

WHO IS THAT WHICH?

1 John 1:1-4

INTRODUCTION

Because the “knowing ones”, the Gnostics of the first century denied that God could inhabit a human body through the incarnation, John is going to show us that the “**Who**” is the **eternal Logos** [the eternal Word] and the “**that which**” is the **Life** that was from the very beginning. From a study of *John 1:1-4* we learn that Life is inherent in the Person of the Word. *John 1:1-4* *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) He was in the beginning with God. (3) All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. (4) In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.*

“**Who**” [a personal masculine relative pronoun] existed before creation while “**that which**” [a personal neuter relative pronoun] existed before Jesus’ manifestation. Both **John 1** and **1 John 1** are saying the very same thing about our Lord, He is the eternal God. So, “**Who**” and “**that which**” describe Jesus Christ the Son of the living God.

Suzanne is my wife of 57 years, that’s **who** she is. She is also **that which** I have heard, seen, beheld and also hugged throughout the years. She is very much alive and one magnificent German.

PROPOSITION

Here’s my request to all present. Come with me into this exciting letter and let’s reason together and discover “**Who is That Which**”. At lessons end we will rest assured that Jesus Christ possesses the eternal life that is made available to us. Furthermore, we can only have fellowship, now and then, with the eternal God through the eternal Word of God.

❖ **That which was from the beginning. Vs. 1**

- John is not here calling attention to the Word [logos] as a person but to life which is demonstrated and made available by the Word through the incarnation. This preexistent “Word of life” of verse 1 is “the life” and “the eternal life” of verse 2.

❖ **That which we have heard. Vs. 1**

- The sermon on the mount was still ringing in his ears. Matt. 5:1-9. Our Lord’s solemn promise not to leave any true believer behind. John 14: 1-3.

❖ **That which we have seen with our eyes. Vs. 1**

- With but the slightest urging, the panorama Cana (Jn. 2:1-11), Mt. of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-8), Gethsemane and Calvary and all the other hallowed scenes stream across his vision in vividness undimmed by time.

❖ **That which we beheld. Vs. 1**

- Beheld is more than “have seen”. Seeing might be momentary but beholding implies that steady contemplation. He beheld or scrutinized each and every step that the Master took while walking on Lake Galilee in the midst of a violent storm. John viewed this with amazement and determined that life actually stood before him in visible, tangible, audible human form. The incarnation is still the most amazing fact in human history.

❖ **That which we handled. Vs. 1**

- What he examined with his hands... The breast he leaned upon at the supper, the touch of the Master’s shop-calloused hand upon the shoulder of John as they walked together. Perhaps the tips of the apostle fingers were still tingling so many years later.
- Notice that beholding and seeing is more than hearing and handling is best of all.

❖ **The parenthetical statement; the incarnation is a historical fact. Vs. 2**

- The Word Who is the Life, the eternal life was manifested, brought forth, demonstrated openly and investigated — He’s the real deal! **John 1:14** *And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*
- This happened in John’s time and space. This is not fake news — it’s inspired news.
- This carpenter walked, talked, laughed, cried, ate, and slept and whose resurrection proved the claim He made: **John 14:6** *“...I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.*

❖ **That which we have seen and heard. Vs. 3**

- This true truth is re-emphasized. He is declaring this fact of the enfleshment of the Word of life to the brethren in order that they might have fellowship [an intimate, personal affinity] with one another through the Father as well as the Son.

❖ **John’s joy may become his readers joy is the secondary purpose of the letter. Vs. 4**

- Only if you believe that the Word predated creation; became flesh and dwelt among us, and that John heard, saw, beheld, and touched the eternal God will my joy be made full.