

I John 1:1-4 **Defining Christianity**

Introduction:

When an interviewer had gone to three major cities in America to ask an important fundamental question: What is Christianity? The answers to this question were quite bizarre; “Christianity is the American way of life,” another said, “Christianity is an organization,” Others said, “Christianity is an ethic,” “a tool used by capitalists to repress the poor,” “One of the major religions of the world,” etc. Very few could give an adequate answer and identify Christianity with the person of Jesus Christ. Christianity must be Christ in all that He is and does and shall do as found in the Scriptures.

I. The Substance of Christianity

A. Christ is “the Word of Life” – v.1 cf. John 14:6; 3:15,16

1. Believers in Christ receive eternal life – John 3:36
2. Non believers do not receive life but the wrath of God abides on them.

B. The Word from the beginning refers to the Gospel era.- John 1:1; Gen. 1:1 Turn To: I John 2:7,24

II. The Evidence of Christianity

A. Two fold evidences: (Objective and Subjective)

B. Objective:

1. Heard – John 7:46; Matt. 13:16,17
2. Saw – Gk. Horao “to see with understanding” (John 20:1-10)
3. Touched – v.1; John 13:22,25; 20:27

C. Subjective:

1. Christ appeared to the apostles – John 1:10
2. Christ “was manifested to us” v.2b; John 1:14; Rev. 3:20

III. The Proclamation of Christianity

A. Proclaimed to the Nations – Matt. 28:19-20; Acts 1:8

1. These disciples were to be baptized and join the church

B. The Gospel is communicated to people around us:

1. We bear witness – v.2
2. We proclaim – v. 2,3 (John Stott comment)
3. We write – v.4

Conclusion:

1. *John writes primarily with two objectives:*
 - a. *Fellowship with the Apostles – v.3*
 - b. *Our joy be made complete – v.4*
2. *John speaks of two vital fellowships:*
 - a. *Fellowship enjoyed by Christians – (horizontal dimension)*
 - b. *Fellowship enjoyed with God the Father and His Son – (Vertical dimension)*
3. *John connects fellowship with Joy – v.3,4 (Martin Lloyd-Jones)*

