

KNOWING GOD THROUGH JOHN

The gospel of John is different from the other three gospels. It is filled with conversations, people, and incidents in the life of Christ that do not appear in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. It is similar, however, in its overall purpose. John joined the other writers in their God-given task of documenting the greatest life this world has ever seen. As David Egnor points out in this booklet, John's mission was to show us how we can come to know God through His Son, Jesus the Christ.

Martin R. De Haan II

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JOHN'S STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

John wrote his gospel with a strong sense of purpose. He was driven to bring others to the same point of belief he himself had reached many years before. He spelled out this purpose when he wrote:

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name (Jn. 20:30-31).

Four statements in these verses reveal the elements of John's purpose for writing:

1. **The Evidence:** “**many signs.**” John recorded Jesus' miracles as evidence to support his claim that Jesus is the Son of God.
2. **The Goal:** “**that you may believe.**” John wrote to persuade, to convince his readers to believe what he had come to believe.
3. **The Truth:** “**that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.**” John longed for his readers to see who Christ was, and he wanted them to trust in Him.
4. **The Result:** “**that believing you may have life.**” When his readers trusted in Christ, they were given new life from God—a life that included a new purpose, new values, new relationships, new loves, and a new sense of destiny.

John's purpose, then, was to encourage conversion. He wanted unbelievers to trust in Jesus Christ. So, as he wrote, he presented evidence that supported Jesus' claim to be the Son of God.

JOHN'S WORD FROM GOD

What do you do when you want to communicate? The easiest way is to use words—either spoken or written. You search until you find the word that best expresses the idea you have in mind.

- If you want to communicate the rumbling sound that accompanies lightning, you use *thunder*.
- If you want to describe intense, all-consuming fear, you select the word *terror*.
- If you want to name the device that keeps a ship from drifting, you refer to an *anchor*.

According to John, if you want to describe what God is like, you say “Jesus.” At the beginning of his gospel, John said that Jesus Christ came as the “Word” of God (1:1,14). John was the only Bible writer to use the term *word* (Gk. *logos*) in reference to Christ (see 1 Jn. 1:1; Rev. 19:13). In doing so, he used a term that his Greek readers would readily understand—a term that came to mean both (1) an idea and (2) the word used to express that idea. John used it to tell why Christ came. He wanted us to know that Jesus came to reveal God to man. Christ came to be the visible, tangible, on-earth expression of the Father. In fact, Jesus said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (14:9).

Christ came to express God, to be His “Word.” Therefore, to see Him was to see God. To hear Him was to hear God. To walk with Him was to walk with God in the world. The gospel of John, then, is one man’s record of the unveiling of God by His Son.

JOHN'S PLAN

In the opening chapter of his gospel, John was speaking of Jesus Christ when he said:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory (1:14).

We can trace the story of Christ through John by using the phrases of this verse to follow the action.

“And the Word became flesh.” Matthew begins with a genealogy; Mark, an Old Testament prophecy; and Luke, a personal note. But John begins with God “speaking” Himself into the world in the person of His own Son. The Son, identified here as “the Word,” is God (1:1). The Word became man (1:14) when Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary. The facts of His birth are described in the other gospels. But John, approaching the incarnation philosophically, says simply that the Word became flesh; that is, He became man in bodily form and in nature. The purpose for His coming as the Word was to reveal the Father (1:18). His introduction to the world was then publicly announced by His cousin John the Baptist (1:19-34).

“And dwelt among us.” After this introduction of God becoming man, John traced the 3 years of Jesus’ public ministry (1:35–12:50). Christ chose His disciples (1:35-43), turned water into wine (2:1-12), and had encounters with Nicodemus (ch.3), the woman of Samaria (ch.4), and a diseased man (ch.5). He fed the multitudes (ch.6), disputed with religious leaders (chs.7–8), and healed the blind (ch.9). He taught the multitudes (ch.10), raised a man from the dead (ch.11), and entered Jerusalem amid shouts of honor (ch.12).

Along with Matthew, Mark, and Luke, John wanted his readers to know that Jesus was a public Savior—that multitudes saw the wisdom and power of the Father in His teachings and His miracles. John also wanted us to know that it was clear to all but the spiritually blind that Jesus was no ordinary man (9:35-41). He was God the Son, doing the will and revealing the character of God the Father. Here was God among men, God involved in a public ministry, God walking the streets of Palestine for all to see.

“And we beheld His glory.” John, along with the other Gospel writers, spoke much about the glory of Christ. But only John tells us that Jesus began to reveal His glory when He performed His first miracle in Cana (2:11). John saw Christ’s glory manifested in His miracles (11:4), at His transfiguration (Lk. 9:28-36; 2 Pet. 1:16-18), and in His death, resurrection, and ascension (Lk. 24:26; Jn. 7:39; 12:16,23-33; 13:31-32; 17:1,4-5,24; 1 Pet. 1:11). We may not see glory in the horrors of a crucifixion, but it was there at Calvary that the greatness of God’s love was fully revealed. This was the Son’s purpose for coming—He had to die on the cross for the sins of mankind. And in that sacrificial act He was glorified.

John went on to say of Jesus in his introduction, “The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him” (1:18). John’s gospel, then, is not just the story of a man, or even the God-man. It is also the unveiling of the One who sent Him. Therefore, if we want to know God, we can learn of Him through the life and ministry of His only begotten Son.

CHART OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

"That You May Believe"			"That Believing You May Have Life"								
THE SON OF GOD INTRODUCED	THE SON OF GOD PRESENTED	THE SON OF GOD REJECTED	THE SON OF GOD PREPARES	THE SON OF GOD INTERCEDES	THE SON OF GOD CRUCIFIED	THE SON OF GOD RESURRECTED	THE SON OF GOD APPEARS				
1:1	1:18	1:19 6:40	6:41	12	13	16	17	18	19	20	21
A Few Years			A Few Hours		A Few Weeks						
Public Ministry			Private Ministry		Crucifixion & Resurrection						
Throughout Palestine		Judea and Perea	Jerusalem					Galilee			
1	7:9	7:10	12	13					20	21	

"These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (Jn. 20:31).

KNOWING GOD THROUGH THE RELATIONSHIPS OF CHRIST

In the booklet *Knowing God Through The New Testament* (p.10), it was noted that each of the four gospels has a distinct emphasis:

Matthew: Christ the King

Mark: Christ the Servant

Luke: Christ the Son of Man

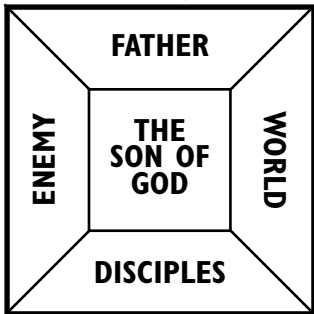
John: Christ the Son of God

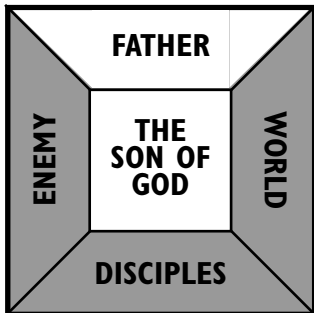
We will look closely at Jesus through the eyes of John—one who was an intimate of the Lord (13:23; 21:20-24). We will see the Son of God in Galilee, in Jerusalem, in the home of friends, in the upper room, in Pilate's judgment hall, and on the cross. We will observe Him as He teaches, performs miracles, prays, instructs His disciples, and talks with people.

More than the other gospel writers, John showed us Jesus in His relationships. This is exactly where we will focus our study. We will look carefully at Jesus in His relationship:

1. With the Father.
2. With the world.
3. With the disciples.
4. With the enemy.

As we do, we will look beyond the Son to the Father in heaven whom He came to reveal (14:8-9). Therefore, our prayer is that you will not only understand the book of John more fully, but that you will also know more fully the God He came to make known.





1. HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE FATHER

The first relationship of Christ that we will look at is the one He had with His Father. The fact that John saw this as important becomes clear when we discover that he recorded over 100 times when the Son alluded to His relationship

with the Father. We also see that it touched all aspects of His life and ministry. This closeness should not surprise us, for we have already seen that Jesus came as the “Word” to express the Father. At least eight points stand out in His relationship with the Father.

He Had A Unique Relationship With The Father.

John used the phrase “only begotten Son” four times (1:14,18; 3:16,18). In so doing, he tells us that Jesus was the only One to have this special relationship with the Father, for the phrase means “only one of its kind, unique.” Others might be sons of God by creation, spiritual birth, or adoption, but Christ is the only Son of God by nature. It does not imply that the Father came first, or that the Father is superior in essence to the Son. They both are God.

He Was Sent By The Father. Jesus said of the Father, “I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me” (7:29). The fact that the Father sent the Son is repeated so often in this gospel that the teaching is beyond question (3:34; 5:36,38; 7:29; 11:42). This implies a preexistent relationship between the Father and the Son and shows us a loving God who is willing to send His Son on a mission of death.

He Was Loved By The Father. Perhaps more than the other gospel writers, John depicted God as a God of unbounded love. He seemed to have a special understanding of the love that was expressed by Jesus Himself when He said to the Father, “. . . for You loved Me before the foundation of the world” (17:24). The love of the Father for His Son is also expressed in John 3:35, 5:20, and 10:17. This same love is also given to all who believe in Christ (17:23).

He Revealed The Father. When Philip said to Jesus, “Lord, show us the Father,” He replied, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father” (14:8-9). Jesus’ teaching, His miracles—everything He did—made the Father known to those who observed (8:19; 12:45; 15:24). This, in part, is what John meant in the prologue when he referred to Christ as the light (1:5,7-9). It reveals a God who makes Himself known to us.

He spoke the Father’s words. According to John, while Jesus was on earth He said what the Father wanted Him to say: “I have not spoken on My own authority; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak” (12:49). Because Jesus spoke what the Father gave Him to say (14:10,24; 15:15), He showed us a God who communicates to us in a way we can understand.

He Depended On The Father. John recorded for his readers very special statements showing that while the Son was on earth He was dependent on the Father. “I can of Myself do nothing,” Jesus said. “I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me” (5:30). He did only what God commanded Him (8:28; 14:10). On earth He acknowledged the Father’s superiority and submitted to Him (5:19; 14:28). In this He revealed a God that we too can depend on.

He Prayed To The Father. In Jesus' prayers recorded in John, He always addressed God as His "Father" (11:41; 12:28; 17:1,5,11,21,24-25), indicating the relationship He had with God. His brief prayers in 11:41 and 12:28 reveal God as the One who hears and answers prayer. And His prayer in chapter 17 gives us a glimpse of the intimacy He had with the Father—an intimacy that we too can have with God.

He Would Return To The Father. God not only sent His Son out; He also brought Him home. John is the only eyewitness who recorded for all time the discussion that Jesus had with His disciples in the upper room when He announced that He would soon be leaving them and going back to the Father (14:12,28). He was sent by the Father, and He would return to the Father when His work on earth was finished (see 14:12; 16:10,28). The Son would again take His seat at the right hand of the One with whom He had shared the fullness of deity for all eternity.

As "the apostle of love," John was especially sensitive to the closeness of the relationship between the Son and the Father. His inspired pen passed along to us the overwhelming truth that they are co-equal and co-eternal, yet the Son came into the world to reveal the Father. He did God's will without disobeying, even though it took Him to the cross. He was a Son who was loved, sent, and obedient; a Son who so accurately represented the Father that to see Him was to see God.

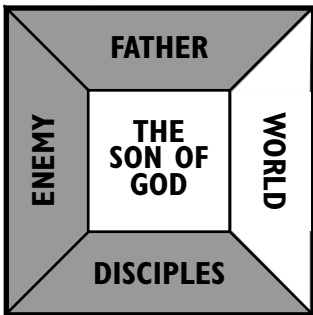
SEEING GOD

- In the love of the Son for the Father, we get a glimpse of a God who inspires great love.
- In the obedience of the Son to the Father, we see a God who has the sovereign right to give commands and expect obedience.

- In the Son's speaking the words of the Father, we see a God who is the source of all truth.
- In the Son's dependence on the Father, we see a God who wants and deserves our unwavering trust.

SEEING OURSELVES

- The Son was sent by the Father. How is that a picture of God's relationship to us?
- The Son obeyed the Father. In what ways does that tell us what God expects of us?
- The Son spoke the words of the Father. What does that suggest about our own speech?
- The Son prayed to the Father. What does that have to say about us in our relationship to God?



2. HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD

Christ's relationship with the world is a second way that we can know God through John. John uses the word *world* three ways. Depending on the context, it could refer to the created world, the world of men, or the evil world-system. All

three of these meanings are seen together in a verse that appears early in the book: "He was in the *world* [of men], and the [created] *world* was made through Him, and the *world* [evil world-system] did not know Him" (1:10). We will consider these three uses of the word *world* in John as they relate to Christ.

The Created World. One use of the word *world* in John is in reference to the world of creation. John emphasized in a manner that the other writers did not that the One who claimed to be the Son of God was

the One who created all things (1:3). We know that Jesus existed before the worlds were made because He spoke of a glory He had with the Father “before the world was” (17:5). Jesus’ relationship with the created world is twofold: (1) He existed before it, and (2) He is the One who brought it into being.

The World Of Men. A second use of the word *world* in John is in reference to mankind. Jesus was using the word *world* in this way when He prayed, “As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world” (17:18). As He came into the world of men to represent the Father, so He sent His followers into the world of men as His witnesses.

Jesus’ specific relationship to the world of mankind is twofold. *First*, He was born into it through the incarnation. This is what is meant by the words, “The Word [Christ] became flesh and dwelt among us” (1:14). He Himself echoed this truth when He said, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see” (9:39). And before Pilate He said, “For this cause I have come into the world” (18:37).

Second, Jesus Christ came into the world as God’s love-gift to man. This use of the word *world* is at the heart of the most memorized verse of the Bible.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (3:16).

John the Baptist was looking at Christ’s coming as God’s love-gift to man when he cried, “Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the *sin of the world!*” (1:29). And the citizens of Samaria were doing the same when they said, “This is indeed the Christ, the *Savior of the world*” (4:42). Christ entered the world of men as the love-gift of the Father. He came to save

us from our sins. The scope of His work was not limited, for He came to offer salvation to everyone.

The numerous encounters of Jesus demonstrate His relationship with the world of men. He did not hold Himself aloof but walked among them. The encounter with the man born blind was typical (ch.9). His disciples asked a theological question about whose sin had caused the man's blindness (v.2). But Jesus saw the man in his misery and need. So before He left, Jesus anointed the man's eyes and sent him to the Pool of Siloam to wash and be healed. Later, the man was harassed by some Pharisees who threw him out of the temple. Jesus sought him out and met his deepest need—spiritual “sight” through faith in Christ Himself.

The other encounters of Jesus, as with Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, demonstrated that He came into the world to bring the light of salvation. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (8:12). He knew men's hearts, and He came to bring them into the realm of light.

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” —1 John 2:15

The Sinful World-System. A third use of the word *world* in John is in reference to the evil world-system that is in direct opposition to God. Ruled by Satan, the “prince of the power of the air,” it may be defined as a way of thinking and living that is dominated by evil. Men controlled by this evil world-system rejected and crucified Christ. John was using the word *world* in

this way when he wrote early in his gospel, “And the world did not know Him” (1:10). Jesus came as light and life (1:4). The world-system is characterized by darkness and death. Its followers rejected His light and offer of life and killed Him.

Jesus was using the word *world* in reference to the evil world-system when He said, “The world cannot hate you, but it hates Me because I testify of it that its works are evil” (7:7).

Later, Jesus promised the disciples that the reign of darkness through its wicked prince would not last forever. He linked his crucifixion with the overthrow of Satan and end of his evil world-system when He said, “Now is the judgment of this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out” (12:31; cp. Heb. 2:14-15).

Sometimes the followers of the evil world-system confronted Jesus openly. John recorded several clashes with the hypocritical religious leaders. Perhaps the most dramatic is in John 8 where Jesus’ claims were challenged by a group of Pharisees. Jesus exposed them as being part of the evil world-system (v.23) and told them they would die in their sins. Before the encounter was over, He said to them, “You are of your father the devil” (v.44), and they tried to stone Him (v.59).

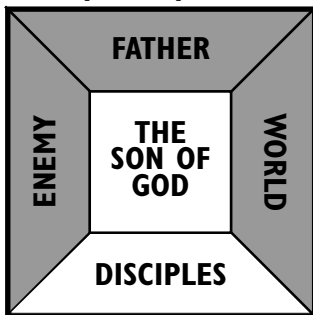
Let’s reflect a moment. Jesus’ relationship to the world was determined by His identity as the Son of God. He created the world, He came into the world of men by taking on our humanity, and He was God’s love-gift. He came to destroy the evil world-system dominated by Satan. John gave us a few prophetic glimpses of that future day when Jesus will return as King of kings and Lord of lords to cast out the darkness and to reign in righteousness and truth (5:28-29; 6:39-40; 14:1-3).

SEEING GOD

- In the Son's creation of the world, we see the Father as the originator of all things.
- In Jesus' coming into our world, we see the grace of the Father in reaching out to mankind.
- In the Son's sacrificial death on our behalf, we see the depth of the Father's love for sinners.
- In the Son's conquest of Satan, we see the ability of the Creator to defeat the rebellious creature.

SEEING OURSELVES

- What does the Son's creation of the world tell us about our relationship to the world we live in?
- What does the Son's sacrificial death for the world tell us about our responsibility to mankind?
- How is Christ's relationship to the evil world-system a model for us as we seek to please God?
- In what way does Christ's victory over Satan give us spiritual power?



3. HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DISCIPLES

A third way we can know God through John is to look at the relationship of Jesus with His disciples. John tells us how Jesus singled out and trained a group of ordinary men who would eventually bear the responsibility of proclaiming the gospel to the world. As Jesus taught, led, and lived with His disciples, He revealed the Father who sent Him. Through the eyes of "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7,20-24), we will look at Jesus' relationship with these specially chosen men.

During Jesus' Public Ministry. The first mention of Jesus' disciples in the book of John was when Jesus called Andrew, Peter, Philip, and Nathanael to follow Him (1:35-51). Directed by the Father, as He was in all things, Jesus demonstrated: (1) The authority to call. When He singled out these men, they left their occupations and livelihood and followed Him. (2) A supernatural knowledge. Jesus knew Nathanael's character, and even where he had been before He called him.

In the 3 years that the disciples were with Jesus, He revealed the Father to them. They saw God's miraculous power when the Son turned water into wine (2:1-11); healed the sick (4:46-54), the lame (5:1-15), and the blind (9:1-41); fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish (6:1-13), and raised the dead (11:1-44). They sensed God's anger over sin when the Son drove the moneychangers out of the temple (2:13-17). They heard the wisdom of the Father when the Son preached and taught.

Think of what the disciples experienced! They saw Jesus perform amazing miracles. They sat under His wise teaching. They were challenged by His holiness. They felt His compassion. They heard Him express His allegiance to the Father. They sensed the Father's love for Him. And they eventually came to realize that He had the power and authority of God Himself.

In The Upper Room. John gives us unique insight into the private ministry of Jesus in that he is the only gospel writer to record the events and the words of Jesus with His disciples the night before His death (chs.13-17). On that emotion-filled night, Jesus revealed much about His Father. For example:

- The Father has given all things to His Son (13:3).

- The Father would be glorified in the death of His Son (13:31-32).
- The Father can be approached only through His Son (14:6).
- The Father is seen and known through the words and works of His Son (14:7-10; 17:8).
- The Father is glorified when His Son answers our prayers (14:13).
- The Father gives us the Holy Spirit as our Helper and Teacher (14:16,25-26).
- The Father's unity with His Son is given to all who are united with the Son (14:20).
- The Father loves those who love and obey His Son (14:21,23; 16:27).
- The Father and the Son make their home with those who love and obey the Son (14:23).
- The Father is greater than the Son in His earthly state (14:28).
- The Father condemns counterfeit believers to the fires of hell (15:1-2,6).
- The Father "prunes" believers so that their increased fruitfulness will bring Him glory (15:2,8).
- The Father revealed truth to His Son so He could reveal it to His friends (15:15; 17:8).
- The Father answers all prayers received in His Son's name (15:16; 16:23-24).
- The Father is glorified by His Son (17:1).
- The Father gave authority to His Son to give eternal life to all who believe (17:2).
- The Father sent His Son to provide knowledge of Himself—the only true God (17:3).
- The Father gave His Son work to do on earth, which the Son completed (17:4).
- The Father loved the Son, and He shared intimate

glory with Him before the creation of the world (17:5,24).

- The Father chose us and then gave us to His Son (17:6,9-10).
- The Father protects us from Satan (17:15).
- The Father's unity with His Son and with us provides evidence for the world to believe that the Son was sent by the Father (17:21).
- The Father's glory, which was given to His Son, is given to us (17:22).
- The Father's love for His Son and for us is seen in our unity (17:23).

At Jesus' Arrest. Jesus left the upper room with His disciples to go to an olive grove to pray to the Father. Judas, the betrayer, brought a gang of soldiers and temple officials to arrest Jesus. Only John shows us Jesus' protection of the disciples during His arrest. Twice Jesus asked those arresting Him whom they were seeking, and twice He identified Himself to them (18:4-8). Then He told them that since they were seeking Him, they should let the disciples go.

John also is the only gospel writer to show us Jesus' power during His arrest. John described what happened when the soldiers said they were looking for Jesus. He wrote, "Now when He said to them, 'I am He,' they drew back and fell to the ground" (18:6).

During His Crucifixion And Resurrection. Jesus allowed Himself to be arrested, tried, and crucified because He knew that it was for this purpose He came to earth. Before Him were the humiliations of an illegal trial, extreme physical abuse, and an outpouring of hatred by the very people He had come to save. All His disciples, except for John, would abandon Him. Peter would three times deny that he had

ever known Him. Jesus would die on a cross—executed as a criminal. But He was willing to endure all of it because He knew of the glory that it would bring to the Father (13:31-33; 17:1-5) and the joy of victory over death that would be His (Heb. 12:2).

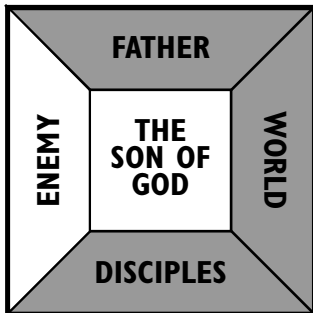
After His resurrection, Christ appeared to His disciples on several occasions (20:19-29). The matter of Peter's denials needed to be dealt with. So, in a tender encounter in Galilee, which only John recorded, Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him (21:15-17). Then He said to Peter, "Follow Me" (v.19), completing Peter's reinstatement. In this He showed the forgiveness of the Father and His continuing concern for those He had called. Peter went on to become a courageous leader of the church.

SEEING GOD

- In the Son's call of the disciples, we see the Father's right to bring whomever He wants into His service.
- In the Son's miracles, Jesus demonstrated the power of the Father over disease, nature, and death.
- In the Son's protection of the disciples from arrest, we see the loving care of the Father for His children.
- In the Son's reinstatement of Peter, we see the Father's loving patience for His servants.

SEEING OURSELVES

- What does Jesus' three-year relationship with His disciples tell us about God's relationship with us?
- What does Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet tell us about our relationship to one another?
- How does Jesus' high-priestly prayer reflect His ministry in heaven on our behalf today?
- What does Jesus' reinstatement of Peter reveal about God's relationship with us when we sin?



4. HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE ENEMY

A fourth way we can know God through John is to look at Christ's relationship with Satan, God's archenemy. Jesus played the primary role in the conflict between God and Satan. John gives us insights we do not get from the other gospel writers. From three viewpoints, we will look at what John tells us about God through Christ's relationship to Satan.

- Satan's role in the evil world-system.
- Satan's character.
- Satan's defeat.

Satan's Role In The Evil World-System. John identifies Satan as the head of the anti-God world-system. Jesus spoke of him as "the ruler of this world" (John 12:31; see also 14:30; 16:11). In this, Satan tries to counterfeit God's sovereign monarchy.

As we saw earlier, the evil world-system is made up of those who are opposed to God. Satan has proclaimed himself to be the king of that realm of darkness—a counterfeit to God's righteous rule. Satan's purposes are totally evil. In contrast, God's are altogether good.

Satan's Character. Two distinct aspects of Satan's character were singled out by Christ in John. They are directly opposite to like elements of the character of God. Jesus said to the hypocritical leaders of Israel:

You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer

from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it (Jn. 8:44).

This is a chilling exposé of Satan's character. He is a *murderer* and has been from the beginning. In a sense he "killed" Adam and Eve—both physically and spiritually—by enticing them to disobey the Lord. And when Cain murdered Abel, he revealed that he "was of the wicked one" (1 Jn. 3:12).

Satan is also a liar and deceiver. It began in Eden with Eve. His strategy today for keeping mankind in darkness and for oppressing the nations is built on a deception that is a natural outflow of his nature (Mt. 24:5,11,24; 1 Jn. 2:26; 4:1).

These two aspects of Satan's character are directly opposed to what we are told in John about Jesus Christ. John wrote that "in Him was life, and the life was the light of men" (1:4). He identified Himself as "the way, the truth, and the life" (14:6).

Satan's Defeat. John's gospel teaches that Satan's power over Christ was limited. Jesus said of the devil, "He has no hold on Me" (14:30 NIV). Because of sin, Satan has a stranglehold on mankind. But he had no such power over Christ because Jesus was sinless (1 Jn. 3:5). He was out of Satan's reach.

Jesus said that He had come to overthrow Satan and his world-system (12:31). The place of Satan's defeat was the cross. It might have seemed that Satan had won, for Christ was dead. But He had died without sin; therefore, He had paid the price for our sin and won the victory. Satan's power was broken, for the One who was lifted up (3:14; 12:30-33) had died for all mankind. The substitution had been made, the

sacrifice poured out, the ransom paid. Because of the cross, Satan's doom is sure.

SEEING GOD

- God's truth and life are made more real to us when contrasted with Satan's lying and murderous heart.
 - God's holiness and goodness are more desirable when contrasted to Satan's wicked rule.
 - Satan's inability to "get at" Christ because of His sinlessness gives us a new appreciation for the purity and protection of God.
 - The defeat of Satan at the cross gives us confidence in the power of God over sin and evil.
-

"He who is in you (Christ) is greater than he who is in the world (Satan)." —1 John 4:4

SEEING OURSELVES

- In what ways does Jesus' statement about Satan's character as a liar and murderer prepare us to resist him when he tempts us?
- How does faith in Christ help us to resist Satan as he works through this evil world-system?
- In what ways does Christ's sinlessness—His being "out of Satan's reach"—also help us?
- How does Christ's relationship with the Father help us in our struggle with our spiritual enemy?

DISTINCT ELEMENTS IN JOHN

There are many conversations, people, and incidents in the life of Jesus that are unique to John's gospel. Here is a list of the elements of Christ's life that are not mentioned in Matthew, Mark, or Luke.

- Identified as "the Lamb of God" by John the Baptist (1:29,36).
- Calls His first disciples (1:35-51).
- Turns water into wine at a wedding in Cana (2:1-11).
- Drives the moneychangers out of the temple near the start of His ministry (2:13-22).
- Teaches Nicodemus about being born again (3:1-21).
- Remains in Judea with His disciples where they baptize disciples. John the Baptist testifies to His identity (3:22-36).
- Encounters the Samaritan woman (4:5-42).
- Heals a nobleman's son (4:46-54).
- Heals a lame man at Bethesda pool (5:1-15).
- Preaches to the multitude that had been miraculously fed and refers to Himself as "the bread of life" (6:22-71).
- Teaches in the temple during the Feast of Booths where the crowd is divided over His claim to be the Christ (7:1-53).
- Forgives a woman caught in adultery (8:1-11).
- Refers to Himself as "the light of the world" (8:12).
- Calls the Pharisees children of the devil and claims to be the I AM of Abraham's day (8:21-59).
- Gives sight to a beggar born blind (9:1-41).

- Declares Himself to be the good shepherd and the door to the sheepfold (10:1-21).
 - Claims to be one with the Father—prompting the Jews, for a third time, to try to stone Him (10:22-39).
 - Raises Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44).
 - Withdraws from the public after the Jewish leaders make plans to capture and to kill Him (11:45-57).
 - Prays to the Father, who answers Him with a voice from heaven that was heard by those around Him (12:27-30).
 - Washes the disciples' feet (13:1-20).
-

John draws mainly upon events and discourses not found in the other gospels to prove to his readers that Jesus is the Son of God. No finer gospel tract has ever been penned than John's inspired account!

- Gives parting words of exhortation and encouragement to His disciples (14-16).
- Prays for His disciples and for Christians of every age (17:1-26).
- Put on trial before Annas (18:12-14,19-23).
- Entrusts His mother into John's care (19:26-27).
- His side pierced by a Roman soldier (19:31-37).
- Appears to disciples and dispels Thomas' doubt that He had risen from the dead (20:26-29).
- Appears to seven disciples by the Sea of Galilee (21:1-14).
- Restores Peter, instructs him to care for His followers, and predicts the manner of his death (21:15-22).

A CLOSER LOOK

The gospel of John presents a strong case for the deity of Jesus Christ. A closer look at some of the elements of Jesus' life found only in John reveals the kind of evidence John's case is built on.

UNIQUE "I AM'S" OF JESUS IN JOHN

Seven times in John, Jesus identified Himself with different metaphors. Each of these "I am's" portrays the Son of God as sufficient to meet man's needs.

1. *"I am the bread of life"* (6:35,48). This statement, given after the feeding of the 5,000, expresses that the resources of God's Son can meet all of man's needs.

2. *"I am the light of the world"* (8:12; 9:5). This tells of the Son's power to overcome the darkness of sin through His death and resurrection.

3. *"I am the door"* (10:7,9). The Son of God, by His sinless life and death, is the only way through which man can enter God's kingdom.

4. *"I am the good shepherd"* (10:11,14). The divine resources of the Son of God meet all our needs for guidance, care, and protection.

5. *"I am the resurrection and the life"* (11:25). Spoken at Lazarus' tomb, this statement tells us that the Son of God has the power to raise us from the grave.

6. *"I am the way, the truth, and the life"* (14:6). Only the Son can take us to the Father, counter Satan's lie with truth, and give us eternal life.

7. *"I am the true vine"* (15:1). The Son of God has the power to nourish His followers and make them spiritually productive.

UNIQUE MIRACLES OF JESUS IN JOHN

John recorded six miracles of Jesus that are not

recorded in the other gospels. Each one of them demonstrates His deity and His authority.

1. Turning water into wine (2:1-11). The Son of God turned water to wine and kept a wedding host from embarrassment. He demonstrated His power as the Creator to change what He had created.

2. Restoring health to a nobleman's son (4:46-54). The Son of God demonstrated His power to heal physically and spiritually by healing a boy at the edge of death and giving him and his family spiritual life.

3. Providing strength to a paralyzed man (5:1-15). The Son of God in compassion replaced human infirmity with His strength—a power only God has.

4. Giving sight to a man born blind (9:1-7). As the Son of God gave sight to a man born in physical darkness, He also brings light to the spiritually blinded—a power possessed only by God.

5. Raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44). The Son of God had the power over death to bring Lazarus to life again. Likewise, He brings eternal life and the promise of resurrection to all who trust in Him.

6. Supplying a great catch of fish (21:1-14). Jesus showed His divine control over nature when He directed 153 fish into the nets of seven discouraged disciples.

UNIQUE STATEMENTS OF JESUS IN JOHN

While Jesus was here on earth, He did much preaching and teaching. Here are a few of the things He said as recorded by John, that give evidence of His deity.

1. "My hour has not yet come" (2:4). Spoken early in Jesus' ministry at the wedding in Cana, these words of Christ show that He knew who He was and what He had come to do.

2. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will

raise it up” (2:19). Here Jesus showed His divine knowledge by predicting His death and resurrection.

3. *“Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again’”* (3:7). Jesus said this to Nicodemus because, as God, He knew this Pharisee’s true spiritual need, and He knew He was able to meet it.

4. *“Before Abraham was, I AM”* (8:58). Spoken to His enemies, this statement by Jesus confirmed His eternal preexistence and identified Him with the same name that God used in identifying Himself to Moses at the burning bush in Exodus 3:13-14.

5. *“It is finished!”* (19:30). This was spoken from the cross just before He died. Jesus knew that His work was accomplished, showing His oneness with the Father and the knowledge of His work.

6. *“Reach your hand here, and put it into My side”* (20:27). This was spoken after the resurrection to Thomas, the doubting disciple. Thomas had said to the other disciples that he would have to have certain proof to believe that Jesus had risen from the dead. Jesus, exercising His divine knowledge, provided the exact proof that Thomas had asked for. This prompted Thomas to exclaim, “My Lord and my God!” (v.28).

UNIQUE ENCOUNTERS OF JESUS IN JOHN

Of the many encounters that Jesus had with people during His public ministry, certain ones are found only in John. We saw some of these when we looked at Jesus’ unique miracles and statements. Here are some others that pointed to His deity.

1. **John The Baptist** (1:29,36). The Holy Spirit revealed to John, Jesus’ cousin, that He was the Messiah. John proclaimed to his followers that Jesus was the “Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

2. Nathanael (1:43-51). Jesus knew two things about Nathanael before He met him that only God could know: a. he was an Israelite without guile (v.47) and b. he had been sleeping under a fig tree (v.50). Nathanael became a disciple and witnessed even greater miracles than these (v.50).

3. A Samaritan Woman (4:1-45). This half-Jewish, half-Gentile woman of low morals was told things about her life by Jesus that only God could know. Her testimony to other Samaritans about her encounter with Jesus brought many to faith in Him.

4. An Adulterous Woman (8:1-11). This woman caught in the act of adultery, was dragged before Jesus by some Pharisees. After convicting them of their own sinfulness, Jesus sent the woman away forgiven and uncondemned—something that only God could do.

5. The Pharisees (6–8). This band of self-righteous religious leaders of Israel vigorously opposed Jesus. Throughout these three chapters, Jesus repeatedly affirmed His deity, angering the Pharisees to the point of seeking to stone Him (8:59).

6. Martha (11:17-27,38-44). At the graveside of her brother, this woman confessed Jesus to be the Christ, the Son of God. Her brother was brought back from the grave as evidence of His power.

7. Seven Of The Disciples (21:1-14). After Christ's death, these disciples had gone fishing in Galilee. Jesus appeared and told them to throw their net on the other side of the boat. The great catch of fish convinced them that "it was the Lord" (v.12).

8. Peter (21:15-19). Grieved that the Lord would ask him three times if he loved Him, Peter finally appealed to Jesus' omniscience and said, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You" (v.17).

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN JOHN

John wrote more about the Holy Spirit than the other gospel writers. The Spirit is the gift of the Son of God to us. Some information about the Spirit is given in the early chapters of John, but most of the teaching appears in the private ministry of Christ to His disciples in the upper room.

During Christ's Public Ministry (chs.1–12). John the Baptist testified that he saw the Holy Spirit descend on Christ (1:29-34). We know from the other gospels that this event happened at Christ's baptism. John saw it as a sign that Jesus was the Son of God (v.34). He announced that Christ would baptize with the Holy Spirit (v.33). From other passages we learn:

- We are born again by water and by the Holy Spirit (3:5-8). The meaning of "water" here is debated; however, the emphasis here on the Holy Spirit is that He is the One who gives us new birth. He is the regenerator, and like begets like.
- The Holy Spirit is not limited (3:34).
- The Holy Spirit leads us in true worship (4:24).
- The Holy Spirit, not the flesh or its works, gives spiritual life (6:63).
- Christ gives the Holy Spirit to believers (7:38-39).

During Christ's Private Ministry (chs.13–16). From the upper room discourse we learn these important facts about the Holy Spirit:

1. His Titles. Jesus referred to the Holy Spirit by two titles:

- *Helper* (14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7). The Greek word means "one called alongside." Words like

Helper, Counselor, and Comforter express the idea. Jesus promised to send the Spirit to do for the disciples what He had been doing.

- *Spirit Of Truth* (14:17; 15:26; 16:13). The Holy Spirit would reveal truth to the disciples.

2. His Work. As Jesus talked with His disciples, He revealed much about what the Spirit would do when He came:

- He would guide the disciples into truth (16:13). He would lead them into a lifestyle consistent with the God of truth.
- He would glorify Christ (16:14). Any teaching that does not exalt Christ cannot be from Him.
- He would give believers the power to witness (15:26-27).
- He would help the disciples to remember truth (14:26) as Christ taught it.
- He would convict the world of sinners of their sin (16:1-11).

3. A Gift. In two places the Spirit is declared to be the gift of the Father (14:16,26), and in two others He is said to be the gift of the Son (15:26; 16:7). The oneness of Father and Son is revealed.

4. A Condition. Jesus taught that the Spirit would not be sent until He left (16:7; see 7:39).

5. A Limitation. Unbelievers would not receive the Spirit; He would indwell only believers (14:17).

A Final Note. Pentecost was foreshadowed when the resurrected Christ breathed on the disciples and they received the Holy Spirit (20:22-23). This preview became reality on the Day of Pentecost, when the Spirit came in fulfillment of Christ's promise (Acts 2:1-12).

SURVEYING THE EVIDENCE

The emphasis of the gospel of John, we have noted, is on Jesus as the Son of God. Let's review some of the evidence John presented to support that claim.

- The concept of “the Word.” Jesus is, in life and speech, the declaration of the Father.
- The relationships of Jesus. His relationships with the Father, the world, His disciples, and the enemy each give indications that His claim to be the Son of God is true.
- The “I am’s” of John’s gospel. These seven self-descriptions of Jesus each indicate His deity.
- The miracles. The distinct miracles of Jesus recorded in John show His power as Son of God.
- The encounters of Jesus. The change of life that came to those who contacted Jesus indicates His supernatural power.

In an encounter with antagonistic Jews, Jesus Himself called on four witnesses to His deity (5:31-47).

1. John The Baptist (vv.32-35). John was a “burning and shining lamp” testifying to Christ’s deity.

2. Jesus’ Own Works (v.36). His miracles, He said, attested to His claim of deity.

3. The Father (vv.37-38). The Father gave audible testimony at the baptism and the transfiguration.

4. The Scriptures (vv.39-47). Jesus said the Old Testament supported His claim to be the Son of God.

The gospel of John gives overwhelming support of Jesus’ claim to be the Son of God. So, we can know God more intimately as we see the Son of God in His relationships with the Father, the world, His disciples, and His enemies.

FACING THE EVIDENCE

What does all this mean? And how should we respond to the message of John?

If you are a believer in Jesus Christ, you should be overwhelmed with a sense of certainty that He truly is the Son of God. His teachings, His miracles, His relationships while here on earth are all biblical evidences that point to the truth of His claims.

With renewed confidence that Jesus is the Son of God, strengthen your relationship with the Father. Following the pattern that Christ established, accept the Father's authority and walk in obedience and fellowship with Him.

Also, sense the need of the world and see yourself as sent—as Christ Himself was—into the world with the message of the gospel.

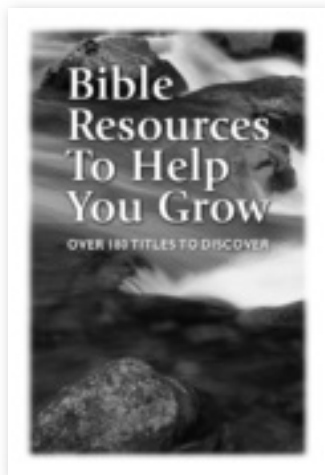
If you have never trusted in Christ, look honestly at the evidence of John's gospel. Read it over several times. See yourself as Nicodemus did, needing to be born again.

Then, in faith, ask the Son of God to save you. Admitting your sin and your inability to save yourself, and trusting Jesus Christ and Him alone, receive Him as your personal Savior. The most familiar verse of the Bible says:

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life (Jn. 3:16).

Receive Christ today. That is the first step in knowing God as He is made known through His Son, Jesus Christ, in the gospel of John.

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