

Series: SEEING IS BELIEVING
(Book Study Gospel of John)

Christ First Church
Pastor Wayne Chasteen

Sermon 2: The Word Of God (John 1:1-5)

February 23, 2020

INTRO: Oh, isn't this exciting! Turn your Bibles or turn them on to the 4th book of the NT, the Gospel of John. Last week we laid the foundation to our study in this great Gospel by way of a book introduction, and looking at the the Key Verses and theme of the book. **John 20:30-31** states, *"Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."* That will be the main purpose as we move systematically, and exegetically through this great Gospel.





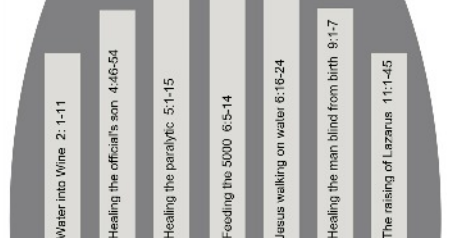
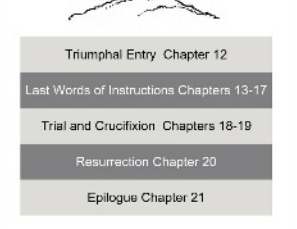
I hope you brought your John Journals and are prepared to take notes. And I encourage you to read through the book of John on a regular basis as we continue through this study. Make it a goal to read through the book of John at least once a month, every month, from now until we finish this study. Just add this to your daily reading as we make our way through the Bible together this year. It won't add more than 3 or 4 minutes to your daily reading. And it will have life changing results! BTW, you should have finished your 4th full book of the Bible this week, if you're current with your chronological reading schedule. You have now read through Genesis, Job, Exodus, and Leviticus. And I'm very proud of you. If you are behind, or if you haven't even started, you still have plenty of time, and can very easily catch up with us. Just take a Bible reading plan home with you today and get started. You'll be glad you did.

As we learned last week, the apostle John, is the writer of the Gospel. John was a disciple of Jesus Christ, one of the 12. It's important to remember that he was an eyewitness to the accounts that he recorded in this book. John wrote in his first epistle, 1 John 1:1 *"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life."* SO, what we're getting in John's Gospel is not a second hand recollection, but a first hand eyewitness account, and that, made perfect in detail, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This Gospel is absolutely trustworthy. As is every other book of God's Holy Word.

If you remember from last week, the first three gospels, called the synoptic gospels, emphasize the humanity of Jesus. Matthew calls him the SON OF DAVID, Mark presents Him as an OBEDIENT SERVANT, while Luke identifies Him as the SON OF MAN. All three focusing on His humanity. In these three books we see JESUS as the God-MAN.

In John's Gospel, we see CHRIST the GOD-Man. John will present Jesus as the SON OF GOD! And by the end of this study, it will be easy to see that Jesus is who He claims to be, the SON OF GOD, and VERY GOD!

Today, we are looking at the first chapter of John. But before we start, let me draw your attention to a chart that may help with your understanding of the book.

THE GREAT ANNOUNCEMENTS Chapter 1	THE GREAT AUTHORITY (Seven Signs) Chapters 2 -11	THE GREAT ACHIEVEMENT Chapters 12 - 21
The WORD of God vv 1-18 The LAMB of God vv 19-35 The SON of God vv 36-51	Rise and Fall in Popularity  Seven Signs	
 Approximately 3 Years		 Approximately 3 Weeks
NOTEWORTHY Key Verses: Ch. 20: 30-31 Key Words: Believe (98) Life Light Love		

I created this chart for the purpose of giving you a visual breakdown of the book. Here, you can see what I have chosen as the 3 major divisions. Division one is Chapter 1, called THE GREAT ANNOUNCEMENTS. In this chapter Jesus is announced as the "Word of God" by the Apostle John in vv 1-18. Then in verses 19-35, Jesus is proclaimed as the "Lamb of God" by John the Baptist. In the closing verses we see Jesus calling disciples to follow Him. This is at the very beginning of His ministry. It is at this time that Jesus meets Nathaniel. After Nathaniel's first conversation with Jesus, he declares in v 49, "you are the Son of God!" It is these 3 Great Announcements that set into motion the events of this beautiful Gospel.

I have called the second division, THE GREAT AUTHORITY. In chapters 2-11 we see Jesus performing 7 signs, as John calls them. We would call them miracles! In these, Jesus exercises complete authority over elements, sickness, and even death.

Then we come to the third and last division, THE GREAT ACHIEVEMENT! This section is 10 chapters long. 10 of 21. The first 11 chapters comprise approximately 3 years in the timeline of Jesus' ministry. The last 10 chapters, about 3 weeks. In these chapters we get a much more intimate view of Christ as He works closely with His disciples leading up to His death, burial, and resurrection.

I hope you will take a chart home with you today, and use it as you make your way through the Gospel.

Now, let's look at the first 5 verses of this awesome study, as we talk about the WORD OF GOD!

John 1:1-5 *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*

Nearly every theologian of every generation agree that John 1:1-18 is a prologue to the Gospel, and that the last chapter, chapter 21 is it's epilogue.

It's in this prologue that John gives us the backstory to the key character in his narrative. NOTICE...

I) THE INTRODUCTION OF JESUS: **v 1** *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

"In the beginning was the Word," John dives deep with his first breath. There are two things we need to look at in this opening phrase. What is the "beginning" that John speaks of, and, who or what is the "WORD"?

First, What is meant by the beginning? Does John mean the beginning of eternity? We know that's not so, because eternity by its very nature has no beginning and no end. So the beginning that John is speaking of, is the beginning of time and creation as we know it. We see this same phrase used in other places in Scripture.

Genesis 1:1 *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* The reference is to creation.

Hebrews 1:10 *"And, You, Lord, laid the foundation of the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands,"*

So we know, by just allowing the Word to interpret itself, what John is speaking of. But what's the significance of what John is saying? Well, John wants his readers to know the truth of who Jesus is. So, he does something amazing! He takes us on a journey back in time. And he takes us as far back as HUMANLY possible, to the beginning of creation. That's as far as our minds can fathom. And then John simply adds the little word "was". *"In the beginning was..."* Not "is" or "came into being", but WAS already. John is making a declarative statement that Jesus precedes, pre-dates, and pre-exists all our capacity for measuring time. **THIS IS A STATEMENT OF JESUS' DEITY!** Right out of the gate, John makes his purpose known. *"I am writing that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"*

Second, what does John mean by the phrase, "was the Word"? Who or what is John speaking of? John gives the answer to that question a few verses down.

John 1:14,17 *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth...For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."*

The WORD that John is speaking of... *"In the beginning was the Word..."*, is Jesus!

The first word that John uses to describe Jesus is the word "WORD". Make a note that John is writing to both Jews and Gentiles (Gentiles in this case being mainly Greeks).

J) THE INTRODUCTION OF JESUS: v 1 CONTINUED At the time of John's writing, Jews accounted for about 10% of those in the church. Greeks, made up by far, the majority of those non-Jew. Remember, John is writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And here in the opening phrase he uses a word that catches the attention of both Jew and Greek. The Word he uses is the Greek word LOGOS. (we get our English word LOGIC from this root) *"In the beginning was the LOGOS"*. When the Jews hear the word Logos(Word), they immediately understand, right away, that the WORD of God is the revelation of God Himself to His people. They knew the Old Testament. They had heard the prophets say, "Thus says the Word of the Lord". So a Jewish believer would know right away when you mention the Word of God, that you were speaking of the revelation of God Himself.

To the Greeks though, the whole idea of the word LOGOS would mean something totally different. We have all heard of the Greek philosophers, Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates. But before them was another philosopher who really framed Greco-Roman thought regarding the creation, regarding the gods, and so many different things. His name was Heraclitus. Heraclitus came up with this concept that above the gods, was this thing called the LOGOS. And it was an impersonal rationale for the universe. In his thinking, it was why the universe was the way it was. So if a Greek person heard this word Logos, he would be thinking in terms of this philosophical idea that there was a purpose, that there was a reason, a cause, or a rationale for the universe...that the universe had a purpose. ILLUS: Let me explain it to you this way, if I came to your house, and I'm walking up to your front door, and notice you have your front door propped open, maybe because it's hot, and your AC is broken, and you have the door propped open with a FOOD PROCESSOR, I know, and you know, that's not the purpose for which that food processor was created. Now, if you have it propped open with a fruitcake...then you're using the fruitcake appropriately! Oh, I'm kidding. The point I want to make is, a food processor has a specific purpose. That purpose is what? To process food—chop, cut, slice, blend, all those kinds of things. That's the rationale for that. Now, Heraclitus said that the rationale of the universe was a thing, vaguely understood, called Logos. But Heraclitus wasn't the only Greek philosopher. There were philosophers on every corner in Greek life. And the philosophers could not really come to terms concerning the purpose of the universe. The Epicureans, for example, said we can't know the purpose of the universe. And since we can't understand the purpose, let's just party because it doesn't make any difference. The Stoics said, we can't know the purpose, we don't know what it is, but let's go ahead and act like we do.

Now let me explain the relevance of what I'm talking about. The learned Greeks of John's day, and those down through the ages, had no better understanding of the purpose of life and the universe, than do those of secular thought in our day. We're still asking the same questions and drawing the same assumptions. What is the purpose of life? Why do I exist? If it feels good do it! If it works for you, that's great! There are no answers, so just do what you want to do! There's no meaning. There's no LOGIC. There's no rationale.

NOW you can get what John is saying here. In the beginning there was... a rationale... in the beginning there was a reason...in the beginning there was Logic...there was LOGOS. And the reason, the logic, the rationale...WAS JESUS CHRIST, the Son of God!

In the beginning was this personal revelation of God that existed before anything else existed! Who is Jesus? How do you introduce Him? He is the reason for absolutely everything. He is the rationale. He is the purpose to life. He defines life, He is the reason for our existence, and the driving force behind all we are! CAN YOU SAY AMEN?!!!

I) THE INTRODUCTION OF JESUS: v 1 CONTINUED Christians understand rightly that this earth is simply the stage, that God in his infinite wisdom, and for purposes we can't fully understand, has chosen, to play out this divine drama of redemption!

In the beginning was the WORD, the LOGOS, the Rationale, the Revelation of God Himself to mankind!

Wow, what a way to open a book! We have to stop there, and we only got through the first 6 words of John! Lord help us!

CONCLUSION: What are you going to do with what you have heard concerning Jesus today? Are you going to turn a blind eye to your REASON for living, your PURPOSE in life, to the REVELATION of God Himself on your behalf, or will you BELIEVE! Believe is the key word in this book. It's mentioned 98 times in the book of John. More than all the times in the synoptic Gospels combined. The purpose of the book is that you might SEE and BELIEVE. SEEING IS BELIEVING! What about you, will you believe today?

Next week we'll come back to verse 1. We'll pick up where we are leaving off and see how far we get.

II) THE INFINITE JESUS: v 2

III) THE IMPERATIVE JESUS: v 3

IV) THE ILLUMINANT JESUS: vv 4-5