

“THE WORD OF LIFE”

I JOHN 1:1-4

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

How do you know that your faith is based on reality? That Jesus Christ really is the Son of God who is risen from the dead? Could it be possible that you have been deceived, that you have followed blindly a tradition with no reality?

There have been many other religious claims through the centuries. Many of them sound reasonable to intelligent people. How can we know that Biblical Christianity is true? How can we be sure that we are not following false prophets and teachers? How can we be sure that those who teach error are really those who are in error?

The Apostle John wrote to these Christians in Asia Minor—the Roman Province of Asia in modern day Turkey—who were being besieged by such false teachers who had left their fellowship and drawn other people after them. They continued to allure others after them. The Christians at home were confused and “shell-shocked.” Were they right? Were they really saved, or were their enemies right?

[Review the false teaching of the Docetics]

YOU CAN HAVE FELLOWSHIP JESUS CHRIST, GOD’S SON, WHO HAS COME IN THE FLESH AND HAVE FULLNESS OF JOY!

- I. THE PERSON OF THE DECLARATION (vv. 1, 2, 3)
 - A. The Word (cf. Jn. 1:1)—The Communicator of the Godhead.
 - B. The Word of Life—The Word which is Life, in His essential being.
 1. Called “the Life” in v. 2—there is no life apart from Him; He is also its source.
 2. He is “the Eternal life—always been, always will be—lives forever; the character of the life also.
 - C. The Son of God (v. 3)
 1. Eternally begotten—John has much to say about God as Father (122-Jn.); Jesus often calls Him so.
 2. He was with the Father
 - Personally present and in a relationship with Him
 - Shows Him to be a separate Person from the Father
 - Note the two articles with the Father and the Son in v. 3.
 - D. Jesus—real humanity, the Savior
 - E. Christ—Messiah, true fulfiller of OT prophecies
- II. THE SUBSTANCE OF THE APOSTOLIC DECLARATION—What Concerns the “Word of Life” (v. 1)

“We have not followed cunningly devised fables.” “We” refers to the apostles and other leaders.

 - A. What (Who) has existed from eternity past (1:1a)
 - B. What the apostles heard (1:1b)—With continuing results—still “ringing in their ears”
 - C. What they saw (1:1c)—with continuing results—still “flashing before their eyes”
 - D. What they carefully examined (1:1d)—looked upon; careful observation of inner & outer reality
 - E. What they handled (1:1e)—cf. Lk. 24:39—the apostles; Jn. 20:27—different verb, same idea.
 - During Jesus’ earthly ministry
 - But very possible that John thinks specifically of their touching Him after His resurrection!
 - They saw Him alive!
- III. PARENTHESIS (1:2)
 - A. The Manifestation of the Life (1:2a)
 1. Visibly made known by God; his entire earthly life.
 2. Verb used twice in the verse for emphasis.
 3. Manifested “to us”—the apostles who bear witness

- B. The Eyewitnesses of Life (1:2b)
 - “We have seen”—2nd use of this verb
 - C. The apostles’ official Setting forth of the life (1:2c)
 1. We Testify—Legal testimony of truth by an eyewitness
 2. We Proclaim—Focus on **the communication** of that truth as official representatives
- IV. THE PURPOSE OF THE APOSTOLIC DECLARATION (1:3-4)
- A. Repetition of the eyewitness testimony
 1. What we have seen—**3rd time** this perfect tense verb is used
 2. What we have heard—**2nd time** this verb is used
 3. We proclaim—**2nd time** emphasized, as in v. 2—continually proclaiming.
 - B. The purpose of the Universal Witness of the Apostles (1:3)
 1. Stated—“That you may have fellowship with us” (1:3a-b)
 - “Fellowship”—what is **shared in common** with others—apostles and Christians.
 - In This case such fellowship is only possible through receiving the gospel of the true person and work of Jesus Christ.
 - No other message opens the door to genuine fellowship with God. False message, **No fellowship**.
 2. Explained—“Our fellowship is with the Father and the Son” (1:3c)
 - Having real fellowship in common with God and with His Son.
 - Two separate prepositions before “Father” and before “Son”, and two articles; **clearly they are two separate Persons!**
 - What a privilege to have real common sharing, not only with Christians, but with GOD and CHRIST!
 - C. The purpose of this Specific Declaration (the letter)
 1. “These things”—vv. 1-3, the apostolic testimony; “we are writing”
 - “We” refers to the apostolic witness, and esp. to what Paul now writes individually to them.
 - Not strictly a purpose statement for the entire letter—see 5:13 for that, cf. Jn. 20:31.
 2. Abundant joy for the writer (and readers as the result; 1:4)
 1. “Our Joy” is not as expected as “your joy” and thus is most likely the best reading.
 - The joy of the pastor/teacher in his “children”—III John 4
 2. “Our” still has the apostolic witness in view, but with a primary focus on Paul himself.
 3. At the same time Paul thinks of the readers for whom he desires “fullness of joy”
 - Joy “having been fulfilled” and remaining so! (perfect tense)—future sense also.
 - Compare same words in Jn. 16:24—ask, so that your joy may be fulfilled.
 - See similarly Jn. 15:11—“Your joy may be made full.”
 - See also Jn. 17:13—“they may have their joy made full in themselves”.

CONCLUSION

“Do you want “joy, real joy, wonderful joy?” Then “let Jesus come into your heart”—let God save you through Christ! Fellowship with the Father and with the Son is possible, and necessary for you. Do you have fellowship with God, and is it growing and thriving?

John gives this eyewitness testimony and writes this letter so that you can have such Fellowship, and such Joy. John’s words are true, based on eyewitness testimony. Never has any religious system been founded on such solid evidence.—they have **heard** Him, **seen** Him, and **touched** Him!

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