

# So That You May Know

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

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

### 13. The Person of Jesus Christ Part 9

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WAOY Tuesday 04/24/07; WOSM Monday 10/13/08; WOSM Wednesday 10/19/22

Welcome again, my brothers and sisters in Christ. We are continuing our “journey” through the Epistle of 1John and today we are going to begin to at “The Declaration of the Apostle John” as listed in **1John 1:1-4** so let's read those verses 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 just why John went to such great lengths in these first four verses to describe his own personal contact with Jesus by discussing the heresy of Gnosticism that attacked the Church late in the first century and which still plagues the Church today.

Now we studied last time how that there are three main branches of Gnosticism:

1. Dualism
2. Syncretism
3. Docetism

And last time, we looked at Dualism and today I want to see what Syncretism is all about. Syncretism comes from the Greek word from

which we get our English word, “synchronize”. According to *The Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Walter Elwell, Syncretism is a form of Gnosticism that merges various beliefs both pagan and otherwise into one system of religion. Syncretism is the blending of all beliefs into a “hodge podge” patchwork of a self- made religion- and it is much more common than you would think.

Syncretism exists when something that the Bible says is wrong is “spiritualized” or “sanitized” or “sanctified” by incorporating it into the Church and thus that which was wrong- suddenly becomes right; that which is sinful- is suddenly accepted as being not only okay- but is accepted as being holy- even though the Bible clearly cries out against it. For example- the prophet Isaiah cried out against syncretism when he said in **Isaiah 5:20**:

**Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter!**

All throughout the Bible, God told His chosen people that they were to be holy; that is, they were to be “set apart” from all the other people of the earth; that they were to be an exclusive- dedicated and consecrated *to* God and *for* God. Now this “set apartness” doesn’t mean that we are better than others, nor does it mean that we are too good to associate with sinners or that we cannot rub shoulders with the sinner- we can and we should- but what it *does* mean is that the God that we serve *expects* and *deserves* our full loyalty and our full devotion and our full love and He will not share us with the world and so there must be *some* type of separation between the saved and the lost in behavior, desire and in how we live, or else why would the sinner ever want what we have? Hear the Word of God in **Ezekiel 22:25&26**:

**25 "There is a conspiracy of her prophets in her midst like a roaring lion tearing the prey. They have devoured lives; they have taken treasure and precious things; they have made many widows in the midst of her.**

**26 "Her priests have done violence to My law and have profaned My holy things; they have made no distinction between the holy and the profane, and they have not taught the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they hide their eyes from My sabbaths, and I am profaned among them.**

Now even though the form of Gnosticism called Syncretism began around the second century- the snare of Syncretism is today bringing us to a place of corruption and judgment like we have never seen. Syncretism has become so popular today, that we now have invited the world into the Church and the Church today for the most part doesn't look or act or live much different than the lost unsaved world! We have mixed the holy with the profane- precisely what the Bible says not to do. And as a result of Syncretism being in the Church today- we have the very same social problems like divorce and financial irresponsibility and emotional distress that used to be reserved for those who didn't have the God of all Glory in their lives and the Peace that passes all understanding in their hearts.

Now back during the early years of the Church, as the Gentiles were being saved- some of the wayward the leaders in the Church allowed these former pagans to bring many of their old pagan practices with them so that they would feel more comfortable. Some of these practices were relatively harmless, but some of them were extremely sinful. But because the Church was now allowing these new converts to keep their old ways and did not expect them to adopt the ways of God- these sinful practices suddenly became acceptable and in some cases they even became holy almost overnight. This served to confuse many about right and wrong.

A very good example of how modern day syncretism is now operating in the Church in this area is the blending or synchronizing of a pagan celebration with a religious service in the season that we call Mardi Gras.

The celebration of Mardi Gras today by some in the Church is a modern day equivalent of the Gnostic heresy of Syncretism. You see, Mardi Gras is not like the Fourth of July or other celebrations. Mardi Gras is a *blending* or a *synchronizing* of pagan worship and the Church of Jesus Christ and that is classic Gnostic Syncretism.

Now the forerunner to our modern celebration of Mardi Gras was the Roman Festival of Lupercalia, which celebrated the she wolf which had suckled Romulus and Remus- the legendary founders of Rome with several days of drink, dance, and sexual promiscuity in the streets of pagan Rome.

In A.D. 494, Pope Gelasius I, *synchronized* or *blended* this pagan celebration with Christianity and made it acceptable to the people in

the Church by changing the focus of celebration from the she-wolf to the Virgin Mary. At this time a group of priests called the Luperci would sacrifice two male goats and a dog and then would drape the skins of the slain beasts around their bodies as costumes. These skins were called, "februa". These priests would then run through the city, striking the people who lined both sides of the streets with the remains of the dead animals.

The promise was made that if a woman or young girl was struck with the contents of this pagan parade- she would be fertile and would bear many children. This so-called promise had the effect of encouraging adultery and fornication and wild orgies both during and after the parade.

Now normally, Christians would be outraged at such a display of sin. But because the leaders of the Church had *synchronized* the holiday and had "spiritualized" and "sanctified" it by blending it with a Christian observance- the "edge of the sword" against this sinful celebration had been dulled and outrage was turned into silence and then participation.

This time of "carnival" was so widely known that when William Shakespeare wrote his play, *Julius Caesar* he began his play during the festival of Lupercalia.

Now over in France, during the Middle Ages, it became common for people to wait until Easter to be baptized. Many people fasted and went into solemn seclusion for upwards of forty days to prepare their hearts and minds for baptism. This period of personal cleansing became known as "Lent" and became a time when people fasted or gave up something meaningful to prepare themselves for baptism.

The first day of Lent was always on a Wednesday and is today marked by millions by having a cross marked on their foreheads from ashes which is supposed to denote sacrifice and humility.

So the last day before Lent was Tuesday- and it was the last day in which people could be light and happy and merry before they had to go into forty days of fasting and repentance. So because the French Church was overrun with Gnostic teachings- the Tuesday before Ash Wednesday became known, especially in Paris during the Middle Ages, as a time when sin could abound one last time before they had to be serious and pious. So they called this last fling with sin- "Fat Tuesday."

And this sinful synchronistic celebration grew larger and larger until parades and drunkenness and sin was displayed publicly and openly in an ungodly demonstration of human depravity at first for that one single day only. But it soon grew to extend over a period of over two weeks.

In 1699, when the French explorer, Iberville settled the Gulf Coast, he brought with him many of the practices of his native France. On March 3, 1699, Iberville had set up camp on the West Bank of the Mississippi River about 60 miles south of where the city of New Orleans is today. Iberville knew that this was the very day that Mardi Gras was being celebrated in his native France. So Iberville proudly named the site of his camp, "Point du Mardi Gras" in honor of this corrupt celebration.

All during the time when the French controlled New Orleans, pre-Lenten celebrations were common. But when the Spanish took over the city- they banned the corrupt party because they thought it made a mockery of Christian purity. And this ban continued until 1823, when the Creole population of New Orleans convinced the Governor of Louisiana to reinstate only the "masked" balls. In 1827, the street parties began again with a vengeance and in 1837, the parades began again with the sin and violence and drunkenness along with them that we know today.

Today, Mardi Gras type celebrations are held in several states and countries around the world. But in every case, Fat Tuesday is known as the last day in which men can kick up their heels and sin with abandon before they have to fast for forty days.

I tell you that the Mardi Gras celebration is a mockery of all that is holy and all that is righteous. Mardi Gras is the greatest religious hoax that ever was. And make no mistake about it- Mardi Gras was and is a religious holiday perpetrated upon the world by a pagan and backslid "church" that has tried to synchronize pagan things with the things of God, and those who love the Lord should cry out against the hypocrisy and the evil of this wickedness.

Now I realize that many today have no idea about the origins of Mardi Gras. And I realize that today many use this time as just an excuse to get off work or to get out of school or to catch some beads, which, by the way, are symbolic of the rosary that this religious organization promotes.

I tell you that Mardi Gras is a wicked example of Gnostic Syncretism and simply because many today are not informed about what this wicked celebration is all about is no reason why we who do know should not cry out against it.

So be careful, beloved that we do not call that which is evil to be good and make sure that you are found faithful when the Lord returns. 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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