

## **The Life Appeared**

### **By David Feddes**

Today we're going to look at the preamble to 1 John, the introduction to the whole book, First John 1:1–4. As we listen to this letter, it's helpful to think about who is the one writing it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

#### **Beloved disciple John**

- Fishing partner of Peter and Andrew
- Born son of Zebedee and Salome
- Brother of James (Sons of Thunder)
- Adoptive son to Jesus' mother Mary
- Disciple who saw, heard, touched
- Beloved, dearest friend of Jesus
- Wrote Gospel, 3 epistles, Revelation

The apostle John is sometimes called the disciple of love, or the beloved disciple, the disciple whom Jesus loved, and he is the one whom God directed to write this book.

Who was John? He was a fisherman. He was a fishing partner with his brother James and with their friends Peter and Andrew. The four of them, and maybe others, were involved in a fishing business.

He was originally the son of Zebedee, his father, and Salome, his mother. Salome is a woman who also followed Jesus very closely. One time she was looking out for her sons and wanting them to be big shots in Jesus' kingdom, and came and asked if James and John could sit on either side of Jesus on the best thrones (Matthew 20:20–21). That was a blunder, but she was a woman of great courage and devotion to Jesus. When Jesus was hanging on the cross, Salome was there (Mark 15:40). When the tomb was opened on the first day of the week, the women who came to the tomb included Salome (Mark 16:1).

John was the brother of James. Jesus gave those two brothers a nickname, Boanerges, which means sons of thunder (Mark 3:17). Sometimes they acted like it. There was a village they came to, a village of Samaritans, whom they weren't very fond of anyway, and that village didn't welcome Jesus and the disciples, so James and John said, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?" (Luke 9:54). But Jesus said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of" (Luke 9:55), and they went to another village (Luke 9:56). The sons of thunder could thunder. John walked with Jesus all those years, was filled with the Holy Spirit, and was a tremendous disciple of love who writes so movingly about God's love, but he still had some thunder left in him when the occasion demanded it. When you read in this letter what he has to say about those who teach other than the truth about Jesus, he calls them antichrists (1 John 2:18). The son of thunder was not entirely changed from his personality. He's changed, but he doesn't become somebody who's not John anymore. When it's time to thunder, he's still got some thunder in him from the Holy Spirit.

John was also the adoptive son of Jesus' mother Mary. When Jesus was hanging on the cross, he said, "Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother," and from that time on, this disciple took her into his home (John 19:26–27). John is somebody who knew Jesus' mother by living with her for years and years. By the way, there is some evidence that would indicate that John's mother Salome might have been a sister to Mary, the mother of Jesus (compare Matthew 27:56 with John 19:25). Salome might have been a daughter of Anna, and so she may have been a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. There are some texts which, if you read them, seem to indicate this, so John may even have been Jesus' first cousin, with both of their mothers being sisters.

There are tight connections between John and Jesus. John is a disciple who accompanied Jesus constantly during his public ministry. He saw what Jesus did, he heard what Jesus said, he touched Jesus, he ate with Jesus. He was one of the twelve that Jesus chose to be with him and to be his witnesses (Mark 3:14). Of those special twelve, there were three who were closest of all to Jesus: Peter, and the two brothers, the sons of thunder, James and John. Those were the inner circle whom Jesus sometimes took with him when nobody else went with him. When Jesus was transfigured on the mountain and talked with Moses and Elijah, and when Jesus shone with the glory of the Lord, it was Peter, James, and John who were there (Matthew 17:1–2). When Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, Peter, James, and John were the ones he took a little further into the heart of the garden (Mark 14:33). Of that tight inner circle of three, John was closest to Jesus, his best friend, "the disciple Jesus loved."

John spent all those years with Jesus, his mother was a very close disciple of Jesus, his aunt might have been Jesus' mother Mary, and whether she was John's aunt or not, she was his adoptive mother because he cared for her the rest of her life after Jesus went to heaven (John 19:27).

John is the one who wrote the Gospel according to John. He wrote the three letters, First John, Second John, and Third John. And he is the author of the book of Revelation, where he received visions from the risen Lord Jesus Christ (Revelation 1:1).

This is who is writing this book that we're going to be studying in more detail. If you wanted somebody with credentials for knowing Jesus, it is hard to match Jesus' best friend, the one the Bible calls the disciple Jesus loved (John 13:23), the closest friend of Jesus, the adoptive son of Jesus' mother, the son of a great woman who followed Jesus and was there at the tomb even before the disciples were (Mark 16:1).

### **Firsthand testimony**

John writes: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched, this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have heard and seen, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete" (1 John 1:1–4).

What John heard, what he saw, what he touched—what’s John talking about? If you go back to the Gospel of John, you’ll get an idea of what he means when he says, “that which we heard and saw and handled with our own hands, this is what we’re proclaiming concerning the Word of life.” John was there was there.

John went with Jesus as guests at a wedding. They ran out of wine, so Jesus’ mother brought Jesus to those who were involved in handling the wedding and said, “Do whatever he tells you” (John 2:5). Jesus told them, pour some water into these big jars and serve it, and they did, and when they brought it to the head of the banquet, he said, “You have saved the best till now” (John 2:10). In doing that first miracle, Jesus is revealing something. Who is it that makes “wine that gladdens the heart of man”? God does (Psalm 104:15). God usually uses a slower process to turn water into grapes and then to wine, but sometimes, if he wants to hurry it up a bit, he can. This is the one who says, “I am the vine” (John 15:5). “I am the life from which you draw life and by which you can bear fruit” (John 15:5). He’s the one who changes water to wine (John 2:1–11).

John wasn’t the only one who had some thunder in him, of course. When Jesus saw that the temple was being changed into a mall, a big money-making racket, he went in and overturned the tables of the money changers and made some cords into a whip and drove out everybody who was buying and selling there (John 2:14–15). John saw it. John heard the coins clanking on the ground. He heard Jesus denouncing them and telling them, “Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father’s house into a market!” (John 2:16).

John was there when a prominent religious leader came to Jesus, a man named Nicodemus. He heard Jesus tell this man who was considered an authority and a great leader in Israel, “You must be born again” (John 3:3). Nobody can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again (John 3:3). “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life” (John 3:16). John heard those words spoken from the lips of Jesus to Nicodemus.

Not only did Jesus deal with important leaders asking questions, but also with people nobody else wanted to associate with. There’s a woman by herself at a well, and she’s there by herself because nobody else wants to hang out with a woman with her reputation. Jesus says to her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water” (John 4:10), and you’d never be thirsty again (John 4:14). They get to talking more. She’s a woman who has had five husbands and is living with another man (John 4:18), and Jesus tells her what her life has been. Jesus also says, “God is Spirit, and his worshipers must worship in Spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). She mentions the Messiah, and Jesus tells her, “I who speak to you am he” (John 4:26). John and the disciples are shocked that Jesus is talking with this woman (John 4:27). But she goes back to her village and brings back a bunch of people, and when those people meet Jesus and hear him speak for a while, they say, “We know that this man really is the Savior of the world” (John 4:42).

Jesus goes into the temple, and there is a place with five colonnades and a pool called the Pool of Bethesda (John 5:2), and there’s a man there who has been an invalid for thirty-eight years (John 5:5), disabled, unable to walk. Jesus says, “Do you want to get well?” (John 5:6). The man says

yes, and Jesus says, “Get up! Pick up your mat and walk” (John 5:8). He gets up and walks (John 5:9), and the people are astonished, and this man is amazed at what Jesus has done for him. How does Jesus do that? “The life appeared” (1 John 1:2). The life appeared, and those legs that had been dead for 38 years were suddenly alive and strong and healthy again.

Jesus is preaching to a very large crowd with thousands and thousands of people, and they are starting to get hungry as the day goes on, and he says, how much food do you have? The disciples scrounge up one boy who has a lunch with him, five small barley loaves and two small fish (John 6:9), and they say there’s no way we can feed this crowd. Jesus says, “Bring it to me.” Then they start handing out the bread, and before you know it there is bread everywhere and fish everywhere, and they are all eating and they are satisfied (John 6:11–12). When Jesus does his miracles, John is there. He’s one of those handing out the baskets and collecting the leftovers. He hears Jesus say, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty” (John 6:35). “I am the living bread that came down from heaven” (John 6:51). “Your forefathers ate manna in the desert, yet they died” (John 6:49), but anyone who eats this bread will live forever (John 6:51). The life appeared (1 John 1:2).

John was in the boat when Jesus came walking toward them on the water (John 6:19). He was one who cried out with fear and then with relief to discover this wasn’t just any ghost or terror, but it was Jesus himself, and he said to them, “It is I; don’t be afraid” (John 6:20). Who is it that is the commander of the wind and the waves? “You rule over the surging sea; when its waves mount up, you still them” (Psalm 89:9). The Lord God is the one who rules winds and waves, just as the Lord God is the one who gives wine that gladdens the heart of man (Psalm 104:15) and gives humanity bread (Psalm 104:14–15). Jesus’ miracles reveal him to be the Lord God.

Jesus meets a man who was born blind from birth. Jesus touches his eyes, and the man can see (John 9:1–7). When the man is asked what happened, he starts to talk about it, and some of the authorities tell him that the man who healed him is a sinner. The man says, “Whether he is a sinner or not, I don’t know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!” (John 9:25). Then he finds Jesus again, and he begins to understand who Jesus really is. He says, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him (John 9:38). Who do you worship but the living God?

Jesus begins to talk to the crowds and to his disciples, including John. He says, “I am the good shepherd” (John 10:11). Who’s the good shepherd in the Old Testament? “The Lord is my shepherd” (Psalm 23:1). When Jesus says, “I am the good shepherd,” he’s claiming to be the Lord God. He says, “I am the good shepherd. All who ever came before me were thieves and robbers” (John 10:8). “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). Life! The life appeared. “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11). “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand” (John 10:27–28). The life appeared, and he gives eternal life.

Jesus comes to a grave where his friend Lazarus is buried, and he says, roll back that stone, and Martha says, “But, Lord, by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days” (John 11:39). Jesus says, roll it back, and they do, and just before he does that, Jesus says, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever

lives and believes in me will never die” (John 11:25–26). That’s a pretty big claim, but it’s also a pretty big thing to say, “Lazarus, come out!” (John 11:43), and the dead man came out from the grave (John 11:44). The life appeared, bringing life to the dead. “I am the life” (John 11:25).

Jesus is relaxing at dinner. His friend Mary, the sister of Lazarus and of Martha, comes and pours perfume on Jesus’ feet and wipes his feet with her hair (John 12:3). John is there. He adds this little footnote: "and the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume" (John 12:3). John smelled it. He says in 1 John 1, “What we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and our hands have touched” (1 John 1:1). He could have added, what we smelled with our noses and what we ate. He could have included all the senses, because all the senses were working when he was seeing Jesus and discovering who he is.

John was there. His hands were grabbing palm branches and laying coats on the road. He heard the shouts of the crowd when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” (John 12:13). John was in the upper room with Jesus. His own feet were washed by the hands of Jesus Christ. Jesus took water and a towel and washed the disciples’ feet (John 13:5), and John heard him say, “I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” (John 13:15). “As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another” (John 13:34-35). John felt Jesus' hands on his feet and heard Jesus' voice in his ears, and it continued to ring in his heart the rest of his life.

John was leaning on Jesus and eating with Jesus at the Last Supper (John 13:23). He received the bread and the cup from Jesus’ own hand (Luke 22:19–20). That’s how close John was to the Lord Jesus Christ.

John was at the cross with Mary, the mother of Jesus, as well as John's own biological mother Salome (John 19:25). John heard Jesus say to Mary, “Dear woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother” (John 19:26–27).

John saw one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. “The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true... He testifies so that you also may believe” (John 19:35).

John was the first of the twelve to reach the tomb when it was empty, after the report of the women (John 20:3–4). When he went into the tomb, he saw the strips of linen lying there, and he saw and believed (John 20:5–8). John saw, he touched, he knew that the grave was empty.

John was there when the risen Lord Jesus appeared to his disciples. He was there when Jesus said, “It is I myself; touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have” (Luke 24:39). “Do you have anything here to eat?” and he ate in their presence (Luke 24:41–43). John was there when Thomas said he would not believe (John 20:25), and John was there when Jesus came among them again and Thomas fell at his feet and said, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28). The life appeared, and John saw it.

John was there fishing with his buddies when someone stood on the shore and said, “Friends, haven’t you any fish? Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some” (John 21:5-6). They caught so many fish that they were unable to haul the net in. When they counted them, there were 153 large fish (John 21:11). They got to shore and found that someone already had fish cooking and bread prepared (John 21:9). John was there. He felt the splash of the water and the sand under his feet and the warmth of the fire. He smelled the smoke and aroma of the fish cooking. He tasted the fish that were handed to him by Jesus Christ himself (John 21:13).

"That which we have seen"--that’s what John is talking about. "This is the disciple who testifies to these things and wrote them down, and we know that his testimony is true (John 21:24). When you read the Gospel according to John, and when you read this letter by John, you’re not hearing it from just anybody. You’re hearing it from the one who was in the room when it happened, the one who was there when it was all going on. “We have heard, we have seen with our eyes, we have looked at and our hands have touched. We have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you what we have seen and heard” (1 John 1:1–3).

He says later in this letter, “We have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world” (1 John 4:14). If all those things that John saw and heard and touched and smelled and tasted still haven’t added up, and you’re not quite sure what he’s talking about, John sums it up. "Here’s what I’m talking about: God sent his Son, who is very God himself, to be the Savior of the world. The life appeared. And I was there."

## **Word of life**

I’ve given you an idea of who John is as well as who Jesus is, and I’ve emphasized the eyewitness aspect. Now let’s look more closely at the fact that the life appeared. What does John say about Jesus? “That which was from the beginning... we proclaim concerning the Word of life” (1 John 1:1). He’s from the beginning. He’s the Word of life. “The life appeared [was manifested]... we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us” (1 John 1:2). The life was manifested. What does he mean by that?

We might think that God came to give us eternal life so that we can live forever, and that’s certainly true, but that’s not all that he means. When John says, “that which was from the beginning,” who’s there at the beginning before anything has begun? “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). Or, to quote from John’s own Gospel, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men” (John 1:1–4).

When John speaks in his letter of the Word of life, he’s talking about the very same Word whom he speaks of in his Gospel. The Word was God, and he is the Word who brought life into the world. In the Old Testament, you sometimes read the phrase “the living God.” John is simply calling him "the life." There is a life that is beyond all life, before all life, not dependent on any other life, a life that just is, that lives and reigns apart from anything else ever made. Apart from anything that existed or was made, there is life, and this life is Father, and Word, and Spirit. This

life is eternally from the Father, through the Son, and in the Holy Spirit. “That which is from the beginning... the Word of life... the life” (1 John 1:1–2).

Sometimes people ask, "Why couldn't God just give eternal life apart from Jesus?" That's an oxymoron. You can't give life without the life. There is only death apart from the life. You can't give life without the life. He's the eternal God. He's from the beginning. He's the Word of life. He just is the life.

God the Son, who is the life before anything was ever made, did not begin to exist when he entered Mary's womb or when he was born in that stable near Bethlehem. Jesus, as the Son, as the living Word, was there at the beginning and indeed before the beginning in endless ages. Jesus, as Son of God, had no beginning.

But he took upon himself a human nature. He took upon himself real human flesh. He could be heard. He could be seen. He could be touched. That is what is so remarkable. The invisible God, whom nobody can see and live (Exodus 33:20), the God who is unknowable unless he chooses to make himself known, this eternal life that is beyond all life and all living things, came in a form as a man who could be heard and seen and touched.

We will never fully understand it. People have been writing about this for two thousand years and haven't gotten it figured out, how God can be Trinity, how Christ can be fully human and at the same time fully divine and the eternal life. We will never fully understand it, but the Bible makes it very clear that this is the reality. The eternal God took on human flesh. “The Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth... No one has ever seen God. The only begotten God, who is at the Father's side, has made him known"(John 1:14-18). That's what John says. Nobody has ever seen God, but the only begotten God, who is at the Father's side, has made him known. The life appeared.

Jesus says, "As the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself... The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life... I came that they may have life and have it abundantly... **I am... the life**" (John 5:26; 6:63; 10:10; 11:25; 14:6).

When you understand who Jesus is, you know that he is eternal God. You know that he is human flesh that can be heard, seen, and touched. He is God incarnate, God made flesh. He's the life, “the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us” (1 John 1:2). That is the core of the Bible's message about who Jesus is. He is God, he is human, and he has appeared to us in order to bring us participation in that life.

### **Joyous fellowship**

John goes on to say, “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard” (1 John 1:3). Why? “So that you also may have **fellowship** with us. And our **fellowship** is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We write this to make our **joy** complete” (1 John 1:3-4). Fellowship and joy!

I've been emphasizing the facts. John was there. He knows. You can take it to the bank when he writes and tells you this, not just because he's an eyewitness, but because he's filled with and guided by the Holy Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But it's not just getting our facts straight and our doctrine in line that is so important. He wants there to be fellowship through the word of the apostles, through Jesus Christ, and through the power of the Holy Spirit. He wants us to have a living fellowship with the apostles and their message, but above all, fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, and, as he will say later, through the Holy Spirit who lives in us (1 John 3:24).

He says, "We write this to make our joy complete" (1 John 1:4). About half of the best manuscripts say "our joy," and the other half say "your joy." There is something about sharing Christ: your joy is not complete until you've shared it with somebody else and until somebody else is rejoicing in it. In one of his later letters, John says, "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth" (3 John 1:4). He gets great joy from sharing Christ and seeing more people come into fellowship with Christ.

He writes to complete his own joy, and he is also writing so that our joy will be complete, so that we who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ will have the fullness of joy that Jesus intends. The Scriptures are given, and Jesus is given, so that you and I can have a relationship with God, a fellowship with God, an interactive relationship with God. He wants us to have fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, and he wants us to have the joy of that fellowship.

When Jesus was here, John was with him in the room when Jesus said, "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete" (John 15:11). He said, "You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy" (John 16:20). "Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy" (John 16:22).

Once John had seen Jesus risen and was filled with the Holy Spirit, no matter what happened after that, nothing could take away his joy. His brother James was the first of the apostles to be killed. James was put to death with the sword on the orders of King Herod (Acts 12:2), but nothing could take away John's joy. One by one, the other apostles were murdered in the process of preaching the gospel, but nothing could take away his joy. John was exiled on a desert island (Revelation 1:9), but nothing could take away his joy. While in exile, he was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and Christ appeared to him and said, "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades" (Revelation 1:17-18).

When you know somebody like that, who's going to take away your joy? Nothing that goes wrong in the world can take away your joy when you know the life, when the life has appeared and you have met him. John wants us to enter into not just a true doctrine and correct belief, although that's very important, but into fellowship with the church of God and with Jesus Christ, with God himself, so that we together as believers can have complete joy in him.

## The life appeared

- Through eyewitness John, the Spirit of truth gives sure **knowledge** of Jesus.
- Through disciple John, the Spirit of life shares eternal **life** by faith in Jesus.
- Through beloved John, the Spirit of love guides us into a joyous and growing **fellowship** with Jesus.

Here's what we've learned. Through **eyewitness John**, the Spirit of truth gives sure **knowledge** of Jesus. Jesus describes the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of truth (John 16:13). Many times in this short letter John uses the word **know**. He wants us to know. Through the words of this eyewitness who was there when it happened, the Spirit of truth gives sure knowledge of Jesus through John, that disciple who was hand-picked to walk with Jesus, to live with Jesus, to be a believer in Jesus.

Through **disciple John**, the Spirit of life shares eternal **life** by faith in Jesus. When you put your trust in Jesus, when you believe in him, something happens. This life that existed from eternity becomes part of you, and he becomes your life. "For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:3–4). You have life. You have eternal life. It's not just that your life now gets stretched out so that it lasts and lasts and lasts forever. It means that the eternal life of the living God is put into you, and you have his life. Of course it lasts forever, but this life is not just long, it is divine, it is glorious, it is love, and it is joy.

Through **beloved John**, the disciple Jesus loved, the Spirit of love guides us into a joyous and growing **fellowship** with Jesus. Those are the purposes of this letter: to have sure knowledge, to have eternal life, and to be in a relationship with Jesus, to know the Lord God, the Father of Jesus Christ, as your Father, to know that you live in him and he lives in you, and to know that by the Holy Spirit whom he gives you, to be one of those who worship God in Spirit and in truth (John 4:24).

As we read this letter together, as we meditate and pray upon it, may God give you knowledge, sound knowledge of Jesus.

May you rejoice in the life that comes through Jesus. If you don't have that life, trust him. Jesus himself said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). The life appeared, and he is eager to share his life with everyone who knows and trusts him.

That's not just a fire insurance policy. That's not just, "I want my theology straight and my beliefs correct." That's not just, "Now I know what's going to happen to me when I die. I won't go to hell, I will live forever." Those things are enormously important, and I'm not making light of them at all, but there is fellowship. There is walking with God now and knowing that as you walk through life, someone else is walking with you, that when you talk to God and pray, he is listening and he is answering according to his perfect will. To fellowship with the Father, to fellowship with the Son, to fellowship with the Holy Spirit, to be partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).

Knowledge, life, fellowship: that's what God gives. That's what we can have because the life appeared.

### **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, may our thoughts ever be focused on you, and our souls and our love be poured out to you, you who are our life. May we always rejoice that you have been there from all eternity and that in your own purposes and design you chose to make yourself known fully in the fullness of time, and that you have come among us and that you have taken on flesh and blood so that we might be partakers of your divine nature and have fellowship with you.

Lord, draw us more and more into that. Where we've been confused or uncertain or in error, shape us by the Spirit of truth, so that we have a sound knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ and of the living God.

Where we have been living in death, where we are without your strength and without your gladness and trapped in darkness, may the Spirit of life help us to know Jesus Christ, the Lord of life, and fill us with your eternal life, the life that proceeds forever from the Father, through the Son, and by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, draw us more and more into fellowship with you. Help us not to walk alone. Help us not to live as though we're on our own, but to spend every day in conversation with you. Help us when we're reading your Word to hear the living voice of the Life, and help us when we pray to know that we are praying to the Lord of life, the living God, the very life who appeared among us and has claimed us for your own. May we live always in gladness and in fellowship and in communion with you.

May we know the reality, Lord Jesus, of what you prayed to the Father, "Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent" (John 17:3). May that life flourish in us and overflow from us, so that our joy may be full, as our children come to know you, the Life, as our neighbors come to know you, the Life, as more and more people in this world come to know you as the Life. Amen.

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- Beloved, dearest friend of Jesus
- Wrote Gospel, 3 epistles, Revelation

<sup>1</sup> That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. <sup>2</sup> The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. <sup>3</sup> We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. <sup>4</sup> We write this to make our joy complete.

**Firsthand testimony**

One of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. (John 19:34-35)

This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. (John 21:24)

We have heard... seen with our eyes... looked at... hands touched... we have seen it ... We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard. (1 John 1:1-3)

We have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. (1 John 4:14)

**The life appeared**

That which was from the beginning... this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared... we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. (1:1-2)

## **Word of life**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. (John 1:1-4)

## **Only begotten God**

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth... No one has ever seen God. The only begotten God, who is at the Father's side, has made him known. (John 1:14-18)

## **I am the life**

As the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself... The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life... I came that they may have life and have it abundantly... **I am... the life.** (John 5:26; 6:63; 10:10; 11:25; 14:6)

## **The life appeared**

- **Eternal God:** from the beginning, Word of life, the life
- **Human flesh:** heard, seen, touched
- **God incarnate:** The life appeared... the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

## **Joyous fellowship**

We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have **fellowship** with us. And our **fellowship** is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our **joy** complete. (1 John 1:3-4)

## **The life appeared**

- Through eyewitness John, the Spirit of truth gives sure **knowledge** of Jesus.
- Through disciple John, the Spirit of life shares eternal **life** by faith in Jesus.
- Through beloved John, the Spirit of love guides us into a joyous and growing **fellowship** with Jesus.