

Our Light and Life:

IDENTITY IN THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST

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“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

JOHN 1:4-5

Our Light and Life:

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- Chapter 1: The Knowledge of God and of Ourselves
- Chapter 2: The Bread of Life: God's Continued Faithfulness
- Chapter 3: The Bread of Life: Our Nourishment
- Chapter 4: The Light of the World: God's Promised Steadfast Love
- Chapter 5: The Light of the World: Our Vision
- Chapter 6: The Door and the Good Shepherd: God's Trustworthy Protection
- Chapter 7: The Door and the Good Shepherd: Our Security and Peace
- Chapter 8: The Resurrection and Life: God's Plan of Restoration
- Chapter 9: The Resurrection and Life: Our Divine Physician
- Chapter 10: The Way, the Truth, and the Life: God's Provided Holy Lamb
- Chapter 11: The Way, the Truth, and the Life: Our Only Path
- Chapter 12: The True Vine: God's Divine Unity
- Chapter 13: The True Vine: Abiding in Our True Home
- Chapter 14: The Alpha and the Omega: The Covenant Maker and Keeper



The Knowledge of God and of Ourselves

*“Therefore, My people shall know My name.
Therefore, in that day they shall know that
it is I who speak; here I am.”*

ISAIAH 52:6



THINK ABOUT IT

Do you find the question, “Who am I?” difficult to answer? Why is this a difficult question to answer?

Who Am I?

“Who am I?”—Is there a question more central or universal to the human experience? These three little words, this tiny question, can take a lifetime to unravel. For generations, poets, songwriters, sociologists, and anthropologists (just to name a few) have attempted to romanticize or research their way to a deeper understanding of human and personal identity. For the Christian, the question is also warranted. God invites His people to freely ask identity questions, knowing in His kindness He has already given them the answers in His Word.

The Knowledge of God and of Ourselves

As readers enter into God's Word, as they begin to digest God's divinity, His story and promises, they are invited to understand the fundamental truth: there is no real knowledge of self without a knowledge of God. And at the core we cannot truly answer the question "Who am I?" until we have answered, "Who is He?"

So, who is God? The four gospel books were written to help the Church know and understand the person and work of Jesus Christ. But the Gospel of John is different from the other three books (the Synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke) in that John writes his book not simply to recount Jesus's life, but to help explain Jesus's identity and unique relationship with God the Father.

John, an ethnic and religious Jew, originally wrote his book for both a Jewish and non-Jewish audience. Having been raised in the synagogue studying the Torah and the other scriptural texts, John recognized the thread of God's covenant promises running throughout Jesus's teaching. In his book, he wanted to make it abundantly clear to others that Jesus is the Son of God who came to fulfill the promises of God the Father. Or as John puts it, "these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). In His name is found identity and life. But what is His name and who is He?



WHAT DO YOU SEE? God Declares His Identity

Read and mark the following passages from Exodus.

- Circle the participants in these narrative passages.
- Highlight identification statements God made about Himself.
- Highlight Moses's fears.
- In yet another color, highlight God's promises.
- In the margin make note of how God wants to be remembered.

Exodus 3:9-15

⁹And now, behold, the cry of the people of Israel has come to Me, and I have also seen the oppression with which the Egyptians oppress them.

¹⁰Come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt.” ¹¹But Moses said to God, “Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the

The Knowledge of God and of Ourselves

children of Israel out of Egypt?”

¹²He said, “But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain.”

¹³Then Moses said to God, “If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, ‘The God of your fathers has sent me to you,’ and they ask me, ‘What is His name?’ what shall I say to them?” ¹⁴God 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.’” ¹⁵God 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.’ This is My name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.”

Exodus 5:22-6:5

²²Then Moses turned to the

Our Light and Life: IDENTITY IN THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST

LORD and said, “O Lord, why have You done evil to this people? Why did You ever send me? ²³For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people, and You have not delivered Your people at all.”

^{6:1}But the LORD said to Moses, “Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.” ²God spoke to Moses and said to him, “I am the LORD. ³I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My name the LORD I did not make Myself known to them. ⁴I also established My covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. ⁵Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered My covenant.”

The Knowledge of God and of Ourselves

1 In Exodus 3:11 and 13, Moses expressed doubt in his ability to do what God was asking him to do.

- a. How did God respond to Moses's question?

- b. Why might God have responded to Moses's question with declarations about His own identity?

2 List the three names God gave to Moses in both passages as proof of His relationship with the people of Israel?

3 In Exodus 6, God stated that He “established” and “remembered” His covenant.² Using a dictionary, look up and write out the definition of a covenant.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

The Great I AM



When trying to understand a topic discussed in a passage of Scripture, it can be helpful to ask the questions “What do other passages say on this topic?” and “What does the whole Bible say about it?” Looking at other passages (known as referencing) is a helpful tool in analyzing a particular passage because it helps us understand connections made throughout the entire Bible.

God declared His identity in Exodus, but as God’s story progressed, He continued to remind His people of His identity by making similar declarations throughout Scripture. So, generations after the exodus, God gave the prophet Isaiah a special revelation to share with His people.

The Knowledge of God and of Ourselves

4 God declared His identity multiple times throughout Isaiah. Read each passage given, using the charts to answer questions for each passage.

Who does God declare Himself to be?

ISAIAH
44:6-8

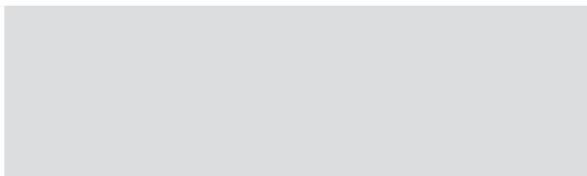
ISAIAH
48:17

ISAIAH
52:1-10

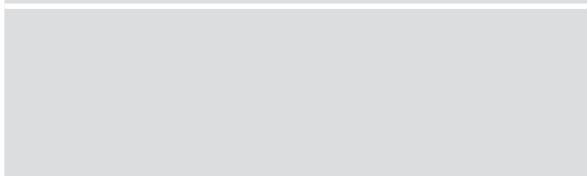
Our Light and Life: IDENTITY IN THE CLAIMS OF CHRIST

What does God promise to do?

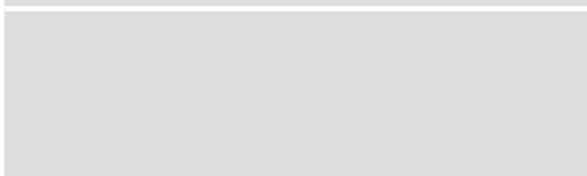
ISAIAH
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ISAIAH
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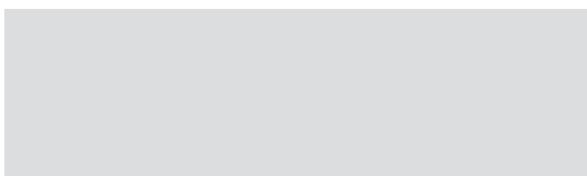


ISAIAH
52:1-10

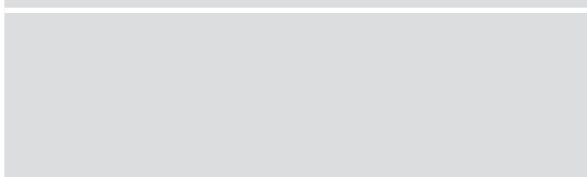


To whom is God making promises?

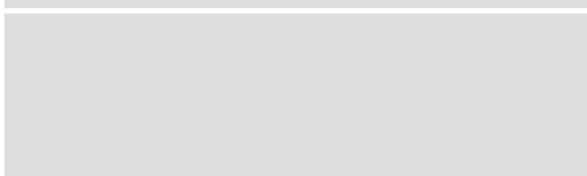
ISAIAH
44:6-8



ISAIAH
48:17



ISAIAH
52:1-10



The Knowledge of God and of Ourselves

How are God's promises here similar to the promises given in the Exodus passages?

ISAIAH
44:6-8

ISAIAH
48:17

ISAIAH
52:1-10

5 Isaiah was written as a guide to faithful, God-centered living, based on the covenant promises of God. List three ways God's declarative statements in Exodus and Isaiah are still true.

6 How are the truths you listed in question 5 helpful in your own identity formation?

WHAT'S IT TO YOU?

7 Why do you think it is important to ask and try to answer the questions “Who am I?” and “Who is God?”

The Knowledge of God and of Ourselves

8 Ask yourself, “Who am I?” Write out your answer.

9 What are some other Bible passages that help you answer “Who am I”?

10 List some of the beliefs, relationships, or experiences in your life which have been a part of your attempts to cultivate your own identity? (Think of examples which have been both positive and negative.)

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The Bible is one continuous story of God's redemptive love for His people. Studying Jesus's "I Am" statements in relationship to the Old Testament passages to which they correspond, helps reveal the steadfast identity of God. As the author of Hebrews wrote, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever" (Heb. 13:8).

11 In closing, take some time to pray and to journal. What comfort or frustration do you have in the knowledge that you can only know who you are in light of who God is?