**Distinctive Themes in John’s Message**

Part 3

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**God and Evil in the World – The Paradox of God’s Love**

One might ask the age-old question after reading this Gospel: If God loves us so much how come He let’s evil thrive and harm us? What does John’s Gospel have to say?

At least two notable pronouncements of Jesus tell us God Is aware of the work of evil in the Christian’s life:

*“These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended (*fall into the trap of feeling defenceless*). They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh that (*oh yes, the time is coming when*), whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service (*will think that he is offering service to God*).”* (6:1-2)

*“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation (*turmoil*): but be of good cheer (*feel good and act with boldness because*): I have overcome the world.”* (16:33)

As known, Jesus had a reason for His words in every situation; in the former quote it is so we don’t turn away from the faith because our faith is challenged by evil. This passage is all the more meaningful even in our time in view of the merciless killings of people including Christians, in or against the name of God. In the other passage Jesus is telling believers not to lose hope or become discouraged in the face of life’s problems and to be assured because God has it all under His control. This explanation has foundation in John’s Gospel where God Himself through His Son is unjustly hounded and innocently killed, nonetheless within His Plan. If God is not exempt from the ravages of evil neither are we.

In this same chapter Jesus discloses: “*the prince of this world is judged* (has been brought to trial)” (vs. 11). We know He is talking about Satan. Therefore clearly God condemns Satan’s evil actions in the world, for which his punishment is sealed. Addressing the Jewish religious leaders Jesus earlier said:

*“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”* (8:44)

(In paraphrase: “Deep down you have made the devil your father whose strong forbidden desires you are eager to put into practice. He was a murderer from the beginning and has never been trustworthy. Whatever he says, typically is false, because he is a deceiver and the father of lies.”)

So with this condemnation Jesus informs us, Satan personifies evil and is its disseminator. On the other hand we know from John’s presentation that God personifies good and that all His actions are designed for a good purpose. It is to show God’s good Nature that John uses the seven miracles of kindness, which he calls Signs, to prove that Jesus truly and fully represents God. Even Jesus’ enemies could not deny that His Actions were portraying the good Nature of God, as this exchange shows:

“*Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed (showed) you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God*”. (10:31-33)

John therefore shows us that it is acknowledged God is inherently good and Satan is inherently evil. Previously however we were told God in Jesus created absolutely everything, which includes Satan:

“*All things were made by him* [Jesus, the Word]*; and without him was not any thing made that was made*.” (1:3) Being created, Satan is not superior to God; he is under God’s control and therefore cannot destroy God’s Creation. Not only that but in addition to being doomed we learn his precise fate from the Evangelist’s other Book (Revelation).

*And the devil who deceived… was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur…* [to] *be tormented day and night forever and ever.* (Revelation 20:10)

From the Old Testament we learn that Satan’s arrogance led him to try to usurp God’s Position, which caused his eviction from Heaven and his literal downfall. From that point on, Satan made no secret of his intention to thwart God’s Plan and still today at every point he believes he can by making us sin against God. From his initial success with Adam and Eve he has gone on to enslave mankind to sin, as Jesus tells us (8:34). In Jesus’ day Satan did succeed in blinding people’s view of Jesus’ divinity, thereby attempting to diminish God’s influence. Nonetheless people were, and still are, responsible for their actions, which Jesus’ words suggest in this passage:

“*If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.* (15:24).”

(In paraphrase: “*If I had not accomplished among them the divine activities no other person has done, they would not have committed sin. As it is, they have witnessed these actions, and yet they have hated both me and my Father.*”)

So the rebellion continued with God trying to make us stop sinning, as described through out the OT and Satan, since initially succeeding in enticing us, continues to do so. From the beginning this state of affairs caused an automatic rift or estrangement between God and us, since a perfectly good God cannot live together with mankind while we are on the same side with Satan or evil. At the right time God decided to implement Plan B, which entailed using His Life in Jesus to provide a Way for us to come back without sin to live Him now fully aware of His goodness. As such God has used His Goodness to neutralize Satan’s evil whenever any individual chooses to end their alienation from Him.

So then could not God have just changed Satan to make him free of evil? Here however is the rub. God receives each of us back only when we choose to serve Him. We have to say we want to return Home, along with the implied acceptance of His Rules (Teaching). Satan however still has not been willing to accept Him, as John indicates:

*“And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not* (and the darkness has failed to bring it under its control).” (1:5)

It seems John is explaining that despite God’s attempt to change Satan he stubbornly continues to war against Him and therefore cannot understand Him (as the various meanings of the Greek word for “comprehend” suggest). God cannot just neutralize or take him out of existence otherwise He would need to do the same with us all, before Jesus’ death made us, who accept Him, sinless before God. Therefore the only way to remove evil completely from the world is to have Satan choose like us to follow Jesus. He cannot, although given a chance to do so. God is loving and good but also fair so this deadly rebellion made the battle on the cross necessary and Jesus’ consequent Victory purchased the cleansing from evil and sin that is required for God to accept us back.

John tells us that both Jesus’ Signs and the stubborn opposition of the religious leaders are necessary prongs in the Salvation Plan. The people had to choose between Christ, Who showed God’s Goodness, and the religious leaders who were children of evil. There cannot be a reasonable halfway point. Someone cannot say these are two extremes; so I choose a middle ground. With God’s Plan you’re all in or all out. God fights for us to belong exclusively under His Management. The only other jurisdiction is the kingdom of the Enemy, Satan. The “lower-level” battle had to occur as an earthly enactment of the Heavenly One. That moment-by-moment battle is being fought in each person’s mind, consciously or not, to decide where to remain: with God or not with God, which is the same as choosing Satan and that means to remain alienated from God. Jesus’ Death on the cross entitles us to move in with God as soon as we win the internal mini-battle by wanting to give our loyalty to Jesus. That is to say, we win as soon as we agree to believe, or believe in, Christ.

In other words God gives us the chance, through our faith in Jesus, of declaring we accept His Loving Invitation to come over to His side and stay – that is to come Home. Evil in its many forms is always around and in many ways trying to entrap by granting power and benefits. It turns out however that God allows evil through its alluring but harming effects to be a channel to challenge our faith; and when we resist, it strengthens our bond with Him. When we succumb, our confession to Him helps to activate His forgiveness obtained through Christ’s death. God knows that being human we are imperfect (we have evil in us) and so cannot be sinless, sometimes despite our best efforts. That’s why He puts in Paul’s mouth:

“… *I always want to do what is right, but find myself unable to achieve it. The wrong (or evil) I do not want to do is what I routinely practice.*” (Romans 7:18-19 – Greek paraphrase)

On His part, being aware of this human problem, God tries to help us out. He says:

“*No temptation has overpowered you that is not from human nature; but you can trust God Who will not allow more than you can handle to take over your mind. Along with that test however, He will empower you to escape from under the pressure.*” (1 Corinthians 10:13 – Greek paraphrase)

Since we will sometimes succumb, on account of our damaged character and Satan’s craftiness, God has neutralized the effects of this moral deficiency by Jesus’ death. On our part, confession to Him that our faith in Christ requires each time we “miss the mark” (the root meaning of sin) brings out God’s compassion to restore us. This is God’s Promise, which John voices in another of his Books:

“… *if we admit our sins - make a clean breast of them - he won't let us down; he'll be true to himself. He'll forgive our sins and purge us of all wrongdoing.*” (1 John 1:9- Message Version)

This is the hope we have of nullifying evil, Satan’s destructive actions. Since we have such a hope, we are equipped to deal with the troubles or evil in life by focusing beyond this life on the joys of heaven where Satan cannot tempt or harm us. As a result we experience His Love in many other ways thereby declaring He is a good and caring God, despite the occurrence of evil. What a paradox: that good and evil can co-exist under the control of a Good and Loving God! Needless to say there’s a lot more than meets the eye or ear in Jesus’ Assurance:

“*I have overcome the world*” (16:33).

John clearly shows that the Battle in which Jesus our Leader was stabbed in the back by some of us but won over evil anyway, was FOR US. Once and for all time Good has won and the followers of the Christian God are safe. Evil lost and can only try or pretend to have power. With this spiritually historic fact we can fearlessly confront the evil in our lives and not give in, knowing assuredly that even though our circumstances do not always show it we have already won and Evil will never win no matter how powerful it tries to look.

**Is Jesus ‘Judgy’? The Answer From the Story of the Woman Caught in the Act of Adultery**

This story needs to be highlighted in the context of the Real Jesus especially because of the “judgment” He gave to a sinner, as God’s Representative. A lady was accused of one of the worst moral-religious crimes in Jesus’ day: adultery. She would face a public action that was universally accepted and considered just. It would be very surprising if there were people in the crowd that gathered around her and her accusers who had not judged her behavior as religiously, morally and socially offensive.

Chief among her accusers were the religious leaders who wanted to see her stoned. In today’s language they would have stated that to kill her by stoning was Biblical and God’s Will. And many of today’s Christians likely share this belief. Consequently these leaders brought her to Jesus fully convinced on biblical grounds and with practically unanimous public support that their case was watertight. Yet God Himself, in the Person of Jesus did not condemn her! His sole response to her amounted to: Go with your dignity and My Blessing; but stop committing those sins as of now.

This is the clearest instance of a moral-religious wrong that almost everyone in His day would consider worthy of condemnation and the severest punishment. Yet in the Evangelist’s telling, Jesus’ attitude and reaction was not only calm, non-judgmental, compassionate and accepting of the woman; but as well He unequivocally left no doubt that her accusers were guilty of forgetting that they too were sinners, regardless of how they viewed their own sinfulness in relation to hers. It is also noteworthy that Jesus did not comment on or use her situation as the basis of a teaching to His disciples or the crowd. It seems that all the lessons to be learned from that event were already presented at the “accusation site”.

These are hugely significant items for the lesson plans of today’s religious leaders as they determine what is critical to be taught as biblical and Christian. Through this story Jesus teaches every Christian that no one’s sin is better or worse than another’s. Paul echoes this truth when he says: “… *all have sinned, and come* (fallen) *short of the glory of God*…” (The Glory of God is the Presence or moral Character of God; Romans 3:23). Above all Jesus demonstrates here that as the One Who came to fulfill the Law His every action and word trumps everything in the Old Testament. The moral lesson from this story is the advice that we who are followers of Jesus need to: Stop judging or pretending we are not judging. We cannot fool God. Remember, He is not ‘judgy’.

**Marching Orders: Jesus’ Commands in the Gospel**

John records statements or pronouncements that constitute the expectations Jesus imposes on His disciples, which means us as well. You may observe that the list provided here is incomplete. You are encouraged to add to it, as your reading and understanding make clear.Let’s start with the story of the woman who poured expensive oil on Him (12:1-10) that seems to contain a hidden Command. John does not quote Jesus’ words as an actual Command. Nonetheless, whether as a command or prophecy Jesus gave the woman’s action prominence.

John tells us there was “a large crowd of the Jews” (12:9), indicating Jesus’ audience included the Twelve but also consisted of more than just the people who followed Him regularly. Therefore this teaching was intended to go far and wide. Jesus said:

“*For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always*.” (12:8)

(You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me.)

It is probable that in conformity with his theologically layered style John wants his readers to see the significance of Jesus’ words in the Scriptural context of the comment where it is a command. The Old Testament origin is in Deuteronomy as follows:

“*Thou shalt surely give him, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him: because that for this thing the LORD thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thine hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land*.” (Deuteronomy 15:10-11)

(“I command you that without question when you give to your brother it must be done generously and ungrudgingly; and when you do it wholeheartedly it is so that the Lord your God will bless every activity you set out to do. There will never be an end to poverty among you and it is for that reason I command you to open your hand wide to your brother, your poor and to those who are needy among you.”)

Was Jesus using this largely witnessed unquestionably generous behavior of Mary to remind us of that Command? Namely, that as it applied to people in olden days, in the same way, His audience and we too need to recognize that when God has blessed us with material wealth, it is our ongoing duty to look after the needs of those with less means who will always be around us. Jesus also used the occasion to advance the spiritual importance of the timing of this event when He said: “… *against the day of my burying hath she kept this*” (12:7). (… her buying it is so that she might save this perfume for the day of my burial.) For now, its economic value is beside the point. It seems He was calling attention to the fact that Mary’s action was not accidental or impulsive. As such keeping the perfume till that moment to be used in anticipation of His death was part of God’s Purpose.

This material gift from Mary is probably among the most generous made to Jesus during His Ministry – certainly the only one, which Jesus acknowledged and with commentary that’s reported by the Gospel writers. With respect to the significance of this gift, notably John did not report as extraordinary the combined offering of two men of means, Joseph and Nicodemus, in providing the likely royal-size embalming spices for Jesus’ body. From this perspective and the Lord’s indication of its importance for His coming death, certainly Mary’s action seems to rank as a momentous gesture that Jesus (and John) did not want to be glossed over. In fact in the record of two synoptic writers, very likely of the same event, Jesus is quoted as stating:

“*Verily I say unto you* (Take this seriously), *Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her*.” (Matt 26:14, Mark 14:9)

In effect, Jesus seems to be saying that the current usage of the resources Mary provides is a memorable act of which God approves and is not misplaced or extravagant waste nor does it represent wrong priorities because there is ample opportunity for the better-resourced Christians to assist their needy and dependent neighbors, seeing as that ministry must be a permanent and ongoing responsibility. Obedience to this Command was probably the inspiration for the following practice among the first Christians who were Jews:

“*And* [they] *sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men* (distributed to everyone)*, as every man* (one) *had need.*” (Acts 4:32-35)

In the quotes immediately below the form of the verb and sentence structure in the Greek indicate what must be done though not stated in English as a command:

“*If any man serve me, let him follow me* (he must follow Me); *and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honour*” (12:26).

“*And ye also shall bear witness* (you also are to be my witnesses), *because ye have been with me from the beginning*.” (15:27)

The former quote sounds like the kind of attachment expected between a master and a trustworthy servant, in which the servant is always where the master is and ready to serve. Jesus seems to make this dependable quality in His disciples a requirement to keep them focused on the Gospel Mission. The Father will recognize and value such total dedication to the Lord’s service. In giving the Instruction to “follow” Him Jesus’ seems usually to imply going down the road He goes or following His example as later we will hear Him tell Peter (21:19). As such it is probably fitting to include the notion of expecting persecution and even death in serving Christ with total commitment. This expectation is the more relevant when we consider similar references to it in the synoptic Gospels. When the disciples began to be worried about the value of their following Jesus He told them His followers will receive earthly blessing along with persecution (Mk 10:30); but the real payoff is Eternal Life along with accolades from the Father.

In the case of the second quote, after laying out the requirement of dedication in serving Him, on a later occasion Jesus charges them with the responsibility to speak on His behalf, as indeed one would expect. A loyal servant should be relied on to be a worthy spokesperson of his master. In today’s world employees can get fired for badmouthing the organization for which they work mainly because being disloyal they are considered untrustworthy. Thus we cannot claim to be followers of Jesus and not be totally loyal supporters and trusted reporters of His Work.

Jesus’ teaching in the following passage also does not include the word “command” but His use of: “ought to” or as in other translations: “must” equally conveys the meaning of required action:

*“So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”* (13:12-17)

(So after He finished washing their feet He retrieved His outer garments, went back and reclined at the dinner table; and then asked His disciples: ‘Do you realize what I just did?’ You address me as Teacher and Lord, which is correct because I am. So then if I, your Teacher and Lord, can wash His subordinates’ feet you, the subordinates, are obligated to wash each other’s feet. By my action I have set you an example so you too should do what I did. Take this seriously: A servant is never more important than his master nor a messenger than the person who sent him.)

Neither Jesus’ position as the disciples’ Master nor the serious business of His impending crucifixion obstructed the need for this lesson to the disciples (and us), which underscores the importance of this Command to Christians. For the sake of the Gospel nothing can be too menial for a follower.

In the following passage Jesus states He is giving a New Command, which comes as of cardinal significance for His followers to obey:

*“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”* (13:34-35)

In this passage Jesus repeats the Command three times as if to ensure its clarity and priority. And then at a later point He repeats the central precept He has been elaborating on, clearly wanting no misunderstanding or confusion about the need for His disciples to keep to it:

*“These things I command you, that ye love one another.”* (15:17)

It is remarkable that Jesus makes our loving each other a command but does not treat obeying Him in the same way. Obeying Him is a choice we have to make, as evidence of our love for Him, being more in the nature of an authoritative advise; we are not compelled to do it. Once we choose to obey Him however, which in effect is what it means to become Christian, we must love each other. It’s a package deal! The love that is spoken of here is not lip service, as when we condemn or put another person down “in love”. Jesus set the ultimate example of this love by His Willingness to die for us. Loving one another is critical in the expression of our faith.

The passages that follow are not essentially commands; they seem to be more like prescriptions for His disciples:

*“Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.”* (14:1)

*“Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”* (14:27)

*“Abide in me, and I in you (You need to continue in this relationship with Me and I to do the same with you). As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.”* (15:4)

*“Hitherto have ye asked nothing (Up till this moment you have not asked for anything) in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full (so that the level of your joy will rise as high as is possible).”* (16:24)

It is instructive that these passages seem to have a common thread. They seem to hold a nurturing, healing and comforting meaning that is faith-affirming and strengthening. It is notable that this category of prescriptions from Jesus, which, in the above references constitutes the majority of His important exhortations, seems to address our emotional or peace-of-mind needs. At the risk of over-interpreting one may conclude from the apparent preponderance of this type of statements that Jesus takes seriously our need for inner peace and emotional support. So His Kindness is not only towards our physical and spiritual but to our emotional wellbeing as well.

Jesus states the following as conditional Commands. They are critical requirements for Christians to do or show but initially a choice has to be made.

*“If ye love Me, keep My commands.”* (14:15)

*“If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you (If you continue to have this relationship with Me and My teaching maintains that link), ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.”* (15:7-8)

*“As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.”* (15:9-14)

A close review of all the collection of Commands and Command-like utterances of Jesus in this Gospel in fact may be said to reveal positive values for discipleship. They are however our marching orders to follow on the road of life: Be generous and God will bless you. You need to be trustworthy and loyal. Learn radical humility. Show unquestionable love for each other and Me. Keep your inner peace. In these statements Jesus strongly expects us to be like Him Who the Evangelist shows to be Loving, Kind, Humble, Trustworthy and wise.

Everyone likes winners and the Leader of Christian believers is always winning and never losing. This Torchbearer of Good News accepts, no, invites everyone to come Home: rich, poor, high, low, educated or less; from the East, West, North, South, whatever their political, religious, philosophical or scientific beliefs. They only have to want to; and agree to His overall Rule of Love. Based on faith in Him, with an eye on the goal or hope of Eternal Life believers need to live like Him. That is, they express His Life in their own life using the principle of Love. The Lord does tell us what Christian Love looks like, which Paul explains (1 Corinthians 13:4-8a) as follows:

Easygoing, not easily hassled

Gentle and full of service to others, kind

Not unreasonably desirous of having something, not envious

Not boastful, not wanting much attention

Not self-inflated or ego-proud.

Behavior is under control and socially acceptable

Not selfish or self-centered

Not easily angered

Does not yield to or avoids counting every bad experience.

Finds no pleasure in, does not approve of, injustice; rather gives enthusiastic support to what’s true.

Bears up under all circumstances, not a faultfinder

Never loses faith, always confident

Always actively hopeful

Always perseveres, not a quitter,

Christian Love never falls down under pressure.

It is noteworthy that all of these attributes are not only positive but also mainly other- rather than self-oriented (sacrificial); and these are the natural traits of God Himself. Using His model of life Christians are guaranteed prosperity and longevity from this world and into the next. Some may not realize that to be a Christian you don’t have to start by possessing these qualities or any good ones. There’s plenty of time to work on them afterwards. All that’s required to make you a Christian is to truthfully say you believe that Jesus is the Son of God, your Savior and you want Him to come into your life. That’s all. With that the Real Jesus accepts you! You have made the Lord happy, done well by John the Evangelist, joined hands in unity with all other Christians and are on your way Home. Congratulations!

IN CONCLUSION

Now you have met the Real Jesus through the Story that John the Evangelist the closest of His friends has told in the fourth Gospel. This Jesus Story cannot be fiction, fable or fantasy if John is the “disciple whom Jesus loved”; and if the Gospel is historically authentic then the indicators in the Gospel that John is the writer must also be authentic. On the whole John has portrayed a real, supernatural and divine Jesus, God’s Emissary, Who also has a human side to His makeup; Who dearly loves us enough to die in our place, willingly and obediently executing His Father’s Salvation Plan; is Impartial, Benevolent and radically Humble; Who performed miracles that always benefited people; is non-vindictive, totally forgiving and nurturing; and, at tremendous cost, has invited me, you and everyone to accept and come live with Him, regardless of how our lives have gone till now. He wants us to come Home only because He loves us as His specially created living beings and needs us to share His Home with Him forever.

Now, considering His qualities and the motive for the invitation how could I, or you, refuse this Offer? What do we have to lose that’s important enough for us to risk loosing out on this Offer? Of course we have to keep to His Teaching once we decide to live with Him; but according to the Evangelist Jesus assures us He will continue to teach us directly and with the help of a Tutor, Holy Spirit. According to John His very close Friend, once we get to know Him we will find, in addition, that He is compassionate and unselfish. So why would we not want to live under His comfortable and spacious Roof?

In full disclosure I admit St John the Evangelist has succeeded in convincing me that he achieved his objective, which he explains as follows: “… *many other signs* (miracles) *truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book* [John’s Gospel]*: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life* (Eternal Life) *through his name..*.” (20:30-31). Indeed, Eternal Life is this easy to obtain. After one accepts Christ there is learning to do because each of us will continue to be a work in progress; we can never be perfect on this side of the flesh-spirit divide. Meanwhile, then, as we make one mistake after another we need to admit it if only to Christ and each time, sincerely promise to change. And Christ Whose death has cancelled all sin will forgive us and present our case favorably to an impeccably Just Father Who then has no choice but to embrace us, since He set up the Salvation Plan in the first place.

God wants us to take His forgiveness seriously and to be aware that Satan, the personification of evil is still actively trying to recruit those he can. In the Bible, Satan is called the Accuser who makes it his job to make us look guilty before God. Jesus functions as our Advocate Who continually steps in to restore His Image on us. When we hear messages that we are unworthy it is Satan’ voice, not God’s. God’s is always the Voice of encouragement and hope. John’s Gospel underscores our eternal value to God once we decide to stick with Him.

In summary John’s Gospel is mainly about God the Father sending His Son to make it possible for us to live with Him, that is to bring us Home. Therefore in response to my Father’s call: “Please come Home”, I happily say: “Yes Dad, thank You for everything, I’m on my way”! As soon as you accept Jesus Who is the Christ, you too are on your way. What makes better sense to you for refusing this Invitation? I trust everything the Gospel of John, the Evangelist tells us. Hopefully this brief analysis and explanation resonates with you, Christian or not. Hopefully it helps you understand and appreciate the Christian God Whose single Motivation, for all of what John explains about the method He chose to give this Invitation, is based on Universal Love. As the Message Version of the bible puts it: “*This is how much God loved the world: He gave his Son, his one and only Son. And this is why: so that no one need be destroyed; by believing in him, anyone can have a whole and lasting life*”.

In that same spirit of loving-kindness, I feel the urge to pray to Him for you; in other words talk to God about you because I want good things to happen to you:

Father this Reader has just finished reading some, most or all of what You prompted me to write. Father, bless this Individual with all that is good from Your Nature such that Your Love and Satisfying Presence will be experienced in every aspect of their life. Thank you God for everything wonderful that You will do for this Reader.

**Postscript**

Here’s how Moses God’s chosen leader of the Israelites described God that those believers of thousands of years ago needed to keep in mind:

“*For the LORD your God is the God of gods and Lord of lords. He is the great God, the mighty and awesome God, who shows no partiality and cannot be bribed. He ensures that orphans and widows receive justice. He shows love to the foreigners living among you and gives them food and clothing. So you, too, must show love to foreigners, for you yourselves were once foreigners in the land of Egypt*.” (Deuteronomy 10:17-19)

And another leader after God’s Heart, king David, spoke of Him thus:

“… *as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear Him* (accept His Rule)*. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions* (detached our mistakes) *from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.*”(Psalm 103:11-13)