

WHO IS JESUS?

JOHN 1:10-13

JESUS IS OUR BIG BROTHER



FIRST BYRON CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

DAVID MURRAY
APRIL 18, 2021 (AM)

INTRODUCTION

Being welcomed warms our hearts, being rejected rips them out. We've all been rejected at one point in our lives, haven't we? A college rejected our application. An employer let us go. A coach cut us from the team. Someone we asked for a date said no. Our spouse started an affair. Rejection rips our heart out. If we think about these rejections too much, we sink emotionally and mentally, so we generally try to put it behind us.

But can we think about rejection in a way that will be good for us? I believe we can. For example, if we remember the pain of rejection, we will be less rejecting and more welcoming of others. What about spiritual rejection? Can we turn that to good? **Can we use the rejection of Christ to increase the reception of Christ?** Let's look at John 1:10-13 for our answer

BACKGROUND

As we've already discovered in our study of this Gospel, Jesus is the Word of God, the Son of God, and the light of God (1:1-9). John was shining a beautiful spotlight on Jesus but then an ugly darkness descends as he horrifies us with the rejection of Jesus.



What mars this beautiful scene?



1. MANY REJECT THEIR BIG BROTHER (10-11)

Jesus was rejected by the pagan world

He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him (10).

'World' may be referring to the planet or to the non-Jewish world, the Gentiles, the pagan world. Perhaps the first two uses of 'world' in this verse is the planet, and the third use is the pagans in it. That would certainly fit the context where the next verse goes on to describe how the Jews responded to Jesus.

The maker of the world visited the world but the world did not recognize its maker! He, the Word of God, the Son of God, the Light of God, was in the world. The One whom the universe could not contain, confined himself for a time to this world. The one who made the world came to the world he made and yet they the world did not recognize their Maker.

It's such an anti-climax, isn't it. **He was in the world, and the world was made by him...**and the whole world warmly welcomed him, is what we're expecting. But the growing sense of excitement falls flat.

He was in the world as an approachable man, not as an unapproachably holy God. He was in the world as a servant, not a tyrant. He was in the world as a savior not a judge. He was in the world as a creator not a destroyer. But the world did not know him in this way.

Jesus was rejected by the religious world

He came to his own and his own people did not receive him (11).

The pagan world might attempt to excuse their ignorance because they didn't have the same Gospel light as the Jewish world (they had enough light to seek more light though). However, the Jewish world, the religious world, had no excuse.

Jesus not only came to the world, he came to his own world, his own people, those he had come to via prophecies, pictures, and personal appearances in the Old Testament. Now he came to them in Jewish flesh from Jewish parents in the Jewish land. He arrived, knocked the door, called out to those living inside...and they fell over themselves to let him in and rejoice in his visit. Nope! His own people did not receive him. What? This is the climax of all anti-climaxes.



CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH JESUS' STORY

How long did Jesus knock on your door? As I was thinking about these verses, I couldn't help but go back to the many years I heard Jesus knocking and ignored him. Sometimes I told him, "Go away!" Other times I opened the door in order to slam it shut on him and make him leave. But he kept coming back for more rejection, more ignoring, more door-slamming. He kept knocking and knocking as I kept knocking him back and knocking him back. The patience and persistence of Jesus is just breath-taking and it was eventually soul-taking. Let's praise our big brother and best brother for his long-knocking and long-suffering.

Is Jesus still knocking at your door? "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" (Rev. 3:20). Are you hearing his voice, his knock, his promise? As we'll see in a moment, he comes as a brother, not as a bother. He comes to your heart because he wants you to in his family. Open the door of your heart with the key of faith, and you'll discover Jesus has already opened it. To reject the Lord is to reject life.

YOU MIGHT REJECT OTHERS
BUT DON'T REJECT YOUR BROTHER



Is that it? Do we end in such an anti-climax?
No, this anti-climax only makes the climax higher.



2. SOME RECEIVE THEIR BIG BROTHER (12-13)

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name... (12).

A Receiving

It's a big rejection but not a 100% rejection. There are some who do receive him. 'Receive' is the word for welcoming someone into our home. It's not, "Oh, it's you, well I suppose you'd better come in." It's more like, "Wow, is that really you? Please please come in, make yourself at home, go wherever you wish, and treat this as your own home. Help yourself to whatever you want. If you need to re-arrange the furniture, go right ahead. If some rooms need demolished, bring in the wrecking ball. New decoration, no problem." This is a receiving of all of Christ into all of our lives with all our hearts.

How do I receive Christ? What does that actually mean? John defines it as **'believing in his name.'** We receive Christ by believing in Christ. Receiving and believing are two sides of one coin. 'Receiving' stresses our passivity (we don't give to Christ but Christ is given to us). 'Believing' stresses our activity (Christ doesn't believe for us). We need both sides if the coin is to have any value. You cannot believe without receiving, and you cannot receive without believing.

Believing **'in his name'** is like a transfer of ownership. Before believing, our name was written over our house and every room in it. Faith transfers ownership to Christ. His name is on the title deeds and on every brick.

A Right

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God (12)

The Jews called themselves 'children of Abraham.' But here's a far better title: 'child of God.' When Jesus comes into our heart, we hand him the title to our lives. But at the same time, he hands us a title, a far better title, 'son of God' or 'daughter of God.' There's an exchange of titles when Christ comes into our lives. Believing in Christ's name changes our name.

With this title comes enormous entitlement. I know there's a wrong kind of 'entitlement' today, an emphasis on rights without any responsibility. Here we're given one right, which exceeds all other rights. It entitles us to God's fatherly provision, care, chastisement, education, guidance, etc. With that right comes the responsibility to live up to the family name. That's the role of our big brother. He helps us learn what it means to be a child of God because he knows what it is to be the Son of God.



A Regeneration

...children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God (12-13).

How does all this happen? How do door-slamers become door-openers? How do rejecters become receivers? How does a rejecter get such rights? The ultimate cause is regeneration, new birth.

Like all new births, this birth starts a new life. It's as if the old one never happened. It's a fresh start, a clean sheet.

John follows this with a triple denial of any human contribution to this new life. It's **not of blood**. It doesn't run in the veins. It's got nothing to do with nationality or genetics. It's **not of the will of the flesh**. This was not initiated by a human decision because the human will is opposed to God. It's **not of the will of man**. It's got nothing to do with our parents or a preacher. John is ruling out the possibility of any human element in this birth. It's not that, it's not that, and it's not that.

So what is it? What explains it?

But of God. Can you grasp that? Three words of one syllable. So, so simple. There's no teamwork here, no cooperation, no collaboration. It's simply God.

CHANGE YOUR STORY WITH GOD'S STORY

Receiving not giving. Many think that if they can give enough to God then they'll get something from him. But this passage tells us that Christian faith begins with receiving from God, not giving to God.

'Child of God' not 'President of USA.' "Ladies and Gentlemen, the President of the United States of America." How many would love to be introduced with these words. But here's something far better: "Ladies and Gentlemen, a child of God!" Have any of us ever fully grasped that privilege? And remember, that means Jesus is our big brother.

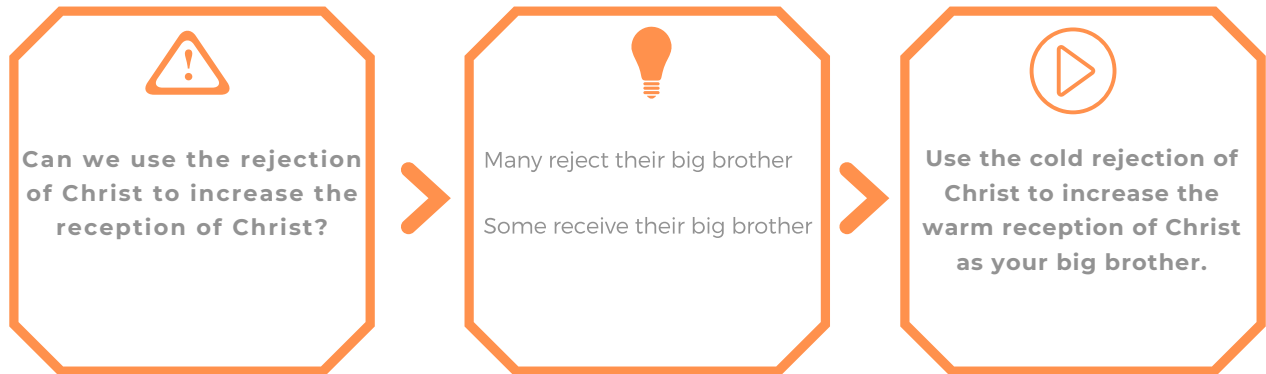
God not me. When I was a young Christian, I really had little idea what happened to me? How come I now hate what I loved and love what I hated? I couldn't remember deciding that one day. No one pressured me or persuaded me to change. Then I read this verse, and it all fell into place. It explained everything and became (and still is) the most amazing source of joy in my life. I memorized these verses and to this day love to go over them again and again and again.

THE MORE WE FEEL OUR COLD REJECTION OF CHRIST
THE MORE WARM A WELCOME WE'LL GIVE TO CHRIST

Hear the story > Change your story > Tell the story.



SUMMARY



PRAYER: Heavenly father, make me your child by opening my heart to Jesus so that he will be my big brother and my best brother. Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Recall a past rejection. What did you think and feel? How can that memory help you?
2. Give examples of Christ's rejection in the Gospels. What did they make him feel?
3. Why did you reject Christ in your life? How did you do it?
4. How big a welcome have you given Christ? Any rooms still off-limits?
5. When might it help you to remember your title "child of God"?
6. Does God's unilateral and sole sovereignty in your salvation make you happy or angry? Why or why not?

First Byron Christian Reformed Church
8541 Byron Center Ave SW, Byron Center, MI 49315
Phone: (616) 878-9768
www.firstbyroncrc.org

Pastor David Murray
www.HeadHeartHand.org
www.livingthebible.net