

It's All About the Center Pt. 3

1 JOHN

1 John 1:1-4, Wednesday, October 1, 2025



Pergamum

Thyatira

Sardis

Philadelphia

Laodicea

Smyrna

Ephesus

Patmos

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I John 1:1-4

“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.

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I John 1:1-4

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.”**

I. Howard Marshall

How does Jesus lose the central position as Living Head in our lives and the life of the church specifically with our worship and service for God?

- Still struggle with feelings in our experiences of worship and service— feel it is not worth it if don't feel that it is worth it
- Feel our worth tied to what we do; what does growth mean? Shun certain things, embrace certain things; growth in knowledge, in giftedness for service—all of these things can lead to the temptation to need Him less; easy to shift focus from Him; IF regularly confessing sins, SHOULD be before face of God; Holy Spirit should remind us of source of identity with God
- Social issues that are rooted in the gospel can become bigger than the gospel;
- Easy to look to be fulfilled by worship and service instead of a Christ-centered gospel that ends with treasuring all Christ is for us leading to worship and service
- Trials/tragedies can lead toward less dependence on Christ
- Content with the form without the substance—even content knowing we are not properly centered/motivated; effort/spiritual character II Pet. 1 is too much

What pieces are involved (have weight) in deciding who is right in truth wars among professing Christians?

- Sometimes scared by complexity—this will hinder us getting deeper into the truth; however, we might follow someone into complexity when there are more touchpoints with Scripture (complex—made up of multiple parts)
- Who we are listening to (often listen to those with whom we align in other areas); what makes logical sense to us
- Often start with ourselves as the “piece that is right”
- Parts of our theology that are incomplete—would rather have incomplete puzzle than jam in pieces that don't belong (knowing when this is an interpretation versus when this is a final word)

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I John 1:1-4

I. Identify the Center

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I John 1:1-4

“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?”

Isaiah 43:10-13

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I John 1:1-4

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

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I John 1:1-4

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

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.

Habakkuk 1:12

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I John 1:1-4

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.

Habakkuk 1:12

“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.”**

Micah 5:1-2

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I John 1:1-4

So Manoah said to his wife, “We will surely die, **for we have seen God.**”

Judges 13:22

“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 3:11

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John 3:11

**having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets,
Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone,**

Ephesians 2:20

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I John 1:1-4

“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.”

Luke 24:39

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;

Acts 17:27

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I John 1:1-4

“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.**

Deuteronomy 30:6

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Deuteronomy 30:6

In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

John 1:4

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I John 1:1-4

In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.

John 1:4

And 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 1:14

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I John 1:1-4

“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 5:24

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 20:34-36

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I John 1:1-4

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,

Hebrews 1:3

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.** 5 For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

2 Corinthians 4:4-5

What keeps us from coming back to these eyewitness accounts of One who was from the beginning as the final source of truth and life? Why are we so susceptible to similar but wrong teaching about this God?

- Lack of respect for Word of God—for the ways that God has manifested Himself
- Valuing historians and those who analyze the findings more than the ones who were there themselves
- It seems so long ago—seems so distant; eyewitnesses seem to be those we can talk to right now—other things/voices seem larger-
- Why reveal to eyewitnesses instead of to everyone one of us? Perhaps being made in image of God, wants us to be ones carrying His image to others
- Laziness—don't want to do the work that others seem to have done
- To trust these eyewitnesses puts us in a position of dependence—their testimony has to be compelling because WE didn't experience it; what if what they say is compelling isn't compelling to us because it doesn't address what we bring to the table—i.e. Conspiracy theories call us to trust as well, but leads to condescend where WE have the knowledge and you don't; we know there are eyewitnesses that we shouldn't listen to; certain amount of confusion—process like Bereans- natural

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| John 1:1-4

“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.’”

Robert Yarbrough

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Thoughts from this quote by Robert Yarbrough?

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I John 1:1-4

‘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.

Numbers 35:30

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I John 1:1-4

‘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.

Numbers 35:30

“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 19:15

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“It will lead to an opportunity for your testimony.

Luke 21:13

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 1:8

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I John 1:1-4

“For if you believed **Moses**, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me.

John 5:46

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

John 8:56

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I John 1:1-4

“**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.

Joshua 2:10-11

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“**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.

Joshua 2:10-11

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 4:42

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I John 1:1-4

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John 4:42

So faith comes from hearing, and **hearing by the word of Christ.**

Romans 10:17

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I John 1:1-4

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.

John 20:31

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.

1 John 5:13

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I John 1:1-4

- I. Identify the Center
- II. The Center Determines Fellowship

No matter what we say about what we believe/value, how would you determine the glue holding us together?