

# **I JOHN: DISCERNING TRUE FROM FALSE SPIRITUALITY**

## **Part I: The Foundation Of True Spirituality In The Witness Of Jesus' Original Apostles**

### **(1 John 1:1-4)**

#### **I. Introduction**

- A. 1 John was written to combat false teachings that had begun to affect the Early Church by A. D. 90. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, p. 1770: "Intro. to the First Letter of John;" Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 881)
- B. Much error afflicts Christendom today (Brannon Howse, Religious Trojan Horse, 2012, pp. 485), and one question of concern for many is whether Jesus is now sending new apostles with updated, modified revelations from God or whether we are to hold to the revelation of Christ's initial apostles (Ibid., p. 481, 105-167).
- C. The Apostle John in 1 John 1:1-4 answers this contemporary question, so we view the passage for our insight:

#### **II. The Foundation Of True Spirituality In The Witness Of Jesus' Original Apostles, 1 John 1:1-4.**

- A. As John began to write 1 John 1:1, he was aware that his readers faced many false teachers (Ibid., B. K. C., N. T.; 1 John 2:18-26) who opposed the witness of Christ's original apostles that Jesus was God come in the flesh (1 John 4:1). Some scholars think John countered the Gnostics who held "deity cannot unite itself with anything material such as a body" (Ibid., Ryrie) or that Jesus was a mere man and the divine Christ came on Him at His baptism and left Him before His crucifixion" as taught by heretic Cerinthus, Ibid., B. K. C., N. T.
- B. Accordingly, the Apostle John in the Greek text at 1 John 1:1-4 set the record straight for all time that the true message from God was that of Jesus' original apostles in the Bible (as follows):
  1. First, John noted that Jesus was already existing [as God] before the beginning of creation, 1 John 1:1a:
    - a. The verb "was" in verse 1a, *en*, is the imperfect tense of *eimi*, "is," meaning "was [already] existing" (U. B. S. Grk. N. T., 1966, p. 813; The Analyt. Grk. Lex. (Zon.), 1972, p. 187; Ibid., Ryrie, fn. to 1 John 1:1.)
    - b. The phrase "from the beginning" points to eternity according to 1 John 1:2b, so John meant the Entity to which he referred, the Word of Life, Jesus (v. 1c; John 1:1, 14) was eternal, existing before creation.
  2. Second, John claimed that he with Jesus' original apostles, the "we" in 1 John 1:1-4 (Ibid., B. K. C., N. T., p. 883), had once-for-all-heard (*akekoamen*, perfect tense of *akouo*, "hear," Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 12) and had once-for-all-seen (*heorakamen*, perfect tense of *oraō*, "see," Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 180) with their eyes, what they had thus looked upon and handled with their hands, of the Word of Life (opposite the Gnostic heresy), 1 John 1:1b.
  3. Third, this Life was manifested, and the apostles once-for-all-had-seen (*heorakamen* again, cf. v. 1b) and were testifying and formally announcing (*apaggello*, Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Moulton & Milligan, The Vocab. of the Grk. N. T., 1972, p. 51) to John's readers the Eternal Life that had already been existing before creation (*en* again, cf. v. 1a) with God the Father and was manifested to the apostles, 1 John 1:2.
  4. Fourth, repeating once again that what the apostles once-for-all-had-seen (*heorakamen* again, cf. v. 1b) and once-for-all-had-heard (*akekoamen* again, cf. v. 1b), they were formally announcing (*apaggello* again, cf. v. 1b) to John's readers, that they in turn might fellowship with the apostles and hence also with God, for the apostles' fellowship was with God the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, 1 John 1:3.
  5. Fifth, John added that these things he with the other witnesses, Jesus' original apostles, were writing in order that their joy as apostles would be once-for-all-complete (*pepleromena*, perfect passive part. of *pleroo*, "be complete" (Ibid., U. B. S. Grk. N. T.; Ibid., The Analyt. Grk. Lex., p. 316, 329), 1 John 1:4.
  6. In summary, John stated that he with Jesus' other original apostles had once-for-all-heard and once-for-all-seen the eternal Word of Life, Jesus Christ, that they had handled His body as God Incarnate, and that they were solemnly testifying and formally announcing to John's readers what they had undeniably witnessed as God's once-for-all presentation of the God Incarnate Christ that John's readers might truly fellowship with the Apostles, and thus that they might also fellowship with the Father and Son with whom the apostles fellowshiped. In introducing John's readers to this fellowship, the apostles' joy would be complete.

***Lesson:*** True spirituality and fellowship with God is presented in the revelation that Jesus' original apostles once-for-all-heard and once-for-all-saw of Him, the Eternal God, when He revealed Himself to them as God Incarnate in His earthly life. All believers since then find true spirituality and fellowship with God and Jesus Christ, the Word of Life, through heeding the changelessly authoritative words of Jesus' original apostles, cf. John 17:20.

***Application:*** (1) We must heed the words of Jesus' original apostles to know true spirituality and fellowship with God. (2) All alleged other messages that differ from the words of Jesus' original apostles are accordingly false.