John and His Gospel

Commentary of July 1, 2007 — The Bounty that Is the Gospel of John

Please read the "July 2007 Newsletter" to access this month's article. Transcribed from a 1979 lecture, this article is a message by Dr. Ernest Martin I have titled "The Apostle John, the Lamb, and the Spirit." It presents excellent information about the message of the Gospel of John that most of you have not considered before, or have not thought about for years.

The article shows John's purpose for writing and provides additional information emphasized throughout the Gospel. Other presentations by Dr. Martin (as listed in the article footnotes) give other points of emphasis that John brings out, important elements such as time, location, audience, and actions by Christ and by people around Him. All of this shows that the Gospel of John was a carefully crafted literary work designed to present the reader with something much more than a history or a biography. Everything that happens in the Gospel of John, everything that is presented, is understandable and true.

Dr. Martin's article shows how the Gospel of John differs from the Synoptic Gospels. All together the four Gospels create a complete portrait of our Messiah and Savior Jesus Christ.[1] It is another example of how the Bible is a bottomless well of information and understanding which opens the mind and satisfies the longing in our souls that only God can fill:

> **"For he** [YHWH] **satisfies the longing soul, and fills the hungry soul with goodness. Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron.**
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> [Why?] **Because they rebelled against the words of God** [El]**, and contemned** [held in contempt] **the counsel of the Most High."**
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> ***• Psalm 107:9–11***

The best way to know about God is through study of His Word, reading about Christ's deeds and example for us. The Gospel of John begins with the Word (John 1:1) and ends with John telling about the many acts of the Word of God, the Christ, the Son of God. So many acts did He do that John uses hyperbole when he comments that the world could not contain all the accounts of Jesus' actions and teaching (John 21:25).

The Gospel of John brings the message of love for everyone in the world (John 3:16–17), and hope in particular to those who read and understand that message. It is the last Gospel and one of the last works written in the New Testament canon. The apostle John was rejected (like the apostle Paul, 2 Timothy 1:15) by many of the Christians in Asia who saw the destruction of Jerusalem and particularly the Temple as an indication that the message about Christ, John's Gospel, the Book of Revelation, and the prophecies of Christ's soon return, were a failure and false.[2]

God is revealed to man through two ways: (1) through creation and (2) through His Word. Physical creation is plain in its revelation of God's existence (Romans 1:19–20), but that knowledge only brings God's judgment upon mankind (Romans 1:18–32). God's revelation

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1. Jesus is the Son of Man, as emphasized in John at 1:51; 3:13f; 5:27; 6:27, 53, 62; 8:28; 12:23, 34; 13:31. At the same time Jesus is the Son of God as emphasized in John at 1:34, 49; 3:18; 5:25; 9:35; 10:36; 11:4, 27; 19:7; 20:31.
2. See Dr. Martin's book *Restoring the Original Bible* (Portland, OR: ASK Publications, 1994), chapter 26 "The Rejection of the Apostle John." In the print version that chapter is from pages 414–442.

through His Word (through the life of Christ, and subsequent writings describing Christ's actions, i.e., the New Testament) bring a complete knowledge resulting in salvation.

> **"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting** [eonian] **life.**
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> **For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.**
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> ***• John 3:16-17***

Just as Genesis chapters 1 and 2 explain the physical creation to us: **"In the beginning God**," John's Gospel explains the spiritual creation: **"In the beginning was the Word."** This spiritual creation (of which you and I are part and beneficiaries) comes through an expression from God the Father which is termed the *Logos* (Greek for "Word"), who is the first creation of God.[3] God the Father can only be known fully through Christ, the Word who is the Son, yet that knowledge also comes from the Father:

> **"O righteous Father, the world has not known you: but I have known you, and these have known that you have sent me. And I have declared unto them your name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."**
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> ***• John 17:25***

> **"Jesus answered** [the Jews]**, 'If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honors me; of whom you say, that he is your God: Yet you have not known him;**
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> **but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.'"**
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> ***• John 8:54–55***

> **"All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knows the Son, but the Father; neither knows any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."**
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> ***• Matthew 11:27* (cf. Luke 10:22)**

The Father was not truly known until Christ came to reveal Him. It was impossible to truly know the Father:

> **"No man can come to me** [the Word]**, except the Father which has sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."**
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> ***• John 6:44***

> **"Jesus says unto him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man comes unto the Father, but** [except] **by me.'"**
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> ***• John 14:6***

The Gospel of John reveals unique information about God's Son, His Messiah, who in turn reveals God the Father to mankind. All this is done and written according to God's purpose and plan, so that those who read the Gospel of John might believe (John 20:31). When John writes that those who have not seen Christ in the flesh are blessed [happy] if they believe (John 20:29) in **"the Christ, the Son of God"** who is **"the resurrection and the life"** (John 11:24–27), he unknowingly is writing about you and about me.

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3. See Dr. Martin's article "How Did Jesus Become God?" where the term *Logos* as used in John's Gospel is explained. This article also deals with Christ's existence before His incarnation. For full information on what took place at the conception and incarnation of Christ, see chapter 6, "Our Sins Are Imputed to Christ" in Dr. Martin's book *Essentials of New Testament Doctrine* (Portland, OR: ASK Publications, 2004).