

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **Responding to the Incarnate Word**

Scripture: John 1:6-13

Code: 1502B

John's gospel is about Jesus Christ. In John's gospel Christ is presented as the Son of God in human flesh. That is John's burden, and in that uniquely he differs from Matthew, Mark and Luke. John's desire is to present Christ in all of His deity. He presents Him in His humanity but only insofar as it relates to His deity. Everything that John focuses on in the pages of this gospel have to do primarily with Christ the Son of God.

Now I said to you last week and I shall say it again that John employs simple words for the expression of profound truths. In very simple little words John expresses the most unbelievably profound and infinite transcendent thoughts imaginable. The words are so simple that, as I said last time, anyone being instructed initially in the Greek language goes to the gospel of John and the epistles of John because of the simplicity of vocabulary. And so we see profound truths couched in very simple terms.

Now John has a basically a three fold theme. As I said before, he first of all desires to present Christ as the Son of God. Secondly, the gift of salvation that he offers, thirdly what men did with that offer. So it is really a three fold progressive theme. Christ, the Son of God, the salvation that he offers, and what men did with the offer, whether they accepted it or rejected it. And so John's gospel is just for that purpose, to present Christ, His salvation, that men might believe.

And he so states his purpose in the 20<sup>th</sup> Chapter and the 31<sup>st</sup> verse, "But these are written," that is the words in this book, "that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." That's his primary objective to present Christ as Son of God. And that believing you might have life through His name. So his desire is to present Christ, the salvation that He offers and then he talks about how men reacted, some received, very few, and the majority rejected Christ. That is John's theme.

Now in the prolog to John's gospel we are introduced to this theme where we see Christ, the Son of God, we see Him as He offers life and light and we see how men rejected and how some believed. We see the theme of the gospel right here in these first 18 verses. He is presented as God, in the first part of the first chapter, then it tells that He came with salvation called life and light in verses 4 and 5, then it tells us what men did with Him, some rejected, verses 10 and 11, and some received, verses 12 and 13. So the theme of the gospel of John, so stated in the 20<sup>th</sup> Chapter and the 31<sup>st</sup> verse and so given throughout the entire gospel is given in kind of a little diminutive form in the opening prolog.

Now as John opens his gospel he talks about Christ, but this is always his way. He had a love relationship going with the person of Jesus Christ and you can see it as we look through the gospel we'll see it in many things. He loved to be where Jesus was, he was inseparable from Christ, he was constantly leaning upon the chest of Christ, he was just totally passionately in love with Christ, the Son of God, for His deity sake, and for the blessed loveliness of His person. And so the pages of John's gospel just drip with love and he is constantly presenting Jesus Christ. But, of course, this is always what he does. He starts his gospel with a presentation of Christ. He starts the book of Revelation, which the same John wrote, with a presentation of the glorified Christ. He starts his epistles, I John 1:1, with a presentation of the Christ that he had seen and heard and touched.

And so John is concerned with presenting Christ as the Son of God, not so much as humanity, not so much as Messiah ship to Israel, not so much as idea of a servant or a prophet as the other accounts do, but as the Son of God that men might see Him, His gift of salvation and react toward it by believing. Few believed, most rejected.

Now we see six dimensions of Christ. It's almost like a six-facet diamond. And we've already considered to and this morning we shall consider two or three depending on time. The first that we see of Christ is the eternal Christ in verses 1 to 3. Then we see the incarnate Christ in verse 4 and 5, then we see the heralded Christ in verses 6 to 8, then we see the unrecognized Christ in verses 9 to 11, then we see the omnipotent Christ in verses 12 to 13, and then we see the glorious Christ in verses 13 to 18. So we see all of the dimensions, as if we are looking at Him from every possible angle, to see the totality of the person of Christ as Son of God incarnated in a human body.

Now last time we examined the eternal Christ, the first three verses. And we noticed the progression, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word there refers to Christ. Then he takes a step further and says not only was the Word in the beginning it was with God. Then he takes another step and says not only was the Word with God, it was God. Christ is God eternally. The same was in the beginning with God, and when He was in the beginning with God what was He doing? Verse 3, He was making all things because everything that exists was made by Him, positively negatively nothing exists except the things that He made.

And so we first and last week saw the eternal Christ. Secondly we saw the incarnate Christ in verse 4 and 5, because in those verses we see the light and life of God come to men in a body. In Him was life and the life was the light of men and the light shines in darkness and the darkness didn't put it out, or overcame it not. So blazing was the light that no amount of darkness could put it out. And so we see Christ the light embodying the light coming into the world. And so thus we see the incarnate Christ and by the word incarnate I mean in a body. We see the light of God and the life of God in a body, Christ incarnate.

Now this morning we come to the third facet or dimension of Christ, the heralded Christ. God did not send Christ without some announcement. God previewed the coming of Christ by announcing His arrival. Notice verse 6 and meet the heralded Christ. There was, better translated, there came, the Greek word indicates come not was, there came a man sent from God whose name was John. Now this John is not the apostle John, who wrote this book, it is John the Baptizer or John the Baptist and we shall call him the Baptist with no denominational references at all. Strictly because his work was a baptizing work is he called John the Baptist and try though they may the Baptists cannot trace themselves back to John. There were no denominations then.

And so we introduce the heralded Christ. Now there was a man sent from God, or there came a man sent from God whose name was John. The change of subject, when I first read this I was completely struck by the immediate change that took place. He has been talking about God of very Gods and all of a sudden bang just like that he's talking about a man, a very abrupt change. Christ is God and Christ was with God and Christ made the world and Christ is the life and Christ is the light, and there was a man. Just that abrupt! From the Word, who was God, he comes to the one that announced that the Word was God, John the Baptist. He is the herald, he is the forerunner, He is the one to announce the coming of Messiah, and he is contrasted to Christ. Christ was the Word. John the Baptist was sent by God. Christ was God. John the Baptist came, Christ was from all eternity. John the Baptist was commissioned by God, Christ was God. John the Baptist came to point to the light, Christ was the light. John the Baptist is the agent of belief, Christ is the object of belief and I'll define that in a little while.

So from the very beginning John the Baptist is seen in his right perspective. You say why are you making an issue out this, because it is an issue. It's a very important issue and I'll show you why. Every time in the gospel of John the Baptist appears he gets put in his place. He never gets the slightest bit of exaltation. He's always depreciated and humble whenever he appears in John's gospel. You say well did John the apostle have something going against the Baptist? Not at all! You say why does he feel it's his place to depreciate him all the time? Very good question and it has a very good answer. The reason that John the apostle, whenever he brings up John the Baptist he puts him down the reason is this: for four hundred years prior to John the Baptist there had been no prophet. There was no prophetic voice in Israel. The voice of prophecy had been stilled. It was silent. And so for four hundred years Israel had no messages coming from God.

Then all of a sudden at the end of this four hundred years, since the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, all of a sudden there appears on the horizon this very fascinating man by the name of John the Baptist and he is positively a prophet of God. He is the first prophet in four hundred years. Well naturally Israel really began to be attracted to this guy and the Bible tells us that all Jerusalem and Judea went out to the desert to see him and hear him. And he was out there proclaiming and he was out there baptizing. And all these people were going out there why, because there had not been a prophet in

Israel for four hundred years.

And what naturally happened is they didn't listen to the message of John the Baptist, and they started worshipping the preacher instead of the one he was talking about. And so there grew a little J. B. cult, a little John the Baptist heresy, and this group of people became so enamored with John the Baptist that they got their eyes off the one he was talking about and got hung up on him.

In fact that little cult still existed as far along as Acts 19, when the church in Ephesus was founded there and Paul was there, he was talking to some of the disciples of John, quote. What does that mean? They were part of this little John the Baptist crew and they asked him if they'd heard about the baptism of Christ, and they said, "We don't know anything except the," or the baptism of the Holy Spirit, "We don't know anything except the baptism by John." They were a little John the Baptist group. And this was happening and so John the apostle endeavors to counteract that by constantly putting John the Baptist in his place. And it's important that he do that. That the people understand that John the Baptist is nothing in comparison to Christ, nothing at all.

You say, well gee, that's for sure. John the Baptist was nothing. The only thing anybody knows about him is he wore some kind of a modified Tarzan suit and ate grasshoppers. And you know that's about all anybody knows about him, and he wandered around in the tulies out there and that's about it. And certainly when you compare that kind of a guy with Christ, the Son of God, he was nothing. You want to know something? Do you want to know that the greatest human being that ever put his feet on this earth up until this time was John the Baptist? Do you know that John the Baptist was the greatest single individual human that ever walked on this earth until Jesus arrived? You say, was he better than David? Greater than David. Greater than Moses? Greater than Moses. Greater than Elijah? Greater than Elijah. Greater than Abraham? Greater than Abraham. Name it, he was greater. He was the greatest human being that ever walked on the face of the earth up until his time. This was no slouch. This guy was no half-baked prophet. You say well MacArthur, that's a pretty sweeping statement to make. On what basis do you make it?

Look at Matthew 11:11. Verse 11, "Verily I say unto you, or truly, among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than whom? Whose the greatest man that ever lived since the beginning of time? John the Baptist. You say, "I didn't know that." Most people don't. Listen when God wanted somebody to do the greatest task announce the coming of the Messiah, He picked somebody that was the greatest man. And just to make sure John didn't blow it Luke 1 tells us that God filled him with His Holy Spirit from the time he was a baby in his mother's womb. This was no mean man. This was not the run of the mill type guy. And now, you say, why are you telling me this? Just listen to this: here is the greatest human being that ever lived, but in the light of a comparison with Jesus Christ he's nothing. You see the point? You say poor John. No, no, no, not poor John.

Look at Chapter 3 of John verse 25, John was, he knew what he was. John's gospel 3:25, describing the Baptist. "And there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying." See John had this little group. And the Jews came to John the Baptist and they said, 'Rabbi, or teacher, he that was with thee beyond the Jordan, that's Christ, to whom thou bearest witness behold the same baptizeth and all men come to him.'" You see what he's trying to do to these Jews? They were trying to get John the Baptist and his little crew over here and Jesus and His followers over here and set them against each other, see. Oh John you're baptizing but look at that one over there, He's doing it, and set them against each other. And so they bring up this little dilemma. Oh John, he's sharp.

Look at verse 30, and what does he say? "He must, what, increase but I must decrease." The greatest man that ever lived in this world in comparison to Jesus Christ is nothing. See John wants us to get the message that this is the Son of God, ladies and gentlemen. This is not some man. This is not some glorified human being. The greatest man who ever lived in the history of the world is like a flickering match before a billion suns and even that doesn't tell the one millionth of it.

John knew his place. He must increase and I must decrease. Oh it's so easy sometimes to substitute the preacher for the Christ, to fix your attention on the herald rather than the one he's heralding, and that's what they were guilty of doing. And so we meet John and a fascinating guy he is and I wish we had time, and perhaps we will sometime, to study his life. But he's the last and greatest of the Old Testament prophets and he's the first of the New Testament evangelists. He's that terrific transition in the middle.

Now he was also the first to announce the saving work of Christ. Notice the 29<sup>th</sup> verse of Chapter 1. "The next day John sees Jesus coming unto him and he's baptizing in the Jordan there, and he saw Christ and he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world.'" Have you ever thought of all that's wrapped up in that statement? The concept of the Lamb, the concept of God, the concept of sin, the concept of taking away sin, the concept of taking away the sin of the world? Tremendous impact that that one statement of John has. He is the herald of the Christ of God and the highest calling took a man like John.

And so there was, or there came a man sent from God, the indwelling Spirit from the time of his mother's womb and his name was John. Verse 7 tells us why he came. "The same came, what, for a witness." Now a witness is one who testifies to truth and perhaps I've told you that one time I witnessed an attempted murder. In fact I even got in it and got punched. I was in on the innocent end of it. And I had to go to court and testify. I was a witness. I related what I saw and heard and felt. That's what a witness is. And John is coming into this world to testify to the reality that Christ is the Son of the living God. He's a witness.

God in essence is bringing the humanity to a courtroom and God is setting up Jesus Christ and saying, "I declare Christ is the living God in a body." And he says just to show you the reality of that I want to call the witnesses in to testify and the first witness in John's gospel is John the Baptist. Say is that the only witness in the gospel? No. John the apostle presents eight witness eight different witnesses that Christ is God. I figure that'd stand up in any court. And they are irrefutable, conclusive witnesses and John gathers the testimony of heaven and earth, of God and man to verify that Christ is God.

He starts out here with his first witness who is John the Baptist. In Chapter 5 verse 37, don't try to follow me. I'm just going to give you these and we'll look at them as we go through the gospel, but I want you to see the other witnesses. There's another witness in Chapter 5, verse 37. Listen to this: "And the Father, Himself, who sent Me hath born witness of Me." Not only John the Baptist is a witness, God is a witness. Is that all? No, there's another one. Jesus Christ Himself witnesses. He is His own witness.

Chapter 8 verse 18, "I am one that bear witness of Myself, Jesus said." And not only His words, but His life is a witness. Back in Chapter 5 verse 36, it says, "But I have greater witness than that of John, that is the Baptist, for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent me." So you have John the Baptist, you have God, you have the words of Christ and you have the works of Christ. All of those are brought into the courtroom by John the apostle to testify that Christ is the Son of God.

Is that all? No. Chapter 5, verse 39, "Search the Scriptures for in them you think you have eternal life and they are they which testify of Me." Look at the Old Testament, he says, that testifies of Me as well." And certainly it does prophetically. And of course all the people who met Him testified of Him. In Chapter 4, the woman at the well. She said, "Never have I met a man who told me all the things I did. Is not this the Christ?" And you've got witnesses all through the gospel like that, but people were His witnesses. People that He met. Not only that the disciples were His witnesses.

In Chapter 15 and I think it's about verse 27, He reminds of them of that. He says, "And you also shall bear witness because you've been with Me from the beginning." The disciples were His witness that He was the Christ, the Son of God. And there's one more, verse 26 of Chapter 15 says, listen: "But when the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, listen, even the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father He shall testify of Me." So John calls together humanity and deity to testify to the fact that Christ is the Son of the Living God, God in the human body, and his first witness is John the Baptist.

And so we're introduced to a man who came from God, whose name was John, and he came for a witness to bear witness to that light. He was not that light, verse 8, but he was sent to bear witness of that light. And you see that's directed right at these disciples of John who were following him around

as if he was the light. He is not the light, the apostle John says. He only came to point to the light.

So John's burden is to present Christ the living Logos, the Word incarnate in a body, all that God is, all of His divine attributes gathered together and placed in one human body is Jesus Christ and the first witness to that reality is John the Baptist. And the reason he witnessed is in the end of verse 7, "He witnessed that all men through him might believe." The end result of John's witness was that men might put their faith in that Christ.

Now notice two words there, and I want you to catch them, they're very important, tremendous truth locked in them. Through him, see it there at the end of verse 7. "That all men," watch those two words, "through him might believe." Through him, now to whom does that refer? Does that refer to Christ or John the Baptist? Don't answer. It refers not to Christ, but to John the Baptist. Contrary to what your mind first told you, that's why I didn't want you to answer, didn't want to embarrass you. Your natural reaction is to say that all men through Christ might believe. Listen to me; you don't believe through Christ, you believe in Christ. He is the object and John says I want my life to be so radiantly putting forth Jesus Christ that you could literally believe in Him through my testimony. You see what's he's saying now? Isn't that what evangelism is all about? We don't believe through Christ. There's nowhere to go through Him. He's the end of it. We believe in Him through the testimony of the witness and we can truly say that when you lead someone to Jesus Christ they believe in Christ through your testimony.

And so what is he saying? He's saying I want to witness to the life that all men through my witness might believe. You see what you are really? You are supposed to be just a channel through which men can believe in Christ. You might ask yourself a rather provocative question this morning. Ask yourself whether your life is a gate or a wall. Can people look at you and through you believe in Christ?

John came that men might believe. He says, John the apostle a hundred times talks about believe, uses that word. It's very important. And the Baptist's intention was that all those who heard his testimony might embrace Christ as their savior. Now Christ is the light and John is the reflector. John wants to be sure in verse 8, that nobody mistakes him for the light. He's just sent to bear witness to the light.

Now I want to show you a verse that might cause you a problem and I want to clear it up in case you run across it. Chapter 5 verse 35 talking about John the Baptist Jesus says this: "He was a burning and a shining light." You say now wait a minute. John said in the first chapter that he was not that light. Now Jesus says he was that light. Now in the English you never get the meaning, the Greek fortunately clarifies it because two different words for light are used.

In Chapter 1, when it says Christ is the light and John was not the light the word used is *phos* from which we get our word phosphorant, which means lighted. *Phos* means, now watch this, *phos* means the essence of light what light is in itself, not its rays and not what we see, but the essence of light. Christ is the very essence of light. But over in Chapter 5:35, when it says John the Baptist was a burning and shining light the word used is *luchnos*. You know what that means? It means a portable lamp. It's kind of a Coleman lantern. Jesus is the essence of light. John is a portable lamp and a portable lamp doesn't have any light of its own. You're going to dump something in it and stick a match to it. Now you see the difference? There's a big difference between being the essence of light and being a portable lamp and the preacher is nothing but a portable lamp and Jesus Christ is the very essence of light.

So John is a flickering match; Christ is a billion suns, as we said. You see this is tremendous truth in verses 7 and 8, isn't it? Fantastic reality! But you know I want you to see something I'm sure you wouldn't recognize because it took me a long time to really see this. You know that verses 7 and 8 are tragic, absolutely pathetic? If you look at them you can't see it. Hey isn't that terrific a witness and a the light and men might believe, wow, that's fantastic. I said it's tragic; it's absolutely pathetic. What do you mean?

Listen to this: since when does somebody have to bear witness to light? You get that?

We were up in northern California in this dark cave one time and they turn, they turn the lights out, of course they had it lighted, turn it out, just that kind of blackness, you've seen it where you couldn't see anything. And it was pitch black and they were talking about the blackness and all this stuff and then the guide turned on his flashlight and nobody said, "Where's the light, where's the light." When that flashlight went on everybody knew the light was on. Nobody said, "There's the light." You lit a match in that place and everybody would have gone to that match. Nobody to point out light. You know what John came to do? He came to point out light to people living in blackness. You say, "Who needs to point out light?"

Listen, there's only one kind of person who needs to be pointed to the light. What kind? Blind ones. Blind ones. And you know what? Everybody in this world is blind. You say, "How do you know that?" Look at II Corinthians 4:3, "Now listen, if our gospel be hidden it's hidden to them that are lost." Now here comes verse 4, watch this truth. "In whom the God of this age," whose that, "Satan, has," what, "blinded the minds of them who believe not." Why did Satan blind them? Watch! "Lest the light of the glorious gospel shine unto them." That's why Satan blinded them that they couldn't see the light and so God's prophets and preachers and heralds have to come along and say look blind people take my hand there's the light. And that's tragic, isn't it? That's pathetic that the black world hasn't even got the sight to see the light.



It's like those fish in Carlsbad Caverns that have been underground so long that their eyes are gone and all they have are empty sockets. Somebody turns the light on they can't see it anyway. And so the light came blazing brilliant glorious the light of God into this world and people couldn't see it because they were blind and John had to be the first one to take them by the hand and say, "There's the light." And you know something? That's what every preacher does who ever lived. That's what you do when you witness, because you know something, everybody that's ever lived has been exposed to the light of God. Did you know that? Look at verse 9, what does it say? "That was the true Light, which lighteth," how many, "every man." God has revealed the knowledge of Himself to men and yet they can't see it, they refuse it, they're blind, they don't want to look at it. And so our task as preachers, as Christians, as witnesses is to take people by the hand in their blindness stumbling around in darkness and show them the light because they can't see it. And so this verse is sad.

The sun doesn't need the moon to prove it exists, except for blind people and then even the moon doesn't do much good, and what a revelation of man's condition. And that kind of mess that man's in blinded leads us to the next point in our outline. We've seen the eternal Christ, the incarnate Christ, the heralded Christ. Now let's look at the unrecognized Christ in verse 9. And this will take us through verse 11. We'll look at it very simply because it is very simple.

You say, "Well isn't this exciting?" Here's man in his darkness and the light comes sweeping into the darkness and light always dispels darkness, except for blind people, and you say yeah, I know man's blind, but John comes along and the apostles and you and all these Christians and they take these blind people and they lead them to the Light and oh I can imagine that after all those years of darkness they'd love that Light and they just kind of bask in that Light and they bathe in that Light that's exciting. And when Jesus came and the preachers preached and the prophets prophesied and everybody said there He is did the world run to Him? Did the world run into the light? Did the world start loving the lovely Christ? Well the answer is in verses 9 to 11.

"That was that true light", verse 9, and that word true is the word genuine, *alethinos*, real or genuine. That was the genuine light, not some emanation from another light. That's the real stuff, folks. I mean in the Old Testament you'd see little flickers of God, and little rays of His light. This is the Light itself, the true Light. And it's the same Light that lights every man that cometh into the world. Somehow sovereignly by God's power every man has enough light to be responsible.

Romans 1:19 says, "God has planted His knowledge in man," and verse 20 says, "If man doesn't live up to that he is without excuse." People say, "Are the heathen who never heard lost?" Yes, they're lost if they reject the knowledge that God gave them and the Light that He gave them. Why else would you think Christ would tell us to go into all the world and preach the gospel to, how many, every creature. If they weren't lost we should stay home and let them alone. We don't want to give them an option. Christ said go, because of course they're lost. They turned out their own lights. They've

taken the Light that God gave them in Romans Chapter 1, first they perverted it into idolatry, then they perverted it into perversion and all kinds of sins.

God's light has been in the hearts of men somehow that same light that was in Christ, that was Christ before Christ ever came, that same light had been given to man, enough of it to make him responsible. The coming of Christ Jesus was just the embodiment of the very same Light that God has placed in a little flickering image inside the heart of man and asked him to live up to that light and He would grant him more. And Jesus Christ just embodied all of that and when Christ came it was if the sun landed on the earth. It's enough to see it in the sky, but to have its blazing glory here and even that couldn't dispel the blackness of men's hearts, so perverted were they.

Christ came with light to dispel the darkness of doubt, to dispel the darkness of despair, to dispel the darkness of death. He came to do all of that and He was the only Light. "I am the Light of the world. There is no other Light," John 8:12. And He came in a way that every man could understand and know Him. You say oh that's boy coming like that you'd think the world would run to Him, but they didn't. You say why didn't, why don't men run to Jesus Christ? Why don't they bask in the Light? Why don't they grab that Life of God? Why don't they love that lovely Christ? I'll tell you why.

Chapter 3, verse 19, "And this is the condemnation that Light is come into the world, that's Christ right, and men loved, what, they didn't endure it folks, they ate it up, they loved every minute of their sin because their deeds were evil. And you know something, somebody's got evil deeds, verse 20, "Everyone that doeth evil hateth the light, doesn't come to the light because you know what happens when you come to the light, your deeds get exposed. And if a man's not willing to face the fact of his sin, he's never going to come to Christ. That's why they didn't run to Him. They loved their sin. Men love every minute of it. They don't necessarily love the consequence. The world of men refused and still refuse the light of Jesus Christ and its fullest revelation, and if the world would refuse Christ, which is the total revelation of God, they don't have much trouble turning out the light that God plants innately within them. And so, in this John tells us that He came into the world then in verse 10, he says this: "He was in the world, whose world, His world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not.

There you have folks, the essence of the gospel when Christ came. He came, who came, they one who made it, and what did men do with Him? They didn't want Him. That's the whole story of Christ coming right there in that verse. Heartbreaking, piercing sorrow, He was no stranger here. He came to His own. For 33 years Jesus tabernacled among men. He taught, He loved, He died, He bore man's sin, He bore man's judgment all in His own world that He'd made with His own hands.

And the very hands that He had formed out of dust picked up hammers and pounded nails back through their Creator's hands. That was His world. Those were His men. That was His tree, His hill, His world. He made it. He came to it. It didn't know Him. It didn't know Him, the unrecognized

Christ. Sad story. The world knew Him not.

I suppose the saddest tragedy in the world is unrequited love and that's the prime example. There was never such an infinite love and there never was such a total rejection of infinite love. John puts it another way in verse 11, "He came unto His own and His own received Him not." He came unto His own what? What does that mean? His own everything. He made it all. He came onto everything that belonged to Him and it didn't want Him. His own received Him not.

But I think it has a primary reference to Israel where He said in Amos 3:2, "Israel only have I known," and He called them Mine own people several times in the Old Testament. He came to Israel and Israel didn't want Him. Israel joined with the rest of the world and said, "Well not have this man to reign over us," and took Him out on a hill and they crucified Him. Israel didn't want Christ. They didn't want Him. And back in Isaiah it was prophesied in the first chapter, let me just read it to you, "Here O heavens, and give ear O earth, for the Lord hath spoken. I have nourished and brought up children and they have rebelled against me. The ox knows his owner and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doesn't know, my people don't consider. O sinful nation." And he goes on. He didn't know when He came.

Want to know something very interesting? In the minds of many Jews there is a tremendous reservation and fear that they have crucified indeed their Messiah. You say, I never heard a Jew admit that. You never will. But many of God's precious chosen people have a lingering fear in the back of their mind that per chance that was Messiah. You say how do you know that? Number one because of the avid avidness of their hatred toward Christianity. It's as almost as it you're bringing up something that just bothers them. Secondly, for example, Rabbi Ben Ezra, very famous Rabbi, one time wrote a prayer to Jesus Christ and the prayer expresses that terrible haunting possibility of the Jewish heart that perhaps Christ was who He said He was.

In Rabbi Ben Ezra's prayer this is what he says, and I'm quoting it to you, listen: and he's talking to Christ and he says, "Thou, if Thou wast He who at mid watch came by the starlight, naming a dubious name, and if too heavy with sleep and too rash with fear, O Thou if that martyr gash fell on Thee coming to take Thine own and we gave the cross when Thou deserved the throne, be Thou the judge." Haunting words.

He came unto His own and His own received Him not. Oh what tragedy and the gospel of John as it begins in this first chapter and sweeps right through the very end is a constant picture of the world's rejection from one end to the other. You say, "What breaks my heart about this is poor God, He must be terribly broken hearted and frustrated. All this plan and He sent Christ and they did that to Him." Want to know something? Don't ever forget it. God doesn't get frustrated.

You say, "But look at what they did to Christ." That's okay, He was the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world. God knew all of that. You say, "Yeah, but God had this plan of salvation and look what it says there, the world knew Him know, He came to His own and His own received Him not." That's all right. He didn't come to save the whole world. He came to save some, didn't He? He came to call out a little flock. And you know what Jesus said, I love these words, just goes off like a gong every time I think of it. John 6:37, "All that the Father gives to Me shall come to Me." God doesn't get frustrated. His ecclesia, which comes from the verb to call out or elect, His group of believing ones that He has chosen to bring to His side by faith, God's plan is not frustrated. And that is verses 12 and 13.

And we close by meeting the omnipotent Christ overruling hell's effort on the cross and overruling the rejection of the world look at verse 12 and 13. "But," you see that? Boy you change gears right there. Oh sure the world said no, the world said we don't want Him, the world didn't know Him, the world didn't want a thing to do with Him, "but, as many as received Him," oh you say, some did? They did? How did they do it? Did they just decide I want Christ? I think I'll be one of those of, verse 13 says, "Not by their will," by whose will? God's will. As many as God called to His side that's how many came and believed. And there you see the omnipotent Christ.

Do you know something that the world's hatred of Christ couldn't frustrate God? Did you know that the world could kill the Son of God and not frustrate His plan? Do you know why, because God makes the wrath of men to do what, to praise Him. And what looks like Satan's biggest hour is Satan's end.

And so we come to 12 and 13 and we meet the omnipotent Christ. And you see the two sides of salvation, the human side in verse 12, receive, believe, the divine side, it wasn't your will it was God's. And there's the vast mystery of salvation. But as many as received Him, whom, Jesus Christ, to them He gave, and the word here should be translated authority or the right to become the sons *rehasor* children of God. To those who receive Christ God gave the right to call themselves sons of God. If you know Jesus Christ, you have absolute eternal right to call yourself a child of God. And then Paul adds this fantastic dimension. He says and, Romans 8:17, if you're a child of God then you're an heir, and if you're an heir then you're a joint heir, with whom, Jesus Christ.

I was saying to someone the other day, I was looking around it was a beautiful day and I said, "It is amazing that I own all this. All of it's mine. And I just enjoy that. These people can have it for a while but it's mine." Why? I'm a joint heir with Christ. I'm a child of God. How did you get to be a child of God? Was it something in your racial background.? No, that's verse 13. You were born in the right family? No. It doesn't come by blood. It doesn't come biologically, and that's what the Jew thought, you know. I'm Abraham's seed. I got it made. It comes not by the will of man, even. It comes by the will of God. God called me to His side to be His child. Oh, infinite grace. See God's not frustrated is He? The world said no to Jesus, but God's little flock said yes and they received Him and His plan

wasn't frustrated. The omnipotent Christ overruling. And as we go through the gospel we're going to see all of these aspects of Christ just exploded before our eyes. New life begins with Christ. That's the message that John wants us to get. We've seen how God overruled the darkness of the world.

First of all we saw that the darkness couldn't put the light out and then we saw that the darkness couldn't frustrate salvation. You say what does this say to me, just this as we close. Two things God required of you, verse 12. Believe and receive. That's our part. Believe that Jesus Christ is who He said He is, the Son of the living God come to earth to bring salvation; number two receive Him into your life as your personal Lord and Savior, that puts you into the family of God. And if you've sensed the Spirit of God calling you and God's grace penetrating your heart and drawing you to Jesus Christ respond by putting your faith in Him, receiving Christ into your life and that is salvation. Jesus Christ came to give life to dead men. Jesus Christ came to give light to black hearts. Jesus Christ came to give love to lonely hearts. He's all of these things. And the greatest man that ever lived in the history of the world up until this time can't even hold a candle to the reality of who Christ is. He's the Son of the living God. He wants to live in you and bring light and life and love, and all you need to do to receive Him is believe first and then open your life and invite Him in.

Father we thank you this morning for Your word. So powerful, so penetrating to our hearts. We thank you for the reality of who Jesus Christ is, the eternal Christ, the incarnate Christ, the heralded Christ, the unrecognized Christ, the unrecognized Christ, but oh the omnipotent Christ and the glorious Christ. Oh we thank you, Father, that even hell itself can't frustrate God's plans. We thank you that in the moment that Jesus Christ was dying on a cross at the hands of hatred and cruelty He was in effect bringing about the salvation of all of those to be called to Your side. Father we thank you for this.

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