

## INTRODUCTION

Who is Jesus? This is the question that the apostle John answers in many ways with his account of Jesus' earthly ministry. John wrote the most theological of the four gospels. He included unique material that is not contained in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Since John wrote his gospel account later, he was able to give information that helps the reader to better understand the events of the other three "synoptic," or similar gospels.

As an apostle, John was an eyewitness to Jesus' earthly ministry. He was divinely inspired to use his own witness, the testimony of John the Baptist, the Old Testament Scriptures, and Jesus' own words to write his narrative. He brought all these elements together to paint a full picture of exactly who Jesus is.

As you read through the first four chapters of John over the next twenty-eight days, I pray that you will see how important your own answer to the question, "Who is Jesus?" really is. Contrary to what many believe today, the truth of Jesus' deity, humanity, and character is not something that you can form your own opinion on. It is clearly taught in the pages of Scripture and is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (2 Tim. 3:16).

This truth has direct implications for your daily life. I pray that you will come to realize how the truth of God's word that was written so many years ago still speaks to the many issues that you face as a Christian young person today. But above all, I pray that your study of John will help you to grow in your personal relationship with your heavenly Father.

The structure of each day will be as follows: you will first read a passage from John, noting the bold-faced key phrase.

## DEVOTIONS ON THE GOSPEL OF JOHN FOR TEENS

Then you will be guided to think about what the passage means by reading the meditation. The “Ask Yourself” section will assist you in applying the truth of Scripture to your life. And finally, the “Praying to Your Heavenly Father” section lists three prayer prompts based on this passage that you can use as a starting point for your own prayer. The journaling space can be used to record your thoughts on the application questions or to write out your prayer.

This volume and the three that will follow are not a comprehensive commentary on the gospel according to John. Rather, they are meant to be a guide to systematically lead you through an entire book of the Bible while familiarizing you with the process of personal Bible study. If you have any questions about the verses that you are reading, I encourage you to talk about them with your parents and siblings, discuss them with godly friends, or go to an elder or pastor for help.



**JOHN 1:1-3**

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

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

## DAY 1 – JESUS IS GOD

Mark's gospel account starts with the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry. Luke's begins with the birth of Jesus. Matthew's goes back even further by including the genealogy of Jesus before his birth. But the opening words of John's gospel account go back to the very beginning of the story. He echoes Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Then John points us back even farther—to eternity past—to show that not only was God the Son present at creation, *he always was*.

The second person of the Trinity did not come into existence when he came to earth as a man. The Son of God has always existed in fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit. As *the Word*, the visible revelation of the triune God, he had an active role in the creation of the universe. Everything was created through him and for him. He also continues to uphold and sustain all things (Col. 1:13–17). From the very beginning, John makes his main point clear: Jesus is God.

The original audience of John's gospel account in the first century was Jews and Gentiles who lived in the Greco-Roman world and the surrounding areas. They had varying responses to John's bold claim that Jesus was God. Unbelieving Jews saw John's claim as blasphemy. Many unbelieving Gentiles who were used to the idea of having many gods simply added Jesus to the list. But those given true faith, whether Jew or Gentile, believed and embraced the truth of Jesus' deity.

There are also many different responses to the truth of who Jesus is today. Some deny that Jesus exists altogether. Others see him as only a good man who lived long ago or a great moral teacher. Some may even acknowledge that Jesus came from heaven but deny the authority that his teaching should have in their life. But this passage states plainly that Jesus is nothing less than God himself.

**ASK YOURSELF...**

*Who do you believe that Jesus is?*

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*How will your belief about who Jesus is affect how you read and respond to his teaching in the book of John?*

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**PRAYING TO YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER**

- This passage reminds us that our Lord is not restricted by time like humans are. *Praise* Him for his eternity!
- How do you sinfully limit God in your mind by having a view of him that is lesser than Scripture's? *Confess* this sin.
- *Thank* your heavenly Father for his continual government and care of creation.

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JOHN 1:4-9

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

## DAY 2 – LIGHT AND DARKNESS

The contrast between light and darkness is a picture that is used many times in the New Testament, especially by the apostle John. You of course are familiar with the idea of light and darkness, but do you fully understand what John means when he says that Jesus is light?

Throughout Scripture, the image of light is used to show righteousness, truth, and goodness. In Psalm 119:105 we see God’s word compared to a lamp that sheds light on the path of obedience to God’s commands. On the other hand, the image of darkness is used to show what is sinful, false, and repulsive to God. The works of darkness are described in Romans 13:13 as partying, drunkenness, immorality, lust, fighting, and envy.

Jesus is not just light; he is the Light. As the Son of God, he is the source of all light. Even when he took on a human nature and came to this dark world, he shone as a perfect example of what is true, right, and good.

Since the fall, the natural state of this world is death and darkness. All men are not only lost in the darkness, but they prefer the darkness and cannot even comprehend the light. Yet in his mercy, God uses the light of the gospel—the truth about Jesus—to draw out of darkness those whom He has elected before the world began. This light exposes sin and irresistibly draws God’s children to saving faith.

Because of Jesus’ work on the cross, his people can be lights too (Eph. 5:8). In 1 Peter 2:9 we read, “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” John the Baptist devoted his entire life to reflecting the light of Jesus into the darkness of this world so that others would believe. As a Christian young person today, you are called to do the same.

**ASK YOURSELF...**

*What are some specific ways that your life shines as light for Jesus?*

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*How can you improve in this area?*

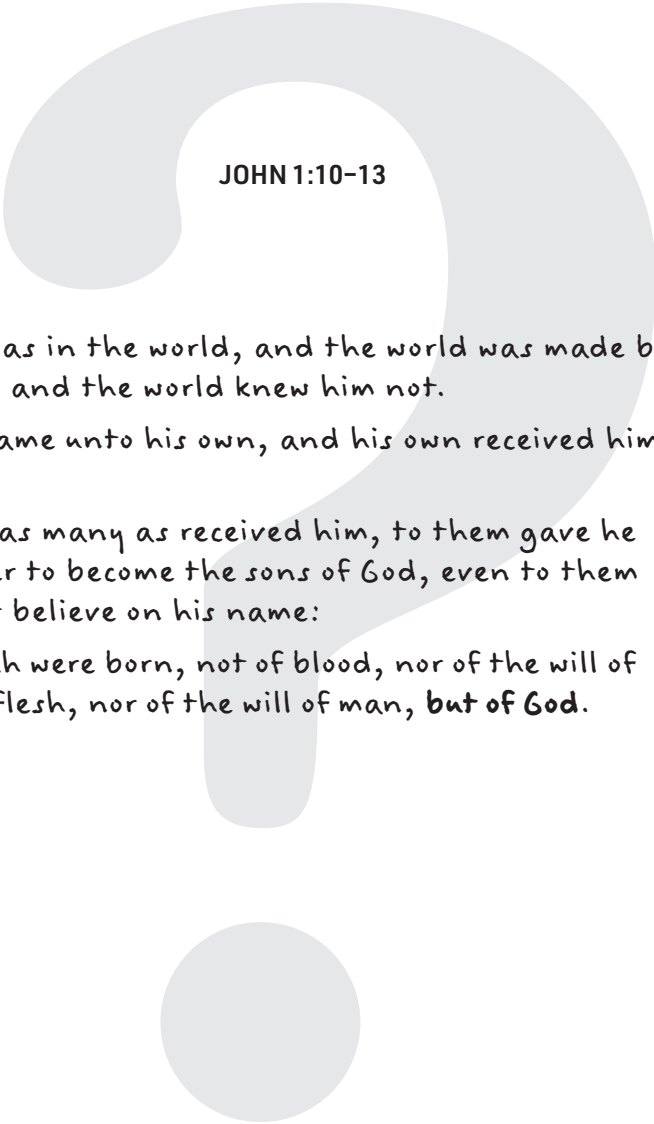
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**PRAYING TO YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER**

- Is there an area of your life where you are drawn to the darkness rather than the light? *Confess* this sin.
- *Ask* God to give you the grace and courage necessary to shine as a light in this dark world.
- *Thank* God for calling you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

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JOHN 1:10-13

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, **but of God.**

## DAY 3 – BORN OF GOD

Jesus came into this world as the true Light—the physical appearance of God’s glory. But even though his light shone on all men, his glory was not apparent to all men. The eyes of faith were necessary to recognize it. Isaiah 53:2–3 tells us that there was nothing physically remarkable about Jesus’ outward appearance. To the world he looked like an ordinary, common man—a poor carpenter’s son.

Jesus also did not look like the king that the Jewish people were expecting. They were looking for a powerful earthly ruler to save them from the rule of the Roman government. When Jesus came to “his own,” the people who had been given the promise of his coming, as a whole they rejected him. The Jews had ignored the prophets in the Old Testament, they ignored John the Baptist, and now they ignored Jesus himself. Because of this rejection, as a nation they lost the right to be the covenant people of God.

Yet there were some that did believe, both Jews and Gentiles. Why did these people believe and not others? Because the Holy Spirit had worked regeneration, or new life, in their hearts. Belief is evidence of this spiritual rebirth. Every child of God must be born again. This spiritual birth is an act of God, not man.

Simply being a part of the nation of Israel was not enough to make someone a child of God. Simply being a part of an earthly family who profess to be Christians also does not give you the right to be a child of God. (Although God does usually save in the line of generations.) Your assurance of your salvation must come from the work of God in your own heart and life, not from your ancestry or the earthly family to which you belong.

**ASK YOURSELF...**

*Have you ever been tempted to trust in your place in a Christian family as the basis for your salvation, maybe without even realizing it?*

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*Why do you think it is so tempting to trust in earthly, human things for your salvation instead of the work of God?*

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**PRAYING TO YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER**

- *Praise* God for his amazing work of regeneration (new life) in your heart.
- *Confess* your inability to believe apart from the work of the Holy Spirit in your heart.
- *Thank* God for sending the true Light into the world to save you from your sin.

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