

Background

Written by the Apostle John toward the end of his life, most likely in Ephesus, around 80-90AD. It is a general letter written to the church at large, most likely to counteract the teaching of a false leader that had arisen in the church called Cerinthus. Cerinthus began to question the authenticity of Jesus. He questioned the Deity of Christ and taught that Jesus was a great moral teacher whose example should be followed.

The sad reality is that this belief is very evident in the days in which we live. Many scholars in University Religious Departments question the authenticity of Jesus. When I was studying at Theological College, we went to listen to a lecture by the author of a book entitled "The Myth of God Incarnate". Sadly, with the rise of secular, "scientific" thinking, this belief is still very evident in our day.

A rise in Eastern Religion influence on Christianity has also caused a decline in certainty about the Christian Faith. A greater emphasis on "feeling" and "emotion" in Christian churches has caused people to doubt their Faith as their feelings fluctuate.

John felt so strongly about Cerinthus, that one of John's students wrote about an incident when John discovered that Cerinthus was using a public bath that he wanted to enter. John said, "Let us flee lest also the baths fall in since Cerinthus is inside".

MAY WE ALSO BE AS PASSIONATE AGAINST FALSE TEACHERS!!!

v1 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. v2 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. v3 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. v4 We write this to make our joy complete.

1 John 1:1-4

WHO IS JESUS AND WHY WE NEED HIM?

I WHO IS JESUS?

1. JESUS IS REAL

v1 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.

To prove a case in a Jewish Court of Law you needed at least two witnesses, preferably three. John presents four witnesses as proof that what he taught about Jesus could be believed.

HEARD, ⇒ SEEN (physically), ⇒ LOOKED AT (Understood), ⇒ TOUCHED

2. JESUS IS REALLY GOD

v2 and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father

John is clearly referencing the opening verses in the Gospel of John.

John 1:1-4 v1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. v2 He was with God in the beginning. v3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. v4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

HE IS POINTING TO THE DEITY OF JESUS IN TWO WAYS

1. Jesus was “WITH THE FATHER”
2. Jesus was and is “THE SOURCE OF LIFE”

3. JESUS IS REALLY GOD WHO CAME TO EARTH

v2 which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

The following is taken from “Robertsons Word Pictures”.

HAS APPEARED (*ephanerothe*). First aorist passive indicative of *phaneroō*, to make known what already exists, whether invisible (B. Weiss) or visible, “intellectual or sensible” (Brooke). In Col 3:4 (*When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.*) Paul employs it of the second coming of Christ. 1 John 1:2 here is an important parenthesis, a mark of John’s style as in John 1:15. By the parenthesis John heaps reassurance upon his previous statement of the reality of the Incarnation by the use of *heōrakamen* (as in 1 John 1:1) with the assertion of the validity of his “witness” (*martuoumen*) and “message” (*apaggellomen*), both present active indicatives (literary plurals), *apaggello* being the public proclamation of the great news (John 16:25).

II WHY WE NEED JESUS?

1. JESUS RESTORES OUR DIVINE RELATIONSHIP

v3 so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ

Cerinthus was preaching that the message of Jesus was “LIVE A GOOD LIFE”.

John is SHOUTING – “GOD WANTS TO HAVE A RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU”.

2. JESUS RESCUES US

v1 the Word of life. v2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life,

Cerinthus was preaching that all we needed to do was “BE GOOD”.

John is SHOUTING – “JESUS WANTS YOU TO HAVE THE LIFE OF THE AGES”.

3. JESUS RESULTS IN MEANING AND WORTH

v4 We write this to make ALL joy complete.

The following is taken from “Vincent’s Word Studies”.

The word translated “COMPLETE” is “more correctly, *fulfilled*. Frequent used in John. See Joh 3:29; Joh 7:8; Joh 8:38; Joh 15:11; 2Jo 1:12; Rev 6:11. “The peace of reconciliation, the blessed consciousness of sonship, the happy growth in holiness, the bright prospect of future completion and glory, - all these are but simple details of that which, in all its length and breadth is embraced by one word, *Eternal Life*, the real possession of which is the immediate source of our joy. We have joy, Christ's joy, because we are blessed, because we have life itself in Christ” (**Düsterdieck**, cit. by Alford). And **Augustine**: “For there is a joy which is not given to the ungodly, but to those who love Thee for thine own sake, whose joy Thou thyself art. And this is the happy life, to rejoice to Thee, of Thee; this is it and there is no other” (“Confessions,” x., 22).

CONCLUSION

WHAT MUST WE DO ABOUT JESUS?

v1 we proclaim, v2 we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you, v3 we proclaim