

**The Gospel of John**  
**Lesson #76**  
**The Journey**  
 Jim Hoffman

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**The Gospel of John**

- In John 8:23 we read - Jesus said to them, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world."
- This is like Jesus saying, "Even if I were to spend unlimited hours with you trying to explain myself, you simply lack the capacity and the willingness to understand".
- This is like trying to explain the Trinity to an oak tree - our job in evangelism is trying to explain the living God to the spiritually dead.

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**The Gospel of John**

- When Jesus said he was from a different world than the Jews he was speaking with, he really meant it.
- The Greek word for world is "cosmos" – and it has multiple meanings depending on how it is used in a sentence.
- The meanings that seem to apply here are – 1) the order or arrangement of things and 2) the division between the godly and the ungodly.

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### The Gospel of John

The Believers Commentary on John 8:23

This meant that they had a very low outlook on things. They could not rise above the literal things of time and sense. They had no spiritual understanding. In contrast, Christ was from above. His thoughts, words, and deeds were heavenly. All that they did smelled and tasted of this world, whereas Jesus' whole life told that he came from a purer land than this world.

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### The Gospel of John

• "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world".

• An interesting juxtaposition – below versus above, and of this world versus not of this world.

• When we try to share the gospel, we have a barrier to navigate that is harder than just not speaking our neighbor's language – we are speaking to the dead. 5

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### The Gospel of John

Ephesians 2:1-3 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. 6

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### The Gospel of John

- What a difference on every level of life between those who are spiritually dead and the believer who has been made alive.
- What Paul describes for us in Ephesians 2 is a picture of a life that is lost in sin, lost in the darkness of this world, and subject to the whims of the flesh.
- We are children of God's blessing while the lost are people standing in line to face the wrath of God – the two could not be more different.

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### The Gospel of John

Ephesians 2:4-7 But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved— and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

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### The Gospel of John

- Ephesians 2:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins.
- Paul addresses this gap between the living and dead in his letter to the church at Ephesus – and he gives some key insights into the chasm.
- He begins with the situation Jesus said his opponents in John 8 were in – they were dead (unresponsive) in their sin and unless change comes, they will die there.

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### The Gospel of John

- An apt description of the spiritually dead would be to say they are totally driven and guided by what the flesh desires and are trapped in the devil’s ethos.
- Let’s look at the remedy in Ephesians 2:4 “But God”.
- We could say the same remedy applies when we are speaking to the dead – without the intervention of the Holy Spirit no one ever has, or ever will be saved<sub>10</sub>

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### The Gospel of John

- By his grace you have been saved and he raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.
- Now just how great and how good must he be if we will spend all eternity learning of his goodness and greatness – these attributes of God are said to be “immeasurable”!!

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### The Gospel of John

Permit me to try to excite all of you as to your future - if someone asks, “what will you do in Heaven?” tell them that in addition to worshipping God face-to-face you will do a lot of the things Adam and Eve did in the garden. They worked, they ate, they talked, they played, and generally enjoyed what many falsely call the smooth stretches of this life, “the good life”. But, there is more - Ephesians 2 makes it clear that we will spend eternity discovering and learning how great, and how good God is. Yes, it will take that long. When we have a greatly blessed day in this world we always have this sense of “this is nice, but I have to face the reality that it won’t last”. But in glory every day will be greatly blessed with the additional comfort that comes from knowing it will last.

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### The Gospel of John

- John 8:24 Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am, you will die in your sins. NASB
- Exodus 3:14 God said to Moses, "I am who I am." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I am has sent me to you.'" 15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.'"

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### The Gospel of John

- "I am who I am" – Ego-I-Me (phonetic) in effect God declares to Moses "I am the ever-present, everlasting one".
- The above comes from the Greek O.T. – this is like saying Lassie barks. To say, "I am" is to say, "God is". (noun/verb)
- Exodus 3:15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.'"

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### The Gospel of John

- What is the significance of "The Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you."?
- Luke 20:37 But that the dead are raised, even Moses showed, in the passage about the bush, where he calls the Lord the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob. 38 Now he is not God of the dead, but of the living, for all live to him."

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### The Gospel of John

- If I could make one thing “stick” with you today it is probably the idea that saints do not die – God seems to have no interest in being God of the dead.
- The immortality of the saint is a precious thing – when we know we will never die it helps us to handle anything that comes our way.
- Eventually the day of our passing will come for all of us, and someone will pronounce us as being dead, but we will in fact be more alive than we’ve ever been!

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### The Gospel of John

- John 8:25 So they said to him, “Who are you?” Jesus said to them, “Just what I have been telling you from the beginning.”
- All of a sudden, the Jews ask a very direct question – they ask, “who are you?”.
- All this time Jesus has relied on his works to disclose his identity – in fact he never says, “I am God”, but his works declared his identity loud and clear.

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### The Gospel of John

- John 5:36 But the testimony that I have is greater than that of John. For the works that the Father has given me to accomplish, the very works that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father has sent me. 37 And the Father who sent me has himself borne witness about me.
- Matthew 3:17 and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.” (the Father said Jesus was God)

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### The Gospel of John

The problem for the Jews is not a lack of evidence that Jesus is the Christ – by the time we get to John chapter 8 I do not see how it is possible to not know Jesus is the promised Messiah. We see the same today all around us. Many people we know fall back on rhetoric like, “well, I’m just not sure”, or “you know the Bible was written by men so how can we trust it”, or maybe even, “in the Old Testament God seemed vindictive and mean so I want nothing to do with him”. The Jews of Jesus’ day and the unsaved of our day do not lack proof of Jesus’ identity - they lack the desire to be saved because they love their sin more than they want God and eternal life.

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### The Gospel of John

- John 8:26 “I have much to say about you and much to judge, but he who sent me is true, and I declare to the world what I have heard from him.”
- Oh my, Jesus now reveals that he has lots of evidence against them – and that evidence is enough to condemn them.
- When Jesus said, “you will die in your sins” he knew what he was talking about – the Alpha and Omega knows the end from the beginning.

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### The Gospel of John

- John 8:27 They did not realize that He was speaking to them about the Father. 28 So Jesus said, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am, and I do nothing on My own, but I say these things as the Father instructed Me”. (NASB)
- When Jesus speaks of being “lifted up” he was not speaking of a worship service song – he was speaking of dying a criminal’s death on Calvary.

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### The Gospel of John

- “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am.”
- There are arguments to indicate that the crucifixion reveals Jesus to be God, but even stronger ones once the resurrection happens.
- Sometimes we can get too precise in our exegesis – in this case it is the whole of the sequenced events around Jesus’ death that proved he was Messiah.

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### The Gospel of John

- John 8:29 “And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.”
- This is now the 4<sup>th</sup> time in chapter 8 that Jesus speaks of being sent by the Father and that he was doing the very things that pleased the Father.
- In a sense, his message was not original with him, but was one straight from God, the Father.

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### The Gospel of John

- As we share the message of the scriptures, we should see ourselves in the same fashion as Jesus saw himself.
- We are not carrying our message, but the very message God has for the world – the God who speaks sends us then to repeat what he has spoken.
- We may be able to dream up some very exciting things that might even sound as though they are scripture, but nothing that originates with us has the same power!

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Questions?

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