

## The Meaning of Life – 1 Jn 1

John begins his epistle with a statement of beginnings, very similar to how he started his gospel account. Cosmology is the study of the origins of the universe, and the Bible speaks very clearly on this. Why is it important for us to understand the beginning of the universe? Because it helps us know our place and purpose within creation. It gives us a meaning for our life. John's opening paragraph addresses this.

"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 – 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—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. And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete."

What was in the beginning? According to Gen 1:1, "In the beginning God..." God created all things, and before He started that creative work, He was the only thing that existed. The Gospel of John starts by saying, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made." John's cosmology is built on the ancient Jewish revelation that God created the heavens and the earth, and everything within them, both seen and unseen, material and spiritual. The way God created was by the words of His mouth – He spoke and it happened. God's Word reflected His will, carried His power, and accomplished His purposes.

Coming back to our text in 1 John 1, he writes that he was an eyewitness to the word of life, which was made manifest. Back in his gospel account, after introducing the Word of God which was in the beginning, which made all things, and was the source of both light and life, he then says this same Word became flesh and dwelt among us (v. 14). Jesus Christ is the Word of Life, the Creator God, who took on flesh and lived among His creation as a man. John testifies to this fact. He saw, heard, and touched Jesus, and was witness to the miracles which authenticated His claims to be the eternal God.

The fact that this God is eternal, and is the source of all life, gives us the concept of eternal life. This God wanted to share His life with His creation, so He created man in His image, after His likeness, with the ability to relate to and communicate with Him. God breathed His spirit into man, granting us an eternal aspect that is not shared by any other part of creation. It is that eternal part of man, the soul and spirit, which needs the message of salvation, the message of eternal life, because when the body dies, the soul and spirit continue – either in eternal blessing with God, or in eternal punishment away from God. That is why Jesus came to this earth, to provide eternal salvation for us and reveal the loving mercy of a very personal God. True joy comes from having a right relationship with that God, and knowing He has forgiven our sins.

The next few verses outline the basic message that God wants us to know. "This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

Light or darkness, truth or lies, fellowship or self-deceit. These are the contrasts we are confronted with in God's message to us. He is light – with no hint of darkness. He is holy – with no hint of sin. This also means that in order for us to be in right fellowship with Him, for us to enjoy being in His presence, we cannot bring sin with us. God can't allow sin into His presence. This is why Jesus had to come and live life as a man, then die as a man – to be our substitute, our sacrifice, paying the penalty for our sins. His blood cleanses us from all sins – if we confess our sins and seek His forgiveness. That's faith – believing that Jesus died on our account, and that based on His sacrifice for us, God will forgive us. To deny that we need his forgiveness, to say we have no sins to be forgiven, is to call God a liar, because He is the One who said, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" and "no one is righteous."

The same God who created the universe created us in His image, after His likeness, with the intention that we enjoy fellowship with Him for all eternity. Our sin separated us from God, so in His love and mercy He provided a way of salvation, that we could be forgiven and restored to a life of fellowship with Him. That is the message of life. That is the meaning of life – to know our Creator God and enjoy fellowship with Him through His Son Jesus Christ. If you don't know Him, if you have not received His forgiveness, I urge you to make today the day you meet your Savior and receive new life. While we sing the final song, come to the front, and someone will take you aside privately to talk and help you.