

“Who Are You?”

John 1:19-34

January 12, 2014

Intro: Video of John 1:1-18

v.1-5... Jesus is the WORD

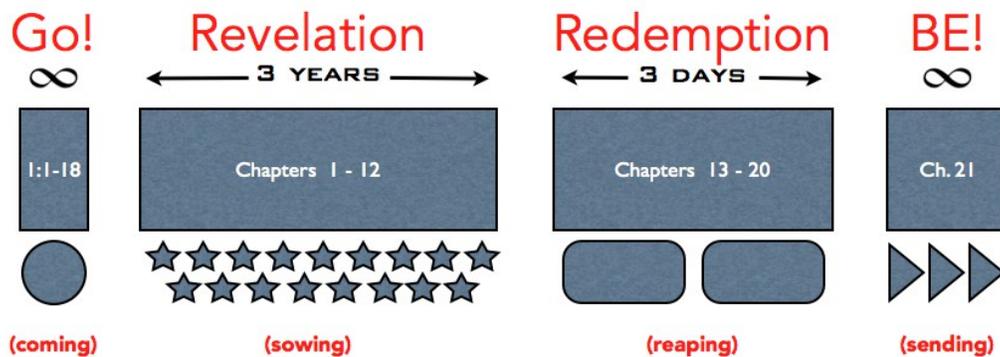
vv.6-8... John is witness to testify for all....

v.12... Gospel promise (vs. v.11)

v.14... “The Word became flesh...”

vv.15ff All good and grace comes from God

“The Walk of God” GOSPEL OF JOHN



MACRO → **MICRO**

*“These things are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,
and that by believing you may have life in His name.” - John 20:31*

T/S: We are going to take the next few weeks to walk thru Christ's first recorded week in John's Gospel....

Today we start with John's "NARRATIVE"

Learning via narrative = observation & application

Look for principles & life lessons: (vs. didactic)

T/S: Learning thru Questions vs. Answers...

Big Idea: **There is NO identity crisis in Christ!**

Preview: **5 key Questions for us today:**

1. Who are you?
2. What do you say about yourself?
3. Who is Jesus?
4. What do you say about Him?
5. Are you SURE? (based on your life)

I. WHO ARE YOU DEALING WITH?

*** Local homeless & Mary B. ***

19 *This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?"*

"the testimony of John" = NARRATIVE begins

"the Jews" = negative, religious rejecters...

"when the Jews sent to him" = "Satan's sent ones"

T/S: Read Dr. Mohler's article from this week...

Is the Enemy of My Enemy My Friend?

—An Old Question in a New Age

January 8, 2014 (by Dr. Albert Mohler @ AlbertMohler.com)

We are not living in a season of peace. Thinking Christians must surely be aware that a great moral and spiritual conflict is taking shape all around us, with multiple fronts of battle and issues of great importance at stake. The prophet Jeremiah repeatedly warned of those who would falsely declare peace when there is no peace. **The Bible defines the Christian life in terms of spiritual battle, and believers in this generation face the fact that the very existence of truth is at stake in our current struggle.**

The condition of warfare brings a unique set of moral challenges to the table, and the great moral and cultural battles of our times are no different. Even ancient thinkers knew this, and many of their maxims of warfare are still commonly cited. Among the most popular of these is a maxim that was known by many of the ancients: “The enemy of my enemy is my friend.”

That maxim has survived as a modern principle of foreign policy. It explains why states that have been at war against one another can, in a very short period of time, become allies against a common enemy. In World War II, the Soviet Union began as an ally of Nazi Germany. Yet, it ended the war as a key ally of the United States and Britain. How? It joined the effort against Hitler and became the instant “friend” of the Americans and the British. And yet, as that great war came to an end, the Soviets and their former allies entered a new phase of open hostility known as the Cold War.

Does this useful maxim of foreign policy serve Christians well as we think about our current struggles? That is not an uncomplicated question. On the one hand, some sense of unity against a common opponent is inevitable, and even indispensable. On the other hand, **the idea that a common enemy produces a true unity is, as even history reveals, a false premise.**

We must not underestimate what we are up against. We face titanic struggles on behalf of human life and human dignity against the culture of death and the great evils of abortion, infanticide, and euthanasia. We are in a great fight for the integrity of marriage as the union of a man and a woman.

We face a cultural alliance determined to advance a sexual revolution that will unleash unmitigated chaos and bring great injury to individuals, families, and the society at large. We are fighting to defend gender as part of the goodness of God's creation and to defend the very existence of an objective moral order.

Beyond all these challenges, **we are engaged in a great battle to defend the existence of truth itself, to defend the reality and authority of God's revelation in Scripture, and to defend all that the Bible teaches.** A pervasive anti-supernaturalism seeks to deny any claim of God's existence or our ability to know him. Naturalistic worldviews dominate in the academy, and the New Atheism sells books by the millions. Theological liberalism does its best to make peace with the enemies of the church, but faithful Christians have no way to escape the battles to which this generation of believers are called.

So, are the other enemies of our enemies our friends? Mormons, Roman Catholics, Orthodox Jews, and a host of others share many of our enemies in this respect. But, to what extent is there a unity among us?

At this point, very careful and honest thinking is required of us. At one level, we can join with anyone, regardless of worldview, to save people from a burning house. We would gladly help an atheist save a neighbor from danger, or even beautify the neighborhood. Those actions do not require a shared theological worldview.

At a second level, we certainly see all those who defend human life and human dignity, marriage and gender, and the integrity of the family as key allies in the current cultural struggle. We listen to each other, draw arguments from each other, and are thankful for each other's support of our common concerns. We even recognize that there are elements common to our worldviews that explain our common convictions on these issues. And yet, our worldviews are really quite different.

With the Roman Catholic Church, our common convictions are many, including moral convictions about marriage, human life, and the family. Beyond that, we together affirm the truths of the divine Trinity, orthodox Christology, and other doctrines as well. **But we disagree over what is supremely important, the gospel of Jesus Christ.** And that supreme difference leads to other vital disagreements as well: over the nature and authority of the Bible, the nature of the ministry, the meaning of baptism and the Lord's Supper, and an entire range of issues central to the Christian faith.

Christians defined by the faith of the Reformers must never forget that nothing less than **faithfulness to the gospel of Christ forced the Reformers to break from the Roman Catholic Church.** Equal clarity and courage are required of us now.

In a time of cultural conflict, the enemy of our enemy may well be our friend. But, **with eternity in view and the gospel at stake, the enemy of our enemy must not be confused to be a friend to the gospel of Jesus Christ.**

T/S: You better know who you are dealing with...

"Who are YOU?" (the question asked of John...)

1. Be comfortable in asking...
2. When answering:
 - a. Be confident (regarding self)
 - b. Be competent (regarding others)
 - "...pearls before swine..."
 - "...wolves in sheep's clothing"
 - "...when there is no peace..."

20 *And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed,*

"I am not the Christ."

"confessed" = 2X (emphasis)

"did not deny" = extreme emphasis

"I am not the Christ"

1. To know who you are, you must first realize who you are NOT...
 - a. NOT the Christ...
 - b. NOT the Messiah
 - NOT the Savior of souls...
 - NOT the hope of humanity...
 - NOT the lynchpin of love...
 - NOT the center of the creation...

2. How can you be sure you're not the Christ?
 - a. Because He IS...
 - b. HE is the Savior of souls...
 - c. HE is the Hope of humanity...
 - d. HE is the Lynchpin of love...
 - e. HE is the Creator of creation!

21 *They asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he *said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No."*

"What then?" = NOTE: the blind grope in the dark...

"Are you..."

1. Elijah? "I am not"
2. the Prophet? "No"

NOTE: if John were interested in fame & fortune he could & would have beat his own drum... He must have been overwhelmingly known (the religious leaders sent representatives out to get the scoop on him...)

II. WHO ARE YOU? (What do you say about yourself?)

22 Then they said to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?"

"Who are you?" = Again... Do you know?

NOTE: know who you are dealing with!!!

"so that we may give an answer..." (motive)

"...to those who sent us"

- KNOW who you are dealing with!

- Matthew 10:16!
- All questions are not created equal
- Custom fit your responses to the people asking vs. the questions asked...

“What do you say about yourself?”

1. This is the heart of “testimony” & “witness”
2. Knowing what you’re not is not enough.
3. How about YOU...
4. What do you say about yourself?

III. WHAT ARE YOU?

23 *He said, “I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as Isaiah the prophet said.”*

NOTE: 3 key observations:

- a. John quotes Isaiah 40...
 - Read Isaiah 40... shocking context
 - No hope without repentance
 - Wrath & consequence come to those who reject the LORD...

*** John is NOT the person of Elijah but he does represent the prophetic reference to the

coming of Elijah before the
Messiah

*** The gospel presentation
begins with sin & damnation.

- Intent: prepare a parade path of the
Prince of Peace!

- b. John answers the “who” question with a
“what” answer!
 - Note the humility...
 - Note how John disregards the question
asked and gives the answer needed
 - Note the constant elevation and
glorification of Christ

- c. Jesus is the WORD... John is the voice!
 - Are you BE-ing His voice?
 - Are you representing His Word?
 - Are you joyful in your role?

24 *Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.*

NOTE: Again... Know who you are dealing with!

“Often times, the source tells the story.” - JDP

IV. WHY DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO? (cf. v.31)

25 *They asked him, and said to him, "Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"*

*** HUGE Question:

"Why are you doing what you are doing?"

- First, take note of whose asking...
- Next, note the clueless groping...
- NOTE: the lost just don't get it!

*** John refuses to answer (cf. v.31)

26 *John answered them saying, "I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do not know.*

John is less than subtle in their culture/context:

1. John was baptizing Jews... (offensive)
 - a. Jews were thought born "clean"
 - b. Only Gentiles were baptized "clean"

2. John knew they didn't know Him!
 - a. NOTE: John is not politically correct
 - b. NOTE: John tells them the truth!
 - c. John KNOWS who he is dealing with!

V. WHO IS HE?

27 *It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."*

*** More human humility & glorification of God!

1. What's the big deal about the feet?
 - a. Explain the life of foot back then...
 - b. Explain the slave's role with feet
2. John says he is not worthy of slave status
3. John sees his blessing in being saved to serve!

28 *These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.*

A veiled geographic reference, likely in place to strengthen the credibility of John's Gospel account.

VI. WHAT DOES HE DO?

29 *The next day he *saw Jesus coming to him and *said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"*

1. Note: 2nd day begins (transition from 1 to 2)
2. Note: Jesus comes to us vs. us to Him...

*** WHO IS HE???????????

- a. Do you KNOW Him?

- b. Do you recognize the "lamb" reference:
 - Genesis 3:15... promise fulfilled!
 - Abraham & Isaac... the "type"
 - Moses & the Passover miracle...
 - Daily Temple lambs...
 - Isaiah 53... Messianic Lamb
 - Revelation... Triumphant Lamb!

- c. Do you trust the take-away clause?
 - Note: "world" is NOT universal
 - "takes away"= promise to family!
 - NOTE: "sin" vs. sins...

*** "Sins" would = bad fruit

*** "Sin" (singular) means that Christ takes away the "root" problem of SIN, vs. the "fruit" problem of "sins." – Amen!!!

30 *This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'*

*** John is pointing to Christ's pre-existence...

WHY DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO? (from v.25)

(ANSWER: "so that He might be manifested...")

31 *I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in water."*

VII. CAN YOU SEE/SENSE THE SPIRIT of GOD?

32 *John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit*

descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.

***** KEY = "remained" vs. "came upon" *****

1. John "knows" so he "goes" (to testify).
2. John knows the dove is the Spirit...
3. God the Father told John...
4. God the Spirit showed John...
5. God the Son came to John!

VIII. DO YOU KNOW, HEAR & HEED GOD'S VOICE?

33 *I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.'*

Do you KNOW the presence of God's Spirit???

IX. ARE YOU SURE?

34 *I myself have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."*

1. Have YOU seen?
2. Are YOU testifying?
3. Do you think he's good...?
4. Or... do you KNOW He's God?

Let's Pray!