**Things We Can Know**

When you read through the apostle John’s first epistle, or letter, you find that John emphasizes at least four things in which the Christian can have complete confidence. Considering the circumstances in the church in 90 AD, it is easy to see why John felt the need to address what we truly know.

The church had been in existence for over fifty years and many members were second and third generation Christians. False doctrine had begun to creep in and one such false system was Gnosticism. Gnosis meant knowledge and the Gnostics were people who believed they were the “knowing ones”; that they possessed knowledge that no one else had.

Among their false suppositions was that the flesh is inherently evil and that Jesus could not have inhabited one of these bodies and remained pure and righteous. Thus they concocted the notion that the body of Jesus was not real but an illusion. In combating the influence of these false teachers, John sets about to assure Christians of every age of what we really know.

I suggest that John outlines four things that Christians know: False teachers are here and can be identified, we can know that we are right, we can know that God hears our prayers, and we can know that we have eternal life. I won’t be able to address all of these in a single study, but these truths are important enough to devote more than one article to consider John’s supporting arguments.

John said in 1 John 2:18-19, “Children, it is the last hour; and just as you heard that antichrist is coming, even now many antichrists have appeared; from this we know that it is the last hour. They went out from us, but they were not really of us; for if they had been of us, they would have remained with us; but they went out, so that it would be shown that they all are not of us.”

John told them in verse 21, “You know the truth.” How? Verse 24: “As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father.”

Jesus had promised His apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all truth (John 16:13). John points out in 1 John 1:1-2 that they had experienced Messiah first-hand. What the apostles had learned from Jesus they had proclaimed to others “so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ” (v. 3).

Christians today must understand that false teachers are among us and we can identify them by comparing their doctrines to what we heard in the beginning; the Holy Spirit-inspired writings of the New Testament.

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