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The Johannine

In 2007 a popular science magazine (*Wired*) had a cover article titled “What We Don’t Know About . . .” The article then ran short pieces on such unanswered mysteries as “Why Do We Sleep?” “Is Time an Illusion?” “What’s at the Earth’s Core?” “What Is the Universe Made Of?” and “Why Can’t We Predict the Weather?”

Even after hundreds of years of scientific advancement, on such basics, *we’re still in the dark!*

Fortunately, on the most basic of all questions (and by far more important than “What’s at the earth’s core?”)—questions such as “How did we get here?” “Why are we here?” and “Where are we going?”—we haven’t been left to grope in darkness. Instead, God has revealed to us, in the Bible, the answers to these fundamental concerns. And among those revelations given to us in Scripture, we have the writings of John the evangelist.

“In Jesus we find the answers to the most important questions.”

This quarter, instead of studying John’s Gospel (his own inspired eyewitness account of Jesus) or the book of Revelation (which he also wrote), we’re going to study his three letters. Though addressed to certain churches and individuals in his time, they deal with issues relevant to us today, issues such as false doctrine, sin, love, apostasy, and obedience. But most important of all, they deal with Jesus Christ, the One through whom we were created (“How did we get here?”), the One who gives our existence meaning and purpose (“Why are we here?”), and the One who promises to come again and raise us to eternal life (“Where are we going?”). In short, in Jesus we find the

Epistles

answers to the most important questions.

As with many of the letters of the New Testament, John's don't occur in a vacuum. On the contrary, they were written to deal with issues facing some churches at that time, including the nature of Christ, which for John wasn't mere abstract theology but a topic that impacted the Christian's view of truth. For John, to deny that Jesus Christ "has come in the flesh" would ultimately lead to a view of sin and redemption that radically differs from the Bible's teaching. It would lead to a different dynamic within the community of believers and to a different relationship to the "world." Finally, it would lead to apostasy and ruin. Hence, the importance of this theme.

Indeed, while discussing the passages and themes of these epistles, we need to keep in mind that they are all related to Jesus. Whenever we discuss them, we also discuss who Jesus is, what He has done for us, and what He promises to do for us.

Thus, the three epistles of John speak to issues relevant for the church today. We would do well to listen to them, because we believe that ultimately it is God who is speaking to us through John's words, the God who—though not revealing to us answers to such questions as "What's at the earth's core?"—has revealed to us truths about a greater and firmer foundation upon which we can rest: our Creator and Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

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Disheartened and unsure of her relationship with God, Mariana turned on the radio to listen to music and forget her troubles. But instead of music, she heard a man speaking to her of God's love.

When Edwin lost his sight, he fell into a deep, angry depression that drove his family away. Alone, he turned on his radio to forget his loneliness and heard a man tell him, "God loves you and wants to help you."



Elena ran to her room and turned on the radio. Her favorite children's program was coming on, and she didn't want to miss it. The stories of Bible characters and everyday heroes help her deal with growing up.

Last year almost 1,000 people in Ecuador asked for Bible studies after listening to the Adventist radio, Nuevo Tiempo. More than 150 were baptized as a direct result of this ministry. To reach even more people in Ecuador with the good news of salvation, they need to upgrade and network their stations. I'm glad I can help improve the ministry of radio Nuevo Tiempo this Thirteenth Sabbath. For me, it's personal.

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