

“Eternal Joy and Fellowship” (1 John 1:1-4)

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—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—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. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete.

Analysis of the Text:

The text is divided by the parenthesis of verse two. John continues his thought in verse three where we find the main verb of the long sentence, proclaim. John then states his purpose, “in order that you too may have fellowship with us.” There is a second purpose clause in verse 4, “in order that our joy may be made complete.” Fellowship with the company of believers makes their joy complete, fills their joy.

The “we” of the text are the apostles, particularly Peter, James, and John. The “you” of the text are the members of the churches of Asia Minor. This “you” embraces us as we receive the testimony of the eyewitnesses and experience joy and fellowship with the Father, the Son, and with one another. Experiencing this joy and fellowship nurtures our assurance that we do indeed belong to God through Christ and that we do indeed belong to God’s family. Thus John fulfills, in part, his primary purpose to nurture our assurance of salvation.

Our assurance of salvation is therefore grounded in (1) God’s revelation of His Son, Jesus Christ; (2) the personal witness of those who heard, saw, and handled Christ; (3) the resultant joy and fellowship they had with the Father, the Son, and one another; and (4) their reaching out to us to include us in their joy and fellowship with the Father and the Son.

Main Point of the Text:

1. What is the text about?

Answer: The Word of Life revealed to and proclaimed by eyewitnesses.

2. Why was the Word of Life revealed to and proclaimed by eyewitnesses?

Answer: So that hearers would also experience joy and fellowship with the Father, the Son, and one another.

3. Main Point of the Text: Join 1 and 2.

The Word of Life was revealed to and proclaimed by eyewitnesses so that hearers would also experience joy and fellowship with the Father, the Son, and one another.

Main Lesson of the Text:

Receive the Word of Life revealed to and proclaimed by eyewitnesses and enjoy fellowship with the Father, the Son, and one another. OR:

If you receive the Word of Life revealed to and proclaimed by eyewitnesses, then you enjoy fellowship with the Father, the Son, and one another.

Food for Thought:

Again, here is a lesson from the text: When adopted children of God struggle with assurance of salvation, they should feed on Christ as revealed in His Word and enjoy fellowship with the Father, the Son, and one another. In like manner, legally adopted children not enjoying an adequate sense of security within their adoptive family must undergo a healing process. On the basis of this text, the process begins with (1) a revelation of the love of God in Christ accompanied by the revealed love of the new parents. The latter is rooted in the former. (2) The new parents testify to the love of God in Christ and other family members testify to the love of the parents, whose love they have heard, seen, and felt. (3) The joy and fellowship with God through Christ within the family and the joy and fellowship of the family becomes a witness to be heard, seen, and felt. (4) The whole family embraces those with attachment concerns so that they too begin to experience the joy and fellowship of family life. They are encouraged to test the waters. Over a period of time, it is hoped that they begin to hear more accurately, see more keenly, and feel more fully the joy and fellowship of their new family. As the text shows us, a growing sense of security within the family of God and growth in assurance of salvation involves a similar process.