

# So That You May Know

## An Expository Study of the Epistle of **1John**

### Chapter 2- John's Declaration **1John 1:1-4**

#### 8. The Person of Jesus Christ Part 4

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WAOY Friday/Monday 04/13-16/07; WOSM Monday 10/06/08; WOSM Wednesday 10/12/22

Welcome again, my beloved in Jesus Christ. We are continuing our “journey” through the Epistle of 1John and today we are going to continue to look at “The Declaration of the Apostle John” as listed in **1John 1:1-4**- so let's read those verses again together.

**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.**

Now on the last broadcast, we were exploring the five attributes that John gives to Jesus here in these first four verses. Those five attributes are:

- That Jesus is God
- That Jesus is the fulfillment of all of the over 400 Old Testament prophecies that foretold of the coming Jewish Messiah
- That John literally saw Jesus Christ with his physical eyes
- That John literally looked upon Jesus and touched Him
- That Jesus is the Word of Life

And last time- we were touching on the Doctrine of the Trinity, and I want to try to finish this today. In the first few words of the first verse of the first chapter of **1John**- the Apostle is underscoring the fact that made Christianity different from every other religion and philosophy on

earth- the fact that Jesus Christ is God. That is what John meant when he said in verse 1:

### **What was from the beginning...**

So, John was re- affirming what the Church already knew here in this opening verse of his Epistle. And so, we must be sure that we have a grip on this Truth today.

If you believe John's declaration- and you accept what John said about Jesus being with God in the beginning- then you are forced to believe one of two things- either Jesus was God Almighty wrapped in human flesh- which is what the Doctrine of the Trinity teaches- or else you have to believe that Jesus was some type of lesser god; a sort of demi-god who was higher than angels- but still less than the Father. Which is exactly what the heretic Arius taught in the fourth century and which is the foundational Doctrine of the Jehovah's Witnesses today.

Now as some of you will remember in our "journey through **Jude**- the Christian Church wrestled over the issue of the Deity of Jesus Christ late in the third century and early in the fourth. A presbyter by the name of Arius began to teach that Jesus was of a *similar* but different substance than the Father.

And Arius's false teaching began to spread all through the Church and by the dawn of the fourth century- many of the leaders of the Christian Church began to reason within themselves that half a loaf was better than none- and that the issue of Jesus' Deity was not really that important anyway and Jesus being similar to God still had significance so who really cares anyway. And this is how many people look at Truth and Doctrine today.

But on the road to becoming official Christian Doctrine- there was a small roadblock. His name was Athanasius. Athanasius said that the Bible clearly taught that Jesus was God and that he was of the very same substance with the Father- and that it wasn't good enough to simply say that Jesus was of a similar but different substance than the Father because that isn't what the Bible teaches.

Now Arius was very tall and handsome and was charismatic and he possessed great oratory skills and he was able at one point to

convince every single Bishop in the Christian Church that Jesus was not Deity- every Bishop that is except one- Athanasius.

Athanasius on the other hand was a bit of a klutz and was not articulate and was not particularly good looking and could not speak nearly as eloquently as Arius could- but Athanasius had one thing on his said that Arius didn't- the Word of God.

So every chance he got- Athanasius taught and proclaimed and preached that Jesus was God; that Jesus was Almighty God wrapped in human flesh; that John was right- Jesus was the Word Who was with God and Who was God and Who was made flesh and dwelt among men.

At one point- Athanasius was commanded to stop teaching what the Bible said about Jesus. And thank God he ignored that order and continued to boldly and loudly proclaim that Jesus Christ was God. Finally the leaders had had enough and brought Athanasius before them to explain why he insisted on teaching such a controversial Doctrine that was so hard for people to grasp.

And Athanasius' answer was simple. He taught what he taught about Jesus because that is exactly what the Bible said was true and he didn't believe that he had the right to teach contrary to Divinely revealed Scripture.

So since that couldn't get Athanasius to budge off the Scriptures- the leaders tried to use another approach that is very common today. They tried to reason with Athanasius from the standpoint of Christian unity.

They told Athanasius that since the overwhelming majority of those in the Church at that time believed what Arius was teaching- that Athanasius was just being stubborn- and surely he could see that stubbornness wasn't a Christian virtue.

Athanasius agreed that stubbornness wasn't virtuous- but he countered by saying that teaching contrary to what the inspired Word of the living God said wasn't virtuous either. But that being faithful to what the inspired Scripture declared to be true *was* virtuous and in fact it was his duty to be faithful to what Scripture taught- if everyone agreed with it or if no one agreed with it.

Athanasius understood something that we need to understand today. Being a Christian is not about feeling better about yourself. No, being a Christian is about being transformed from being lost to being saved by the supernatural miracle of God Sovereignly regenerating your

old nature that pertained to Adam and replacing it with a new nature that is created in righteousness and true holiness and one of the main hallmarks of the new birth is a love for and a devotion to the Word of God.

We need to be reminded that faithfulness to Scripture is very important- especially in a time when everyone is willing to compromise what the Bible says or throw Sound Doctrine to the wind in order to create or preserve what they call “unity”.

But brothers and sisters in Christ- we need to understand precisely what we are to be in unity about. We need to understand exactly what it is we are all agreeing with. The Church of Jesus is not simply a “spiritual Woodstock” where we all hold hands and sway back and forth and sing “Khum-Bah-Ya”. That isn’t unity- that is just being silly and mystical. So without agreement with and adherence to the Holy Scriptures- we have no lasting basis for any unity at all. So it isn’t the songs we sing that bring about unity- it is what we teach and what we believe and what we accept and what we reject. And so I would suggest to all of us that we drop our rebellion and the desire to do things our own way and simply trust in and believe and teach what the Bible actually says. Because human unity that is based on anything other than Divine Truth is not of God- in fact it is detrimental to the real Plan of God in the earth.

For example- when people say that we need to tear down the walls that divide believers- if by that statement they mean the walls that have been built over economics or culture or age or education or things like that- then I agree with them because the Bible clearly teaches that we are not to make meat out of one person and fish out of another. We are to love everyone without partiality.

But if by that statement they mean that it doesn’t matter what a person believes as long as he sincerely believes it- and that we are to open our arms and welcome everybody into the fold regardless of what they believe and teach- then I am absolutely against that and so is Jesus and Paul and Peter and the rest of the Bible.

Truth is the most prized possession that we have on earth and Divinely inspired Truth is the greatest gift that God gave to Man. Without that- we have nothing- including any basis at all for unity.

It is so easy today for a great crowd to gather and sing songs which make absolutely no demand on our lives and hold hands and

close our eyes and be emotionally moved by the moment of it all and think that we have arrived at some kind of Christian unity. But that is silly and childish and naïve to think that when so many things still exist that we must deal with.

Genuine Christian unity is real hard work and it takes much labor and it takes a sovereign Move of God Himself and it requires forgotten concepts like repentance and forgiveness and of being taught the Ways of God. You're not going to sing a song and have genuine revival. You're not going to preach a clever sermon or hire a famous television preacher to come and achieve unity.

We must understand that genuine Christian Unity is not that you agree with me or that I agree with you. Unity is when we all work very hard to agree with God. And there is only one single way for any of us to agree with God- and that one single way is for us to know and to learn and to be taught and to love and to obey and to follow and to submit to the authority of the written Word of God.

Like back in Athanasius' time- great pressure is put on faithful men today to compromise what the Bible says for the sake of so-called unity. You can hear things like this said often in our day- *"Don't say that- it will make someone feel bad. Don't get into things that make demands on people's lives- because someone might not agree with it and they might leave angry or hurt. After all, Brother Blair- it really doesn't matter what somebody believes as long as they are sincere. You need to lighten up, Pastor- because we are all God's children –even though we may be on different paths."*

But those statements and many more like them are patently false- they are all lies because it absolutely *does* matter what we believe because Christianity teaches that we are saved by what we believe and not by what we do. And so what we believe is vitally important because if we believe the wrong thing; if we are led astray; if we are deceived- then we will remain lost even though we think we are saved. Teaching and believing contrary to what the Holy Bible actually says is wrong- no matter how many people agree with it.

Athanasius forsook Christian unity 1700 years ago for the sake of Christian purity and he fought – many times all by himself- against great odds to bring the Church back to her first love and back to the Authority of Scripture and back into a strong belief that John's

declaration right here in 1John was true and that Jesus Christ was God.

And Athanasius was renounced and rejected and cast off and maligned and lied about- but Jesus stood by his side. And because this faithful warrior remained steadfast against unbelievable odds- God used him to rescue the Church from serious error and God's ultimate Wrath.

And after 42 years of battling over Truth and of ignoring pleas for unity at the expense of Truth- even from the Roman Emperor himself- God's Church repented of her backsliding and fully accepted the Doctrine of the Trinity and of Christ's Deity. And it was Arius- not Athanasius who was declared to be a heretic and it was Arius's teachings- not Athanasius' which were thrown out. And after he refused to repent- it was Arius who was excommunicated and his teachings were discredited and thrown into the ash bin of history. And Arius' teaching remained totally discredited for nearly 1600 years until a wayward Baptist preacher by the name of Charles Taze Russell uncovered them and was deceived by them and began to teach them all over again and today- the ancient heresy that Arius taught that Jesus was not God and that denies the Doctrine of the Trinity- is the foundational Doctrine of Russell's cult called the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society- better known as the Jehovah's Witnesses.

And every single person who is deceived by this false teaching has bought into an ancient heresy that was fully examined and rejected and cast out of the Christian Church many centuries ago. But because people today do not see the need for Sound Biblical Doctrine- millions of weak and undiscerning people fall victim to those nice people who come by your house to leave you some literature.

So all of us today need to thank God for raising up a faithful man like Athanasius, who almost single handedly rescued the Church from apostasy centuries before America was even discovered. And we need to thank God for giving us a clear and trustworthy written Revelation of Truth that we can read and learn and know and follow and defend and we need to remember this time in history when- but for the efforts of one single man- every Church in the world today would believe and teach heresy. So when we are tempted to cast Sound Doctrine to the wind or compromise the glorious Gospel for the sake of so-called unity- we will remember that all this really does it matter.

So listen to John's declaration- here in **1John 1:1** that Jesus was God. Think about it; ponder it; marvel at it; stand in awe of it and then believe it and trust it and then proclaim it from the rooftop and then defend it against any and all who would try to change it.

Well, I have to stop right here, but please join me on the next broadcast as we continue our "journey" through the Epistle of 1John. May God help us all.

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