

## ENDORSEMENTS

I will honestly say that this is one of the finest, most anointed books that I have read in ages. *Seeing with Fresh Eyes* takes me back to my early readings of authors like Andrew Murray and Watchman Nee. Back then, I read as a simple man desiring to find the deep truths of the Word of God. Now, in the same way, my study of John's book has brought me into a more complete understanding of the true gospel of our Lord.

John committed himself to find God's answers to perplexing questions he had about *how* he had been saved and *what* he had been saved from. The more truth he uncovered, the more amazing God became to him. Through his openness, I believe you will find your own victory. *Seeing with Fresh Eyes* will clear up much misunderstanding and ignite a new hunger in you to know the Person of the Holy Spirit. *Seeing with Fresh Eyes* brings Spirit-filled revelation that will change your life and help others as well. Enjoy!

—Dr. Dan Funkhouser  
Senior Pastor, Heartbeat Ministries International  
International Speaker  
Adjunct Instructor, Charis Bible College

Over my fifty years of ministry, this is the best explanation that I have read of the inner workings of salvation, both from God's perspective and our own. *Seeing with Fresh Eyes* will find its place as one of the most relevant books of our generation. Your journey of faith will come alive as you explore the divine narrative and discover how the Bible reveals God's plans for you today.

Reading this book by John Bullock is like getting together with an old friend. You will be encouraged and enriched. You will definitely not be disappointed! This is more than a good read; it is a road map to an awesome life.

—Chaplain (Lieutenant Colonel) W. T. Permenter, USA,  
Retired

*Seeing with Fresh Eyes* is more than just a book title—it's a way of life.

I've had the privilege of knowing the author—John Bullock—for a number of years, and if there is one thing that I would say is unique about John, it is that he has a way of seeing beyond what most people notice. In this short study, John has harnessed this talent and focused it on the eternal plan of God for His people. The result is a departure from the clichés and pat answers that we so often repeat without ever having thought them through or even really considering the logic (and more often than not, the lack thereof) behind those answers. The end product of this is a refreshing and often challenging journey of reexamination and discovery.

—Dr. Delron Shirley  
International Missionary and Teacher  
Founder, Teach All Nations Mission  
Former Dean, World Harvest Bible College  
and Indiana Christian University

*Seeing with Fresh Eyes: Sin, Salvation, and the Steadfast Love of God* is not a light read. Be prepared to experience a thought-provoking, insightful, heart-stirring reflection through one person's

continuing journey into the depths of a genuine, personal relationship with our Creator God. But I make one promise: If you'll walk through this testimony deliberately, patiently, and with an open heart, you will emerge a different person with a deeper encounter with the living God. You will never regret it, and you will ask for more!

There is a remarkable quote from Beauchene: “You are never a great man when you have more mind than heart.” I can confidently tell you three things about John: he is a man of genuine faith in the God of the Scriptures, and he is a man who thinks his way well through that faith—but he is also a man whose values are rooted in his heart. To him, these are not dry facts, especially now that he has dared to risk all, ask those hard questions, and take the necessary but exciting journey that leads ever deeper into growing intimacy with the One who is healing, freedom, and full life.

—David Vandenberg  
Pastoral Care for International Christian Workers,  
Barnabas International  
Pastor, Christian and Missionary Alliance

*Seeing with Fresh Eyes* is a fascinating journey from creation to Jesus's resurrection, detailing how God's persevering, unconditional love is more than enough to heal mankind's blindness and brokenness from sin. Few people see the beauty of *how* God skillfully and supernaturally crafted their redemption. John clears away questions about the mess we were in because of sin, why Jesus had to come, and how He accomplished His mission—to bridge the gap between us and Father God. John's book doesn't come from a theoretical understanding of who God is, but from

a tangible encounter and revelation—knowing that he is now a son in the kingdom of the Highest. Reading this book will provide you great biblical insight, but greater still, it will open your eyes to see the eternal loving Father who has loved you from the beginning of time.

—Bryan Nutman  
Founder and President,  
Roots and Wings Ministries International  
Director, Ministry Relations,  
Andrew Wommack Ministries

**SEEING  
WITH  
FRESH EYES**

SEEING  
WITH



SIN, SALVATION,  
AND THE STEADFAST  
LOVE OF GOD

JOHN W. BULLOCK

FULLY REVISED AND EXPANDED

REDEMPTION  
PRESS 

© 2020 by John W. Bullock. All rights reserved.

Published by Redemption Press, PO Box 427, Enumclaw, WA 98022.

Toll-Free (844) 2REDEEM (273-3336)

Redemption Press is honored to present this title in partnership with the author. The views expressed or implied in this work are those of the author. Redemption Press provides our imprint seal representing design excellence, creative content, and high-quality production.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any way by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without the prior permission of the copyright holder, except as provided by US copyright law.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV). Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked AMP are taken from the Amplified Bible. Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked AMPCE are taken from the Amplified Bible, Classic Edition. Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

ISBN: 978-1-64645-213-2 (Paperback)

978-1-64645-214-9 (ePub)

978-1-64645-215-6 (Mobi)

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 2020916339

# CONTENTS

FOREWORD	xi
INTRODUCTION: My Awakening	xv
CHAPTER 1: Finding the Right Story	1
CHAPTER 2: The End Starts in the Beginning	7
CHAPTER 3: The Fruit of the Fruit of the Tree	23
CHAPTER 4: Adam's Legacy through His Children	39
CHAPTER 5: The Problem with Sin	47
CHAPTER 6: The Grace of Obedience	55
CHAPTER 7: Israel, Our Example	63
CHAPTER 8: Jesus Brings Understanding	77
CHAPTER 9: The End of Condemnation	95
CHAPTER 10: Two Kingdoms, Two Words, and Reconciliation	103
CHAPTER 11: The End of an Age	113
CHAPTER 12: Atonement Is Opened to All	123
CHAPTER 13: The Beautiful Way	137
CHAPTER 14: A New World of Freedom: Suddenly Opened	153
CHAPTER 15: Our Journey as Disciples	171
BECOMING A FOLLOWER OF JESUS	179
ENDNOTES	183
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	189



## FOREWORD

**A**fter returning from a trip to Israel, I made an exhibit in my office of several antiquities that I had collected—displayed on an antique table that I had inherited from my grandfather. When my father visited me, I eagerly took him into the room with the announcement, “There’s something that I want you to see.” Seemingly oblivious to the historical artifacts that dated to the time of Jesus, he responded immediately, “Daddy’s table!” Of course, I totally understood that my father was more conditioned to see the family heirloom rather than the two-thousand-year-old relics, but I did walk away from that experience with a clearer perspective on the difference between seeing and looking.

Seeing is a lot harder than looking. We all look at things every day but fail to actually see them. The truth is that we generally only see what we want to see or what we have been trained to see. All we need to do is remember the last disagreement that we had with someone. Both parties were observing the same situation but were seeing it from totally different points of view—like the old analogy of the half-full versus the half-empty glass. The optimist sees the glass as half full because that’s the way he wants to see it. The pessimist sees it as half empty because he wants to see it

that way. Our training has an equally profound impact on what we see as our perspective. For instance, a seamstress may not be able to admire the beauty of a lovely evening gown simply because her attention is drawn to one simple flaw in the way the dress was sewn together—the old “I can’t see the forest for the trees” effect.

Even in spiritual matters, we often speak of seeing things through colored glasses—the filters that we have developed through not only our theological backgrounds, but also our general life experiences. I remember one student in my class at seminary who loved to approach the professor after every class with a comment about his takeaway from the class. Unfortunately, his comment was always the same no matter what the topic of the discussion had been that day: “Sir, it all boils down to ‘let your light shine before men so that they can see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.’” I never figured out how he could come to that conclusion after a class on the theory of the pretribulation rapture, the six-day creation, or the Old Testament prophecies of the crucifixion of Jesus, but he had somehow been so powerfully impacted by that principle that it seemed to be the only thing that he could see in any biblical passage or discussion.

*Seeing with Fresh Eyes* is a compelling invitation for us to put aside our colored glasses—our opinionated viewpoints and our programmed responses—so that we can take a new, unbiased look at the plans and purposes of God for our lives. In this little volume, John Bullock has done something that he has a habit of doing in every area of life—seeing rather than simply looking. Seeing the heart

## FOREWORD

of God in the Scriptures rather than just looking at what we want to find or what we have been trained to find. Each page is an “eye opener” and a whole lot more; it is an invitation to a whole new life of *seeing* rather than just looking.

Dr. Delron Shirley  
International Missionary and Teacher  
Founder, Teach All Nations Mission

*I believe that to him who obeys, and thus opens the doors of his heart to receive the eternal gift, God gives the spirit of his son, the spirit of himself, to be in him, and lead him to the understanding of all truth; that the true disciple shall thus always know what he ought to do, though not necessarily what another ought to do; that the spirit of the father and the son enlightens by teaching righteousness.*

*I believe that no teacher should strive to make men think as he thinks, but to lead them to the living Truth, to the Master himself, of whom alone they can learn anything, who will make them in themselves know what is true by the very seeing of it. I believe that the inspiration of the Almighty alone gives understanding. I believe that to be the disciple of Christ is the end of being; that to persuade men to be his disciples is the end of teaching.*

—George MacDonald,  
“Justice” in *Unspoken Sermons*



# INTRODUCTION

## My Awakening

*Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls.*

Jeremiah 6:16

**S**ome time ago I realized that although I had grown up in a Bible-believing church, I didn't really understand the gospel. Oh, I certainly knew facts about the gospel. I knew I was a sinner and was condemned to die because of my sins and unrighteousness. I knew God had sent His Son, Jesus, as a man, so that through His death and resurrection I could be freed from that condemnation. I knew that, once freed, I would also have the power to live a victorious life.

I knew the facts, but somewhere deep down I knew I had missed the heart of the message, of the miracle. I knew the gospel message I was supposed to share with others, but I still didn't understand the passion and motivation that had moved Jesus's disciples to leave all and risk everything to reach the nations. Their motivation wasn't only from a new philosophy or a duty. Something within them had changed radically. They seemed to laugh at the idea of self-preservation and gladly traded that for the opportu-

nity to share the gospel. What was that message? Whatever it was, it was transformational. I saw rules and morality around me, but very few transformations.

At one point, I went to one of the gentlemen in our congregation who obviously and unashamedly loved Jesus. The church wasn't sedate, but this man still stood out. He constantly talked about Jesus, but his witness, unlike that of others, didn't seem to come from duty, but instead came from an unabashed overflow of love. I wanted to know why. When I asked him what made the difference, he looked at me, bewildered at my question, and blurted out, "But it's Jesus!" That didn't help me at all. I knew what he said was true, but I was hoping to find something I didn't already suspect—something safe, like a better rationale for my understanding. In hindsight, my question was misguided. I didn't need more knowledge *about* God; I needed more relationship *with* God.

I determined to read the Gospels with an open mind. Instead of presuming to know what they were saying based on prior teaching or my presuppositions, I let them speak to me and say what they would. I determined that if I came to a puzzling text, *I* was the one confused, not the text. Focusing on the authors' continuity of context and concepts opened my eyes. My preconceptions and prejudices, my tendency to think, *Oh, I already know all about this section, so I'll read it quickly*, blinded me to real gems of truth. This book includes many Scripture quotations. Don't rush through them, but thoughtfully consider them.

This book tells of my journey through my questions and discoveries. It is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive,

so I'm trusting it will stimulate my readers to study further on their own. You will find treasures because God loves questions; they are His opportunities to teach. The more questions I asked and the more I searched, the more amazing and wonderful God became to me. His love for us is fierce, and His path of salvation is clear—and better than I knew. Far from finessing around with legal loopholes of mercy versus justice, Jesus came to destroy sin, death, and all the resultant works of the devil. He is the healer and restorer. God is love, mercy, justice, and righteousness, with no compromise between them.

Others also have questions. Throughout Christendom, I see individuals reexamining their long-held beliefs. These people admit they became disillusioned with the Christianity they had been taught, but still learned enough of God to say, like Peter, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life” (John 6:68). There is truth to be had, but it is out of focus, and therefore is frustratingly out of reach.

However, my discovery process wasn't born of either disillusionment or skepticism. It was born of belief. I knew that at the center of whatever experiences I encountered—joyful or painful—God was unwaveringly good. But I didn't always understand *good*, and that was frustrating. There were gaps in my understanding. I needed to dig in and ask more *how* than *why* questions. It was much like taking apart a fine watch, already knowing its purpose and value, but marveling at its design and how that purpose was accomplished.

Like the ways of God, there are many moving parts,

but they ultimately work together to precisely accomplish the goal of the designer and the purpose of the watch. The watch is the glory of the designer. The designer receives praise, honor, and respect for the way the watch functions. In the same way, my understanding of the love, complexity, and sacrifice that made my salvation possible brings glory to God in the form of my honor, praise, awe, and love. He gets even more glory when I purposefully live in the knowledge, freedom, and power of the salvation He opened to me. Then others see the results.

Doubts are allowed and questions are good. The true gospel invites examination and stands up under scrutiny. An unexamined and untested belief system is not faith. It's only an inheritance you've been taught. Any quest to find the truth requires a willingness to give up what's found to be not true. Separating from traditions you're invested in is unsettling. Worse is negotiating the minefields of friendships with those who are personally threatened by your questioning. Those who question shouldn't be feared or abandoned by the church. These are the people who become solid in what they believe (James 1:2–5). The work of the church is not to combat those who question; it's to proclaim and explain the gospel of Jesus the Christ.

For those thirsting after God, the good questions never end. The danger for all of us is slipping into the belief that life is static and that once you find the right set of facts—"the truth"—everything is settled. The truth is that the Truth is the Person who was and is and is to come.

Jesus has no problem with our questions, our deconstructions, or our efforts to know the truth and live in

it. He was most critical of the self-righteous—those who prided themselves on having all the answers and looking down on those who didn't. At the end, His call to us is to Himself, and nowhere else.

As a fellow truth seeker, I welcome you.



## CHAPTER 1

# Finding the Right Story

*If you can't explain it simply,  
then you don't understand it.*

—Dad

**KEY: The Genesis story isn't about the mechanics of creation; it's about the dynamics of relationship.**

I discovered during my years as a Christian that there are certain “Questions That Shall Not Be Asked.” It's not that they shouldn't be asked, but asking them was embarrassing. For example, a subject like salvation should be basic knowledge, I thought. If I didn't understand it all, then that meant I was deficient and still immature in the faith, right? What was I doing trying to teach others? Another was, “I know God loves me, but I'm not feeling real love back to Him. What's the matter with me?” I remember wishing there had been a book of those shall-not-be-asked answers so I could settle matters with minimal personal upset, benefiting from someone else's wrestling, not mine. But that isn't possible.

I began to notice that those same questions were also causing discomfort in others as inconsistencies and gaps in thinking were exposed. Questions can be threatening

to our settled order of understanding; they tend to peek around the corner at us just as we start to feel secure in our analysis of things. I also noticed that people tended to divide into two groups: those who wanted truth above all and were willing to search for themselves—giving up what they found to be untrue to welcome the truth—and a second group, heavily dependent on respected people to tell them what was true and how to believe. This second group could get quite annoyed at persistent questions, even angry.

Here's my confession: I became a Christian at a very early age and grew up trusting the doctrine I had been taught. I knew it was my duty to share the good news of the gospel with others—comfortably and unashamedly. However, as I grew into my teens, when it came to talking about the cross, it just got awkward. I knew I was to spread the good news of freedom in and through Christ, but I stumbled trying to explain this need for human sacrifice in our modern culture. No matter how I told the story, at the core of this “good news” was the cross.

The whole process had been explained to me in many ways, and on some level, I understood. I knew there had to be some connection to the animal sacrifices in the Old Testament, but I didn't understand why our redemption had to be done that way. I understood the models that attempted to explain it—ransom, substitution, etc.—but I still knew there was something I wasn't seeing.

I had no problem believing that Jesus was God, that He had become incarnate, and that somehow, mysteriously, He had died for my sins and rose again. I just didn't understand how—how the cross, how His blood, and how

His resurrection reconciled me back to God. Startlingly, I soon found that others weren't sure either. Worse, just like me, they had also been taught that it was "a mystery that we can't be expected to fully understand." But how could I fully trust what I was unable to understand? God had promised that we did not need to be ignorant. In fact, He took extra care to make sure that those who followed Him were *not* ignorant (Luke 8:10; John 16:13; 1 John 2:20–21). For years I kept these questions to myself and called it faith.

And that worked. On one hand, it didn't hamper my relationship with Jesus or my growing in faith and knowledge, but on the other hand, it did hold me back from evangelism. When explaining the gospel to someone who had never heard it, I almost always felt apologetic—like I had to qualify what I was saying. "I know this sounds strange but . . ." Even though this was the good news through which we are set free, and therefore I should be sharing it confidently and eagerly, what lay behind the story, for me, seemed somehow suspect and disturbingly disconnected.

I knew that in order to arrive at the solution, I first had to understand the problem. If I had trouble understanding the *how* and *why* of my salvation, it was very likely because I didn't understand my dilemma. I also suspected I wasn't seeing God's perspective of things. If the entirety of the Bible was a redemption story of how God moved to restore what humankind, through Adam, had lost in Eden, then I needed to understand what had been lost and how. I started reading the Gospels, but I quickly realized that the book of Genesis was where I needed to start.

As I studied, I realized that—although I had been taught that the message of Genesis was a general chronology from God’s creation of the world through the birth of Israel as God’s chosen people—producing a detailed history did not seem to be the primary goal of the author. The timelines and history were only his means to an end—to tell an even grander story of God’s goodness and love for all of mankind.

For example, the difference between Genesis chapters 1 and 2 had always been a puzzle to me. It’s almost like, after telling all about the creation of the heavens and the earth, the author starts over again in chapter 2 to retell the story, this time focusing on Adam—his creation, location, and job responsibilities. Why this do-over? Why didn’t he just tell the whole story in one telling?

It was only after I gave up my need to sort out the chronology that I began to see the picture the author was painting. The first chapter is about God Almighty creating the heavens and the earth, but we don’t see why He did it. He was LORD, and there was no need to explain. However, in the second chapter, God becomes more personal. He interacts with Adam and instructs him in how to live in harmony with both God and the environment that God has created for him. Unlike all the other created creatures, this man is given a personal name: Adam.

In the first chapter we see God as all-powerful creator. In the second, He is God personal and relatable. He orients Adam to his life in the garden. The author of Genesis is showing us two sides of God that inform us about everything to come in the rest of the book—and in the rest of

the Bible. He presents God first of all as Lord of all, the highest king and judge. Yet in the second telling, we see God in a priestly role, relating to Adam directly and teaching him the ways of God. Jesus later came in both those roles combined: as a sacral king<sup>1</sup> and as the champion of our redemption (Matt. 21:5; Heb. 4:14–16).

I believe now that Genesis tells us everything we need to know at the beginning of a very long story. For many years I had felt that the creation story was lacking. It left me with questions, and I wanted more details—especially about those “days.” Now I realize I had been lured into the wrong story. The story wasn’t about the mechanics of creation; it was about the dynamics of relationship. Jesus was there at the beginning, in the creation and through Adam and Eve’s temptation, betrayal, and fall. It was also He, with His Father, who set the course for our redemption, deliverance, and restoration (John 1:1–5).

Answers became clearer to me as I saw that Genesis—and really the whole Bible—is more than just a narrative or rule book. It tells its story through pictures and genealogies—vignettes of many lives and many generations—as well as commentary and direction. The goal is always to illuminate the true nature of God, as well as to contrast the natures of mankind when in harmony versus out of harmony with God. They are recorded as object lessons for us to learn from, count the cost, and make our own choices (Josh. 24:14–15; 1 Cor. 10:6–11).