



CAPITOL COMMISSION

TO: LEGISLATORS
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Pennsylvania The Value of Credible Evidences

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THE EVIDENCE

1 John 1:1-4 John 1:1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life-- 2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us-- 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

The prologue of John's epistle is of interest to us (Romans 15:4 & 1 Cor. 10:11) as well as to the initial recipients for a number of reasons.

First, it establishes the writer's credential as an eye-witness, and an eye-witness of particular note: that is, he was an Apostle. He had companied with Jesus from the beginning up to the resurrection and ascension (Acts 1:21, 22).

The writer speaks of having been present from the beginning (of Jesus' public ministry) and observing the One who was from the beginning (i.e. pre-existence). This observation was not of a casual nature but rather involved observation, scrutiny, testing, and concluding. (This is all the more interesting considering the initial age of John and the other disciples/apostles!)

Secondly, it provides the recipients of the letter, and each succeeding generation with a body of evidence on a par with the sacred writings of the Hebrews, i.e. the scriptures. (Notice v-4 *These things we write*)

Jesus had promised, during his last evening with the disciples, a continuation of His impartation of information to them via the ministry of the Holy Spirit. (John 16:7-14).

John's epistle, along with the Gospel from his hand, the other two short epistles, and The Revelation of Jesus Christ carry the weight of divine authenticity.

No other generation of believers will have the opportunity of face to face physical exposure to Messiah! John's generation did, and John was among those selected, sovereignly, for the experience. Every succeeding generation will have an experience mediated via the words of scripture.

We begin to see this in the epistle when John makes mention of three distinct categories of folk in his audience: 1) children, of whom he makes a declaration...their sins are forgiven for His Name's sake; 2) young men, in whom the word of God (i.e. the sacred scriptures) abides, and 3) the old men, undoubtedly of

John's generation who had probably known of the Apostles. Beyond John's contemporary generation, succeeding generations will base their faith on the evidences of scripture, into which category his epistles falls.

Thirdly, John declares The Life was manifested: he had personally seen it, observed it, touched it, examined it and was persuaded. John experienced the tangible/physical but learned something more and wants to pass that learning on!

The Greek word that John uses here for "The Life" is not *bios* but *zoe*.

Granted, Jesus is God incarnate, the Second person of the Trinity, (John 1:14), that is, in his humanity He had a biological beginning in Mary's womb! (This fact, alone carries implicit weight for believers relative to the issues of the Sanctity of Human Life, sadly, is too little the subject of serious biblical consideration!)

But, as John relates, he was also *Zoe*: John 11:25 and John 10:10. Biblically, *Zoe* pertains to a quality of life vs simply biology.

Fourth, John's focus is especially on the potential of the recipients of his epistle to enjoy the same fellowship (*koinonia*) with Jesus experienced by the Apostolic band. Such a suggestion ought to have prompted the response, "...how can *this be...*?" How is it possible for us to have the relationship with Jesus experienced by those of you who physically companied with Him?

Yet this is precisely John's point in verse 3:

1 John 1:3 3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

"So that" expresses the purpose clause (the first in the prologue). The purpose of what John is writing is directed toward the potential of his recipients...and those in each succeeding generation who believe... to experience the same fellowship (*koinonia*) as that experienced by "The Twelve".

THE FELLOWSHIP?

Biblically, the Greek word means "sharing"ⁱⁱ. We can have *koinonia* in the same activity, in the same purpose, or in the same desire.

But when it comes to “*koinonia*” with God the Father or Jesus His Son, the “*koinonia*” is on two distinct levels: 1) Union with The father and The Son ⁱⁱⁱ, and 2) the level of thought and/or thinking-mindset. That is, to fellowship with The Father or The Son in “*koinonia*”, that is “in union” with them is to think the same.

Intuitively, I suspect each of you may resonate with this concept calling to mind your spouse of long years or those with whom you co-labor most intimately. In such case, your hearts “beat as one”, you think along the same lines, etc. It may even be the case that you answer questions almost immediately and with the same answer!

That is fellowship/*koinonia*.

Is this possible? Certainly, else it would not be in the divine mandate.

How is this possible?

Objectively, when one is born from above, that one is mystically engrafted into the body of Christ.

Subjectively, John will develop this as he contrasts walking in the light and walking in darkness.

John does not, at this juncture, call attention to the other apostolic writers. The press of the circumstance probably precludes this focus. Very shortly the Empire will be wracked with a horrific civil war focusing in Jerusalem, but with ramifications affecting believers throughout the Empire.

John’s attention is necessarily directed toward the recipients of his epistle. He does not want to see them drawn away via the ministry/impact of the anti-christs operating in their midst.

But, as history unfolds following the destruction of Jerusalem and subsequent diaspora, the writings of the Apostolic band come into focus.

The focus of the Apostolic band is on the role of scripture in the life of the believer as the ages unfold.

Paul says, “...we have the mind of Christ...” (1 Cor. 2:16)

Peter says, “...we have a more sure word of prophecy...” (2 Peter 2:19ff)

THE FELLOWSHIP DEVELOPED

Have you ever had a penpal? Corresponded with an inmate in prison whom you have never physically seen?

If you have, what John suggests is no longer outside of your frame of reference! You may well have developed a significant relationship...and if today’s Internet relationships bear any resemblance, they can be significant.

But, our focus is on a relationship with God, most High, via Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Our medium of contact is the Bible. It is “...the Word of God, written...”, representing Square One on our checkerboard of progress. The Bible is “...the mind of Christ...” disclosing God’s plan and purpose for the ages.

Acquainting ourselves with this “revelation” of His thoughts for all ages enables us to view life from His Point of View.

As expressed in a particular translation:

“he purposes in His sovereign will that all human history shall be consummated in Christ, that everything that exists in Heaven or earth shall find its perfection and fulfilment in Him. And here is the staggering thing—that in all which will one day belong to Him we have been promised a share”^w

THE FELLOWSHIP’S REWARD

These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. 1 John 1:4 (this is the second purpose statement in the prologue)

Translations vary in the passage with “our” joy vs. “your” joy. In either case, for the Apostles or the believers, Joy is the reward.

This Joy is not synonymous with happiness, though at times they are similar. The joy the apostle refers to is of another dimension. It suggests a foundation outside of external circumstances and as our pattern is that of the Lord Jesus and his apostles, we do well to take note of such passages as: John 15:11; 16:24; 17:13; Romans 15:13; and Heb. 12:2

ⁱ John 3:4

ⁱⁱ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Koinonia>

ⁱⁱⁱ John 14:23 & 17:21

^{iv} Ephesians 1:9-11 J B Philips Trans 1947