

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN

Ch. 1-C

We're examining the most-read, most-quoted part of the Bible, written by John in A.D. 85-95. To validate His claim that Jesus is God's Son, John's book is a positive "tell all" about three unforgettable years when he was a 24/7 companion of *God-in-the-flesh*! Let's read ch. 20: 30-31.

Summarizing Billions of Years...Briefly...

John describes Jesus as "the *Word*," God's medium of expressing Himself to planet Earth. When this Carpenter from Nazareth walked among us 2,000 years ago, He was actually telling us God's own thoughts! Imagine *that*!! God's mind is revealed by what's in the Bible.

John says God is three Persons-in-One. Jesus existed *before* creation. In fact, He was the Creator! He is the embodiment of light and life (**John 1:4**). While scientists and scholars grapple over what life is, the Bible simply states that Jesus is the Source of *life*. He's also the Source of *light*, i.e., knowledge, understanding, truth. John records Jesus' personal testimony that echoes down the corridors of time: "I am *the* Way, *the* Truth and *the* Life. Nobody comes to the Father except through Me." (**John 14:6**)

John says a personal belief in Jesus is our *only* hope of life with God after we die. In 1st John, a little letter he tucked in at the rear of the New Testament, he declares, "He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life." (**I John 5:12**) The Bible says you'll never fathom the wonders of God's ways nor His plan for you unless you let the light of the Scriptures help you put life's puzzle together.

Isms, Schisms and Baptisms

"Tolerance" is today's mantra. The marketplace is awash in well-packaged ideas "isms" that portend horrendous consequences. Nice, well-meaning people try to create paradise on earth through education, psychotherapy, or political and economic reforms. But the *only* cure for sin is personal faith in Jesus Christ, a gift from God Himself.

Staying true to Christ's words is our only hope of not being sucked into some faux faith whose end is a place the Bible calls hell, the home of unquenchable fire and never-ending hate and destruction.

Following Christ is not just an emotional trip -- it's a personal commitment, through faith and repentance, to a relationship with the one true God, made possible only by receiving the free gift of God's forgiveness for our sin, purchased for us by Christ's death on the cross. That "Good News" alone determines what it means to be "born again."

DISCUSS:

Cut to the Chase

You don't have to wait 'til you die to know if you'll spend eternity in a penthouse or outhouse. The late Adrian Rogers asserted that the Bible:

- Addresses one problem -- sin
- Has one villain -- satan
- Has one Hero -- Jesus Christ
- Has one purpose -- to call mankind to know, love and serve God -- and to be with Him for time and eternity
- Has one message -- Jesus is Lord. If you trust Him, He'll save your.

Let's clarify this born-again business and read John 3:1-18 and 36.

DISCUSS:

Jesus and "The Draft"

In the section of the Gospel of John (1:35-51) Jesus begins drafting twelve ordinary guys who'll literally change the world forever.

John the Baptist points his groupies to Jesus, calling Him "the Lamb of God," highlighting that Christ's ultimate sacrifice for us -- His death on the cross that paid the penalty of the sins of *all* people. only when we confess our sin, and by *faith* -- not by good works or religious calisthenics, simply BY FAITH -- receive God's merciful forgiveness for our sin, only then can we know God.

Andrew and John are first to sign with Jesus. Then Andrew brings his goofy brother Simon whom Jesus retags as #Cephas (in Aramaic), or Peter (in Greek), meaning "rock." Then Philip brings Nathaniel to Jesus.

In each case Jesus looks into their eyes and souls as if He has X-ray oofyHe sees what He can make of them if they'll only respond to His "Follow me." Their potential for success lies not in their brains, brawn, network, lineage or vocation. They'll become all God has in mind for them (which, in their case, is changing the world!) by simply placing their total trust in Christ to be their Savior and Leader.

Let's read John ch. 1, then zoom in at verse 35.

DISCUSS:

Remember when you learned to float? You just laid back and let the water hold you up. That's like taking the plunge of faith to give your life to Christ. Maybe you can't see the bottom because you haven't figured this "spiritual thing" out yet, but if down deep inside you sense that now's the time. God is knocking on your door.

The Bible doesn't say that God will evaluate what kind of life you've lived and give or take away points for your good deeds and screw-ups. No, He will ask you only one question: "What did you do with my Son?"

Jesus is still calling. Like water to the beginner swimmer, you can trust Jesus to hold you up, and always act toward you in love, looking out for your best interests, grooming you to fulfill everything He's created you to be. The *only* way we will ever be *complete* is to follow Him.

Please take a moment now and say something like....."Jesus, you're right; I'm a sinner. I believe You died for my sins. I believe You love me. Right now I take that plunge by faith and invite You to come into my world because I want to follow You."

His Deal

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