-23**). This probably originated with Jewish sects (remember Saul of Tarsus; **Acts 7:58, Acts 8:1**). That Jesus is the Messiah was

addressed in the First Epistle of John (see **I.A.2.** above). The same heresy is around today !!!

B. Another heresy was the Jesus was an apparition or spiritual projection (apparition; Theophany), neither God or man, and did not die on the cross, only appeared to do so (Docetism). The First Epistle of John details that Jesus was very human (see **I.A.3.** and **I.A.5.** above) and that His actual death on the cross had a Divine Purpose (propitiation; see **I.B.1.** above).

C. Another apparent heresy was that Jesus as God the Son did not die on the cross. There was a human named Jesus, and the apparition of God the Son came upon him at baptism and departed before death at Calvary (Cerinthianism). The Epistle of John addresses this heresy by boldly proclaiming He died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins, and that His blood was shed. To misunderstand this was to miss the whole purpose of the Messiah.

D. Gnosticism teaches, among many things, that man evolves toward spiritual perfection, leaving corrupt humanity, through the attainment of knowledge. Divine Jesus coming as man and dying on cross and antithesis to gnostic teaching. The First Epistle of John clearly teaches that we obtain spirituality through the indwelling of the Spirit of God, and that occurs after we acknowledge Jesus is Son of God and ‘propitiated’ for our sins.

E. Don’t think gnosticism is around today? How about the 2016 movie Arrival which should be an affront to every Christian?

Resources:

New American Standard New Testament, The Lockman Foundation

The Letters of John, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, Volume 19. John Stott, InterVarsity Press

Bible Knowledge Commentary, An Exposition of the Scriptures by Dallas Theological Seminary Faculty, John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, Victor Books, 1983

The Mounce Reverse-Interlinear™ New Testament, Robert H. Mounce and William D. Mounce, 2011

<https://studylight.org>

<https://www.openbible.com>

<https://www.biblereasons.com>

<https://jewishvirtuallibrary.org>

<https://www.challies.com>

<http://qbible.com>

<https://www.biblestudytools.com>

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