

It's all about the Center Pt. 3

I John 1:1-4, CBC, Wednesday, October 1, 2025 275 How Firm a Foundation

Last week, finished background—goal to give little insight, also to show way more pieces than you/I thinking about; hope it rattled some of you to make 2 two opposite points—show that can't just care about what you care about and blow off or will find foundation not there for self/others when certain things come in life, but also to show you that you can't study all yourself; **must trust**; trust pastors, larger church present and past, Holy Spirit to guide His church as look at Word of God (not blindly, but if have to make you feel convinced right away, not trust—only trusting in what you can see, understand, unpack—sometimes must act before have all info, sometimes must trust that someone who doesn't have ALL pieces has pieces you don't have that can't even see—for example—I waded through far more than I gave you, but even w pieces that can't get into, very convincing case that John the apostle wrote I John; but have to trust little while study some—(I gave you tools, but I don't have time to read/study all of them; I trust certain ones more than others, been taught how to determine who more trustworthy and how far to trust them, glad to teach you what I know and have you go beyond me/Pastor Jahn, but I/you must fulfill rest of what God has called us to do—means must study more than want to—me/others shouldn't have to do all work BUT other side, you CAN'T study all, find all from scratch—teach children to find all from scratch—study essence of faith and biblical growth—God's tools (Word of God, His people, resources under Holy Spirit) only sufficient if trust God and then trust that He gives others who are His ambassadors to fill in some of the cracks—enough to give reason to stand w/o knowing all—so believe apostle John wrote this letter and sent to groups of believers he close w/interacted with—He at Ephesus before and after Patmos—probably circulating around that area as familiar w churches see in Revelation w 7 churches; written not so much to test to see whether they were saved, but pastorally to assure them that they were based on their profession that Jesus is the Son of God; you can know fellowship with God through Jesus Christ 1:3-5; studied some of what was shaking their foundation and talked about the danger EVEN IN trying to get rid of false doctrine of moving Jesus from center Listen to Marshall writing about this Links can be found with Paul's opponents at Corinth, with Cerinthus, and with Ignatius's opponents. It seems most likely that the opponents were Christians who felt that they had moved beyond the elementary stages of orthodox theology to a new position which called orthodox affirmations into question. They were like men kicking away the ladder on which they have climbed to the heights and leaving themselves without any visible means of support. Relying on their belief that they were inspired by the Spirit and claiming a direct knowledge of God, they thought that they no longer needed Jesus or his teaching. Under the influence of Docetism they argued against a real incarnation of the Son of God in Jesus, and probably adopted a view like that of Cerinthus or Basilides, that the Christ or Son of God inhabited Jesus only for a temporary period. Probably Weiss goes too far in saying that they attached no significance at all to Jesus; it is more likely that he had a nominal importance for them. On the whole, then, a combination of reliance on spiritual experiences and a Gnostic type of world-view led the opponents to a form of Christianity in which Jesus Christ no longer occupied a central position." p. 21-22 how does Jesus lose the central position as Living Head in our lives, in the church specifically with our thoughts about God and life of service for Him? nominal place for Jesus as get lost in PARTS of things God given in Scripture, called us to do; very important to get foundation, not always as easy as think (just want early church, just read it like it says—talked through some “simple statements” in I John that can lead to trouble, must recreate who “they” were to find why THESE the lines that clarified—then can draw parallels for us; So started last week, if these believers were “in the right, but shaken as to ‘the truth’”, how do you bolster assurance? Church blows up, Christians disagree--What is usually important in deciding who right in truth wars? What do we usually hear said when Christians disagreeing, when deciding whether church is healthy or not? give me facts, let me see people working through issues in loving, kind, accepting, serving manner showing love Jesus; argument makes sense to us; problem? So what? We can have all of these in different versions of Christianity; years ago, reading a book from someone outside our circles “Almost Christian”—women pastor in United Methodist from Princeton talking about what we learn about what we are teaching our children from what is happening to them ie. disappearing, values, etc. talks about the theology of niceness—emphasizes what agree, not what disagree—it b/ms the common language b/n us, helps people from diff. backgrounds not feel any of tension of diff. when comes to gospel, like drunken driver, able to go off road on both sides (niceness, AND tell it like it is—“see ya”) and we still say basically traveling down same road; think about our discussion from Galatians where we road tested a couple of definitions of the gospel—the one was so broad that all could subscribe and never be tied to Jesus, deal with sin, need atoning death, live under His Lordship for His purposes by His strength; what do we have right in chapter 1 that addresses these and other glaring aberrations in the gospel? V. 5 walk in light as He is in Light; why important? Look at first verses, where is the subject & verb of first sentence? NIV sticks in early so no suspense; but for us, in verse 3—we proclaim important part is the object – first discussing the message of life, then talking about fellowship, then find message & fellowship tied to person who is life—Jesus Himself--God

I. Identify the Center vv. 1-2

v. 1 what was from the beginning, is it beginning of Jesus' ministry/incarnation here? Kruse believes so b/c tied to other words culminating in incarnate Christ; we were there from beginning; but this along w “with the Father” in v. 2 rings w Jn. 1:1 which roots Jesus' existence b/r time as we know it, Gen. 1:1 concerned w God in Creation, in John, focuses on the message of the gospel), here, focus could also be just message of truth (Acts 15:7), but quickly we see that message/word tied to person (humanity focus here); while say fully God, fully man, must feel tension created by emphasizing HUMANITY of Jesus—OT spoke of God in transcendent manner—not merely impersonal beg. of creation, Is. 43:10-13 (v. 13 from eternity), Ps. 90:2, Hab. 1:12 (from everlasting), we are talking about connecting w this One—it was prophesied Mic. 5:1-2 (from long ago); so whether eternal nature

main focus or implied, saying that not just talking about God and His realities that are “out there,” but it has come to our senses; **this is real, it is now—no separation b/n what is and our experience--what we have heard**; you are listening to others who are claiming more light, more truth, but we, group of us as witnesses, (we, our, us vv. 1-3 11x), others might discount this—heard wrong, hearsay, but WE eyewitnesses; **what we have seen w our eyes** (Judges 13:22, Jn. 3:11) eyewitness--most likely those with John who were in inner circle of Jesus—saw life, death, resurrection; **these** are church’s foundation, Christ being cornerstone Eph. 2:20, received special instructions and commissioning in Jn. 13-17), **what we have looked at**—word similar, but focus here (tense) on what seen—what comes into focus (**do you know what we’ve got here?** (Jn. 1:14 same word—we saw, beheld His glory, I Jn. 4:14) fully seeing, contemplating, drawing inferences from, **and touched w our hands** (Lk. 24:39, Acts 17:27—same word) didn’t even realize what we were touching; Yarbrough, “John saw and touched the deceptively mundane stuff of eternal redemption” p. 29—real physical Jesus, not like Docetists, **concerning the word of life** (life--3x here—but 66 of 135 times in NT found in writings of John) CENTER more than just life v. death, or here v. there – something about existence that goes on—get a life! much in OT, ie. Deut. 30:6, is there any alternative to death? Yes—word of life! Jn. 1:4 v. 2 **and the life was manifested** transcendent God spoken of w awe in OT, seen by us (tie to logos of gospel of John, Jn. 1:14 Burge, “He who existed from limitless eternity has entered time and space and taken up residence here on earth.” P. 53; NO WAY we could experience all of v. 1 and not say “**the life was manifested**”; contra those who denied Jesus is the Christ I Jn. 2:22, 4:2, II Jn. 7 (later Cerinthus whom second century leader Irenaeus takes on) **and we have seen, and testify, and proclaim to you the eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us**—quality of life is same as God Himself, eternal, not something handed out, but something wrapped up, originated in God Himself I Jn. 5:11-12—that’s why birthed into it (spiritual birth like but not physical, Jn. 3:3-8, 16, Jn. 5:24, Lk. 20:34-36, I Jn. 3:1-2, 14) but desire here to reiterate that this Jesus is the Eternal One, God Himself; HERE, same substance as Jn. 1:2 **He was in the beginning with God**—not known apart from communion w Father--**Word of life** is message proclaimed about deity historically manifested in humanity by US humans; Heb. 1:3, II Cor. 4:4-5, we rubbed shoulders w this transcendent one!!!! In face of these slightly different focuses—the “niceness” of those who hold “different views,” **John says that the things taken in by his senses—and other apostles that perhaps seemed so mundane/routine that didn’t even realize all near us—these are the things of life!** The eternal life which was w Father; truth, verified by all means possible back then—it all comes back to who listen to—think—**what keeps us from coming back to these words as final source of truth/life—eyewitness accounts of One who was from the beginning?** why are we so susceptible to similar but wrong teaching about this God? What is REAL center we proclaim even when say proclaim Jesus? we so democratic, Yarbrough says we have “enthroned a metaphysic of naturalism in influential circles.” P. 35 means eyewitnesses mean little if runs counter to convictions of reigning naturalistic certainties; want to hear all facts b/r throw our lot in—want to see what others we respect think; even if facts point one way, easier to judge by experience alone, own opinions; **Though from John’s point of view truth would by no means be antithetical to much of what naturalistic science affirms today, it would be markedly less reductionist. Truth is as much a matter of what God, by word or deed, in creation or redemption, has revealed as it is of what humans observe and infer. Ideally, divine revelation and humble human inference work together, and when they do, truth in a full sense can emerge. Precisely this concurrence of divine self-disclosure and human reception is what John writes about here as he ‘testifies’ or ‘bears witness.’” Yarbrough, P. 36 **Thoughts?****

Numbers 35:30 “If anyone kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses, but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness.”

Deuteronomy 17:6 “On the evidence of two witnesses or three witnesses, he who is to die shall be put to death; he shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.”

Deuteronomy 19:15 “A single witness shall not rise up against a man on account of any iniquity or any sin which he has committed; on the evidence of two or three witnesses a matter shall be confirmed.”

Deuteronomy 30:6 “Moreover the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, so that you may live.”

Joshua 2:10–11 “For we have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea before you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, to Sihon and Og, whom you utterly destroyed. 11 “When we heard it, our hearts melted and no courage remained in any man any longer because of you; for the LORD your God, He is God in heaven above and on earth beneath.”

Judges 13:22 So Manoah said to his wife, “We will surely die, for we have seen God.”

Psalms 90:2 Before the mountains were born Or You gave birth to the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

Isaiah 43:10-13 “You are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, “And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me. 11 “I, even I, am the LORD, And there is no savior besides Me. 12 “It is I who have declared and saved and proclaimed, And there was no strange god among you; So you are My witnesses,” declares the LORD, “And I am God. 13 “Even from eternity I am He, And there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?”

Habakkuk 1:12 Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge; And You, O Rock, have established them to correct.

Micah 5:1-2 “Now muster yourselves in troops, daughter of troops; They have laid siege against us; With a rod they will smite the judge of Israel on the cheek. 2 “But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Too little to be among the clans of Judah, From you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, From the days of eternity.”

Luke 20:34–36 Jesus said to them, “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage, 35 but those who are considered worthy to attain to that age and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; 36 for they cannot even die anymore, because they are like angels, and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection.

Luke 21:13 “It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.

Luke 24:39 “See My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself; touch Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.”

John 1:4, 14 ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. ¹⁴And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 3:11 “Truly, truly, I say to you, we speak of what we know and testify of what we have seen, and you do not accept our testimony.

John 4:42 and they were saying to the woman, “It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world.”

John 5:24 “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.

John 5:46 “For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.

John 8:56 “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw *it* and was glad.”

John 20:31 but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

Acts 1:8 but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth.”

Acts 17:27 that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

Romans 10:17 So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

2 Corinthians 4:4-5 in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. ⁵For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake.

Ephesians 2:20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*,

Hebrews 1:3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

1 John 5:13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life.