

GREAT
 BISHOP
 LORD OF LORDS
 IMMANUEL
 FIRST BORN
 HEAD OF THE BODY
 PHYSICIAN
 ROCK
 POTENTATE
 CHIEF APOSTLE
 EL SHADDAI
 MELEKH
 ROOT OF JESSE
 EL ELYON
 ALPHA
 THE
 PIONEER AND PERFECTER OF OUR FAITH
 ADVOCATE
 COUNSELOR
 LIVING
 DAYSTAR
 DELIVERER
 LAST ADAM
 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
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 CHIEF CORNERSTONE

BY RICHARD ELWELL

JESUS

THE LIVING WORD

BY RICHARD ELWELL



ULTIMATE OUTCOMES

WHY IDEAS MATTER.

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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.

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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.

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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?

2 Peter 1:3

³His 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?

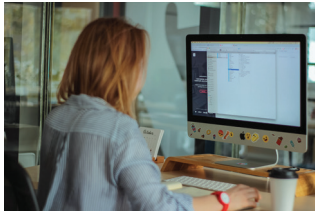


Illustration: A Computer

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 programing 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

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was with God in the beginning.

³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

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

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

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

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵John 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.'" ¹⁶From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No 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

Vs. 6-7, 15

Vs. 14

Vs. 17

2. What are words?

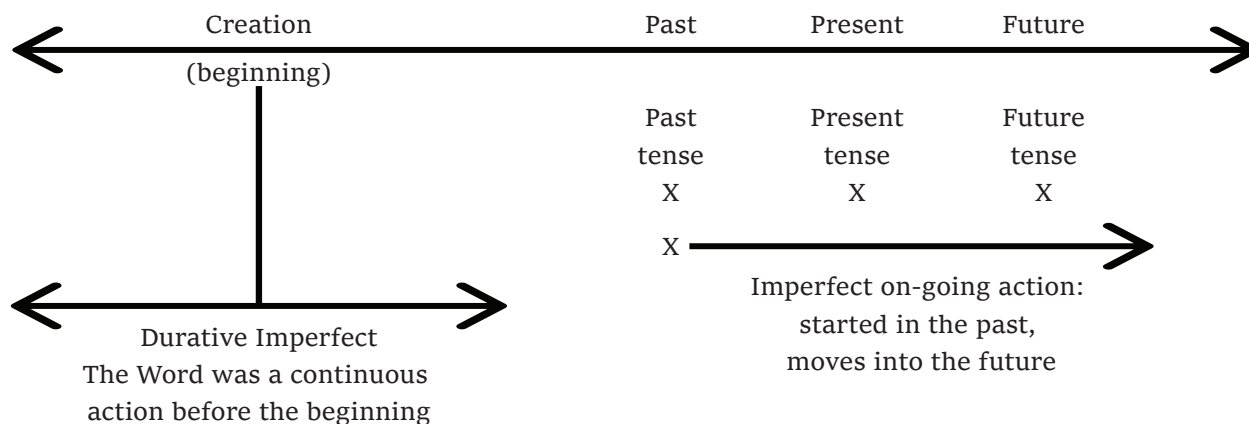
3. Why is Jesus called the Word (logos)?

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

5. The Greek scholar Spiros Zodiatas 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?

THINKING IT THROUGH

1. What is our relationship to time and space?
2. How does our relationship to time and space change when the Spirit of Christ dwells in us?

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

► THE IMPERISHABLE SEED

1 Peter 1:17-25

¹⁷Since you call on a Father who judges each man’s work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear. ¹⁸For 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, ¹⁹but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.

(cont.)

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

²²Now 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. ²³For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

*²⁴For, "All men are like grass and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, ²⁵but 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)

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

Vs. 19

Vs. 20

Vs. 21

Vs. 23

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

► 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?

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

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

Path	Rock	Thorns	Good Soil

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?

► 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?
2. What is the significance of John identifying Jesus as the Word?
3. What is our heart's relationship to the Word?

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

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was with God in the beginning.

³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

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

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

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

¹⁴The 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.
¹⁵John 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.'" ¹⁶From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No 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**

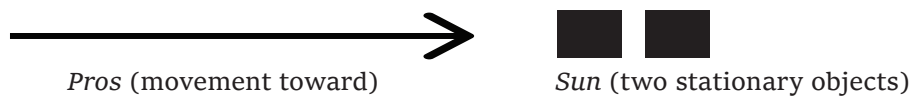
John 1:1-2

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
²He 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?
2. How is it hard to understand the truth that Jesus is both distinct from God and indistinct from God?



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.)

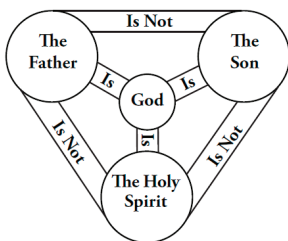


Illustration: The Trinity

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

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

► IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD

Colossians 1:15-23

¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶For 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. ¹⁷He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸And 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. ¹⁹For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰and 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.

²¹Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. ²²But 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-- ²³if 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?

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

Vs. 15

Vs. 17

Vs. 19

Vs. 20

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

²⁰"My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹that 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. ²²I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³I 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)

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

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?
2. How is your life an image of God's goodness?
3. How are you seeking to be one with God and fellow believers?

► 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”?
2. What does it mean when John calls Jesus, “the Word”?
3. How can God the Father and God the Son be both distinct and indistinct from each other?

► 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?



Illustration: Containment

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

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

John 1:1-18

¹*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

²*He was with God in the beginning.*

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

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

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

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

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵John 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.'" ¹⁶From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No 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

¹⁴The 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?
2. What is the nature of flesh?
3. What does it mean that the Word became flesh?
4. Why did the Word become flesh?

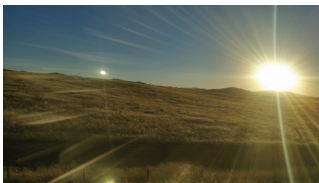


Illustration: The Sun

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

5. How did the Word 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 Zodiates)

Luke 1:35

³⁵When 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?

John 1:14

¹⁴The 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?

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?

THINKING IT THROUGH

1. What did Jesus go through to get through to us?
2. Given what Jesus went through to get through to us, what does he deserve from us?
3. How do we discover what Jesus came to reveal?
4. What does it mean to behold his glory?

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?
2. What kind of behavior would reveal we have the same attitude as Jesus?

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

▶ PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. What are you doing to see God more clearly?
2. What keeps you from having a clear vision of God?
3. How do you benefit from a clearer understanding of God?
4. What can you do to receive Christ in you more fully?

▶ 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?
2. Why is the idea of the Word becoming a man hard to grasp?
3. Why did the Word become flesh and dwell among 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?

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

John 1:1-18

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was with God in the beginning.

³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

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

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

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► THE WORD IS LIFE AND LIGHT

John 1:4-5

⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The 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?



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?

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

4. What is light?



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?



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?

Ephesians 4:18-19

¹⁸They 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. ¹⁹Having 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?
2. Why do men like the darkness?
3. When does the darkness become able to comprehend the light?

THINKING IT THROUGH

1. What does Jesus want to do with the life that is in him?
2. What keeps us from receiving from Jesus what he wants to give us?
3. What is the relationship of sin to life?
4. What is the relationship of holiness to life?
5. Why would anyone prefer death over life?

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

► LIFE OR DEATH

John 10:10

¹⁰The 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?
2. How does he do that?
3. What does Christ want to do for us?

How do we gain that?

► HOLINESS OR SIN

James 1:13-18

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

¹⁶Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. ¹⁷Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. ¹⁸He 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

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

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



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

▶ PERSONAL EVALUATION

1. Do you want the life and light God wants to give? How does your life reflect that?
2. Do you want the darkness that doesn't come from God? How is that demonstrated in your life?
3. If you desire to get what God doesn't want to give, what will you end up with?
4. What is the key to life in Christ?

▶ 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,

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,

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,

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,

► 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?
2. How does knowing that Jesus is the creator affect our view of this man from Nazareth?
3. How is the way we view ourselves affected by our view of Jesus of Nazareth?

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

John 1:1-18

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was with God in the beginning.

³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

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

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

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

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵John 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.'" ¹⁶From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No 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

³Through 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?

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"?

3. Romans 11:33-36

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

³⁴"Who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵"Who has ever given to God, that God should repay him?" ³⁶For 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?
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.)
6. What is the difference between what Christ creates and what we create?
7. If Jesus created all things, is he responsible for evil?



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?
2. How does having an accurate view of how we were created and how we are sustained affect us?
3. Can we be anything we want to be or anything we have been created to be?
4. What does functioning according to our created design do for us?

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

► A LONG RANGE VIEW OF CREATION

2 Peter 3:1-18

¹Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. ²I 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.

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

⁸But 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. ⁹The 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.

¹⁰But 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.)

¹¹Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives ¹²as 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. ¹³But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness.

¹⁴So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. ¹⁵Bear 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. ¹⁶He 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.

¹⁷Therefore, 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. ¹⁸But 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)

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

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?

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,*
- John 1:1b - *and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*
- John 1:14a - *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*
- John 1:4-5 - *In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*
- John 1:3 - *Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.*

► 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?

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

John 1:1-18

¹*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

²*He was with God in the beginning.*

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

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

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

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

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

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵John 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.'" ¹⁶From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No 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

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

1. What is glory?
2. What does it mean to see God's glory?
3. How does Jesus make God's glory visible?
4. How did the disciples come to see Jesus' glory?
5. What is grace?

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

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

► GRACE AND TRUTH

Ephesians 2:1-10

¹As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, ²in 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. ³All 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. ⁴But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, ⁵made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved. ⁶And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, ⁷in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. ⁸For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--⁹not by works, so that no one can boast. ¹⁰For 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)
2. What is the consequence of God's grace towards us? (vs. 5-7)
3. What is the relationship between grace and truth revealed in this passage? (vs. 8-10)

Acts 4:13

¹³When 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?

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?
3. Is God's glory becoming visible through you as the grace of Christ is at work in you?

▶ 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.

7

THE WORD IS THE SOURCE OF BLESSING

INTRODUCTION

► REVIEW

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

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

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

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

► 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? In what ways?

2. Is the effect of Jesus the same on everyone? Why?

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

John 1:1-18

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was with God in the beginning.

³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

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

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

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

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

¹⁴The 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.

¹⁵John 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.'" ¹⁶From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No 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

¹⁶From 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?
2. What does it mean that we receive from his fullness?

John 1:11-13

¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—¹³children 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?
2. What does it mean to receive him?
3. What does it mean to believe in his name?
4. What does it mean to become children of God? (vs. 12-13)

5. How does our being children relate to our receiving one blessing after another?

THINKING IT THROUGH

1. In general what is it that we want from God?
2. What is the essence of what God wants to give?
3. Is what we generally want the same as what we truly need? Explain.
4. Is there anything we need that we don't have when we are receiving Christ?

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

► THE FULLNESS OF CHRIST

Ephesians 1:22-23

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

1. What did we already see is the fullness of Christ?
2. What will it mean for his fullness to fill everything in every way?
3. How do we become full of Christ?
4. How would each of us being full of Christ affect the body of Christ?

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?
3. What is the evidence of a genuine reception of Jesus into your life?

▶ 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.

INTRODUCTION

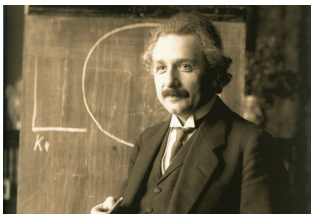
► REVIEW

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_____ before all c_____ things.
2. All things were created by h_____ and for h_____.
3. He is the source of l_____ and l_____.
4. He is the source of g_____ and t_____.
5. His f_____ living in us t_____ 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?

**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?

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES

John 1:1-18

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

²He was with God in the beginning.

³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

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

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► THE ONE AND ONLY MAKES THE FATHER KNOWN

John 1:18

¹⁸No 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”?

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?



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

²²Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, ²³but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴but 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?
2. How do we come to know the otherwise unknowable God?



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?

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”?

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?
2. Why does it sometimes seem that children have an easier time seeing God?
3. Why do some people fail to discover God even as it seems they are searching for him?
4. Where can God always be found?



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

⁹For 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. ¹⁰And 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, ¹¹being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully ¹²giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. ¹³For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Matthew 6:22-23

²² "The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ 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?

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.