




THE COMMUNITY

No One Is like Him | JESUS

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

John 1:1-14

The Praises of Him

1 Peter 2:9 says, “But you are a chosen people, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His wonderful light.” He is making an allusion to Exodus 19:5-6. There Moses is speaking with God at the foot of Mount Sinai. God is about to give the Ten Commandments to the people as a guide for life. In anticipation of that He says, “Now if you will obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:5-6).

Peter seizes on this promise and says it is ours because of Christ. What God offered on condition of obedience, Peter says is ours because of the obedience of Jesus. Not only for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles who have believed. God adopts us as His own and in our lives fulfills all the long anticipated promises.

To Peter’s mind, there is only one obvious response: We must declare His praises! Peter is not just talking about praising Him in a worship service, he is all about praising Him before lost men and women who also need to know His grace. We were rescued out of darkness and brought into His wonderful light. Now we must invite anyone, everyone, to come experience the love and forgiveness that we have. Our primary job is to tell everyone who will listen how great Jesus is so that they will want to know Him, too. The heart of evangelism is praise.

This study is an introduction to a series on evangelism. In the weeks to come, we’ll talk about the scope of the gospel: no matter how good or bad you think you are, you need and can have Jesus’ forgiveness. We’ll also look at some of the strategies Jesus employed in communicating the gospel. This week, though, is just about Jesus. If the focus of evangelism is to declare His praises, we need to first look at what we praise Him for.

Jesus is God

We can’t do that exhaustively so we are going to limit ourselves (more or less) to a study of John’s introduction to Jesus in John 1:1-14. It seems that John has one overriding purpose in his prologue: to show that Jesus is God in the flesh.

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What’s the Big Idea?

When we share our faith, what we are really doing is telling other people how great Jesus is so that they will want to know Him too. The heart of evangelism is praise. This study is a brief look at Jesus’ deity. He is worthy to be praised because He is God.

What’s the Problem?

Evangelism that doesn’t have, at its heart, an enthusiasm for how great Jesus is will be unmotivating and ineffective.

No One Is Like Him | Jesus

The other three gospels all begin with either Jesus' birth, or the start of His ministry. John goes back much further to eternity past where He says, "The Word (Jesus) was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning."

In verse 3, He makes the astounding claim that everything in the world was made by Jesus. He is the Creator God, who made the heavens and the earth and everything in them. In verse 4, Jesus is not merely alive, but carries within Him Life itself. He gives life and light to all men. The things that John is saying are absolutely extraordinary. He is claiming that Jesus is eternally self-existent, that He created the entire universe and that He is the source of life for all things. He is God!

Then in vv.6-9, he appears to interrupt himself with a digression about John the Baptist. In fact, he is offering one more piece of evidence for Jesus' deity. In the Old Testament, God promised that before He came as Messiah, He would send a messenger ahead of Himself to prepare the way. Isaiah 40:3-5 and Malachi 3:1 contain two of these prophecies. In each case, a man is described preparing the way for the coming of God. John the Baptist's ministry was one more piece of evidence confirming that Jesus is God.

In the next paragraph, John summarizes the gospel as he will do repeatedly throughout the book. "To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). Who could possibly have the authority to make someone a child of God? Only God Himself.

Verse 12 also is a great place for you to share the gospel with any non-Christians in the group. Point out that the opportunity to become a child of God implies that we are not already children of God. But God, in His grace, readily adopts us into His family if we will just believe in and receive Jesus. It is also a good verse to use to motivate believers to share Christ with others. People that don't know Jesus are like orphans. They've none of the benefits of being God's child that we experience. God can use the Christians in your group to help others be adopted into God's family.

Finally, in v. 14 John says, "We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." In calling Jesus the One and only, he is again affirming that Jesus is no mere man, nor even an angel, nor a specially created being. He is the one true God. John continues to affirm this throughout his gospel. He shows Jesus' power over nature, His ability to heal and to raise the dead, and he records the extraordinary claims Jesus makes about Himself. Claims that, if not true, could only come from the greatest megalomaniac the world has ever seen. Jesus' "I am" statements are such examples of this. He claimed to be:

The bread of life (6:48)

The light of the world (8:12)

The gate for the sheep (10:11)

The good shepherd (10:11)

The resurrection and the life (11:25)

The way, the truth, and the life (14:6)

The vine (15:5)

Look up each of these references and discuss in your group what Jesus was saying about Himself in each of them. When we understand how outrageous these claims are, it's laughable that anyone would deny that Jesus claimed to be God. It should also be noted that the phrase "I am" is an allusion to Jesus' divinity, borrowing a phrase used throughout the Old Testament referring to God. One of the clearest is in Ex 3:13,14 where God reveals his name to Moses as I AM. In His words and His deeds, and in His death and resurrection, Jesus gives proof that He is God Almighty. His praise should continually be on our lips. As we praise Him before lost men and women, they too can come to know His goodness and be adopted into His family, to the praise of His glorious grace.

What's Our Response?

Encourage the people in your group to ponder how great Jesus really is. Ask them to consider what it is about Him that they each find most praiseworthy. As a group, determine not to keep it to yourselves, but tell others how great He is so they'll want to know Him too.

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What Are the Questions?

John 1:1-14

Launch

What is it about Jesus that most intrigues you and makes you think He is worth following?

Explore

1. Read vv. 1, 2. The other gospels begin with Jesus' birth or early ministry. Where does John start? Why?
2. What does John mean by the use of the term, "Word?"
3. Look up Isaiah 44:24 and compare with John 1:3. What is John's point?
4. What does it mean that "In Him was life"?
5. In vv. 6-9, John seems to interrupt himself with a digression about John the Baptist. Why does he do this?
6. Look at Isaiah 40:3-5 and Malachi 3:1. For whom is this person preparing the way? If John the Baptist is this person, what does it say about Jesus?
7. In 1:11, what does it mean that, "He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him?" What does John want us to understand about the nature of the human heart?
8. In 1:12, John summarizes the gospel message as he does repeatedly in his gospel. He says we can become a child of God. What does that imply is true of us *before* we meet the conditions of this verse?
9. What is required to be adopted into God's family?

10. Read vv. 14, and 17. In a short passage, John has made numerous allusions to Jesus' deity as he does throughout the book. He often uses Jesus' words to show that He is God. Look up the following passages and discuss what Jesus is saying about Himself.

6:32-51 | 8:12-24 | 10:1-21 | 11:17-27 | 14:1-7 | 15:1-8

11. Read John 8:58. Here again, as in the passages above, we see the phrase "I am." Why did they want to stone Him for saying this? What is the significance of these words? Where in the Old Testament does the phrase come from?

12. Besides these clear descriptions of Jesus' deity throughout the gospel, Jesus demonstrates His divinity by doing things only God can do. Describe some of them.

13. Verse 14 says, "The Word became flesh." Which of the statements accurately describes Jesus?

He was 100% God and 100% man.

He was 50% God and 50% man.

Sometimes He was God and other times He was a man.

14. Why is it important that Jesus was (and is) God?

Apply

15. Consider your answer to the launch question. What is it about Jesus that most makes you want to tell others about Him?
16. How can you feed your enthusiasm for Him?

17. The famous missionary C.T. Studd said, "If Christ be God and died for me, there is nothing too great that I can do for Him." Since He is God, and did die for us, what specifically should we do for Him?

NOTES:

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What Are the Answers?

1. John starts before the beginning of time. He is beginning to build his case that Jesus is God.
2. That term is actually loaded with meaning. For the purposes of this study it would be good for your group to know that the term “Word” or “Logos” in Greek was used by Jews to describe that which proceeds from God to fulfill His purposes to create and govern the world. John uses it to affirm that Jesus is, and always has been, one with the Father.
3. Jesus created the world. He is God.
4. Discuss. Jesus is not only alive, He is the source of life.
5. Let this remain unanswered until after question 6 if no one knows.
6. This forerunner is to prepare the way for God. If John the Baptist is this man, as the Scriptures indicate, then Jesus must be God.
7. In this context, “His own” probably means “those whom He had created.” John is observing that even though we owe Him everything, we are slow to love and embrace God.
8. We are not naturally children of God.
9. Receiving Jesus, believing in Him.
10. Discuss as many of these verses as time allows.
11. The Jews recognized the use of the word “I am” as a claim to divinity. Throughout the Old Testament, the phrase was used in reference to God. See especially Ex 3:13,14
12. He forgave sins, resurrected the dead, accepted worship, calmed the seas, etc.
13. The correct statement and biblical doctrine is that Jesus was fully (100%) God, and fully (100%) man. In many ways, this is a mystery, and difficult to comprehend.
14. One important reason is that as God, He is infinite. Therefore, His death on the cross has infinite efficacy – able to cover the sins of the world.
15. Allow the group to discuss.
16. Allow the group to discuss. Answers may include reading His Word, reading other good books, being around people who love Him, listening to great worship music, talking about Him.
17. Allow the group to discuss. Answers may include obedience to Jesus, seeking to fulfill the Great Commission.

Memorize

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 1:1



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