

# Cru.Comm

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LEADER'S GUIDE

## NO ONE IS LIKE HIM • JESUS



Photograph by Greg Schneider/Worldwide Challenge

### WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW?

#### JOHN 1:1-14

##### **The Praises of Him**

In 1Peter 2:9 Peter says, “But you are a chosen people, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” He is making an allusion to Exodus 19:5-6. There Moses is speaking with God at the foot of Mount Sinai. He and the Israelites have just escaped from Egypt and have been making their way toward the Promised Land. God is about to give the Ten Commandments to the people as a guide for life. In anticipation of that He says, “Now if you will obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation” (Exodus 19:5-6).

Peter seizes on this promise and says it is ours because of Christ. What God offered as a condition of our obedience, Peter says is ours because of the obedience of Jesus. Not only for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles who have believed the gospel. God adopts us as His own and in our lives fulfills all the long anticipated promises.

To Peter’s mind, there is only one obvious response: We must declare His praises! Peter is not just talking about praising Him in a worship service, but praising Him before lost men and women who also need to know His grace. We were rescued out of darkness and brought into His wonderful light. And, we can invite anyone, everyone, to come experience the love and forgiveness that we have. Our primary job is to tell everyone who will listen, how great Jesus is, so that they will want to know Him, too. The heart of evangelism is praise.

This study is the introduction to a four-week series on evangelism. In the weeks to come, we’ll talk about the scope of the gospel: no matter how good or bad you think you are, you need and can have, Jesus’ forgiveness. We’ll also look at some of the strategies Jesus employed in communicating the gospel. This week though, is just about Jesus. If the focus of evangelism is to declare His praises, we need to first look at what we praise Him for.

To fully describe His praises, we would need to do an entire series on Jesus: His life, His teaching, His healings, His death and resurrection. As John said, “Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.”

### WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

When we share our faith, what we are really doing is telling other people how great Jesus is, so that they will want to know him too. The heart of evangelism is praise. This study is a brief look at Jesus’ deity. He is worthy to be praised because He is God.

We want to hear from you! Please send your feedback on this study to [cru.comm@uscm.org](mailto:cru.comm@uscm.org).

## Jesus is God

Instead of attempting that here, we are going to take a much more limited view of Jesus' praises, and study John's introduction to Jesus in John 1:1-14. (cru.comm also includes a nine-week series on Jesus' ministry in the Training Group level.) It seems that John has one overriding purpose in his prologue: to show that Jesus is God in the flesh.

The other three gospels all begin with either Jesus' birth, or the start of His ministry. John goes back much further to eternity past where He says, "The Word (Jesus) was with God and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning."

In verse 3, He makes the astounding claim that everything in the world was made by Jesus. He is the Creator God, who made the heavens and the earth and everything in them. In verse 4, Jesus is not merely alive, but carries within Him Life itself. He gives life and light to all men. The things that John is saying are absolutely extraordinary. He is claiming that Jesus is eternally self-existent, He created the entire universe, and He is the source of life for all things. He is God!

Then in vv.6-9, he appears to interrupt himself with a digression about John the Baptist. In fact, he is offering one more piece of evidence for Jesus' deity. In the Old Testament, God promised that before He came as Messiah, He would send a messenger ahead of Himself to prepare the way. Isaiah 40:3-5 and Malachi 3:1 contain two of these prophecies. In each case, a man is described preparing the way for the coming of God. John the Baptist's ministry was one more piece of evidence confirming that Jesus is God.

In the next paragraph, John summarizes the gospel, as he will do repeatedly throughout the book. "To all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God" (John 1:12). Who could possibly have the authority to make someone a child of God? Only God himself.

Verse 12 also is a great place for you to share the gospel with any non-Christians in the group. Point out that the opportunity to become a child of God, implies that we are not already children of God. But God, in His grace, readily adopts us into His family if we will just believe in, and receive Jesus. It is also a good verse to use to motivate believers to share Christ with others. People that don't know Jesus are like orphans. They have none of the benefits of being God's child that we experience. God can use the Christians in your group to help others be adopted into God's family.

Finally in v. 14 John says, "We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." In calling Jesus the One and Only, he is again affirming that Jesus is no mere man, nor even an angel, or a specially created being. He is the one true God.

John continues to affirm this throughout his gospel. He shows Jesus' power over nature, His ability to heal and to raise the dead, and he records the extraordinary claims Jesus makes about Himself. Claims that, if not true, could only come from the greatest megalomaniac the world has ever seen. Jesus' "I am" statements are such examples of this. He claimed to be:

- 6:48 The bread of life
- 8:12 The light of the world
- 10:11 The gate for the sheep
- 10:11 The good shepherd
- 11:25 The resurrection and the life
- 14:6 The way, the truth, and the life
- 15:5 The vine

## WHAT IF THERE'S A PROBLEM?

The student notes make no reference to 1Peter. You may want to use the information from "what do I need to know" on 1Peter 2:9 as an introduction to the study of John 1, to give it context. Use this to explain the concept of evangelism really being a form of praise.

Also, you will probably not have enough time to read and discuss all of the "I am" statements. Review them ahead of time and choose the ones you most want to discuss with your group.

# JESUS • PG 3

## WHAT'S YOUR POINT?

Meditate on how great it is that you have been adopted into God's family, and praise God for all He has done. Think about the people that you know who have not experienced this. What could you tell them of what you know about Jesus that would help them come to know him too?

Look up each of these references, and discuss in your group what Jesus was saying about Himself in each of them. When we understand how outrageous these claims are, it's laughable that anyone would deny that Jesus claimed to be God.

It should also be noted that the phrase "I am" is an allusion to Jesus' divinity borrowing a phrase used throughout the Old Testament referring to God. For example, "I, the Lord-with the first of them and the last-I am" (Is 41:4), or "Yes, and from ancient days I am" (Isa 43:13). Jesus' use of this title is a claim to deity.

In His words and His deeds, and in His death and Resurrection, Jesus gives proof that He is God Almighty. His praise should continually be on our lips. As we praise Him before lost men and women, they too can come to know His goodness and be adopted into His family, to the praise of His glorious grace.

**This study is accompanied by an article to be read before the study. Hand it out to the group at the end of the study and have them read it this week.**

## MEMORY VERSE

John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

## WHAT ARE THE ANSWERS?

1. John starts before the beginning of time. He is beginning to build his case that Jesus is God.
2. Jesus created the world. He is God.
3. Discuss. Jesus is not only alive, but He is the source of life.
4. Let this remain unanswered until the next question if no one knows.
5. This forerunner is to prepare the way for God. If John the Baptist is this man, as the scriptures indicate, then Jesus must be God.
6. In this context, His own probably means "that which he had created."
7. We are not naturally children of God.
8. Receiving Jesus, believing in Him.
9. Discuss as many of these verses as time allows.
10. The Jews recognized the use of the word "I am" as a claim to divinity. Throughout the Old Testament, the phrase was used in reference to God, "Yes, and from ancient days I am" (Isa 43:13). See notes above.
11. He forgave sins, resurrected the dead, accepted worship, calmed the seas, etc.
12. The correct statement and biblical doctrine is that Jesus was fully (100%) God, and fully (100%) man. In many ways, this is a mystery, and difficult to comprehend.
13. One important reason is that as God, He is infinite. Therefore, His death on the cross has infinite efficacy—thus able to cover the sins of the world.
14. Discuss.