

Which Were Born

John 1:6-13



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FOCAL Read Responsively (John 1:6-13 KJV)

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. {7} **The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.** {8} He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. {9} **That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.** {10} **He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.** {11} He came unto his own, and his own received him not. {12} **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: {13} Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."**

Power Question Do I understand that my salvation - if I am saved - is wholly from God my Savior? How does this understanding effect my Christian walk?

People have a tendency to make *salvation* - that state where God Himself bring the believer in Jesus to - to make salvation *much more difficult* than it is. In fact, many people make the Christian way of life *much more difficult* than it really is. Now, don't get me wrong. The Christian, living in fellowship with his Savior, *often suffers persecution*. Our Lord Jesus said:

(John 15:18-20 NIV¹) "If² the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do

1 New International Version

2 The Greek particle *ei* with the Present Active Indicative of *miseo*, which is *not hypothetical*, but it is a *statement of fact*. Jesus was saying **"If the world hates you, and it will, then know that it hated Me first"**

not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also."

The first century Church suffered *great persecution*. In Rome it was perfectly acceptable to worship *any god you chose*, as long as you worshiped Caesar *once* every year. Once you worshiped Caesar by burning incense to him and saying out loud, "Caesar is Lord", you were given a document that showed you fulfilled this requirement. The early Christians would not do this, so they were subjected to terrible persecution for *worshiping their God illegally*. Christians who live according to Jesus suffer, often terribly - and we understand this. That is not what I mean by making Christianity *too hard*. What I mean is that many have *put too much of man* in Christianity, and not enough of Christ.

You see, the Bible sets forth some *very real truths* about human nature, God's Will, and the making of *the Christian*. Let's look at these truths.

1. Man Is Totally Lost - But God Is Totally Able

We are told:

FOCAL (John 1:6-7 KJV) "There was a man sent³

³ apostello {pronounced ap-os-tel'-lo}, Perfect Passive Participle - John was *sent* with the result that he *continued being sent* from God. His apostleship was as eternal as the God Who sent him.

from God, whose name was John. {7} The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

The first five words in this text establish a *key truth* in the Book of John. You see, John the Baptist was a man *sent from God*. "Sent" is a Greek word that means "**to be sent as a messenger, as an Apostle, as one who brings a message from a King or from God**". In fact, this verse could be translated:

John was sent by God *and continued to be sent* as His Apostle, God's Messenger

Though Jesus our Lord chose a *twelve Apostles* to represent Him at the beginning of His earthly ministry, John the Baptist was actually the *first Apostle chosen* in Christ's ministry. God chose this man from eternity to go before Jesus and preaching the coming *Lamb of God* - and the interesting truth about John's choosing was that he was set apart *while he was yet in his mother*. The Bible says that *before John was ever conceived* God commissioned him to this holy office. We read:

(Luke 1:15-17 NLT⁴) "For he [John] will be great in the eyes of the Lord. He must never touch wine or hard liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even before his birth. And he will persuade many Israelites to turn to the Lord their God. He will be a man with the spirit and power of Elijah, the prophet of old. He will precede the coming of the Lord, preparing the people for his arrival. He will turn the

⁴ New Living Translation

hearts of the fathers to their children, and he will change disobedient minds to accept godly wisdom."

John was *set aside by God, chosen by God, and saved by God* to do His work *before he was ever conceived!* The first time John realized that Jesus was the *Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world* was when Jesus came to him to be baptized. In fact John said:

(John 1:29-31 KJV) "... Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. {30} This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. {31} And I knew⁵ him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water."

John *did not know Who Jesus was* until that day he baptized the Lord. So we have here:

- a. A man, set aside *before he was ever born* as an Apostle of God
- b. If an Apostle of God, he was *certainly saved* by God - for our Lord will *not* use the unbeliever (**Psalm 59:8; 79:6; 94:10; 106:47; 66:18-19**).
- c. He was an Apostle preaching the *Coming Messiah*,

⁵ eido {pronounced i'-do}, *Pluperfect Active Indicative* - The pluperfect tense in Greek occurs rarely. It corresponds in a single Greek word to the sense of the English pluperfect, which indicates an event viewed as having been once and for all accomplished in past time. With the *negative* in this sentence, John is saying **"I didn't really perceive nor understand that [my cousin] Jesus was the Messiah"**.

but up until the point of Christ's baptism he had *no idea* that Jesus was that Messiah.

d. He *witnessed for Christ* before he ever knew Christ

What God shows us by introducing this *enigma* we call John is that **His Will reigns supreme - even among the children of men**. To you and I, so accustomed to the idea that *we are in control of all things*, this is an alien concept. Yet Beloved, the truth that **God is in control** is not foreign to Scripture. God *is* in control - and God *is* real.

God is *particularly in control* when it comes to the matter of salvation!

FOCAL(John 1:8-9 KJV) **"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. {7} The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. {8} He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. {9} That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.**

John the Baptist *was not the Light of God* - Jesus alone occupies that position - but he **was sent to bear witness of that Light**. The enigma that is John and the salvation of sinners through Jesus are tied together in this text. God is Sovereign - and His Sovereign power exists *particularly* in the area of the salvation of sinners.

In our day and age we make *salvation* a matter almost

entirely a work of man. The *Purpose Driven Church* written by Rick Warren talks about setting up services in ways that will *entice* unbelievers into the Church. Many of my preacher brethren believe and teach that - unless we change the way we do business - then we will *never reach the unsaved*. But I disagree with this! There is nothing wrong with doing things a *different way* - nothing wrong with using technology such as Power Point and different forms of music. But Beloved, the Power in salvation is not *whether or not I convince you to come forward* - the power is in God Almighty!

The Bible says of humanity that we are *all under sin*, actually *in slavery to sin* prior to the point of our salvation:

(Romans 3:9-12 KJV) "... we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; {10} As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: {11} There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. {12} They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

The Bible is *very clear* that man is *unable* because of sin to *seek God on his own*. Man has no will to find God, nor does he ever even *look* for God. Look at the above text. The Bible clearly says and repeats the word **none**.

**none righteous
none who understands**

**none seeks God
none in the way of God
none profitable
none good**

The old time preachers described the Biblical state of man in sin as a *totally depraved state*, or *the total depravity of man*. Man is:

(Ephesians 2:1 KJV) "... dead in trespasses and sins⁶"

Illustration When I was growing up, my parents moved to the *Outer Banks* of North Carolina. This is a beautiful area, close t the ocean, yet far enough inland to not be threatened by tropical storms - *normally anyway*. We loved living at the Outer Banks. The only thing we hated was the *water* in that place. The water that we drew from the well was a type of *sulfur water*. The water was drinkable enough, I suppose, but it had a terrible, sulfur, stink to it. It was heavy with minerals. I have no idea why it smelled like it did - the taste really wasn't that bad - but the smell made it hard to drink. It also stained the ice trays brown - not very appetizing when you're trying to drink a cold Coca Cola!

Do you want to know how we fixed the sulfur water problem? In time we *moved away* from that place, and moved to an area where the water was sweet and good to drink. There was no way to fix the water. No filter will remove that sulfur smell. You can add anything you want to add to the water, and it will taste like sulfur AND

⁶ also Colossians 2:13

what you added. The truth is this: when something is that polluted, it cannot be fixed with man's efforts. You need to move to where the water is pure - or turn to God, Who alone is able to - as the Bible says - "**.. bring a clean thing out of an unclean ..**"⁷

Man is like that sulfur water in his natural state. He is unclean - the Lord used the word *dead* - in sin. Our God, the Designer and Creator of all things, could have used a *different word* than *dead* if He meant something else. God used the word "dead", the Greek *nekros*, to show that prior to Christ *every person on the face of this earth* is totally unable to reach God, to seek God, or to desire God or do good for God *unless God first makes a way*.

God must open the heart of the unbeliever before that unbeliever will accept Christ. The Bible says:

FOCAL (John 1:10-11 KJV) "He [Jesus] was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. {11} He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

Illustrate Just the other day I was blessed when I went to see an event at one of our local schools. I always love attending these events. My children are all grown up now, and the best time of my life was that time I had with them while they were young. I pray that all you parents understand that children are a blessing from God - a blessing you need to care for as they are in their formative years (see **Proverbs 22:6**).

While I watched these precious young people, I used my "new" camera to chronicle the event. I purchased this camera on sale at a ridiculously low price at one of our local stores. The camera had everything that I wanted - particularly a zoom lens so I could get great pictures while at these sports events. So I took a number of pictures - nearly two rolls of film - and was really excited when I got these pictures back from the developer. That is, I was excited until I looked at the pictures! They were dark, grainy, so much so that you couldn't distinguish who was in each shot. Though the telephoto lens on the camera seemed to do a great job as I was using it, there wasn't enough light getting through the lens to the film inside the camera. Now I see why the camera was on sale!

When our Lord Jesus Christ walked this earth everywhere He went He healed and loved people. Yet the Bible says that He was not recognized by the world, nor even by Israel herself. This old world - and every person in it - is naturally under a state of *spiritual blindness*. The unbeliever is *lost - even dead in sin*. This is why Someone Who never did an evil was treated so evilly just before He was executed.

You may believe in your heart that people are *inherently good*, and that, at their core, all people will automatically do the decent thing. That's not true for the unsaved, for the person lost in spiritual death. The world acts the way the world acts, because the world marches to the tune of *that fallen angel Lucifer*. The world⁸ is dead, and knew not nor knows not Christ. To the world Jesus is nothing,

7 Job 14:4

8 When I use the word "world" I am referring to those who are lost, who have never been *born again* by faith in Jesus Christ

and self is everything. Man is totally, desperately, absolutely lost - unable to do the good, and unable to seek God.

2. The Hope Of Man Is The Power Of God

FOCAL (John 1:12-13 KJV) "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: {13} Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

If man is in a totally lost state - then what hope do we have? The Bible tells us that the answer is in the Sovereign and Absolute Power of God. We read in **verse 12 "as many as received Him"**. This is the *whosoever will* of Scripture, a *whosoever will* that is often misunderstood. If man is *unable* by nature of his fallen estate - unable *because* he is spiritually dead and separated from God - then *God Himself* must *open the heart of man* to the Gospel. The Bible teaches us both truths. It teaches us that "**as many as received Him**" - the *whosoever will* of the Word. But the Scripture also teaches us that "**to then gave He [God] power to become to sons of God**". We are *unable* to be saved apart from the power of God. We are *unable* to even desire God, to seek God, apart from God's calling. We are *unable* to become sons of God unless He empowers. But when He *opens the door* and calls to your heart, you'd better *receive Him as Savior!*

Our Lord Jesus told us:

John 6:37, 44 (ESV⁹) "All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.... No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day. "

God must *open your heart* and make it *pliable to the Gospel*. He must give you understanding. He must come into the inner man and *draw* you. Unless God opens your eyes to the Gospel message, you will never come to Christ.

In short, Beloved, it is *very dangerous* to believe that you can accept Christ as Savior *anytime you want*. The Bible is very clear that God must be in the process, or you are absolutely unable to come into the Kingdom. So many have said, "I'll not accept Christ today - another day will do". Yet God is clear that He must - *by reason of the fallen nature of man* - be in the process of calling to salvation. If He is not, you will never come to Him.

FOCAL (John 1:13 KJV) "**Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**"

Those who are in the state that Jesus Christ called *born again*¹⁰ - saved by faith in Christ - are in that state

⁹ English Standard Version

¹⁰ John 3:3-7 (KJV) "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. {4} Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? {5} Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. {6}

because *God opened their hearts to the Gospel message* and they accepted that call. It is God's will that you be saved, and God Who opens the door. But once the door is open, you *must step through!* It is a dangerous thing to hear the call of God, then reject that call.

Salvation begins as a *partnership between God and man*. The person whose heart is opened to the message of salvation *because God willed to do so* then must step forward and accept what has been offered. There must be an *enabling* on God's part, and a *receiving* on man's part. Man does *absolutely nothing of merit* in the process of salvation. When the believer's eyes are opened to his lost estate, he steps forward toward the Light that is Christ. He steps out of that darkened room of spiritual death and toward the Bright Light of Jesus.

At that moment you become *born again*, as the Bible says:

1 Peter 1:23 (HCSB¹¹) "... since you have been born again — not of perishable seed but of imperishable — through the living and enduring word of God."

You become born into the Family of God through the *incorruptible power of God*. The Word of God - Jesus Christ - Who lives and abides forever brings you to that state of Eternal Life. We who are saved are *born again*, born into an Eternal Family. This New Birth comes:

That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. {7} Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

11 Holman Christian Standard Bible

FOCAL (John 1:13 KJV) "... not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Jesus repeatedly taught that there are:

Matthew 20:16 (KJV) "... many be called, but few chosen."¹²

and

2 Peter 3:9 (NASB¹³) "The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance."

God calls, and calls, and calls to salvation. Very few Sundays pass when the pastor does not see someone in the audience *resist the Gospel*, refusing to step forward for Christ. How dangerous that is! Unless the Lord opens the heart, none are able to be saved. Unless the Lord lightens the path, none step forward to meet Him in glory.

The hope of salvation is - from beginning to end - fully in Christ. The hope of salvation is fully a product of God. Not of your own goodness, not of your own ability, but of the very power of God.

3. If You Are Saved, You Have Power

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, then to you

12 also see **Matthew 22:14; Revelation 17:14**

13 New American Standard

FOCAL (John 1:12-13 KJV) "... gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: {13} Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

You who believe *are* sons of God, even now.

There is a Bible "version" - frankly, I prefer to call it a *perversion* called "Today's New International Version". This version is *gender neutral*, removing phrases or words that refer to *men, sons, or mankind* lest it offend women. How foolish this is! Women, God's Word calls you *sons of God* for a reason. It is true in the ancient world women were often regarded poorly, treated horribly in comparison with men. But I want each and every one of you to understand this:

If you have accepted Jesus Christ as Savior, you are considered the *sons of God*. There is no discrimination, no lack, no lesser inheritance for the woman as opposed to the man. You are ALL sons of God by faith in Jesus.

Romans 8:14 (KJV) "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

You all are enabled by God to live as sons of God. You all are His, and you all need to rely fully on Him for all things, for every spiritual blessing. As sons of God we know that one day we shall all be like Jesus, cleansed, perfected, when we meet Him in eternity. The Bible tells us:

1 John 3:1-3 (HCSB) "Look at how great a love the

Father has given us, that we should be called God's children. And we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it didn't know Him. Dear friends, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet been revealed. We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself just as He is pure."

If you are saved, you are called to love Him. And if you are saved and have loved ones that do not know Him, then you need to understand that you will not be able to reach these loved ones on your own. You must pray, and ask the Father to open the doorway of their hearts. He alone has the power to make new life, to draw the sinner, and to raise up the fallen.

Illustrate (1 John 4:14-19 KJV) "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. {15} Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God. {16} And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. {17} Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. {18} There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. {19} We love him, because he first loved us."

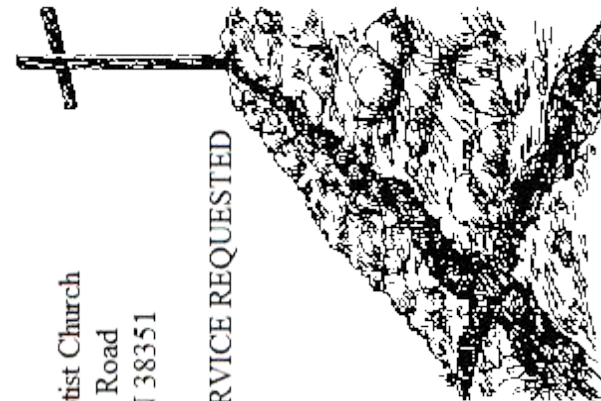
In America - and even in the Church and among the saints of God - we have learned to live our lives in

fullness, but few of us have learned to live our lives in want or in suffering. When you ask some people how they are doing you find yourself being given a medical history ... and everything that's being reported is gloomy and sad.

It is true that many of us suffer afflictions, but it's also true that - dear friend - things could always be worse. If you don't think this is true why not stop by your local "long term care facility", whether it be a hospital or a nursing home? Step into these places and, in just a few moments, you will find yourself quite happy with the Cross that you bear ... for you'll not want the Cross that many of these dear saints have to bear.

The Bible teaches us that we who love the Lord should frequent places where people suffer so we can minister to them. There is a reason that Jesus demanded that our love be *more* than just words. When all you do is seek your own satisfaction then you never experience the benefits that love can bring. When you put your love in action you cease being selfish and self centered, and you learn the lesson that Jesus teaches. Love enables us to do great things. Perfect surrendered love - love like our Lord Jesus Christ taught us to have - casts out all fear.

May God touch your hearts with these words.



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