**That Your Joy May Be Full**

**Introduction:**

Read I John 1:1-4. “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life – 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us – 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.” NKJV These verses are the basis of the entire letter. Christianity is based upon historical fact that is verified by key witnesses’ testimony. (II Peter 1:16) “For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.” NKJV Let’s examine our text more closely.

**Body:**

1. **That Which Was from the Beginning** (I John 1:1)

* ***“Beginning”*** Recall John 1:1. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” NKJV This phrase refers to the Son’s eternal existence. He did not have a beginning, but was there at the beginning of the world. See I John 2:13-14. “I write to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, Because you have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, little children, Because you have known the Father. I have written to you, fathers, Because you have known Him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, Because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, And you have overcome the wicked one.” NKJV
* ***“Heard, Seen, Looked Upon, Handled”*** “We” refers to the apostles multiple witnesses. (I Corinthians 15:3-5) “For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve.” NKJV

Three senses are appealed to: hearing, sight, touch. Some in the first century denied that Jesus came in the flesh. John says that he and the other apostles are proof that He did.

(John 20:24-28) “Now Thomas, called the twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ So he said to them, ‘Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe.’ And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ‘Peace to you!’ Then He said to Thomas, ‘Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing.’ And Thomas answered and said to Him. ‘My Lord and my God!’ ” NKJV The phrase “looked upon” involves not just seeing, but a perceiving as well, especially in a moral and spiritual sense. (John 1:14) “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” NKJV

* ***“Word of Life”*** Jesus is the Incarnate Word who came to declare the Father. (John 1:18) “No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” NKJV Jesus is the Life, the source of eternal life. (John 1:4) “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” NKJV Jesus provides for man’s deepest needs.

1. **The Life Was Manifested** (I John 1:2)

* ***“Manifested”*** Made visible implies Jesus’ incarnation was an historical fact. Note the use of the same word in Hebrews 9:26. “He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” NKJV
* John declares that the apostles are qualified to testify [bear witness]. They had personally seen and heard Jesus and were openly declaring these things.
* ***“Eternal life”*** Eternal is without beginning or end, that which always has been and always will be. (Romans 16:26) “but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith” – NKJV
* ***“Was with the Father”*** The word translated “way” expresses continuous timeless existence. (John 1:1) “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” NKJV
* ***“Manifested to us”*** The apostles interacted with Jesus on a daily basis. They knew He had come in the flesh. Note I John 4:1-3. “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God; Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.” NKJV

1. **We Declare to You** (I John 1:3)

* ***“Declare”*** Announce proclaim. What the apostles had seen and heard of the Word of Life, they were declaring to all who would listen.
* They were doing this so the readers could have fellowship with them. ***“Fellowship”*** Association, communion, close relationship, sharing, this fellowship is a common participation in the grace of God. This fellowship was for all who accepted the witness of the apostle.
* This fellowship of the apostles is with the Father and the Son. Those who reject the testimony of the apostles have no fellowship with the Father and the Son. (I John 4:15) “Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.” NKJV (I John 1:7) “Brethren, I write no new commandment to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning.” NKJV

1. **We Write to You** (I John 1:4)

* ***“These things”*** This would include the entire New Testament.
* The ultimate purpose of these writings concerning the Word of Life is a fullness of joy. (Isaiah 51:11) “So the ransomed of the Lord shall return, And come to Zion with singing, With everlasting joy on their heads. They shall obtain joy and gladness; Sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” NKJV

**Conclusion:**

The Christian faith is based upon that which is historical. It is verifiable. Christianity is a religion of facts which is based upon the most reliable historic testimony.

Jesus, the Word of Life, spoke words of spirit and life. He came to bring eternal life to all who believe and obey.

[Thanks to Brother Rush for his helpful insights into this text.]

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