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**In Class Worksheet**

***Breathe* Session 5**

***1-3 John***

**In Ten Words or Less:**

**1 John = Jesus was truly man just as He is truly God.**

**2 John = Beware of false teachers who deny Jesus’ physical life on earth.**

**3 John = Church leaders must be humble, not proud.** *Know Your Bible*, pages 90-92

**A “Strange Heresy”**

The authors of the *Know Your Bible* booklet say that, “1 John tackles a strange heresy that claimed Jesus had been on earth only in spirit, not in body.” It does seem strange to claim that Jesus Christ never had a physical body, but is that belief “heresy”? Webster’s dictionary defines heresy as “the rejection of a belief that is a part of church doctrine.” Every New Testament writer portrays Jesus as a real human being with a real, tangible, physical body that could, as John put it, be touched and handled—so to say that He was just a spirit that looked like a man but really wasn’t would indeed be heresy.

But does this belief really matter? John certainly seemed to think so! In his first letter John says, “Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to determine if they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you know the Spirit of God: every spirit who confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. But **every spirit who does not confess Jesus has come in the flesh is not from God. This is the spirit of the *antichrist***…” (1 John 4:1-3) That is pretty strong language!

John wrote just as strongly in his second letter about this topic: “For many deceivers have gone out into the world, **those who do not confess the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh. Such a one is the deceiver and the antichrist**…Everyone who goes on ahead and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God. Whoever abides in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. **If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, *do not receive him into your house* or give him any greeting, for whoever greets him takes part in his wicked works.”** (2 John 1:7-11)

**Discuss: Why is John so adamant? What is the problem with teaching that Jesus did not have a real, physical body?**

**A Comparison of the Gospel of John and 1 John**

If you look at the “So What?” sections for these two books in *Know Your Bible* (pages 67 and 90)*,* you will see two almost identical statements:

* John – “These are written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you might have life through his name.” (John 20:31)
* 1 John – “These things have I written…that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:13)

It seems that John’s gospel is a *book* that he wrote to a general audience of *unbelievers* to bring them to a saving faith in Christ, while 1 John is a *booklet* that he wrote for *believers* to give them assurance of their salvation.