The Gospel of John

**INTRO TO JOHN**

**LET’S OPEN OUR BIBLES TO 1 JOHN 1, AND ACTS CHAPTER 2. WE’LL BEGIN IN ACTS 2.**

**WE’RE STARTING A NEW TEACHING SERIES TODAY… LIKE NONE I’VE EVER TAUGHT. WE’RE GOING TO WALK THROUGH THE BOOK OF JOHN VERSE-BY-VERSE.**

**THIS IS WHAT I’M EMPOWERING OUR HOUSE CHURCH LEADERS TO DO, AND LET ME JUST SAY … I’D LOVE TO PARTNER WITH SOME OF YOU TO PLANT A HOUSE CHURCH … AND FOR YOU TO TEACH THE BOOK OF JOHN … I HAVE GREAT RESOURCES FOR YOU ON THE BFAM APP … THE SAME RESOURCES THAT I’M USING … ALSO … I PROVIDE MY TEACHING NOTES TO THE HOUSE CHURCH LEADERS EVERY WEEK … AND IF YOU’D LIKE, YOU CAN ALSO USE THE RECORDINGS OF MY MESSAGES FOR YOUR PREPARATION.**

**I HAVE BEEN TEACHING FOR NEARLY 30 YEARS FROM THE NKJV … AND I STILL FEEL IT IS ONE OF THE BEST ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS … BUT TODAY, I’LL BEGIN USING THE ESV AS MY PRIMARY TEACHING BIBLE … SINCE IT’S PUBLISHING IN 2001, THE ESV HAS BECOME ONE OF THE MOST RESPECTED AND WIDELY USED TRANSLATIONS. IF YOU’D LIKE TO STUDY FROM THE SAME TRANSLATION THAT I’M USING, YOU CAN ORDER A BIBLE … OR WE’LL PICK SOME UP AND YOU CAN PURCHASE ONE FROM US. THERE IS NO URGENT NEED TO CHANGE BIBLE TRANSLATIONS. OUR PARTNER AND SCHOLAR, DR. STEVE SCHELL USES THE NASB … ANOTHER VERY HIGHLY RESPECTED TRANSLATION.**

**OKAY … ACTS CHAPTER 2…**

**ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST, AFTER THE POURING OUT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, MANY THOUSANDS OF JEWISH PEOPLE GATHERED NEAR THE UPPER ROOM TO FIND OUT WHAT THE LOUD, RUSHING MIGHTY WIND NOISE WAS. AND ALONG WITH THE OTHER 11 DISCIPLES, PETER BOLDLY PREACHED TO THEM THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH… THE ONE AND ONLY SAVIOR. HIS MESSAGE DEEPLY IMPACTED MANY PEOPLE. LET’S READ WHAT HAPPENED IN…**

**Acts 2:41–42 (ESV)** So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. **42** And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

**NOTICE AGAIN V. 42 … THE PEOPLE OF HIS NEW CHURCH WERE DEVOTED TO 4 VALUES:**

1. The Apostles’ Teaching
2. The Fellowship
3. The Breaking of Bread
4. The Prayers

Now, each of these four devotions were important and non-negotiable values of the early church, however, one of them was clearly—and by far—the most important. Only through the first one, “the apostles’ teaching,” could the church have learned these values. Jesus had personally and intentionally mentored these apostles for two and a half years, and since the New Testament had not yet been written, the apostles were the only people on earth who knew how to live as New Testament, Spirit-empowered believers.

You may be thinking, “How can believers today learn to live a New Testament Spirit-empowered life? The apostles are not here to teach us.” And that’s true. However, before they died the Holy Spirit inspired apostles such as Peter, John, Matthew, Mark, James, Jude and Paul to accurately write “the apostles’ teaching.” It’s called the “New Testament.”

**FOLKS … THE APOSTLE JOHN WAS ONE OF THESE 12 TEACHING APOSTLES, AND WE’RE GOING TO LET HIM TEACH US WHAT HE LEARNED**

# **INTRODUCE DR. STEVE SCHELL… AND HIS RESOURCES ON THE BFAM APP**

Dr. Schell said, “… there is no one in all of human history who has a greater right to speak about Jesus than John.”

**WHAT MAKES JOHN SUCH AN EXPERT? LET ME READ TO YOU SOME OF WHAT’S COVERED IN DR SCHELL’S INTRODUCTION TO JOHN.**

* John was with Jesus from the earliest days of His ministry.
* He was a disciple of John the Baptist before becoming a follower of Jesus (Jn 1:35-36).
* John was actually standing beside John the Baptist when he spoke those famous words, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (Jn 1:29).
* John and Andrew were the first two of the 12 disciple Jesus invited to follow Him (Jn 1:37-39)
* John was with Jesus for the entire two and a half years of His ministry.
* John watched everything He did.
* There were times when Jesus selected only three of the disciples to accompany Him in some of His most intense spiritual moments:
  + raising a twelve- year-old girl from the dead (Lk 8:51)
  + His transfiguration (Mt 17:1-2)
  + His agony in the garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26:36-37)
  + And John was always one of the three.
* John sat next to Jesus when He served the Last Supper in the upper room (Jn 13:23).
* While the other disciples watched safely from a distance, John was personally admitted into the high priest’s courtroom and allowed to watch and listen to the horrible trial Jesus endured before the crucifixion (Jn 18:15).
* When Jesus was crucified, John went right up to the cross and stood there with four brave women (Jn 19:25-26). And Jesus trusted him so completely that from the cross He asked him to be the one who would care for His mother after He died (Jn 19:26-27).
* John stood so close to the cross that when a soldier ran a spear into Jesus’ side, he could see blood and water pour out of the wound (Jn 19:34-35).
* On the morning Jesus was raised from the dead, John was the first of the 12 disciples to look into the empty tomb and see the linen wrappings and the face cloth (Jn 20:5-8).
* And that very evening, John was in a locked room with the other disciples when the resurrected Christ appeared. There He was… so real, so solid, so genuinely alive that they could touch His scars and serve Him food (Jn 20:19-20; Lk 24:40-43).
* Some days later, John ate a “bread and fish breakfast” the risen Lord Himself cooked on a beach of the Sea of Galilee (Jn 21:9-13)
* John watched Jesus physically ascend from the Mount of Olives and disappear through a cloud (Ac 1:9).
* He also heard the Lord promise to baptize them with the Holy Spirit (Ac 1:5) and he was in the upper room when the Holy Spirit fell upon all the disciples.
* John was one of the original 120 who spoke in tongues and declared the mighty deeds of God that day (Ac 2:1-4).
* Then as the years passed, he was an eyewitness to many of the signs and wonders the Lord performed through the early church.

**NOW ... HOW MANY OF YOU ARE CONVINCED THAT JOHN HAS MANY THINGS TO TEACH US … THINGS WE DEPERATELY NEED TO HEAR AND KNOW?**

**WHAT IF JOHN ... SOMEHOW ... WAS HERE TODAY ... AND SAID HE’D BE HERE FOR A FEW MONTHS. .. AND WHAT IF—AFTER SERVICE—HE FOUND YOU AND ASKED IF HE COULD SPEND PERSONAL TIME WITH YOU ... WEEKLY ... TO TEACH YOU ABOUT JESUS ... WHAT HE SAW ... AND HEARD. .. AND THEN LATER REALIZED AND LEARNED ABOUT HIM? WOULD IT WARRANT WEEKLY TIME? WOULD YOU MAKE TIME FOR IT? I THINK YOU WOULD ... AND SO WOULD I.**

**NOW LISTEN ... THE OFFER ON THE TABLE TODAY IS ACTUALLY BETTER THAN THAT. YOU SEE ... LEARNING FROM JOHN’S WRITTEN GOSPEL IS EVEN BETTER THAN IF JOHN WERE HERE IN PERSON ... WHY? ... I’M GLAD YOU ASKED.**

**IT HAS TO DO WITH SOMETHING THAT THE APOSTLES PAUL AND PETER TAUGHT US.**

**PAUL TAUGHT US IN 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 THAT,** “All Scripture **[the Bible]** is breathed out by God…” (ESV)

**AND THEN PETER TAUGHT US SOMETHING ABOUT THE SCRIPTURES THAT … MY, MY, MY... IS A REAL GAMECHANGER... HE SAID IN 2 PETER 1:16-21...**

For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For when he received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased,” we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. And we have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

**FRIENDS ... PETER JUST TOLD US THAT EVEN THOUGH HE—AND JOHN AND JAMES—WERE EYEWITNESSES OF KING JESUS ... AND HEARD THE VOICE OF FATHER GOD WITH THEIR OWN PHYSICAL EARS ... THAT RECEIVING THE TESTIMONY THROUGH SCRIPTURE IS “MORE FULLY CONFIRMED.”**

**HERE’S WHAT THAT MEANS FOR US TODAY... THAT OF ALL THE THOUSANDS OF SERMONS AND STORIES THAT JOHN TAUGHT ABOUT WHO JESUS IS ... THIS BOOK … CALLED THE GOSPEL OF JOHN … IS THE MOST RELIABLE ... THE MOST ACCURATE ... THE MOST CONFIRMED ... AND THE MOST ANOINTED OF THE HOLY SPIRIT … THAT HE EVER TAUGHT … BECAUSE THE HOLY SPIRIT CARRIED HIM ALONG AND INSPIRED HIM TO WRITE IT ACCURATELY … GOD HIMSELF BREATHED OUT THIS GOSPEL THROUGH THE APOSTLE JOHN.**

**SO LET ME ASK … IS ANYONE BESIDES ME INTERESTED IN HEARING WHAT JOHN HAS TO SAY IN THIS GOSPEL?**

It’s almost certain that the other three gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, had already been written before John wrote his, and he knew what they had said. John probably wrote this while pastoring in Ephesus. Undoubtedly he was aware of the spiritual condition of the churches in western Asia Minor and beyond (Rev 2-3). False teachers were distorting central truths about Jesus (1Jn 2:18-27; 4:1-6). So he wrote his own account of Jesus’ ministry to put an end to that confusion.

**THE FIRST EIGHTEEN VERSES OF JOHN ARE OFTEN CALLED “JOHN’S PROLOGUE.” IN THEM, JOHN FIRMLY AND CLEARLY ESTABLISHES THE IDENTITY JESUS. JOHN KNEW THAT TO BE WRONG ABOUT JESUS IS TO PERISH ETERNALLY … SO HE TOOK UP HIS PEN AND CAREFULLY DESCRIBED THE REAL JESUS OF NAZARETH.**

**AFTER STUDYING THIS 18-VERSE OPENING IN THE ORIGINAL LANGUAGE, DR. SCHELL PARAPHRASED IT. I REALIZE IT’S IN THE INTRO TO JOHN ON THE BFAM APP, BUT IT’S SO POWERFUL, I WANTED YOU TO HAVE A SMALL TASTE OF WHAT JOHN KNEW THIS DARK WORLD NEEDED TO KNOW ABOUT JESUS. HERE IT IS:**

*(vs1-3) “When creation began, God the Father was not alone. Another divine Person was with Him, and through that Person the Father spoke all things into being, both in the spiritual world and in the physical world.*

*(v4) “He left heaven and became a man full of the life-giving presence of God. Everything He said and did revealed God’s true character and power. To meet Him was to meet the Father.*

*(v5) “But the world is so full of confusion and deception most people didn’t understand or accept the revelation that He brought to them.*

*(vs6-8) “God prepared a man to introduce this Person to the world. He was called John the Baptist. When this great prophet saw Jesus, he solemnly testified that He was the One whom the Father had sent from heaven, the Messiah, the Savior of the world.*

*(v9) “Jesus was so much like the Father that when people met Him, their deepest attitudes toward God were exposed. He was like a light that reveals what is hidden in the darkness. People who longed to know God drew close to Jesus, but those who did not want God to lead them turned away from Him. And people still respond that way when they hear the gospel.*

*(vs10-11) “It was strange to see the Creator rejected by those He created. It was strange to see the Messiah rejected by the nation who had been waiting for Him.*

*(vs12-13) “But not everyone rejected Jesus. There were those who recognized who He was, believed what He said and submitted to His leadership. God adopted those believers as His children and transformed their hearts by placing the Holy Spirit inside them. At the end of the age He will also resurrect them so they can be in His presence forever.*

*(v14) “Jesus, the Person who spoke all things into being, left heaven and became a man. His divine spirit put on human flesh, like someone dwelling in a tent, and as a man He showed people the heart of God with a clarity we had never seen before. We now know beyond all doubt that the Father’s heart is full of kindness and honesty.*

*(v15) “When John the Baptist recognized that Jesus was God’s divine Son, he boldly announced that He had existed in heaven before becoming a man.*

*(v16) “Everyone who believed in Jesus received kindness and complete honesty from Him. The apostle John said he and the other disciples experienced His kindness on one occasion after another.*

*(v17) “Jesus gave us a level of understanding about the character of God and His plan of salvation that goes far deeper than what Moses was able to tell us in the Law.*

*(v18) “No human has ever seen God the Father, but we have seen Jesus, the only begotten of God, who after completing His ministry on earth returned to heaven and sat down beside the Father. Jesus wasn’t just another human teacher or prophet or philosopher trying to understand the unseen God. He was actually God’s Son who came down from heaven to give us an eyewitness account of His Father. So now we have a completely accurate report.”*

**1 John 1:1–3 (ESV)** That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— **2** the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— **3** that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

To “behold” Jesus is to understand who He is: our Savior and divine Lord. To “believe” in Him is to properly respond to those truths. If I know that He is the One who spoke creation into existence, there is no other reasonable response but to fall on my knees and surrender my life to Him. If I know that God’s Son became a man and died on the cross for me, there is no other reasonable response but to trust Him as my Savior. To behold Him is to understand, but to believe in Him is to reach out and take hold of the eternal life He offers. The apostle John sat down and wrote out this detailed description of Jesus’ ministry so we too can behold Him. But once we understand, you and I must choose for ourselves whether we will, or will not, believe.

**LET’S CLOSE WITH TWO VERSES FROM THE GOSPEL OF JOHN**

**FIRST, A CLARIFYING STATEMENT FROM JOHN HIMSELF IN**

**John 3:36 (ESV)** Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.

**FRIENDS … IT IS NOT THE WILL OF GOD THAT YOU SUFFER HIS WRATH. IT IS HIS WILL THAT YOU BELIEVE IN HIS SON … AND OBEY HIM … SO THAT YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE.**

**AND FINALLY, LET’S LOOK AT A BEAUTIFUL PROMISE FROM THE LIPS OF JESUS:**

**John 6:40 (ESV)** For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.”

**CONCLUSION**

**I HAVE FOUR POINTS OF RESPONSE TODAY:**

1. **If you are not right with God, that you commit your life to Jesus Christ TODAY … and COME NEXT WEEK to be baptized in water.**
2. **That each of you would commit to this study … allowing God, through the apostle John, to teach you about Jesus.**
3. **That you would invite someone to come for WEEK ONE next week … and sit with them to hear and discuss what God is teaching us.**
4. **That some of you would partner with me to plant a house church … and to teach the Gospel of John … using Dr. Schell’s resources … and if you’d like, my notes and the recording of my teachings.**