

GREAT  
 BISHOP  
 LORD OF LORDS  
 IMMANUEL  
 FIRST BORN  
 HEAD OF THE BODY  
 PHYSICIAN  
 ROCK  
 POTENTATE  
 CHIEF APOSTLE  
 EL SHADDAI  
 MELEKH  
 ROOT OF JESSE  
 STONE  
 STRONG  
 DAYSTAR  
 DELIVERER  
 LAST ADAM  
 JESUS  
 PIONEER AND PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH  
 THE  
 ALPHA  
 EL ELYON  
 BRANCH  
 LIVING  
 ADVOCATE  
 COUNSELOR  
 OMEGA  
 GREAT HIGH PRIEST  
 GUARDIAN OF OUR SOULS  
 WORD  
 BRANCH  
 THEOTES  
 I AM  
 SHAPHAT  
 ELOHIM  
 LOGOS  
 ANCIENT OF DAYS  
 LAMB SLAIN  
 SANCTIFIER  
 THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD  
 LORD GOD ALMIGHTY.  
 SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP  
 MASTER  
 KING OF KINGS  
 ALMIGHTY  
 FOUNDATION  
 LAMB OF GOD  
 CHIEF CORNERSTONE

BY RICHARD ELWELL

the 1990s, the number of people in the UK who are employed in the public sector has increased from 10.5 million to 12.5 million, and the number of people in the public sector who are employed in health care has increased from 2.5 million to 3.5 million (Department of Health 2000).

There are a number of reasons for this increase in the number of people employed in the public sector. One of the main reasons is the increasing demand for health care services. The population of the UK is ageing, and there is a growing number of people with chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. This has led to an increase in the number of people who are hospitalized and the number of people who are in long-term care.

Another reason for the increase in the number of people employed in the public sector is the increasing demand for health care services from the private sector. The private sector has been growing rapidly in the UK, and this has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the private sector. However, the private sector is not able to meet the demand for health care services, and this has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the public sector.

There are a number of reasons for the increase in the number of people employed in the public sector. One of the main reasons is the increasing demand for health care services. The population of the UK is ageing, and there is a growing number of people with chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. This has led to an increase in the number of people who are hospitalized and the number of people who are in long-term care.

Another reason for the increase in the number of people employed in the public sector is the increasing demand for health care services from the private sector. The private sector has been growing rapidly in the UK, and this has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the private sector. However, the private sector is not able to meet the demand for health care services, and this has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the public sector.

There are a number of reasons for the increase in the number of people employed in the public sector. One of the main reasons is the increasing demand for health care services. The population of the UK is ageing, and there is a growing number of people with chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. This has led to an increase in the number of people who are hospitalized and the number of people who are in long-term care.

Another reason for the increase in the number of people employed in the public sector is the increasing demand for health care services from the private sector. The private sector has been growing rapidly in the UK, and this has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the private sector. However, the private sector is not able to meet the demand for health care services, and this has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the public sector.

There are a number of reasons for the increase in the number of people employed in the public sector. One of the main reasons is the increasing demand for health care services. The population of the UK is ageing, and there is a growing number of people with chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease, and cancer. This has led to an increase in the number of people who are hospitalized and the number of people who are in long-term care.

Another reason for the increase in the number of people employed in the public sector is the increasing demand for health care services from the private sector. The private sector has been growing rapidly in the UK, and this has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the private sector. However, the private sector is not able to meet the demand for health care services, and this has led to an increase in the number of people who are employed in the public sector.

# JESUS

THE LIVING WORD

BY RICHARD ELWELL



# ULTIMATE OUTCOMES

WHY IDEAS MATTER.

[www.ultimateoutcomes.org](http://www.ultimateoutcomes.org)

Ultimate Outcomes is a non-profit organization founded on the fruit of the 30 plus years Pastor Richard Elwell and his wife Marty spent in church ministry, developing studies that would help their congregants discern and apply God's truth. Richard was a firm believer that the outcomes in our lives are a result of what ideas we choose to believe and follow.

After Richard died of a rare liver disease in 2018, Ultimate Outcomes has taken on the mission of sharing the Elwells' insights with all who desire to live a better life and are willing to look to God for understanding of the way they are to go. To that end, it makes available for free download on its website: Bible studies, Sunday school curriculum, and sermon podcasts.

Richard earned a Master of Divinity degree from the International School of Theology and was the founding and senior pastor at University Park Church, San Bernardino, CA for over 30 years. His passion was always to make God's truth understandable and applicable to all who hunger for it. Marty holds a Master's Degree in Teaching Processes from Claremont Graduate University. Her passion has been to train women and provide curriculum for parents who want to raise their children up in the ways of the Lord.

Copyright 1999, 2004, 2018 RICHARD ELWELL  
Scripture taken from the Holy Bible,  
NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION  
Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society.  
Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

# JESUS, THE LIVING WORD

## STUDY PURPOSE

The purpose of this study is to help Christians gain greater understanding, knowledge and appreciation of our Lord Jesus Christ. As a result of growing in our knowledge of Christ, we gain more of what we need for life and for godliness. Jesus is the revelation of everything we need. The first eighteen verses of John, chapter one, will be the primary focus of the study, which will rely heavily on the work of the Greek scholar, Spiros Zodiates. John 1:1-18 is a rich vein of revelatory information on the nature of Jesus our Lord.

## STUDY CONTENTS

<b>1. JESUS THE ETERNAL WORD</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. THE WORD WAS GOD</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. THE WORD BECAME FLESH</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>4. THE WORD IS LIFE AND LIGHT</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5. ALL THINGS WERE CREATED BY THE WORD</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>6. THE WORD IS FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>7. THE WORD IS THE SOURCE OF BLESSING</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>8. THE WORD MAKES GOD KNOWABLE</b>	<b>39</b>



# 1

# JESUS IS THE ETERNAL WORD

## INTRODUCTION

### ▶ INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

What can you expect to gain through the study of the person and nature of Jesus Christ?

**Greater understanding and appreciation of who God is and who we should be, greater desire to be in relationship with him.**

#### **2 Peter 1:3**

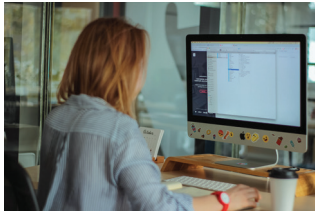
*<sup>3</sup>His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.*



**Note:** The word “knowledge” in the verse refers to personal, first-hand knowledge.

How can our personal, first-hand knowledge of Jesus be the means by which we gain everything we need for life?

**We already have physical life, what we need is what animates spiritual life, a relationship with Christ and the truth (ideas, knowledge) As we increase in our knowledge of Christ we gain the understanding and power that we truly need for life.**



#### **Illustration: A Computer**

A computer is made up of a hard drive of physical components and software (applications). It is the software or non-material components that drive the computer and give it life. Good programming has a beneficial impact on how a computer functions.

### ▶ LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will examine who Jesus is in relationship to the dimensions of time and space, our temporal existence.

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### ▶ THE ETERNAL WORD

#### **John 1:1-18**

*<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*<sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning.*

*<sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

*<sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. (cont.)*

*<sup>6</sup>There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.*

*<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

*<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*<sup>15</sup>John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" <sup>16</sup>From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.*

1. From the following verses, how do we know John is identifying Jesus as being the one referred to as the Word?

Vs. 1-2 **The Word is a person and the Word is God. He is a personal pronoun.**

Vs. 6-7, 15 **John the Baptist testifies about Jesus.**

Vs. 14 **The Word became a man who came from God.**

Vs. 17 **The name of the Word is given as being Jesus.**

2. What are words?

**They are the expression of our thoughts, what goes on in our mind. The revelation of who we are and what we believe and think about come through our words. The thoughts that we put into words are the ones we want others to know.**

3. Why is Jesus called the Word (logos)?

**Logos means words that are an expression of reason; they are intelligent speech, intention of mind. Jesus is the revelation of God's reason and intelligence. He is the personified expression of God's thoughts.**

4. What does it mean, "In the beginning was the Word...?"

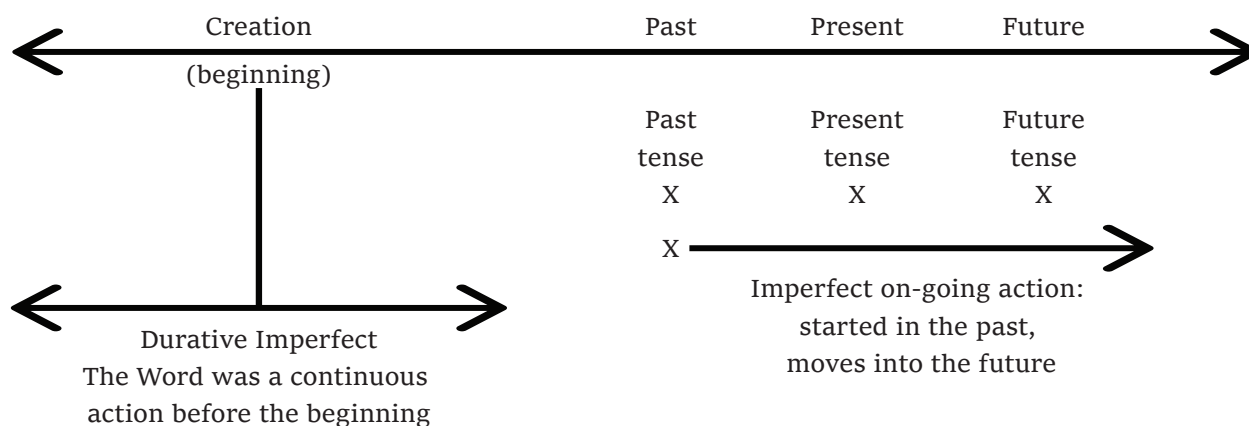
**Before anything material existed in time and space (4 dimensional), the Word was already in existence.**

5. The Greek scholar Spiros Zodiates in his book, *Was Christ God? A Defense of the Deity of Christ*, comments on the importance of the verb "was" in John 1:1. He states:

*The first important word to consider is the verb "was" in the first statement. This is in the imperfect tense. It is unfortunate that we do not have a true imperfect tense in English, and therefore it is difficult to translate the Greek imperfect. The Greek verb *ēn*, "was," holds the key to the understanding of John's statement.*



The first important word to consider is the verb “was” in the first statement. This is in the imperfect tense. It is unfortunate that we do not have a true imperfect tense in English, and therefore it is difficult to translate the Greek imperfect. The Greek verb *ēn*, “was,” holds the key to the understanding of John’s statement. This is what we call the durative imperfect of the verb *eimi*, “to be.” And what does the tense convey to us here? It speaks of a time before the beginning of things. In other words, John tells us that this Logos, this Word, was in existence before the created world. Therefore we would be fully justified in translating this first clause, “Before there was a beginning, the Word had been.”



6. How could Jesus be before the very beginning?  
*He is God, an uncreated, eternal being. He is the prime mover, the one who had no cause that caused everything. He is of a different nature (spiritual) from what is created (physical).*

## THINKING IT THROUGH

1. What is our relationship to time and space?  
*We are confined to it. We can't transcend it. We can think about the future and past but we can't access them. God exists in a reality that we can't comprehend in a physical sense.*
2. How does our relationship to time and space change when the Spirit of Christ dwells in us?  
*Even though we are physically confined to time and space we have an eternal nature. Once Christ is in us we can begin to understand his mind. We gain the eternal nature of Christ. It changes our perspective of life from the temporal to the eternal.*

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

### ► THE IMPERISHABLE SEED

#### 1 Peter 1:17-25

*<sup>17</sup>Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. <sup>18</sup>For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

(cont.)

*<sup>20</sup>He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. <sup>21</sup>Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God.*

*<sup>22</sup>Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for your brothers, love one another deeply, from the heart. <sup>23</sup>For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.*

*<sup>24</sup>For, "All men are like grass and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, <sup>25</sup>but the word of the Lord stands forever."  
And this is the word that was preached to you.*

1. What is the imperishable seed? (vs. 23)

The eternal, living and enduring Word of God

2. What are the characteristics of the imperishable seed that relate to the Word (Jesus)?

Vs. 19 Perfect, without blemish or defect

Vs. 20 Eternal, but participates in human history.

Vs. 21 Way to know God, death had no hold on him

Vs. 23 Gives true life, new and eternal

3. How does the idea of the imperishable seed impact us?

The purpose of the human heart is to have the eternal growing in it. The Word was revealed to us and enters into us. It plants the imperishable (eternal) in us and gives us understanding and an ability to believe in God.

## ► THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER & THE SEED

### Luke 8:11-15

*11"This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. 12Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13Those on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away. 14The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature. 15But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.*

1. What is the seed?

The Word of God (truth in Bible or Jesus)

2. What does the seed's ability to grow depend upon?

The type of soil it lands on (the condition of the human heart). The seed is always the same; the soil (heart condition) varies

3. What happens to the seed in the different types of soil?

Path	Rock	Thorns	Good Soil
Snatched away; never grows.	Withers away; likes seed if it doesn't cost anything.	Competing ideas (weeds) choke out seed.	Grows and has capacity to reproduce

**Summary:** God communicates his mind through Jesus (the Living Word) and the Bible (the written word). Both have been given to us to communicate God's mind and plant the imperishable seed in our hearts. The seed will only grow in hearts that are prepared and receptive.

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

### ► PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. How are you tending to the growth and development of the imperishable seed in you?

Path      Are you staying continually close to the Word?

Rock      Are you seeking out the Word during trials and testing?

Thorns    Are you discerning and getting rid of deceptive ideas that compete with the Word?

Good Soil    Are you growing in understanding of the Word and is it impacting who you are and what you do?

2. What is your view of Jesus as the Living Word?

He is what I truly need for life and godliness.

### ► PRAYER

Pray for a heart that is prepared to receive God's word and know Christ more fully.



# 2

## THE WORD WAS GOD

### INTRODUCTION

#### ► REVIEW

1. What existed before any created thing existed?

*God and his mind (word). The Word was a continuous past existence that was before any created thing.*

2. What is the significance of John identifying Jesus as the Word?

*It shows he is the expression of God's intellect, the imperishable seed. The intelligence of God personified.*

3. What is our heart's relationship to the Word?

*Our heart is the soil into which the word is planted. If it receives the imperishable word, it grows and expands.*

Before all created things existed there existed the uncreated being, God. In the first chapter of John, God is called the Word. The Word is intelligence personified in the person of Jesus Christ. The Word is an imperishable seed that can grow in the soil of our hearts.

#### ► LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will examine how it is that God the Father and God the Son can both be distinct from one another, while at the same time being indistinct from each other.

### SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

#### John 1:1-18

*<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*<sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning.*

*<sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

*<sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

*<sup>6</sup>There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.*

*<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. (cont.)*

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.  
<sup>15</sup>John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" <sup>16</sup>From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

► **THE WORD WAS WITH GOD AND THE WORD WAS GOD**

**John 1:1-2**

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.  
<sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning.

1. Why does the Word being with God seem to be in conflict with the companion phrase that the Word was God?

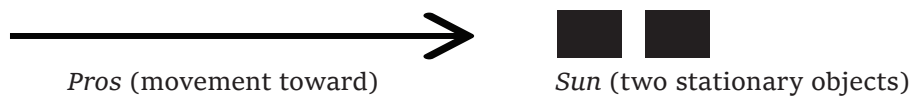
*It makes it seem contradictory that He is both God and not God. How can you be both distinct from something and yet be that something at the same time?*

2. How is it hard to understand the truth that Jesus is both distinct from God and indistinct from God?

*It is unique from our nature and our experience. We're trying to understand what we haven't experienced.*

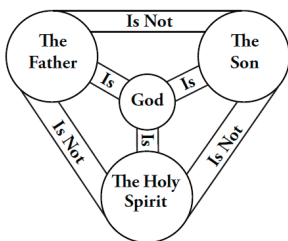


**Note:** In verses one and two the same prepositional phrase is used, "The Word was with God" and "He was with God." The preposition "with" in each phrase is a translation of the Greek preposition pros. Pros conveys the idea of one thing in motion towards another thing. Other Greek prepositions such as sun would convey the idea of two stationary objects being together with each other. (Spiros Zodiatas)



How does understanding the preposition pros (as meaning movement toward) help us to understand the relationship between God the Father and God the Son? (Look at verse 18.)

*Christ is the visible word (manifestation) that moves God's creation (man) towards an understanding of God. He is both distinct (being visible) and indistinct (being God)*



**Illustration: The Trinity**

The Son is the emanation of the Father, going out and revealing the Father and therefore bringing all to the Father. God the Father and God the Son are distinct in form but indistinct in content. There is one God who exists in three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.



1. **Thoughts and Words:** Our thoughts give rise to our words. You can't say a word without thinking it first. Our words carry the same content as our thoughts to the perceivable realm. Thoughts and words are both distinct and indistinct at the same time.



2. **The Sun and its Rays:** The sun and its rays come from the same source but they have a distinct form. Rays emanate from the sun and bring the sun's heat and light to earth, but they are not the same as the sun.



3. **A Book and its Dimensions:** A book is made up of three dimensions: height, width and depth. Each dimension is distinct from the others, yet together they make up one book. If you were to remove one of the dimensions, none of the book would be left. The dimensions are distinct from one another while at the same time comprising the totality of the book.

## THINKING IT THROUGH

1. What would happen to our understanding of God if we were to believe that the Father and Son were wholly distinct from each other?

We would be polytheists rather than monotheists. There would be 3 separate gods. Since there is only one God, either the Father or the Son couldn't be God. If the Son weren't God that would mean that he isn't a perfect representation of the Father and therefore could not an adequate atonement for sin.

2. What would happen to our understanding of Jesus if we didn't see any distinction between the Father and the Son?

We wouldn't understand Scripture. Christ referred to God as his Father and prayed to his Father throughout his ministry. If we didn't believe the Father and Son were distinct we'd be denying Christ's own understanding of himself. The things that Jesus said and did would be nonsensical.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

### ► IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD

#### Colossians 1:15-23

*<sup>15</sup>He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. <sup>16</sup>For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. <sup>17</sup>He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. <sup>19</sup>For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, <sup>20</sup>and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, (cont.)*

*by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

*<sup>21</sup>Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. <sup>22</sup>But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation-- <sup>23</sup>if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.*



**Note:** The word “firstborn” in verses 15 and 18 means pre-eminent.

1. What do verses 15-17 have in common with John 1:1-3?

Both refer to Christ as creator (being existent before creation) and the image of the invisible God.

2. What do the following verses say about the Son?

Vs. 15 **He is the image of the invisible God. He makes what can't be seen visible.**

Vs. 17 **He has always existed and holds all things together.**

Vs. 19 **The fullness of God dwells in him.**

Vs. 20 **He is the reconciler. He brings people back to God.**

**Summary:** Jesus is the revelation of the Father, making his heart and his intentions visible, and leading to the reconciliation of men with God.

## ► VISIBLE TO THE WORLD

### **John 17:20-23**

*<sup>20</sup>"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, <sup>21</sup>that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. <sup>22</sup>I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: <sup>23</sup>I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

1. What does Christ want for us? (vs. 21)

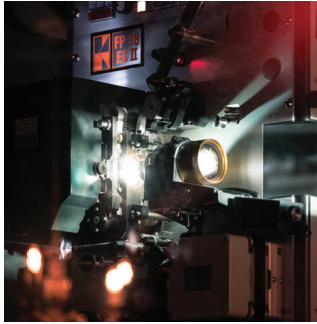
**He wants to make us one as he and the Father are one and that we would find ourselves in him. Unity of believers is like the unity of god.**

2. Why does he want this? (vs. 23)

**So that the world has a continual visible manifestation of Christ and comes to believe.**

**Summary:** Just as Jesus came to be a visible manifestation of the Father, we are to be a visible manifestation of Christ as we become one in him.





### **Illustration: Movie Projector**

If a movie projector is run without something to project on, nothing can be seen. A screen is needed to make the projected image visible. The image (light) on the screen comes from the projected rays. They are the same, yet distinct. The image on the screen is in a form that can be seen. The more those in the body of Christ are one, then the more tightly woven is the screen and the more clearly the image of Christ is reflected on it. If there is disunity and the screen is full of holes, the reflection from the projector wouldn't be clear.

## **PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE**

### **► PERSONAL EVALUATION**

1. How is Jesus reconciling you to your Heavenly Father?

*Extending mercy because of his work on the cross. Revealing more of the Father as I look to him and seek to understand.*

2. How is your life an image of God's goodness?

*What is it that I am reflecting? What do my actions show? Is my presence edifying to others?*

3. How are you seeking to be one with God and fellow believers?

*What is evidence of this in my life? What am I doing for others? Do I overlook offense and maintain harmony?*

### **► PRAYER**

Thank Jesus that he makes God visible and more understandable. Pray that his work would become more visible in your own life.



# 3

## THE WORD BECAME FLESH

### INTRODUCTION

#### ► REVIEW

1. What is the significance of the verb was in John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word”?

It is in the durative imperfect tense, which means it always existed eternally before any material thing existed, “always had been.”

2. What does it mean when John calls Jesus, “the Word”?

Christ is God’s intelligence and truth personified. He is the sum total of thinking of God, the means by which God’s wisdom is expressed. Christ makes God’s thoughts visible.

3. How can God the Father and God the Son be both distinct and indistinct from each other?

Different form, same essence. The word “with” (pros) means towards, emanating from. Words carry the expression of thoughts. Words are distinct from thoughts but at the same time are indistinct as they come from the thoughts. The same with the sun’s rays.

#### ► LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will examine another mystery concerning the nature of Jesus. It will look at Jesus the Word becoming one of us and living among us.

Why is the idea of the Word becoming a man such a difficult idea to grasp?

How does something infinite become finite? The fullness of God dwelling in a man seems inconceivable. They are of two different natures: eternal vs. temporal, infinite vs. finite, spiritual vs. material.



#### Illustration: Containment

How could the fullness of the ocean be contained in a finite pitcher?

### SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

#### John 1:1-18

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

<sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning.

<sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

<sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

<sup>6</sup>There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. (cont.)

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup>John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" <sup>16</sup>From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

## ► THE WORD BECAME FLESH

### John 1:14

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

1. What have we already discovered about the nature of the Word?

It is infinite, eternal, spiritual (immaterial).

2. What is the nature of flesh?

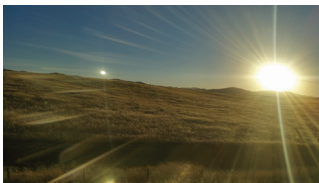
It is finite, temporary, physical.

3. What does it mean that the Word became flesh?

The infinite and spiritual became finite and physical. The creator became part of his creation.

4. Why did the Word become flesh?

To make God visible. To get through to us he had to become one of us. He became flesh to die for us so that we might live. Example, if you were going to relate to an ant you would have to become one.



#### Illustration: The Sun

To see the sun you have to experience the light that comes from it.

5. How did the Word become flesh?

By his own volition and power. The Word made itself become flesh.



**Note:** The verb translated “became” is the Greek verb *egeneto*, which means “was made”. The Word was made flesh. Who made the Word flesh? This verb is in the middle voice (an action you do) rather than passive voice (an action done to you). For something or someone other than the Word itself to have made the Word flesh, the verb would have had to be in the passive voice. Therefore, John is saying the Word made itself into flesh. This verb is also in the aorist or past tense meaning that at a point in time in the past the Word became flesh.



Therefore, the meaning of the phrase, “The Word became flesh,” is that the eternal, spiritual Word, by his own will and power, made himself finite and physical. (Spiros Zodiatos)

**Luke 1:35**

*<sup>35</sup>When Mary questioned how she could become pregnant, The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.*

How did the way Mary became pregnant with Jesus relate to John 1:14?

The immaterial God put life in her womb. It was the formation of material from the immaterial. Like creation it was a miracle, creating something out of nothing, the second Adam, not conceived by any human agency.

**John 1:14**

*<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*



**Note:** The word “dwelling” means literally a tent or tabernacle.

What is the difference between the Old Testament tabernacle and the temple in Jerusalem?

The tabernacle was not a permanent structure, it was designed to be mobile and temporary. The temple was a permanent structure. Both were God’s dwelling place.

**1 Corinthians 3:16**

*Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?*

How does the difference between the temple and tabernacle relate to Christ being with us?

His first dwelling was temporary so we can become a place where he can dwell permanently in us. Christ’s coming was not a permanent condition. He became material so we can become eternal.

## THINKING IT THROUGH

1. What did Jesus go through to get through to us?  
He became a man and took on human experience. He limited himself for our benefit. He experienced all that we go through because he took it on. He gave up everything he is to redeem us.
2. Given what Jesus went through to get through to us, what does he deserve from us?  
The recognition of who he is and what he did should lead to our total devotion. He gave his all for us and deserves all we are for him.
3. How do we discover what Jesus came to reveal?  
By seeking him more than anything else, letting his Spirit work in us, by digging deep into his word. Through humble prayer and diligent study.
4. What does it mean to behold his glory?  
To see the beauty and majesty of who God is and what he came to do, gain a right perspective of God. We have eyes to see what is real about God when we understand what Jesus came to do on the cross.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

### ► THE ATTITUDE OF JESUS

#### **Philippians 2:5-11**

*5Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross! 9Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

1. What is the attitude of Jesus that is revealed by his becoming flesh and dwelling among us?  
**Humility to the maximum degree, as the Creator takes on the nature of the created and comes to serve what he made. Our arrogance must disgust God since he was willing to make himself nothing and die for his enemies.**
2. What kind of behavior would reveal we have the same attitude as Jesus?  
**Lowering ourselves and serving in humility are the outcome of Christ living in us. We would have a willingness to do whatever we are asked to do for others, no matter how low the task or what their relationship is to us. We are not focused on ourselves, but rather on the needs of others.**

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

### ► PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. What are you doing to see God more clearly?  
**Am I diligently seeking him?**
2. What keeps you from having a clear vision of God?  
**Serving self. What does serving self mean?**
3. How do you benefit from a clearer understanding of God?  
**I understand everything better and live accordingly. I grow closer to God.**
4. What can you do to receive Christ in you more fully?  
**Humble self, recognize my sin and need**

### ► PRAYER

Thank Jesus for his humble servant attitude, that he came to reveal himself to those who reject him. Pray that you would see and understand him more fully and that he would be pleased to dwell in you.

# 4

## THE WORD IS LIFE AND LIGHT

### INTRODUCTION

#### ► REVIEW

1. What is John teaching about Jesus by calling him the Word?  
*Jesus is the mind, logic, intelligence of God personified. He is the thinking of God.*
2. Why is the idea of the Word becoming a man hard to grasp?  
*Something infinite, immaterial and timeless became finite and temporary.*
3. Why did the Word become flesh and dwell among us?  
*Jesus came to dwell among us temporarily so that he might dwell in us permanently. He came to make God visible to us.*

#### ► LESSON FOCUS

The purpose of this lesson is to examine Jesus' relationship to life and light. What would happen to us physically if there were no physical light?

*Without light we wouldn't have physical life; our life is dependent upon light. Through light we get the food that sustains us, the warmth to survive and the ability to see.*

### SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

#### John 1:1-18

*<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*<sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning.*

*<sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

*<sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

*<sup>6</sup>There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.*

*<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

*<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*<sup>15</sup>John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" <sup>16</sup>From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.*

## ► THE WORD IS LIFE AND LIGHT

### John 1:4-5

*<sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*



**Note:** The word “was” is the same word as in John 1:1. It means in time past, a continuous condition. Before there was a beginning, life was in him. Life has never not been in him.

#### 1. What is life?

No one can define what life actually is; one can only give description of what it is able to do. Life is what animates something, enabling it to eat, grow and reproduce. Webster Dictionary: A principle or force that is considered to underlie the distinctive quality of animate beings.



#### Illustration: Life

Life is what separates a vital and functional being from a dead body. There is nothing different about the material being of a body at the moment after death; it even weighs the same as it did alive.

#### 2. In what does life have its origin?

It comes from Christ to whatever is alive. He has given life to whatever is living. He is the eternal reservoir of life. He is the author of life, as he existed before all living, material things. Even the things that sustain life come from him.

#### 3. How is the life that is in Jesus different from the life in us?

Jesus' life is eternal and will never end. Life has never not been in him. Our life has a beginning and an end and is dependent upon him. Christ's life is self-existent, it is not dependent on anything.

#### 4. What is light?

To define light you can only give a description of what light does, its effect rather than its essence. Light is that which illuminates, transfer of energy, sustainer of life, visible energy, something that makes vision possible. You have to experience its effect to understand it.



#### Illustration: Light and the Blind

To a blind man light is only an abstract concept. Just because he doesn't perceive light doesn't mean it doesn't exist. Not being able to imagine light would distort a blind man's view of reality.

#### 5. Verse 4 states, In him was life, and that life was the light of men. What does that mean for us?

The life of Christ in us is what makes spiritual things visible. Without that life in us there is no light. To gain vision we have to have life. Without physical or spiritual life, light has no impact. God is unknowable unless we are alive in Christ.



#### Illustration: Being Dead

A dead tree can't utilize light for life. A dead man can't see.



6. Verse 5 states, The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. What is the darkness it is referring to?

People who are spiritually blind or spiritually dead. The darkness isn't alive. The darkness is dead or blind to the light and can't perceive it. Darkness has no ability to see.

#### **Ephesians 4:18-19**

*<sup>18</sup>They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts. <sup>19</sup>Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, with a continual lust for more.*

1. Why is the darkness unable to comprehend the light?

It is separated from the life of God. The life that is in Christ is the light of men, to be separated from it is to be in darkness. Because of blindness men lose all sensitivity to the light and want more darkness.

2. Why do men like the darkness?

They think they will find life in it, that it will benefit them and give them what they are looking for. It is comfortable and doesn't challenge them.

3. When does the darkness become able to comprehend the light?

When it recognizes what the light is. It has to reconnect to the life of God in Christ so it is able to see. Darkness is its own discipline; it is through experiencing the profound emptiness of it that one comes to desire light.

## THINKING IT THROUGH

1. What does Jesus want to do with the life that is in him?

He wants to share it with us. He longs to pour it out on us, which is what he did through his work on the cross.

2. What keeps us from receiving from Jesus what he wants to give us?

Loving deadness, wanting to be hidden in darkness. Wanting to get life out of the creation rather than from the Creator.

3. What is the relationship of sin to life?

Sin causes death and separates us from life in Christ. It leads us into ignorant darkness and prevents life from being in us. Sin keeps us in darkness.

4. What is the relationship of holiness to life?

Holiness is the fullness of what Christ wants to give us. Holiness is being disconnected from darkness and keeps us connected to the life of Christ.

5. Why would anyone prefer death over life?

Ignorance and a hard heart, thinking there is life in darkness. Death is easier and familiar. Death doesn't require any effort at first but then it gets harder and more profound.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

### ► LIFE OR DEATH

#### John 10:10

*<sup>10</sup>The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

1. What does the thief want to steal from us?  
He wants to steal from us our life in Christ.
2. How does he do that?  
He gets us to think that something else is life. He deceives us, "Death is life and life is death."  
He gets us to think that he has something to offer, that there is life apart from Christ.
3. What does Christ want to do for us?  
He wants to give us full and abundant life.

How do we gain that?

By believing that it only comes through him.

### ► HOLINESS OR SIN

#### James 1:13-18

*<sup>13</sup>When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; <sup>14</sup>but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. <sup>15</sup>Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

*<sup>16</sup>Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. <sup>17</sup>Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. <sup>18</sup>He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.*

#### John 1:4-5

*<sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

How do the verses from James relate to John 1:4-5?

Light and life come from God, sin and death don't; they come from the evil within us. Spiritual death is our natural condition. God will never offer sin and death; he wants light and life for us. We are given birth through the Word of Truth. Sin is given birth when we turn away from truth and want what is evil and will harm us.



## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

### ▶ PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. Do you want the life and light God wants to give? How does your life reflect that?

*Fullness of life and contentment*

2. Do you want the darkness that doesn't come from God? How is that demonstrated in your life?

*Frustration, discontent, etc.*

3. If you desire to get what God doesn't want to give, what will you end up with?

*Destruction and death, no life or light.*

4. What is the key to life in Christ?

*Believing you need it, Dying to self and appropriating the life Christ desires to give.*

### ▶ PRAYER

Thank Christ that his life in you gives light. Pray that you would become more open to his glorious life and seek light rather than dwell in darkness.



# 5

# ALL THINGS WERE CREATED BY THE WORD

## INTRODUCTION

### ► REVIEW

**Lesson 1:** Before anything in creation existed, before time, matter, and space existed, the Word had already been continually existing. Thus, John writes in verse 1, “In the beginning was the Word.”

**Lesson 2:** We have seen that the Word is God’s Son, Jesus Christ. The Word, “the logos of God,” is the mind and will of God personified in the person of Jesus Christ. Thus, John writes in verse 14, “The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

**Lesson 3:** We have seen that the Word, Jesus, is both distinct and indistinct from the Father in the same way that our words and the thoughts they carry are both distinct and indistinct from one another. Thus, John writes in verse 1, “The Word was with God and the Word was God.”

**Lesson 4:** We have seen that Jesus is the eternal reservoir of life. All that is alive gets its life from Christ. It is from his life in us that we become able to see the truth. Thus, John writes in verse 4, “In him was life and that life was the light of men.”

### ► LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will show that Jesus is not only the source of life and revelation, but also the creator of everything that exists.

1. What is the difference between a created thing and the creator?  
They are of two very different natures. A created thing has a beginning and an end. It originates in a cause outside itself and is sustained by a force beyond itself. It is totally dependent upon the creator who has no beginning and is self-sustaining and wholly independent. A created thing has no power to create what is material out of what is immaterial.
2. How does knowing that Jesus is the creator affect our view of this man from Nazareth?  
We know he is God. He is beyond us; he is not our peer. We need to bow before him and learn from him. We should gain greater appreciation for his sacrifice and be humbled.
3. How is the way we view ourselves affected by our view of Jesus of Nazareth?  
A higher view of Christ brings us to a lower view of ourselves. It humbles us and causes us to recognize our need for him. If we elevate ourselves and lower Christ we become arrogant and don’t recognize our need for his sacrifice and how precious we are to him.

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### John 1:1-18

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

<sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning.

<sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

<sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

<sup>6</sup>There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup>John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" <sup>16</sup>From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

### ► THROUGH HIM ALL THINGS WERE MADE

#### John 1:3

<sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

1. What does it mean that all things were made (created) through him?

He is the creator and source of the material world. He is the means by which something material was formed out of the immaterial. God's thoughts became material through Christ. Everything material has its origin in the mind of Christ.

The word "through" comes from the Greek preposition *dia*, which means through or by the means of. *Dia* is a prefix for many English words, such as the word *diagram*. A diagram is like an architect's blueprint. It is the bridge between two things: the thought of the architect and the physical realization of the architect's thoughts. Jesus is the agent of creation. He is the means by which the thought in the mind of God became physically and materially realized.

2. What is meant by "all things"?

Everything that isn't God (space, time, matter, our souls, spiritual world), even things we don't know exist. There is nothing that is not included from times past to things that are to come, except God himself.

### 3. Romans 11:33-36

<sup>33</sup>Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable his judgments, and his paths beyond tracing out!

<sup>34</sup>"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" <sup>35</sup>"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" <sup>36</sup>For from him and through him and to him are all things.

To him be the glory forever! Amen.

The relationship of the prepositions in Romans 11:36:

For **from** him and **through** him and **to** him are all things.

—————→

Begins in God's Mind                      Through the means of the Son                      To serve the purpose of God.

4. What does the phrase, "without him nothing was made," tell us about the nature of things that exist?

There is nothing besides God himself that is self-created. He alone is self-existent. Without God or apart from God nothing but God would exist.

5. How does the above truth of origins and the nature of things compare to the beliefs of naturalism? (Naturalism is the belief that the natural, material world is all that exists.)

Matter created itself, everything has self-creativity, spontaneous generation. The explanation for existence is within the material world. The Bible is saying that apart from God there would be no creation.

6. What is the difference between what Christ creates and what we create?

God creates something new from what is non-existent. We only can use what already exists, therefore what we "create" is only the rearrangement of created things, which came from God.

7. If Jesus created all things, is he responsible for evil?

Everything was created good. If we rearrange a good thing into a corrupt or evil design it will be evil. Evil is a corruption of a pre-existing thing. Evil is anything less than what ought to be. Man has volition to mess things up and go against God's good design.



#### Illustration: A Paper Cup

A paper cup is designed for a purpose and when it fulfills that purpose it is good. If it has a hole poked in it, it has become corrupted and can no longer serve a good purpose (function the way it was designed to function).

## THINKING IT THROUGH

1. How does our view of our origins affect our view of Jesus?  
If we believe we are created, then we can see Jesus for who he is. We will esteem him and submit to him if we hold a right view of him. If we believe we are just the result of random processes, then we can never understand who Jesus is and what he came to do.
2. How does having an accurate view of how we were created and how we are sustained affect us?  
It enables us to be humble, dependent and grateful. We accept our design and develop according to it. We trust God, not ourselves. We are secure in what he has in mind. If we believe in ourselves, then we are responsible for ourselves. We put our hope in ourselves and we are never content or satisfied. We will always fall short of what we hope for.
3. Can we be anything we want to be or anything we have been created to be?  
I cannot give myself capacities beyond what God has given me or change my design. To be successful I must want to follow what I have been created to be. I must understand the abilities and capacities that God has uniquely given to me and practice and develop what I have been given for God's glory.
4. What does functioning according to our created design do for us?  
Since it is God's good plan it enables us to live the life God desires and be content and satisfied. Struggling against the will of the Creator will harm us.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

### ► A LONG RANGE VIEW OF CREATION

#### 2 Peter 3:1-18

<sup>1</sup>Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. <sup>2</sup>I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Savior through your apostles.

<sup>3</sup>First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. <sup>4</sup>They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." <sup>5</sup>But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. <sup>6</sup>By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. <sup>7</sup>By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.

<sup>8</sup>But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. <sup>9</sup>The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

<sup>10</sup>But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

(cont.)



*<sup>11</sup>Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives <sup>12</sup>as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. <sup>13</sup>But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.*

*<sup>14</sup>So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. <sup>15</sup>Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. <sup>16</sup>He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.*

*<sup>17</sup>Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. <sup>18</sup>But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and forever! Amen.*

1. What is the long-range view of creation revealed in this passage? (vs. 11-13)

*Everything will be destroyed. The same Word that created this world will speak into existence a new heaven and earth, which will be the home of righteousness. This earth is not the home of righteousness.*

2. How does having a long-range view of creation affect what is important today?

*We would live for God's purposes. We see the passing world as an opportunity to lay up treasures in heaven by growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We prepare ourselves for heaven by doing God's work on earth.*

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

### ► PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. Do you see yourself as being created by God to live for God?  
In what ways?
2. What kind of behavior is born out of the view that you were created by God to live for God?  
*Self-sacrificing actions in conformity to truth.*
3. Is that kind of behavior evident in your life?  
In what ways?

### ► PRAYER

Thank God for giving you life to enjoy his beautiful creation. Pray that you would fulfill his design for you by growing in him and bringing him glory and honor.



# 6

## THE WORD IS FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH

### INTRODUCTION

#### ► REVIEW

What are some of the revealed attributes of Jesus in John 1:1-18 that stretch the boundaries of our understanding?

- John 1:1a - *In the beginning was the Word, He has always existed. He has never, not been.*
- John 1:1b - *and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He both is God and is with God. He is both distinct and indistinct from God.*
- John 1:14a - *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. He is the infinite, yet became finite. He entered into his own creation.*
- John 1:4-5 - *In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. He is the source of life and light, yet he was largely misunderstood. Our life comes through him. Those of his generation didn't clearly see him.*
- John 1:3 - *Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. He is the creator of all things. There isn't anything, except God himself, that doesn't originate from God.*

#### ► LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will look at how the glory of God becomes visible through Jesus, who is full of grace and truth. In Christ we see the glory of the Master who came to serve his disobedient servants.

How could a poor Jewish man on a donkey be more glorious than the Caesars of Rome?

*He alone is God in person. Caesar is a common man who tries to elevate himself. The one who is great voluntarily became low.*

### SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

#### John 1:1-18

<sup>1</sup>*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

<sup>2</sup>*He was with God in the beginning.*

<sup>3</sup>*Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

<sup>4</sup>*In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

<sup>6</sup>*There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was (cont.)*

*not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.*

*<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

*<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*<sup>15</sup>John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" <sup>16</sup>From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.*

## ► THE GLORY OF THE ONE AND ONLY

### **John 1:14,17**

*<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*<sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

#### 1. What is glory?

*Perceptible radiance, aura of greatness, something beyond what can ordinarily be obtained. The Greek word is doxa, meaning the radiance of glory, greatness made visible.*

#### 2. What does it mean to see God's glory?

*See and understand his greatness. Gain understanding of his majesty, his uniqueness, and the fullness of his nature. See his heart and the love he has for his creation. It is a spiritual perception, only available to those who have eyes to see. We can only see it when we first recognize who we are in relation to God and are humble.*

#### 3. How does Jesus make God's glory visible?

*Christ in the demonstration of his character, the outward living of his life. It is a personal perception, depending on our view of God. God's glory isn't seen by everyone even though Christ makes it visible. Christ meets the standard of perfection as there was no sin in him.*

#### 4. How did the disciples come to see Jesus' glory?

*They saw his person and the way he lived his life. He lived a life full of grace and truth. Whether they were able to perceive it depended on whether they were walking in humility or arrogance. His suffering and death and the resurrection were demonstrations of his truth and grace.*

#### 5. What is grace?

*Grace is kindness (unmerited favor) shown to those who are not true, who don't live up to a standard.*

6. What is truth?  
The Greeks saw truth as true propositions that fit reality. Hebrews saw truth as being true to what ought to be (on the inside, character). Truth is the law, the standard of what we ought to be.
7. What does it mean that Jesus is full of grace and truth?  
Jesus both demonstrates God's kindness to those who don't deserve it, while upholding the standard of the law and how we are to live and treat others.
8. What would Jesus be like if he lacked either grace or truth?  
If Christ were grace with no truth, there would be no standard of how we are to live. If he were truth without grace, he would be harsh and unforgiving of those who failed to meet the standard.
9. How does Christ being full of grace and truth relate to his glory?  
What a person is full of (dwells in him) is what will come out of him. The greatness of Jesus is seen in that he is 100% (perfect embodiment of) grace and truth (perfection and mercy). Jesus was the same on the inside as he was on the outside (integrity).
10. Why does the grace of God in Christ surpass all other demonstrations of glory?  
God is perfect and lowered himself to extend mercy to those who deny and reject him. He puts aside the glory that is due him to rescue those who don't even recognize their need for him. Obviously, no man has it as we are imperfect.
11. What is John trying to get us to understand by pointing out that the Law was given to us by Moses, while grace and truth came through Jesus Christ?  
The law is the standard of what we ought to be and aren't. Moses came to show us that we don't meet the standard of what we ought to be. Truth acknowledges the standard, while grace enables us to meet it. Only through Christ can we become what we ought to be according to the Law. Christ in us is the hope of glory.

## THINKING IT THROUGH

1. If we were full of truth, meaning that we were true to all that we ought to be and all that we ought to do, would we tend to be more or less gracious than we are now?  
Less, it is the constant revelation of our sin that makes us more gracious to others.



### Illustration: Smokers who Quit

People who have successfully given up smoking tend to be more critical of (less merciful towards) those who smoke. They think that because they were able to quit everyone else should be able to also.

2. How does Jesus being full of truth enhance the glory seen through his grace?

Jesus is completely holy, but is kind and gracious to those who are broken and wrong. The standard of truth makes the grace more glorious and precious. Forgiveness of thievery by a thief doesn't mean much. Forgiveness of sin by a perfect God means a lot.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

### ► GRACE AND TRUTH

#### Ephesians 2:1-10

*<sup>1</sup>As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, <sup>2</sup>in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient. <sup>3</sup>All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our sinful nature and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature objects of wrath. <sup>4</sup>But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, <sup>5</sup>made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. <sup>6</sup>And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, <sup>7</sup>in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. <sup>8</sup>For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--<sup>9</sup>not by works, so that no one can boast. <sup>10</sup>For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

1. What is our condition without God's grace? (vs. 1-3)

We're dead in our sin, captive to our own fallen desires. We are in an inescapable trap. We are objects of wrath.

2. What is the consequence of God's grace towards us? (vs. 5-7)

We are made alive in Christ. We are saved from our sin and share in his glory. We are taken from damnation, to justification, through sanctification, to ultimate glorification.

3. What is the relationship between grace and truth revealed in this passage? (vs. 8-10)

Grace saves us and enables us to live by the truth (be true) and do good works. Doing good works is the consequence of salvation; it is not the means of salvation. The truth is we need grace and grace enables us to become true.

#### Acts 4:13

*<sup>13</sup>When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.*

How were Peter and John a demonstration of grace and truth at work?

They demonstrated the work of Christ in them.

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

### ► PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. Do you want God's grace for more than just forgiveness of the penalty of sin? Do you want it to work in you and mortify your flesh? In what ways?
2. Do you see grace as the beginning, not the end, of God's work in you? In what way?  
*Grace should empower me to follow God more perfectly. God's grace enables me to be imperfect while I'm being made perfect by him.*
3. Is God's glory becoming visible through you as the grace of Christ is at work in you?  
*What can people see in me?*

### ► PRAYER

Thank God for his truth that shows you his way and how much you need his grace. Thank God for all the grace he has shown you by sending his son to pay the penalty for your sin.





## INTRODUCTION

### ► REVIEW

1. What does John mean when he refers to Jesus as “the Word”?

Jesus is the very expression of God’s thoughts, his will and truth. The mind and intelligence of God are found in Jesus; they are made visible through him.

2. How is “the Word” different from our words?

The Word	Our Words
From God	From man
True, infallible	False, misleading
Dependable	Changing
Creates	Describes, reflects

3. What is our relationship to “the Word”?

We are totally dependent on the Word for both spiritual and physical life. The Word is the source of all that we are and all that we have. The Word is what enlightens us and makes us able to perceive and understand God.

### ► LESSON FOCUS

In this lesson we will transition from studying the nature of Jesus, the Living Word, to studying how we are affected by him.

1. Is everyone affected by Jesus? **Yes** In what ways?

Everyone is dependent upon Christ and his truth and grace whether or not they recognize it. The truth is pervasively true for all people regardless of what they believe. Nothing would exist without Jesus. No one would have life without him.

2. Is the effect of Jesus the same on everyone? **No** Why?

All of us have physical life because of Jesus, but only those who have received him have spiritual life. You have to believe in Jesus to be positively affected by him. You have to have a right heart.

## SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

### John 1:1-18

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

<sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning.

<sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

<sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

<sup>6</sup>There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was (cont.)

*not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.*

*<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

*<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*<sup>15</sup>John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" <sup>16</sup>From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.*

## ► FROM THE FULLNESS OF HIS GRACE

### John 1:16

*<sup>16</sup>From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.*

1. From the last lesson what did we see is the fullness of Christ?  
**His glory, the nature of God himself, which is truth and grace. His grace is his love and mercy and his truth is everything that is right and good.**
2. What does it mean that we receive from his fullness?  
**He is overflowing and by nature giving. It is out of the abundance of God that we receive. He does not keep what he has to himself. He is not self-focused. He is our source of blessing to receive and to share.**

### John 1:11-13

*<sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

1. What do we receive from Christ's fullness?  
**His very nature, the right to become children of God. The essence of who I am is a result of what I am born from and have been given. Human birth gives physical life, being born of God gives spiritual life. When we are born of God we are given his nature.**
2. What does it mean to receive him?  
**You let him in, welcome him, and give him residence. You give yourself to him. The Greek word translated receive means to grab hold of, like a drowning man grabs hold of a lifesaver. We actively take hold of what Christ extends; we can't take the credit.**
3. What does it mean to believe in his name?  
**You put your trust in who he says he is. The name Jesus means God's salvation; the name of Christ means God's anointed one. He is the salvation of and authority over all men (Savior and Lord).**
4. What does it mean to become children of God? (vs. 12-13)  
**We belong to him. It is a parent/child relationship. God is our Father and we are his offspring. He loves us and provides for us. We submit to him and his authority.**

5. How does our being children relate to our receiving one blessing after another?  
As human children we gain the right to the continual care of our parents and are dependent upon their provision (unmerited favor). As children of God we gain the right to the continual care of God (his love, protection and provision).

## THINKING IT THROUGH

1. In general what is it that we want from God?  
Whatever we think we need; generally it is provision, healing or protection, having our physical needs met.
2. What is the essence of what God wants to give?  
Himself, his fullness, the overflowing of himself into us (grace and truth, mercy and understanding).
3. Is what we generally want the same as what we truly need?      no      Explain.  
What we need is more of God and less of self; what we want is more for self. Humility is really what we need because that is what we need in order to receive Christ and what he wants to give. Not until we recognize that everything we need is found in Christ will what we want be what we need.
4. Is there anything we need that we don't have when we are receiving Christ?  
If we are receiving out of the fullness of God then we know that he is providing all that we need. There is overwhelming abundance in the presence of God. Matthew 6:33 says that if we seek Christ first he will also provide for our physical needs.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

### ► THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST

#### **Ephesians 1:22-23**

*<sup>22</sup>And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, <sup>23</sup>which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.*

1. What did we already see is the fullness of Christ?  
His glory, his perfect being, his grace and truth.
2. What will it mean for his fullness to fill everything in every way?  
Everything will be brought back to its original design and become very good again. Everything will be good and true. When we are filled with him we have his nature and are dead to sin. Christ in us is the hope of glory.
3. How do we become full of Christ?  
We die to ourselves and invite him in.
4. How would each of us being full of Christ affect the body of Christ?  
The church is to be Christ's bride, an expression of his nature. When we individually are full of Christ we would act in harmony with his perfect will and the church as a whole would work as a unit and more perfectly represent Christ to the world. His glory would be visible through the church.

## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

### ► PERSONAL EVALUATION

Answer the following questions:

1. What do you welcome into your life (receive through the front door of your soul and let play in your mind)? Light or darkness? Righteousness or sin? Things of the world or of God?
2. How does what you receive affect what you become?  
*Whatever I am full of is what I will be. I will like whatever I have developed a taste for. I should hunger for the best.*
3. What is the evidence of a genuine reception of Jesus into your life?  
*Whether or not I am producing the fruit of the Spirit.*

### ► PRAYER

Thank Jesus that he wants his fullness to dwell in you. Pray that you would truly hunger for what he wants to give and die to self.

# 8

## THE WORD MAKES GOD KNOWABLE

### INTRODUCTION

#### ► REVIEW

What are the things that John teaches about Jesus in John 1:1-18 that can only be true if Jesus is God?

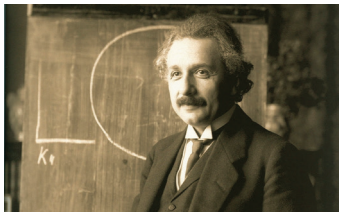
1. He continually e\_\_\_\_\_ **existed** before all c\_\_\_\_\_ **created** things.
2. All things were created by h\_\_\_\_\_ **him** and for h\_\_\_\_\_ **him**.
3. He is the source of l\_\_\_\_\_ **light** and l\_\_\_\_\_ **life**.
4. He is the source of g\_\_\_\_\_ **grace** and t\_\_\_\_\_ **truth**.
5. His f\_\_\_\_\_ **fullness** living in us t\_\_\_\_\_ **transforms** us.

#### ► LESSON FOCUS

This lesson will examine the means by which we can know and understand God.

Can the smartest man in the world come to know God without help from God?

**No, Man can only discover what God has already made known. Everything about us, even our ability to think and perceive God, comes from God. God has to reveal himself for us to know him.**



#### Illustration: Einstein

In spite of being a genius, Albert Einstein only had a vague notion of God. He believed there had to be a God, but his mind wasn't enlightened. He didn't receive the fullness of God's revelation. How can we or our own children know more about God than Einstein?

**If we receive God's revelation of himself we would know more. We can't come to know more on our own. We have to be open to God and ask.**

### SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

#### John 1:1-18

<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

<sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning.

<sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

<sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

<sup>6</sup>There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. <sup>7</sup>He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. <sup>8</sup>He himself was (cont.)

not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. <sup>9</sup>The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. <sup>11</sup>He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—<sup>13</sup>children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

<sup>14</sup>The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup>John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" <sup>16</sup>From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

## ► THE ONE AND ONLY MAKES THE FATHER KNOWN

### John 1:18

<sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

1. In the context of verse 18 what do you think it means that "no one has ever seen God"?  
**No one has had a face to face encounter with the fullness of God's majesty, in its totality. The Greek word is heophones, meaning a form that expresses something about God. Any form of revelation to man of God is in Christ. He is the Word (the manifestation) that has always been there.**

The verb horao, (to see) is in the active voice, which would indicate that no man left to himself alone would have the capacity to see, understand, or experience God. Without help we have no way to see or perceive God.

2. If no one on his own can see God, how is it possible to ever know God?  
**God is revealed through a source that can transfer the information to us. God must show himself in ways we can understand. Jesus has made God known.**



### Illustration: Television Waves

Television waves exist whether we see them or not. In order to see them we have to have a set that receives them and makes them visible. However, having a set won't make anything visible unless it is turned on.

### 1 Corinthians 1:22-24

<sup>22</sup>Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

1. What blocks us from knowing and experiencing God?

Trying to see God on our own terms, this comes from arrogance. Paul said that the Jews looked for miracles and the Greeks for wisdom. God chose to reveal himself through Christ and the cross, which was a stumbling block to both Jews and Greeks.

2. How do we come to know the otherwise unknowable God?

Through humility, we look for him the way he reveals himself. We go to the source material (God's deeds and statutes) to understand what God says about himself. An agnostic, who says God can't be known, is not willing to look for God the way he revealed himself. Jesus is the authentic, first-hand source material.



**Illustration: George Washington**

No one alive today has ever seen George Washington in the flesh. To get to know him, a person would have to go to the library, get books off the shelf and read what he and his contemporaries had to say about him.

3. What does it mean to make something known?

Reveal something to us that we were formerly ignorant of. Christ the Living Word has made God known. Before Christ there were things men could not know about God. If you aren't looking at Christ, you're not looking at what makes God visible.

The Greek verb translated in the NIV into the English phrase, "Has made him known," is *exegesato*. It means to lead or draw out into the open and make comprehensible, visible, or understandable that which would otherwise remain hidden. The same word to "exegete" is used to describe the process of drawing out of God's word its true meaning.

This study of John 1:1-18 is entitled "Jesus, the Living Word." It is an exegetical study of the verses because it draws out of the passage meaning that would be hard to see with just a cursory reading of the text. In John 1:18 we can see that Jesus is the "exegete" of God. In other words, unless Jesus reveals and makes God known God would remain unknown in the fullest sense.

4. What is meant by the phrase, "God the one and only, who is at the Father's side"?

Jesus is God the Son, who is unique from God the Father, but is in continual communion with him. It is an indivisible relationship.

Some translations like the NASB translate the phrase, "God the one and only," as the "only begotten God." The translations come from the Greek words *monogenes theos*. The prefix *mono* means the one, only and unique, *genes* of its kind, of its nature. So *monogenes theos* means the one who is uniquely of the nature of God, the only one of God's kind.

The phrase "at the Father's side" is literally, "the one being in the bosom of the Father." The Greek word for being is *oon* which is in the present participle form of the verb to be. In this context it is a timeless participial predicate, which means that Jesus, God the Son, continuously remained in the bosom of God the Father, even when he became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus, God the Son, continued to be fully God, even as he became a man and lived and died in human history.

Thus God is made known by revealing himself through the life and ministry of God himself, Jesus the incarnate Word. The Living Word dwelt with us so he might dwell in us that we might be born of him.

## THINKING IT THROUGH

1. Why do some people become tortured in their attempt to discover God?  
They're looking for him where he is not revealing himself, in their own way and on their own terms. They are arrogant.
2. Why does it sometimes seem that children have an easier time seeing God?  
Children are naïve enough to look for God where he can be found. They are not demanding proof. They are humble and without preconceived ideas.
3. Why do some people fail to discover God even as it seems they are searching for him?  
We can't discover him where he isn't, where he doesn't show himself.
4. Where can God always be found?  
God can always be found through Christ, his revelation of himself. Through humility we have eyes to see what he has revealed.



### Illustration: Quenching Your Thirst

If you are thirsty you have to go to where the water is to quench your thirst. If you expect the water to come to you, you will remain thirsty. You can't quench thirst where there is no water.

## CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

### ► GROWING IN KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

#### Colossians 1:9-15

*<sup>9</sup>For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. <sup>10</sup>And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, <sup>11</sup>being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully <sup>12</sup>giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. <sup>13</sup>For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, <sup>14</sup>in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. <sup>15</sup>He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.*

#### Matthew 6:22-23

*<sup>22</sup> "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. <sup>23</sup> But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!"*

How does our knowledge or lack of knowledge of God affect us?

In every way. The worthiness of our lives is directly proportional to our knowledge of God. We can't please God if we don't know him. Our knowledge or lack of knowledge of God affects our strength, joy, patience, thankfulness, and the quality and outcome of our lives. Knowing that should cause us to fervently seek after the knowledge of Christ.



## PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

### ► PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. Do you look for God where he can be found? In what ways?  
Are you diligently looking to his word?
2. Are you more likely to ask God to show himself to you on your terms or look for him where he has already revealed himself? In what ways?
3. Is your life being changed by an increasing knowledge of Jesus the Living Word?  
In what ways?



**Remember:** Your life will either be conformed to the world or transformed by Christ depending on what you are seeking after, whether you are walking in arrogance or humility.

### ► PRAYER

Thank God for revealing himself through Jesus the Living Word. Pray that you would be open to receive the fullness of his revelation.