

## The Word

We are beginning today a series looking at the Book of John. This book was pivotal to my return to Jesus and many people have found answers in this gospel that lead them to Christ. Years ago Tammy and I used to host seeker small groups. We would get groups of people together who did not know Jesus but wanted to know more. Our groups consisted of witches, Muslims, Jews, psychics, atheists, agnostics, new age, and many others. We even once had a Buddhist monk in our group.

Explain how the group worked and why we studied the Book of John. Not asking them to believe but rather to understand Christians. Also, I asked them if God existed and they could meet with Him tomorrow and He promised to answer one question, what would you want to know? And then I would make sure that we answered their questions during the first few weeks.

The Book of John is an incredible book to explore the claims of Jesus if you are a seeker. I would encourage you to invite everyone you encounter to come hear about Jesus in his series. Don't tell me that they will not come because we have seen God do incredible life change miracles through this study in the past.

The introduction to John's Book changed my life. John began his gospel with these incredible truths.

John 1:1–5 (ESV) 1 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.

At the age of 33 for the first time in my life, I understood that Jesus was actually God. God literally came to save us. Not His Son...Himself. That truth unlocked everything for me. Once I realized that Jesus was God and not just God's Son born on Christmas everything clicked. The Salvation message made sense. I began seeing things I had never seen before.

Genesis 1:26 (ESV) 26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

I had never seen us and our in that passage. God creating the world and talking about us. Who was us? Why not say my image? He said our image. He was speaking to the Trinity. The Spirit of God hovered over the water. Father God was speaking into being and The Son of God was making everything. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word....here it is...Was God.

This beautiful passage of Scripture changed and saved my life...and I pray it will change the lives of others who were like me. The Word...Greek logos...let's unpack that a bit. It is the key to everything.

## What is the Word?

### Logos

What is the definition of logos? A concept word in the Bible symbolic of the nature and function of Jesus Christ. It is also used to refer to the revelation of God in the world." Logos is a noun that

occurs 330 times in the Greek New Testament. Of course, the word doesn't always—in fact, it usually doesn't—carry symbolic meaning. Its most basic and common meaning is simply "word," "speech," "utterance," or "message."

But when logos is used to represent God it is referring to the Second Person of the Trinity and eventually Jesus Christ.

The word Logos which we call in English "The Word" represents everything that have been or will be revealed about the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity.

The entire Bible is Holy. It is the only book self-proclaimed as Holy. Miles did an incredible job last week speaking of the Truth of the Bible and how the Bible is God's revealed Word or message to us. Holy means originating from and sustained by God Himself. We don't just read the Bible, we surrender to the Holy Bible.

2 Timothy 3:16–17 (ESV) 16 All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

The first century Jew had a keen understanding of the meaning of the Word logos. They did not know that it represented the Second Person of the Trinity, but they understood the word logos to mean everything that has been revealed or will be revealed about God. It represented His essence, His glory, His power, His righteousness, His authority, His creativity, His knowledge, His grace, His mercy, His love, His forgiveness, His judgment, His truth, His benevolence, His presence, His faithfulness, His promises, His protection, His sovereignty, His eternal nature, His covenant, His life, His blessings, His correction, His provision....all summed up in one little 5 letter Greek Word...logos.

God wrote and gave the Jewish People His written Word...His logos. All that anyone would need to know about Him, His plans, His nature would find those truths in the Holy Scriptures. God gave His laws...His commandments to them and told them that in them they would find life.

But the entire Old Testament is the Story of God blessing the Jewish People...they would promise obedience...and then within one generation they would reject Him again....and that cycle is repeated throughout the Old Testament. So God used the Old Testament to prove to man that our sin nature is so strong, we cannot in our own power get right with God. In those same truth, the logos, He promised a Messiah...one who would reveal His logos to the world.

Then the Second Person of the Trinity...obviously the Logos of God because He is God....took on human skin to end Human sin. We know this manifestation of the Logos or Word of God as Jesus Christ. The name given to God when He became a man. The Second Person of the Trinity has always existed and is God....His time on earth refers to Him as Jesus Christ...meaning Messiah and Savior.

Man was separated from God because of our sin...our inability and nature to rebel against God. We were born with bad and sinful DNA. Our very nature was flawed and committed to evil since birth. Not really something we were tricked into doing but

rather what we wanted to do. Every human since Adam and Eve has been hard wired to resist God and to pursue sin through our pride.

We are helpless to solve our genetic condition. We have no hope restoring our relationship with God until something changes our sin nature. God is righteous and pure and holy...and we prove we are not as soon as we are asked to share our toys. God's word tells us....

Romans 3:9–21 (ESV) For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin, 10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." 13 "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips." 14 "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 in their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and the way of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

God is telling us that we are all, in our natural state, worthless and all that we do meaningless...our paths are ruin and misery....never finding peace....with no fear of God. That is not "them" it was at one point all of us.

People often asked me, How can a loving God let bad things happen to Good people? The answer is that there are no good people. There has just been One and God allowed Jesus to die on the cross...what He called a good thing.

Isaiah 53:9–10 (ESV) 9 And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

Everything God does is good...we may see it or define it otherwise, but God can only do the very best thing for us...collectively...for His purposes for mankind. What happened to Jesus was horrific but what God did with it was wonderous. Jesus on the cross revealed the Glory of God to a dying world.

So things happen to people....those things are in God's plan the very best for us...and whatever happens we can be assured that God is allowing it to advance His gospel. God has a singular focus...He wants every person to surrender to Jesus so His does not have to give them their choice of Hell instead of His choice of Heaven.

Everything God does is relational. He created us to have a relationship with us. Not a relationship just while here on earth...God wanted to make sure that we have an eternal relationship with Him forever. He wants us to never have to leave Him.

So when we, in our nature, rejected God, He did not give up on our relationship....instead He doubled down. God revealed Himself, His logos to us in the written Scriptures that are alive and God breathed. The full manifestation of God is found in those Holy Words....but when we, mankind, rejected them...He said

essentially....I am moving into your neighborhood. First my logos, essence will be in the tabernacle, it will lead you by day and night through the wilderness to the promised land. Then my logos will one day manifest as Messiah....a god man...fully God and fully man.

The written word testifies to who I AM...and He will testify to who I AM. They are one in the same...both the Logos of God. The living word of God, Jesus, came into the world to show us the essence of God. What is logos like when lived out...well it is Jesus.

John 14:9–11 (ESV) 9 Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? 10 Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. 11 Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves.

Jesus, the full manifestation of God in the flesh....His logos...reveals to us the very nature of God and reveals to the world a choice. Continue in your path of selfish destruction or surrender to Jesus and be reborn with a new nature...a new Spirit...one not hindered by sin but the very nature of God Himself.

God glorified Jesus on the mount of transfiguration and Peter, James and John were eyewitnesses.

Then God glorified Jesus on the cross when He resurrected Him from the punishment of Sin....the firstborn Spiritually for the new covenant of God...one sealed through the blood of Jesus. Through faith in that Historic event we too join Jesus in the growing nature of God. We become children of God through our faith in Jesus....and then we are given the very logos of God as the Holy Spirit.

The entire story of God...the gospel message...is all about God's logos being manifested to man in the written word, the living word of Jesus and the Spiritual word of the Holy Spirit....and then that very same logos transferred to man through faith in Jesus....not fully developed...in its infancy stage...but God's Children...His essence in us...we become Spirit filled Children of God who will always be in relationship with Him and throughout our life on earth and through eternity we will grow to manifest His logos. His very essence.

That brings us to our new series...

Over the next weeks, we are going to explore the Gospel of John.

## John

What does it mean that logos became flesh and dwelt among us? How did that change the world? How did that fulfill the promises of God in the Old Testament? What happened in the World and to the people of the world when God himself...Jesus Christ the Messiah...became one of us?

We are launching into a new series about the fourth Gospel, the Book of John. Gospel means good news. There are four gospels in the Bible...Matthew Mark Luke and John. They all tell the story of the Logos coming to live among us to save us. Each one written by God through different people, but all four testifying to the true nature of Jesus...He claimed to be God and is God.

The gospels are portraits of Jesus, not photographs. If you take a picture you get whatever seems to be happening in that moment.....whatever happens in the instant that you take it is what you get. But a portrait is much more revealing a personal.

In a portrait, the artist paints what he or she wants you to see...what they want to highlight...their view of the most important things to show their audience. As we learned in our Rembrandt series, portraits highlight what the artist wants you to see. It doesn't show you everything or sometimes even the most important thing. It may not give you the details that you wish you had, but the artist reveals both the subject and himself in the portrait.

The Gospels are portraits. Each written by God through it's author. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John all reveal their personalities in their gospels. They write as tax collectors, doctors, and disciples. Each one reflecting on the very same life of Jesus but choosing which aspects to highlight for us. Just as an artist does not suppose to reveal every detail about someone in a portrait, neither did the writers of the Gospel. John himself reminds us of this

John 21:25 (ESV) 25 Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

So each Gospel is written by God but with the personality and perspective of the author...and with the idea of an intended audience. Some wrote to Gentile audiences and had to explain Jewish traditions, others wrote to Jewish people and could presume that they had knowledge about such things. To the Jews, they would have to explain aspects of the pagan world that the gentiles came from.

It is obvious to the most casual reader that John has features that are strikingly different from the other three Gospels. I want us to consider the Gospel of John in comparison to the three Synoptic Gospels, considering their similarities and their differences.

John has a very unique perspective on Jesus and it is reflected in his Gospel. His gospel was written last and he obviously had the other three gospels available to him.

John knew of the synoptics, then he wrote to supplement them. To say John knew of one or more of the synoptics is not to say, however, that he wrote his gospel with copies of Matthew,

Mark, and/or Luke in front of him. John may have been aware of the existence of other written accounts of Jesus’ life and ministry without actually having seen them.

He had enough material to choose from that much of it does not overlap or simply restate the other gospels. This point is strengthened considerably since John reminds us that he has direct eyewitness testimony about the life and ministry of Jesus

**John 21:24 (ESV) 24 This is the disciple who is bearing witness about these things, and who has written these things, and we know that his testimony is true.**

All four Gospels include the following: (1) narratives and comments about John the Baptist; (2) the call of the disciples; (3) the feeding of the five thousand; (4) the trip across the Sea of Galilee; (5) Peter’s confession; (6) the entry into Jerusalem; (7) Jesus’ last meal with His disciples; (8) the arrest, trial, and crucifixion; and (9) various post-resurrection appearances. In addition to this general agreement among the four Gospels, there are also narratives about the cleansing of the temple and an anointing of Jesus, but both these events are placed in different settings in John’s Gospel

In common with the Synoptics, John records samples of both healing and nature miracles, although John treats them differently from the other three gospels, (identifying them as “signs”). Moreover, John records some Galilean material in common with the Synoptics, although he concentrates on the Jerusalem ministry.

John’s Gospel omits a large amount of material found in the synoptic Gospels, including some surprisingly important episodes: the temptation of Jesus, Jesus’ transfiguration, and the institution of the Lord’s supper are not mentioned by John. John mentions no examples of Jesus casting out demons. The sermon on the mount and the Lord’s prayer are not found in the Fourth Gospel. There are no narrative parables in John’s Gospel. In John much of the teaching comes out in debates with opponents or in intimate contact with the disciples

John also includes a considerable amount of material not found in the synoptics. All the material in John 2-4... Among the significant additions unique to John’s Gospel are the following: (1) the early Judean ministry, including the miracle at Cana; (2) Jesus’ encounter with Nicodemus and with the Samaritan woman; (3) the healing of the paralytic at the pool of Bethesda; (4) the healing of the blind man in Jerusalem; (5) the raising of Lazarus; (6) the washing of the disciples’ feet; in the upper room; and (8) portions of the passion narrative. Jesus’ early Galilean ministry, is not found in the synoptics. Prior visits of Jesus to Jerusalem before the passion week are mentioned in John but not found in the synoptics. The seventh sign-miracle, the resurrection of Lazarus is not mentioned in the other gospels. The extended Farewell Discourse John 13-17 is not found in the other Gospels.

According to John, Jesus’ public ministry extended over a period of at least three and possibly four years. During this time Jesus goes several times from Galilee to Jerusalem. The synoptics appear to describe only one journey of Jesus to Jerusalem (the final one), with most of Jesus’ ministry taking place within one year.

John's view of Christ is one of undeniable love and His Love for Christ is the essence of his writings...his portrait...of Jesus. We say that John has a very high Christology...A high view of the Holiness of Christ.

The Prologue to John’s Gospel (1:1-18) presents Jesus as the logos become flesh (1:14). John begins his Gospel with an affirmation of Jesus’ preexistence and full deity, which climaxes in John 20:28, with Thomas’ confession “My Lord and my God!” Compare Mark who begins his Gospel with Jesus’ baptism and Matthew and Luke who begin theirs with Jesus’ birth. John begins with eternity past (“In the beginning the Word already was...”).

John's gospel is also different in a very key manner.

The other three gospels are written from a third person point of view, describing the events as if the authors had personally observed all of them and were reporting what they saw at the time. Thus they are basically descriptive in their approach. They seem to be like reporters...of course believers...but describing the events that unfolded during their time with Jesus.

John’s Gospel, on the other hand, although also written from a third person point of view, is more reflective, clearly later than the events he describes. He is taking the perspective of looking back and explaining events after some time had passed. The author of the Fourth Gospel very carefully separates himself from the events he describes ..only referring to himself as the disciple Jesus loved.... However clear it is that he was an eyewitness of the life of Jesus, it is no less clear that he looks back upon it from a temporal distance. While we see the events through his eyes, we are carefully guided to see the events of Jesus’ life not as John saw them when they happened but as he now sees them. We understand more of the significance of the events described from the position the writer now holds than an eyewitness could have understood at the time the events took place. In this sense John’s Gospel is much more reflective. The other three are descriptive.

In each of these passages it may be easily seen that John has adopted the “post-resurrection” point of view. He looks back on the events and emphasizes the inability of the apostles to understand the things that were happening in their true perspective at the time they occurred. It is only possible for us to understand these things when we consider the resurrection of Jesus and its significance in God’s plan.

John 2:17 (ESV) 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

John 2:22 (ESV) 22 When therefore he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

John 12:16 (ESV) 16 His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him.

John 20:9–10 (ESV) 9 for as yet they did not understand the Scripture, that he must rise from the dead. 10 Then the disciples went back to their homes.

John presents his material in the form of extended dialogues or discourses rather than the ‘proverbial’ or ‘pithy’ sayings found often in the synoptics: John 3 with Nicodemus; John 4 with the

Samaritan woman; John 6 the Bread of Life Discourse); John 13-17 the Farewell Discourse with the disciples.

The Gospel of John passed on the words of Jesus predominantly differently than the other gospels; it did not do so in sayings, parables, and controversy dialogues, but in connected discussion and reflective observation.

John's literary style is very much evident and much different from the other three gospels.

Much of this symbolism takes the form of dualistic antitheses: light/darkness  
truth/falsehood ; life/death ; above/below ; freedom/slavery.

John makes frequent use of the “misunderstood statement” as a literary technique. Jesus says something to someone which is misunderstood, thus giving Jesus a further opportunity to clarify what he really meant. Examples: John 3 Nicodemus’ misunderstanding of the new birth as a second physical birth; John 4 the Samaritan woman’s misunderstanding of the living water as drinkable water.

The emphasis on the Kingdom of God found in the synoptics is largely missing in John it only occurs twice in John’s Gospel and the noun Kingdom only three times . Instead we find John’s emphasis on ‘eternal life’ as a present reality. The emphasis on ‘eternal life’ in John’s Gospel is closer to the letters of Paul than to the synoptic gospels, for example

So John's Gospel is the same but different. His portrait of Jesus stands bathed in love and focused on the signs Jesus gave to the Jews that He was the Promised Messiah. John said the reason that he wrote this gospel was.....

John 20:30–31 (ESV) 30 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.

The general omission of Jesus’ Galilean ministry, the almost total absence of the parables, the definite selectivity in choosing what miracles to include in his account, and the dovetailing of some of John’s historical data with that found in the other gospels makes one feel that the author was trying to give to the public fresh information that had not previously been used in writing. For instance, in the account of the Last Supper, John described the foot-washing scene and explained how Jesus wished to provide an object lesson in humility for the disciples. Luke, for his part, tells how the disciples were arguing among themselves as to which of them was the greatest The two accounts thus interlock, and one may speculate whether John was not explaining how Jesus met the situation Luke described

Closing...

Next week we will continue to look at the historical context of John. When he wrote this book, why he wrote it and what he wanted us to know.

John 1:1–5 (ESV) 1 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.

John 1:10–14 (ESV) 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 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.

Millions of people have found God's glory through the words of John. I can't wait to explore this incredible gospel with you. Let's pray.