

Title: ON KNOWING GOD, JOHN 1:9-18  
(Chatham, NJ; 01/02/11, AM) [E – Juxtaposition of Ideas]

Theme: Although the world did not recognize who Jesus was and Israel did not receive Him, he still revealed God in His most complete revelation.

Purpose: To urge the audience to accept Christ and the purpose of his revelation, that is, to become children of God.

Introduction:

1. John's prologue describes the nature of Christ like no other passage of our sacred writings. Only Colossians 1 comes close.
2. Given this profound description John also demonstrates the irony that although many did not recognize (10) or receive Jesus—though the world was created through him—he still gave knowledge or revelation of the Father (18).
3. John juxtaposes knowledge given with knowledge rejected.
4. Slowly over the centuries the light of this revelation has penetrated the darkness but it still darkens the minds of many.
5. John revealed the creator, giver and sustainer of life, and the true light.
6. Jesus, the Word made flesh, acts in complete unity with the Father to be all of these.
7. Will your new year bring about a firm commitment to these truths?

#### I. The World and His Own People.

- A. The darkness has overwhelmed humanity.
  1. The world did not know him (10) despite his role in creation.
  2. This breathtaking shock testifies to the idolatry Paul speaks of in Rom 1:19-24.
  3. Furthermore Israel, "His own," did not receive him (11).
  4. Of all people on earth, those with the traditions and covenant with the God who made all things should have accepted him.
  5. Yet the darkness is deep and abiding.
  6. Though revelation has pierced the darkness, humanity has largely refused to walk by its light.
- B. The question of why cannot always be answered easily.
  1. What seems so obvious to believers has been hidden from unbelievers.
  2. For many it threatens their lifestyle (3:19-21).
  3. Others are honest enough to admit that have intellectual pre-dispositions. (See several quotes from *Salvo Magazine*, Winter 2010, p. 15.)
  4. The Bible never insists that people are stupid; Jesus calls it blindness.
  5. The impartation of knowledge, raw facts, must be accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit to open up the hearts of unbelievers.

#### II. John the Baptist, A Bridge to the Land of True Belief.

- A. John's initial testimony played a significant role.
  1. Perhaps this is why Jesus considered John the greatest prophet.
  2. His role permeates the Gospel's testimony (6, 15, 19, 29, and 35).
  3. Only this Gospel gives us such details of his testimony.
- B. The witness of Christ's true identity.
  1. "He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me."
  2. The NIV only changes "ranks before" to "surpasses."
  3. John recognizes Christ's pre-existence.
  4. He recognizes that it demonstrates his pre-eminence.

5. Not only does this assume an order of hierarchy but it also places Jesus Christ at the pinnacle of the hierarchical order.
6. It is also why Paul insists that at some point “every knee shall bow” and “every tongue shall confess” that Jesus is Lord.
7. This witnesses to the very nature of our universe: Christ’s life and work reveal the God who created and sustains the world.

III. Jesus Has Made God Known (Revealed Him in verse 18). In contrast to the rejection of this knowledge, the Gospel of John insists that Christ is the true revealer of the true God.

- A. But Israel already “knew,” didn’t they?
  1. They had the traditions and conceptions of God that monotheism had to offer.
  2. They knew the words of the prophets, Moses, Elijah and others.
  3. They extolled God’s nature in their worship songs.
  4. Yet even they did not accept him.
- B. Christ, a complete revelation of God.
  1. “For in him the whole fullness of deity lives in bodily form,” Col. 2:9.
  2. “He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power,” Hebrews 1:3.
  3. What were only shadows in the OT, Christ makes visible in the New.

Conclusion:

1. The truth about God is revealed only in Jesus Christ.
2. To know God you must know and believe in him.
3. The church is founded on this premise.
4. You must receive him by believing in him; in this way you will become a child of God (12).
5. You must also be born again (John 3) by water and the Spirit.
6. Don’t reject the knowledge of God and the eternal life he gives pass you by.