

Gospel of John I Background

(John 1)

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The Gospel of John is one of the most important books in the Bible, and there are many reasons for it being the most important book in the Bible, because of the relationship between John and Jesus Christ. We'll talk a little bit more about that as we get into the background, but before we get into some of the background of the Gospel of John I want to cover a little bit about John the apostle.

The name John comes from the Greek 'Ioannis' or from the Hebrew 'Yohann'—meaning *Jehovah is gracious*. I think it's very important when you understand the background of some of the other studies we have about *grace and love*, and how those are together. Then when we get into the Gospel of John and go through it verse-by-verse, we are going to see the thread of this book all the way through, and the meaning and teachings for us.

Let's find out a little bit about the one who became the Apostle John. We have the first encounter by John with Jesus Christ in Matt. 4. This is when Jesus came to Galilee:

Matthew 4:19: "And He said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.' Then they immediately left their nets *and* followed Him... [this is Peter and Andrew] ...And after leaving there, He saw two other brothers, James the *son* of Zebedee and John his brother, in the ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father *and* followed Him" (vs 19-22).

The first time I read that I thought, that was kind of selfish of them; they just up and left and were gone, and here the father was left there working, trying to mend the nets. That shows how little I knew about the Bible or really about the background here.

Mark 1 shows virtually the same incident and we will see that they didn't leave the father in the lurch, because someone could look at that and say that Jesus caused them to dishonor their father by dropping all the work on him and just up and walking away. That wasn't the case at all!

Mark 1:20: "And He called them at once; and leaving their father Zebedee in the ship **with the hired servants**, they followed Him." So, there were plenty of people there. This gives an indication, some feel, that the family of John was reasonably well-to-do.

John 19—this is when Jesus told John to take his mother into his own house. That means that John had a house, he owned property, etc.

John 19:27: "Then He said to the disciple, 'Behold your mother.' And from that time, the disciple took her into his own *home*." There's an indication that with the hired servants in the home, they had some substance and it was not the traditional thing that most people think of as Christians being Catholic-type priests that are poor and beggarly in this particular case. Obviously, John wasn't.

Here is something else that is overlooked in the understanding about John. John knew the high priest Caiaphas; he was the main one. He was the one who also prophesied that one should die for the nation rather than the whole nation die at the hand of the Romans. He really didn't realize he was prophesying the death of Jesus Christ for the sacrifice of the sins of all people.

John 18:15: "But Simon Peter and the other disciple followed Jesus..." Notice how modest John is all the way through, even though he writes this, you do not find that he says of himself: 'I saw' or 'I did' or 'I was the greatest' or 'I was the one that Jesus loved.'

In reading some of the writings such as the Mormons you find that real 'egocentric' attitude in a lot of the writings. But here in the book of John you don't have it. He just mentions that he was the disciple that Jesus loved. Here he just calls himself, and so did another disciple...

"...And that disciple was known to the high priest, and entered..." (v 15). In other words, he couldn't get into that area unless he was known by the high priest. Peter didn't get in, if you will recall. Peter was outside where the guards were, and he was around the fire with the guards and later he got in. But at first he didn't go in with John.

"...with Jesus into the court of the high priest. But Peter stood outside at the door. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to the doorkeeper, and brought Peter in" (vs 15-16). Here was a case that John went out and said, 'This is my friend, let him in.'

Now we get a little background on what the mother of John and James wanted, which gives you

a little insight; it was a little bold and daring for her to even ask this:

Matthew 20:20: “Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to Him with her sons... [she brought James and John] ...worshiping Him and asking a certain thing from Him. And He said to her, ‘What do you desire?’ She said to Him, ‘Grant that these my two sons... [she must have known Who and what He was; here’s a little parental intervention] ...may sit one at Your right hand and one at *Your left hand* in Your kingdom” (vs 20-21). She was really wanting to stack the deck. That shows you what she thought of her sons. They were also called the ‘sons of thunder.’

They were the ones—James and John—who wanted to call fire down out of heaven and devour the Samaritans because they didn’t receive Jesus. So, when we talk about John—the apostle of love—he had an awful lot to overcome to be the kind of apostle we think of as the one who is the apostle of love, if you have the concept of love as only being always sweet, nice, dainty, fine, and all of this sort of thing. Being called ‘the sons of thunder’ certainly was quite a different thing from that.

Verse 22: “But Jesus answered *and* said, ‘You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and to be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*?’ They said to Him, ‘We are able.’” You talk about patriotic and gun-ho! This is not quite as self-centered as it was when Peter stood up to Jesus and said—when Jesus indicated that He was going to be crucified—‘Far be it, Lord, it won’t happen to You, as long as I’m here with a sword.’ And that time Jesus rebuked Satan! He said, ‘Get behind Me, Satan!’ In this case, they said, “...We are able.”

Verse 23: “And He said to them, ‘You shall indeed drink of My cup, and shall be baptized *with* the baptism that I am baptized *with*; but to sit at My right hand and at My left *hand* is not Mine to give, but *shall be given to those* for whom it has been prepared by My Father.’ And after hearing *this*, the ten were indignant against the two brothers” (vs 23-24).

Here was a political move. An end-run with mom leading the pack, and ‘let’s get our boys in a really good position.’ So, the rest of the ten were upset about that. It doesn’t give us any more about the fight that maybe went on.

Now let’s see a little more detailed account of the introduction of John to Jesus Christ; John 1:35: “On the next day, John was again standing *there*, and two of his disciples *with him*.” This tells a little something about John the Baptist. John here

refers to John the Baptist. If John means *God is gracious*, it’s interesting if you go back and read the account of why John the Baptist was named John instead of Zacharias after his father the high priest. He said, ‘No, it will be John.’

If John means *The Lord is gracious*, then you know why John the Baptist is named John. He brought grace to the people through the forgiveness of sin through the baptism that he had, and he told them to believe on the One that followed him.

“...John was again standing *there*, and two of his disciples *with him*.” This tells us that James and John were disciples of John the Baptist.

Verse 36: “And as he gazed upon Jesus walking, he said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God!’ And the two disciples heard him say *this*, and they followed Jesus” (vs 36-37).

Apparently, this account of their first meeting with Jesus and then later with the leaving of their father at the ship, this is the first account in chronological order. The second account was when Jesus was ready to begin his ministry. Here they met Jesus and stayed with Him that day.

When you come to John 2 where Jesus told His mother, ‘What am I to do with you, woman?’ when they were out of wine and she said, ‘What are You going to do?’ He said, ‘My time is not yet.’ So, apparently this first introduction at John’s baptism was before leaving Zebedee (the father) at the Sea of Galilee.

I’m just going to review some of the things here. You can find a full detailed account of this in *Unger’s Bible Dictionary*. Some dictionaries have quite a bit, some don’t. This is fairly good. You might also find some of these things in *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*. Unger’s just breaks it down this way:

John was there at the ordination of the 12 apostles, and they received the surname of the ‘sons of thunder’ (Matt. 5:35-37). They were also at the Transfiguration..

Peter, James and John were at the Transfiguration; very important!

Rebuking one who was casting out demons in the Lord’s name, because he was not one of their company (Luke 9:49). Seeking to call down fire from heaven upon a village of Samaritans (Luke 9:54).

Think about what they must have understood even to ask that.

In relationship to children asking their parents for money—if your children know that you

have \$100, they might be bold enough to ask for \$10, if they knew they were going to share in the \$100. If they knew you had \$1,000, they might be bold enough to ask for \$100. If they knew you had \$100,000, they might be bold enough to ask you to go buy them this real snazzy car and pay cash for it. If they knew you had \$1-million, surely a measly \$100,000 wouldn't be too out of line.

For James and John to come and ask Jesus to call fire from heaven:

- What do you suppose they knew about Jesus?
- What do you suppose they knew about the power He had?

They understood that He was the Son of God! They understood that He could! They knew that Elijah the prophet called down fire from heaven and devoured 150 men plus the captains! That was far less offensive than what went on with Elijah and the captain of the guard from Ahab, than rejecting the Messiah, so they thought. So, they wanted to extinguish that village.

They were also joining with his mother and James and asking for the highest places in the Kingdom of the Master...

We just saw that!

They were with Jesus on the Mt. of Olives when He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem (Mark 13). They were sent by the Master to prepare, with Peter, the Passover.

So, it was Peter, James and John that went and prepared the last Passover. I still, to this day, do not know how people can say that the last Passover of Jesus was not a Passover, when it clearly was. He said, 'Go prepare the Passover,' and He sent Peter, James and John to prepare the Passover.

John was asking who would betray Jesus. Peter and James were in Gethsemane with Him

Peter, James and John were at what three major events:

- the Transfiguration
- the preparing of the last Passover
- in the Garden of Gethsemane

In other words, there must have been in the Garden of Gethsemane the 12 disciples that came with Him; nine of them must have been with Judas, and Judas went to the Captain of the Guard to have Jesus arrested.

Then Jesus took with Him Peter, James and

John and they went a little bit further and He told them, 'You wait here and I'm going to go ahead and pray.' So, there must have been those two groups: Peter, James, John, then the other disciples, and Jesus a little further away from there.

But to have Peter, James and John go with Him into the Garden of Gethsemane tells us why John was able to bring the Lord's final prayer in John 17. What does that tell us? We can look at some of the internal evidence and we can bring it back and reflect a little better on it. That tells us that John was probably closer to Jesus when Jesus was praying than any of the other disciples. Which could be true, because John was the disciple whom Jesus loved, and John was also the disciple who leaned back on Jesus' chest and said, 'Who is it that is going to betray You?'

When the betrayal is accomplished, Peter and John follow afar off.

Then they go into the palace of the high priest. Then it talks a little bit here about the friendship for Peter and the things that they did. You'll notice that Mary Magdalene ran to Peter and John; they were the first to know that Jesus was resurrected.

John's mother, whose name was Salome, was also one of those who was at the crucifixion. She was one of those who was preparing the ointment, which they went out and bought, and I'm sure they didn't have time to collect money, so it shows that they had enough money of their own to go out and buy a hundred pounds of the very expensive ointment and spices.

It talks about Peter and John, and their relationship, which we will get to later in this series.

In the history of Acts it gives us a little bit of flavor of the structure of things. There are those who propound the primacy of Peter, as per the pope. I think we're going to see that one of the reasons that John wrote the Gospel of John, and especially the first three verses, is because that is so very, very important. John is showing that all honor must go to God the Father and Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was the Spokesman, the Word of God!

Acts 3:1: "Now, Peter and John went up together into the temple..." I've never heard anyone try and bring about, or substantiate, the primacy of John. I think Peter was a little more aggressive. Peter obviously was one of the main leaders, but here it is Peter *and* John. Later on in the book of Acts it shifts over to Paul who was the apostle of the Gentiles.

If you have a Gentile church such as Catholicism, then it would seem more reasonable that Paul should have been the first pope, which

there was not a pope in the true Christian church.

You know the miracle there where Peter and John were about to go into the temple, and v 4: “But Peter and John, intently observing him, said, ‘Look on us.’” And he gave heed and was healed.

Verse 8: “And leaping up, he stood and walked; and he entered into the temple with them, walking and leaping and praising God. Now all the people saw him walking and praising God” (vs 8-9) They knew it was the lame man.

Verse 11: “And as the lame *man* who had been healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch *that is* called Solomon’s, *for* they were greatly amazed.” They couldn’t even get away.

Imagine this: Here’s this lame man lying there, he is healed and he gets up and is running and jumping and praising God, going into the temple area, and Peter and John were coming along. I don’t know if they were before him or behind him, but the lame man runs up and grabs hold of them making sure they can’t get away. All the rest of the people come running in to see what’s going on. That shows some of the excitement of the early New Testament Church as it was getting going.

We also find in Acts 15 that John was there with the other apostles for discussing the matter concerning the circumcision of the Gentiles, whether they should be circumcised or not.

Even in *Unger’s Bible Dictionary*, he quotes some as saying: It is the greatest book in the world. There may be a grain of truth to that. Maybe that’s an entirely correct statement, especially from the point of view that this was the writing of the one who was the disciple that Jesus loved. Then he goes through and shows and outline of it, which is pretty good concerning it. Suffice it to say:

- the book of John was written in approximately the years: 85-95_{A.D.}
- 1st John, 2nd John and 3rd John was written subsequent to that

Why is the book of John different than the other three Gospels? You can read all kinds of theories, all kinds speculations as to why the Gospel of John is different than the other three Gospels. I think it is important for us to realize why it is different.

- It is different because it fills in all of the missing gaps that are in Matthew, Mark and Luke.
- It is different because it shows us that Jesus’ life actually centered around the Holy Days of God.

{note the book: *A Harmony of the Gospels*}

- John 1—the creation, the coming of Jesus Christ
- John 2-3—Passover
- John 5—Feast of the Jews, which after examining it more closely, I am inclined to believe that John 5 would more fulfill the meaning of the Last Great Day than any other day.
- John 6—Passover again, all the meaning, which is extremely profound
- John 7-9—the Feast of Tabernacles
- John 10—reference to the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple that Jesus attended
- John 11—resurrection of Lazarus
- John 12—the beginning of Jesus’ last Passover
- John 13-19—Passover and crucifixion of Jesus Christ
- John 21—events that took place after the resurrection

The book of John was written for a very, very specific reason. Just keep in mind that with John writing; we will say 90_{A.D.} for a middle figure between 85-95. Remember that the temple was destroyed some 20 years before that. Also remember that at this time the controversy between the Jews and the Christians, and the absolute hatred and vehemence and fighting that was between the Jewish non-Christians and the so-called Gentile Christians. It was just absolute hatred!

{note book: *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi}

John writing at this time, we find why he wrote this book. It is to establish two very important things; John 20:30: “Now then, Jesus did many other miracles in *the* presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book.”

I’ve often wondered why weren’t they written in this book? I think the fact that we just briefly touched on about the calling of fire down from heaven maybe showed some of the private and personal instruction that they received as apostles, directly from Jesus Christ that no one else ever received, were not intended to be written.

Verse 31: “But these have been written, ^[#1]**so that you may believe...**” I’ll do a word study on *believe* as we get more into the series. Nowhere does John use the word that is translated into English *faith*. Everywhere he uses the word *believe!* The Greek for *believe* actually means to *faithize*.

“...that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ^[#2]you may have life

through His name” (v 31).

That’s a very important verse, because when we go back to the Epistle of First John, remember that he wrote: *There be many antichrists!* Were there people believing in another Jesus? That sounds a little bit like the first introduction of Galatians: *I marvel that you are removed from Him Who has called you unto another Gospel!* What John is emphasizing is the **true Jesus Christ, that you may believe Him!**

We will see how this will tie in with the beginning of the Gospel of John. This has to do with *how* you believe and *how* you have faith. Rom. 10 ties these two words together concerning *faith* and *belief*.

Romans 10:8: “...This is the Word of faith that we are proclaiming: That if you **confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus...** [upon conviction and belief; This is not just **mumbling or jumbling the words**] **...and believe in your heart...**” (vs 8-9). What does it mean to really believe in your heart? In other words, **that is a conviction that you live and die by!** It’s not just a casual belief that when the pressure gets strong you turn down. You “...**believe** in your heart...”

“...that God raised Him from *the* dead, you shall be saved. For with *the* heart one **believes** unto righteousness, and with *the* mouth one confesses unto salvation because the Scripture says, ‘Everyone who believes in Him shall not be ashamed’” (vs 9-11).

This is the whole point of the Gospel. You are here because you believe what we just read. **Absolutely believe it!** There’s a special blessing that Jesus gave to each one of you when He prayed for you who believe on the words of those who taught Jesus’ life; namely the apostles and those in His Church. *There’s a blessing for those who believe and have not seen!*

Verse 12: “For there is no difference between Jew and Greek, because the same Lord of all *is* rich toward all who call upon Him. For everyone who calls on the name of *the* Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on *Him* in Whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in *Him* of Whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without preaching?” (vs 12-14).

What does a preacher preach? *He preaches words, the message!* That’s exactly where the Gospel of John begins. It was very important to establish who and what Jesus Christ *was and is*.

Verse 15: “And how shall they preach, unless they be sent? Accordingly, it is written, ‘How

beautiful *are* the feet of those who announce the Gospel of Peace, and those who announce the good news of good things!’ But all have not obeyed the Gospel because as Isaiah said, ‘Lord, who has believed our report?’ So then, faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing through *the* Word [‘Logos’] of God” (vs 15-17).

This brings us right where we need to turn, back to the beginning of the Gospel of John. This tells us some very, very important things concerning Jesus Christ.

John 1:1: “In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in *the* beginning with God. All things **came into being** through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him” (vs 1-3). In other words, there is nothing that is made that Jesus did not make! That’s very important to understand.

There are those who say that Jesus was a ‘good man’—which the Jews still say today. I hear this all the time on a talk show on the radio. They get some Jew that has written some book about Jesus, and he doesn’t know the first thing about Jesus Christ. But they all undeify Jesus Christ. You have one that says, ‘All other religions have failed,’ and that’s why his is the ‘right’ one. I predict that his is going to fail, and I predict that he’s going to come to an ignominious end, because now he has verbally opened his mouth and challenged God! He is in trouble.

The Gospel of John is written not just because of the things that I have mentioned, but because it shows that Jesus Christ is **THE** Son of God! He is **THE** only One through Whom there is life! **No other way!** We will see this emphasized all the way through the book of John.

The word in the Greek for *the* Word is ‘ho Logos.’ It means **the Word!** Why would He use that particular phrase? *The Word* can mean:

- the Message
- the Spokesman
- the One Who is speaking

It’s very important because we saw that you cannot have faith unless you hear.

- What is it you are to hear? *The Word of God!*
- Who is the Word of God personified? *The One Who became Jesus Christ!*

That’s why this is very important that this has been used in this particular way.

Let’s look at some very important things concerning Jesus Christ. Gen. 1 connects the

beginning of the creation with Jesus Christ. Remember, He said, ‘Nothing came into existence, or came into being, except that He brought it into being.

- How did God create it?
- How did God create?
- *This tells us that Jesus Christ was the One Who was the Word in the beginning!*
- How did God create?
- *By speaking!*

Genesis 1:1: “In *the* beginning God created the heavens and the earth. And the earth was without form and void, and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (vs 1-2). The Spirit of God is the Power of God. We will see that when we get into the section in John 14 on the Holy Spirit. There’s some very, very important and new meaning in John 14 referring to the Holy Spirit.

Verse 3: And **God said...**” Who was this One Who said it?

John 1:1: “...**the Word was God.**” So, the One Who spoke it, Who brought it into being and existence was the One Who became Jesus Christ.

Genesis 1:3: “And God said, ‘Let there be light.’....” We’re going to see an interesting parallel when we get back to the John 1 concerning the Light. Who is *the* Light?

Notice how these come together and I want us to really focus in on how the book of John will put things together in a circle. One part is a part of another part, which is a part of another part, which hooks together in a circle. You have the Word; you have Him speaking; now we have “...Let there be light....” and Jesus is the Light of the world.

This is why the book of John is so good; you can put all these together. I’m personally really excited about bringing this series. There is so much in it that I feel is very important.

Verse 5: “And God called the light day, and He called the darkness night.... [v 6]: And God said, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters *from* the waters.’” That happened.

Verse 8: “And God called the firmament heavens. And the evening and the morning were day two. And God said, ‘Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together to one place....’” (vs 8-9); and He called the water seas (v 10).

Verse 14: “And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide

between the day and the night, and let them be for signs, and for appointed seasons, and for days and years.’”

Verse 20: “And God said, ‘Let the waters abound *with* swarms of living creatures... [v 21]: ...And God created great sea-animals.... And God saw that *it was* good. And God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the fowl multiply in the earth.’ And the evening and the morning were day five. And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures...’” (vs 20-25).

Can you imagine the kind of power that is? I don’t know how long They planned it, or exactly what took place before He did the commanding for it to come forth, but can you imagine the power? We need to understand the *office and power* of Jesus Christ! **By His Word He can command and it comes into being!**

That’s why we are to *believe* on Him! This is why it’s very important that we understand that it is not just some sort of patchwork type of thing that God is doing to save us. It is a very meaningful involvement of God in our lives. **The One Who created and made everything is the One Who is saving us!**

Verse 26: “And God said, ‘Let Us...’” He didn’t say, ‘Let Me’; He said, “...Let Us...” This is showing that there is more than one God. The Bible reveals that there are two: Jesus Christ and God the Father! When we get to the important part in John 14, I will prove unequivocally, by the original Greek, that **the Holy Spirit is the power of God and not a person.**

“God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness...’” (v 26). As I’ve mentioned many times before, the rest of the Bible tells about how that **man is going to be made after God’s kind!**

The Word also means *to speak*. Jesus was the Spokesman! You might want to—through a concordance—take and do a word study of:

- God’s Word
- the Word of God
- Your Word
- My Word

You will see how absolutely fantastic the Bible is concerning *the* Word; especially Psa. 119. There are at least 30 references to *the Word of God*.

Here is another very important reason why John wrote what he wrote and the way that he wrote it. I am sure that at this time there were Jews that were feeling that Jesus Christ was really not the

Messiah. So, John chose 'ho Logos' to show Who Jesus was.

When we come to Exodus 20:1 we find kind of a casual little verse that we would read over, but it says: "And God spoke all these words, saying"

- these are the words of God
- this is the message of God
- God is the One Who spoke them
- this is the Word of God

John is reinforcing the very power and impact of the Word of God by those first three verses. Jesus Christ is the One Who spoke those words.

Exodus 24:3: "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD..." Remember what the people said after they heard the Ten Commandments thundered? *They were all afraid and said, 'Moses, you go speak to God, and all that you tell us we will do.* But as for this voice of God, we are so afraid we can't hear it.' That's exactly what Moses did.

"...and all the judgments. And all the people answered with one voice and said, 'All the words which the LORD has said, we will do'" (v 3). The key is this:

- everything in the Old Testament is based upon the Word of God
- everything in the New Testament is based upon the Word of God

What did Moses do? Verse 4: "And Moses **wrote** all the words of the LORD..." That's what we have here; we have all the words of the Lord, all that we need.

There are many other Psalms we could go to showing that the Word of God is pure, true, righteous and Holy and everything like that. But here is one verse that sums it up very clearly for us:

Proverbs 30:5: "**Every Word of God is pure...**" You need to think about that for a minute. **God does not sin!** Everything He says is *pure*; however you want to define *pure*.

- there is no hypocrisy in it
- there is no guile in it
- there are no lies in it
- it is pure
- the Word of God is manifold

—many, many meanings when we combine it together with the rest of God's Word; it is *pure!* **God's Word is pure!**

There are a lot of people today who wish they had a glass of *pure* water. We're finding more

and more that the water is polluted. There's nothing better than good, clean, pure water.

Think about the *pure* Word of God! How that is to be with us, and we put that together with the water of God's Spirit and how that should interact in our heart and mind.

Jesus said, concerning God's Word, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every Word of God.' In another place it says, 'By every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God shall man live.'

Now let's understand something a little bit more concerning the Word of God. We will see why these words are so very important, and another reason why John used the word 'ho Logos' to describe Jesus Christ.

(go to the next track)

John 6:63: "It is the Spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing. **The words that I speak to you, they are Spirit and they are Life.**" That is also true concerning Jesus Christ personally.

- it is *through Him* that we live
- it is *through Him* that we receive the Holy Spirit
- it is *through Him* that the words of God are understood spiritually for us

Let's go further and show more of the power of God in upholding the universe. We can tie this right in with the creation of the world (Gen. 1); but in Heb. 1 we find something very, very important if you can combine John 1, Gen. 1 and Heb. 1. It talks about Jesus Christ:

Hebrews 1:1: "God, Who spoke to the fathers at different times in the past and in many ways by the prophets, has spoken to us in these last days by *His* Son, Whom He has appointed heir of all things, by Whom also He made the ages" (vs 1-2). How did He make the worlds? *By command!*

Verse 3: "Who, being *the* brightness of *His* glory and *the* exact image of His person, and upholding all things **by the word of His own power...** or by the power of His Word! He's upholding everything! **Everything exists because of the Word of God!**

That's why John was writing 'In the beginning was **the Word.**' It is the Word of God Who upholds it all.

"...when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at *the* right hand of the Majesty on high" (v 3).

In Heb. 11 we have *faith, believing in Christ, creation* all tied together.

Hebrews 11:1: “Now, faith is *the* substance of *things* hoped for, *and the* conviction of things not seen. For by this *kind of faith* the elders obtained a good report. By faith we understand that the worlds were created by *the* Word of God...” (vs 1-3)—by the words that God spoke, but also by literally the One Who is called *the Word*, referring also to *Jesus Christ!*

“...so that the things that are seen were made from *things* that are invisible” (v 3). I think we live in a tremendous age where we can at least be knowledgeable of the fact that they are getting down so fine into matter, and they still have not discovered what is behind it, yet.

When they learned about the cell, that was the ultimate. Then it was the atom, and now they're down into things way below the level of the atom and they still don't know what is there. They can't tell you what life is; they can't tell you what matter is. They can tell you what it can do; they can tell you certain behaviors and reactions and things that they have found, but *we know by faith that these things were made of things that don't appear; that is by the Spirit of God!*

Verse 6: “Now, without faith *it is* impossible to please *God*. For it is mandatory for **the one who comes to God to believe that He exists...**” That is why an atheist can never understand about God. You can't understand about the creation unless you believe in God.

“...For it is mandatory *for* the one who comes to God to believe that He exists, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him” (v 6).

Revelation 19:11: “And I saw heaven open; and behold, a white horse; and He Who sat on it is called Faithful and True...” When we get into the book of John we're going to learn all of the characteristics of Jesus Christ. Here He's called “...Faithful and True...”

“...and in righteousness He does judge and make war” (v 11). This is going to be the war to end all wars!

Verse 12: “And His eyes *were* like a flame of fire, and on His head *were* many crowns; *and* He had a name written that no one knows except Him. And *He was* clothed with a garment dipped in blood; and His name is **The Word of God**” (vs 12-13)—Greek: ‘ho Logos tou Theou.’

You will notice that if we tie all this together:

- Jesus said, *‘These words which I speak*

unto you, they are Spirit and they are Life.’

- Jesus is called *the Word of God!*
- He is the One Who has created everything that there is.
- He is the One Who has sent the Holy Spirit

Notice the reference by the Apostle Paul, Ephesians 6:17: “And put on the helmet of salvation, and **the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.**”

How is it that you're best able to fight and resist Satan the devil? *When you use God's Word and the name of Jesus Christ to do so!*

This can be said of the Word of God and of Jesus Christ, and will be when He returns. Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart.”

That's pretty powerful! That's what God's Word does in our lives to lead us, guide us and convict us!

Matthew 13 is the parable concerning the sower, and the sowing of the seed. It says in the book of Mark—in the parallel account—that the seed is the Word of God. So, it goes out.

Matthew 13:18: “Therefore, hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears **the Word of the kingdom...**” (vs 18-19). That is:

- the Kingship of Christ
- the Kingdom of God
- the rule of God, the reign of God
- the meaning of life

The meaning of life is all tied up in that phrase “...the Word of the kingdom...”

“...and does not understand *it*, the wicked one comes and snatches away that which was sown in his heart. This is the one who was sown by the way. Now, the one who was sown upon the rocky places is the one who hears the Word and immediately receives it with joy; But *because* he has no root in himself, *he* does not endure; for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, he is quickly offended. And the one who was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the Word, but the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful. But the one who was sown on good ground, this is the one who hears the Word and understands, who indeed brings forth fruit and produces—one a hundredfold, another sixtyfold *and* another thirtyfold” (vs 19-23). *There it talks about the*

process of conversion!

Matthew 7:24: “Therefore, everyone who hears these **words of Mine**... [the verb form of logos] ...and practices them, I will compare him to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock; and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; but it did not fall, for it was founded upon the rock. And everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not practice them shall be compared to a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand; and the rain came down, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell, and great was the fall of it. Now, it came to pass *that* when Jesus had finished these words, the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; for He taught them as One Who had authority, and not as the scribes” (vs 24-29).

We’re going to see all the way through the Gospel of John that Jesus speaks with *great* authority and strength.

John 1:1 “In *the* beginning was the Word, and the Word was **with** God ...”—‘pros’—*toward God*; not only was He with Him, but He was *toward* God. Everything He did was *to* or *toward* or *for* God the Father. Jesus said, ‘I came not to do My own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.’

“...and the Word **was** God” (v 1). John absolutely defined Who Jesus Christ was. Why is it important to know that Jesus Christ was God? *Because the words that He spoke were the Message of God!* No one can take to himself the liberty or authority to speak on behalf of God unless God has given that permission.

Here we have Jesus Christ Who came in the flesh Who was the Son of God, Who *was* God. Whatever He spoke then was the with the authority of God.

Verse 2: “He was in *the* beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and not even one *thing* that was created came into being without Him. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (vs 2-4)—the Greek there is ‘anthropos’—*human being*. In this case it’s ‘ton anthropon’—which means *of men, all human beings*.

- ‘anthropos’—*human being*
- ‘genos’—*the son or offspring of*—it can refer to a son in the masculine gender

But when it is

- ‘genos tou Theo’—*the sons of God*—that means that there is no respect of gender in that statement

Women today feel very slighted, although

women in America are the most blessed women in the world. Yet, they go along and shout and bang and jump up and down and say they are oppressed, which is not the case. They ought to go to some of the Arab nations if they think they are deprived and oppressed.

But I just wanted to make it clear that the word ‘anthropos’ can refer to a single man as in the gender, but where it is *men* it is *human beings*.

Jesus Christ is the Light of all human beings. In other words, we are told very clearly that there isn’t any human being anywhere that is alive that does not have that life through the power of the Word—‘ho Logos’—who is God—‘ho Theos.’

I’m interspersing a little Greek in here so that when we get further into the study we’ll follow along a little better, and some of these words we’ll be able to pick up as we go along.

Verse 5: “And the Light shines in the darkness, but the darkness does not comprehend it.” *Nowhere* at anytime have the forces of Satan overcome the power of God. God has allowed certain things, but when there’s a challenge right to God’s face, He’ll take care of it.

The Frenchman Voltaire stood in a particular house or palace and said, ‘Within a hundred years the Bible will be exterminated.’ One hundred years later that house was dedicated to the Word of God. God has a way of taking care of those things. He just does! “And the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness does not comprehend it.” It also means:

- it does not overcome it
- it does not conquer it
- there is no way that it can be put out

That is true! The more that men have tried to get rid of the Word of God, the more it’s multiplied! Time and time again that is true.

Verse 6—concerning John the Baptist: There was a man sent by God, whose name *was* John. He came for a witness, that he might testify concerning **the Light**...” (vs 6-7)—Greek: ‘tou photos’—from which we get the words: *photography, photo*. How do they get the photos? *This is sensitized by light*.

“...so that through him all might believe. He was not the light... [‘tou photos’] ...but *came* that he might testify concerning the light. The True Light was that which enlightens everyone who comes into the world” (vs 7-9). This is true concerning the gift of just physical life, the Light of Life, and also the Light of Life concerning the *spiritual life* that we

receive through the Holy Spirit of God.

Verse 10: “He was in the world, and the world came into being through Him, but the world did not know Him.” That is so true today, the world does not know its own Creator. That is absolutely astounding! Doesn’t know its own Creator, just like a clunker car that doesn’t know anything.

Verse 11: “He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.” What did they try to do?

- stone Him
 - persecuted Him
 - kill Him
- and finally
- crucified Him

—even though that was a type of all men crucifying Jesus Christ; that’s why God worked it out that way. It was that Satan inspired the deception and the civil authorities acquiesced to it. The people demanded it. The Jews made sure He was out there to be crucified, but the Roman soldiers actually drove the nail and thrust the spear into His side. The people who say that the Jews alone crucified Christ, it is not a truly authentic statement.

1-Corinthians 1:17: “For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the Gospel—not with *the* wisdom of words...” That’s what I see so many times.

I’ve got some commentaries at home and, believe me, very, very little of the sermons that I ever bring do I gain any material out of those. In fact, I get more material from looking at them and seeing how wrong they are, then preach the Truth, because they’re absolutely incredible. I read the whole summary of the Gospel of John in the *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible* and it was written by an atheist. No wonder he couldn’t understand it.

“...lest the cross of Christ be made void. For to those who are perishing, the preaching of the cross is foolishness; but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God” (vs 17-18).

It also says in relationship to the Jews that Jesus is a stumbling block! That is true! When He came to His own they didn’t receive Him.

Verse 23: “But we proclaim Christ crucified. To *the* Jews *it is* a cause of offense... [a stumbling block] ...and to the Greeks *it is* foolishness; but to those who are called—both Jews and Greeks—Christ *is* God’s power and God’s wisdom” (vs 23-24). Most of the wisdom of the world is based on the wisdom of the Greeks.

John 1:12: “But as many as received Him...” How is it that you received Christ?

There is a movement in the Protestant churches where all you have to do is receive Christ. ‘How many here tonight received Christ. Open your heart and let Him in.’ *NO!* You receive Christ after you have been called.

John 6:44: “No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him...” You receive Him by *repentance*, *His forgiving your sins* and the *receiving of the Holy Spirit*. It doesn’t come any other way! There are many Scriptures that we can go to to show that, especially Acts 8 about Simon Magus. He wanted the power, he wanted the name, but he wasn’t willing to repent and receive Jesus.

John 1:12: “...to them He gave authority... [they were authorized from God] ...to become the children [‘tekna’] of God...” (v 12). God gave His authority to be the children of God.

You can get yourself in trouble with people in the world if you just say ‘I’m a son of God.’ Imagine the answer you would get. But He gave us that authority.

“...even to those who believe in [‘eis’] His name” (v 12). We will see all the way through the book of John that to believe *on* Jesus Christ means to *believe into*; in other words, it not just believe something is there. It is believe so that your belief and the mental process is actually going *into!* This is the kind of belief that it’s talking about all through the book of John:

- believing into Jesus
- believing into His name

Verse 13: “Who were not begotten by bloodlines... [not of a physical genealogy] ...nor by *the* will of *the* flesh...”—because of being of a physical thing. Can you imagine what it would be if eternal life came through a certain race? No one would ever receive it; it would just be within that one family or nation and that would be it. That’s why it has to come from God. It’s not the will of the flesh.

“...nor by *the* will of man, but by *the* will of God” (v 13)—were begotten. We have not been totally born into the Kingdom of God as spirit beings.

Let’s analyze the phrase “...**of** God”: ‘ek’—*proceeding out from God*. The will from God proceeding out into our lives and with the Holy Spirit has begotten us again ‘unto the lively hope of the resurrection’ through the ‘incorruptible Word of God’ (as Peter writes). So, it is by *the will of God!*

That is quite a statement.

When we put it all together with the other statements about how God loves the world, how He calls us, how He does different things for us, that it is by the *will of God*; by His *very own will*! Pretty powerful statement. How powerful is Jesus Christ the Word? *Well, it's beyond description!* But it shows exactly how God's way is in our life.

I want to focus in on what the Bible calls *the joy of the Lord*. Too many times Christianity has been a drudge. I don't want it to be a drudge. The reason that too many have not found the *joy of the Lord* is because they relied too much on their own power, which is going to disappoint them, rather than on the power of God and see the greatness of God and what He does for us in our lives.

Verse 14: "And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us..." He temporarily lived here.

Let's see the total humility of God. You would have to conclude that God is the most exalted being that exists; full of majesty, power, glory, honor and love. Let's understand the humility of God, and concerning Jesus Christ.

Philippians 2: "Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus; Who, although He existed in *the* form of God..." (vs 2-3). We saw in John 1 that He *was* God! We understand about human life, that it comes from just a pinprick of existence from the father and mother. This shows the tremendous humility of Jesus Christ. He was willing to give up everything and become just that little pinprick of life.

And through the power of the Holy Spirit by God the Father was implanted, or impregnated, in the virgin Mary. He was "...in *the* form of God..."

"...did not consider it robbery to be equal with God" (v 6). Remember, they had all this time to see all the history of human beings. There was approximately 4,000 years of human existence that they could see.

We could imagine, in our carnal minds, every reason in the world for not wanting to become—if we were God—a human being. What if someone came up and said, 'I have great news for you.' *What is it?* 'You are going to go into another form of life.' *What is it?* 'You're going to become a flea!'

In comparison to what Jesus Christ gave up to become a human being, that's pretty much what we would have to give up in order to have any magnitude of comparison of what Jesus gave up.

Verse 7: "But emptied Himself..." He didn't tell God, 'If you make Me the most powerful person on earth, yeah I could handle that, I could do that. And I want rich folks. I want to have everything that there is.' *He made of Himself 'no reputation.'* (KJV). He was willing to put Himself completely into the hands of God the Father and trust Him. You talk about faith!

We'll see a little later on where it says, 'the faith of Jesus Christ.' That's how you are saved.

"...and was made in *the* likeness of men, and took the form of a **servant**" (v 7)—Greek: 'doulos'—which means *slave*.

Verse 8: "And being found in *the* manner of man... [all the bodily functions any human being would have] ...He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even *the* death of *the* cross."

You will see again where He said, 'I came not to do My will, but the will of the Father Who sent Me.' He didn't argue with God. He didn't say, 'How about let Me die just kind of easy like.' *NO!* He didn't say that! That's why when He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane He sweat great drops of blood, because He knew what it was going to be.

Verse 9: "Therefore, God has also highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him a name, which *is* above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *beings* in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord to *the* glory of God *the* Father" (vs 9-11). That is going to happen. One day that is going to happen; every tongue—whether in the Kingdom of God or cast into the Lake of Fire, they will confess that Jesus is the Lord.

John 1:14: "And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us... [He lived here a short time, and that has a lot to do with the meaning of the feast of Tabernacles]... (and we ourselves beheld His glory, *the* glory as of *the* only begotten with *the* Father), **full of grace and Truth.**" We are going to see grace and Truth—in particularly Truth—emphasized all the way through the Gospel of John.

{Note Sermon Series: Epistles of John—the Truth is emphasized}

- we know that Jesus is the Truth
- we know that we are saved through grace

So, He was "...full of grace and Truth."

It's interesting that John, who wrote this, the meaning is *the Lord is gracious!*

Verse 15: "John testified concerning Him,

and proclaimed, saying, ‘This was He of Whom I said, “He Who comes after me has precedence over me because He was before me.”’” In other words, Jesus existed before John.’

If you go back to the account of where Mary came and ‘saluted’ Elizabeth, and at time Elizabeth was six months pregnant and John the Baptist—still in his mother’s womb—leapt for joy. Somehow this must have been explained to John the Baptist, otherwise he wouldn’t be able to say that he ‘existed before Jesus, but He’s coming after me.’

Verse 16: “And of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.”

- Psalm 119
- Acts 8

Also referenced:

Books:

- *Unger’s Bible Dictionary*
- *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*
- *A Harmony of the Gospels* by Fred R. Coulter
- *From Sabbath to Sunday* by Samuele Bacchiocchi
- *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*

Sermon Series:

- Grace of God
- Love of God

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

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Transcribed: 7-28-14

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 4:19-22
- 2) Mark 1:20
- 3) John 19:27
- 4) John 18:15-16
- 5) Matthew 20:20-24
- 6) John 1:35-37
- 7) Acts 3:1, 4, 8-9, 11
- 8) John 20:30-31
- 9) Romans 10:8-17
- 10) John 1:1-3
- 11) Genesis 1:1-3
- 12) John 1:1
- 13) Genesis 1:3-6, 8-10, 14, 20-26
- 14) Exodus 20:1
- 15) Exodus 24:3-4
- 16) Proverbs 30:5
- 17) John 6:63
- 18) Hebrews 1-3
- 19) Hebrews 11:1-3, 6
- 20) Revelation 19:11-13
- 21) Ephesians 6:17
- 22) Hebrews 4:12
- 23) Matthew 13:18-23
- 24) Matthew 7:24-29
- 25) John 1:1-11
- 26) 1 Corinthians 1:17-18, 23-24
- 27) John 1:12
- 28) John 6:44
- 29) John 1:12-14
- 30) Philippians 2-11
- 31) John 1:14-16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- John 2; 17
- Acts 15
- John 3; 5-19; 21