

John 1:1-13

The Word

Image Church // Behold: Week 2

Introduction

Well good morning Image Family! I hope you're doing well...

Hey listen, we have a lot of exciting things happening right now in the life of our church and I know that there are many of you that are new with us- I want to encourage you to sign up for the weekly update to stay looped in on everything going on...

Especially given the craziness of COVID we want to make sure that we're communicating well- this weekly update is our primary vehicle for communication- so make sure to sign up for it and to read it!

And really the best way to stay looped in is by being part of one of our Community Groups! I know it is a weird season but now is a great time to jump in!!

Ok, well we're going to be continuing our **Behold** series this morning where we're taking a deep dive into **John Chapter 1** with the goal of looking at **who Jesus is**, and the implications surrounding who He was and what that means for us as a fresh reminder as we build toward Christmas...

And as we do this it's important to remember the broader context of **John's Gospel** so that we can have an understanding of the purpose for why **John**, one of Jesus' **12 disciples** is writing this... John says in **John 20:31** **But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.**

We never get beyond the purpose of why John wrote this...

My hope in this series is that you would be encouraged and refreshed in your belief of Jesus, and that you will walk away with a better grasp and understanding of the scope of who Jesus is that leads you into a greater worship of Him...

And also, that this study of **John 1** would be helpful to you as you share Jesus- there are massive foundational truths here- *that provide answers to the question that so many people want to know- mainly, how they can be right with God, how they can get to God...*

And if you're joining us this morning and you're not a Christian, this is going to be a helpful journey for you to be part of!

OK, so if you haven't already done so go ahead and turn to John 1...

As you're getting there, two weeks ago we kicked off this series by starting in the middle of **John 1** where we saw that Jesus was identified as the **Lamb of God**- and we looked at the implications and importance of what this meant...

That was our set up for where we're going to be headed for the rest of this series where we're going to be looking at the surrounding content of **John 1** and unpacking essentially **how** Jesus is able to be the Lamb of God, **who is He**, and **what it all means for us...**

OK, so, this week we're going to be starting in **verse 1**... Let's pick up there and walk through this together...

John 1:1-13

1 In the beginning

Ok we have to stop right here because here's what you have to understand, John is writing to a mixed audience of both **Jews** and **Gentiles**... So, you have **Hebrew** thinking people and **Greek** thinking people that are reading this...

And John grabs both of their attention right here in this opening line and he starts with the Jewish people...

Every Jewish person (*Hebrew thinking person*) reading this would immediately think back to **Genesis 1:1**, *In the beginning God, created the heavens and the earth...*

- This is where John wants them to be because this is where John is going to build from- **the beginning** where God who has always existed orchestrates and creates everything else into existence...

Ok let's keep going: **1 In the beginning was the Word,**

- **Word=** *In Greek: Logos*

Now here's where he would have locked in every Greek thinking person... See for them, **logos** was a *non-personal force in the universe that was responsible for making things the way that they are...*¹

- For you Star Wars Fan's, it was like *the force*... So, the **Greek** thinking people are like ok we're tracking with you...

Now the **Jews** would also have connected with **logos**, the word, because for them, up to this point, the way that God had always reveled himself was through the Word...

- The Word of God was always connected with God's powerful activity in creation.
 - o Creation (Gen. 1:3,6,9, Ps. 33:6)
 - o Revelation (Jer. 1:4, Is. 9:8, Ezk. 33:7, Amos 3:1,8)
 - o Deliverance (Ps. 107:20, Is. 55:11)
 - o And countless other times in the OT when the *word of the Lord* comes **to** and **through** the Prophets...

And here's what John's going to do in chapter 1, he's going to **show the Greek thinking people** that they are right about there being a force, but it's **not** some nameless, faceless, in-personal power that's floating around, but that it is a person...

And he's going to show the **Hebrew thinking people** that hey, you know how your introduction to our God has come through His spoken Word? You know how God has always revealed Himself through it? Well God's ultimate self-disclosure is here; *the Word is not just a proclamation from God but is also the second person of God.*²

John's very intentional with how he's laying all of this out. And up to this point everyone's probably tracking, but John's about to make some key distinctions that have massive implications!

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

Now hold on a minute... *The Word was with God and the Word was God???*

This is huge! We get a glimpse into the Trinity here... Here's how the **with** and **was** works...

1 God 3 Persons- Father, Son, Holy Spirit... Together co-equal, and coexisting in perfect community together as the Godhead...³

- *You think about it too long your head will explode!*
- *I can't understand- well if you could that would make you God and you would have a pride problem...*

The way that the Word is able to be **with** God and at the same time **is God**, is because of the trinity... **1 God 3 Persons**- Father, Son, Holy Spirit...

- **And check this out, bonus feature**, the way that we're about to stay connected to God, the way that we experience change in our life is through the power of the Holy Spirit...

By the way: something to see here- we were created out of community, and because of that we were created for community... **Growing in Christ is a group project...**

¹ John McArthur

² Terry-Lee Kirkland

³ Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:13-23; Heb. 1:1-4

So, **the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

Now let me show you the importance of this, and why this matters so much...

We're going to talk about this next week, but the Word is referring to the Son (see v. 14), and the Son is Jesus who we saw last week would be the Lamb of God... The remedy for sin and separation from God!

And so, what we have to see here, and this is imperative, is that **Jesus is God!**

The claim that Jesus was God is the **hinge** in which Christianity hangs... It differentiates and distinguishes Christianity from every other religion, and it has massive implications for us... The claim that Jesus is God is a big deal!!

Here's why:

- Only a perfect God could save a broken and sinful humanity...
- If there was another way outside of God's perfect action and provision, then everything it means to be God breaks down...

And here's the thing- it actually makes sense!!!

Example: guy in the barber shop cutting my hair... I believe in a God...

- *Me: how do you get to him? I don't really know- everyone just finds their own way there??*
- *Me: what does that say about God? Not really God-like if we can make it to Him right? Got him really second guessing...*
 - *How do you know if you're on the right track etc...*
- *Me: What if I told you that there is no way that you could get to God...*

GOSPEL

- So, God came to us to do what we couldn't do...
- Dies: takes on the wrath of God...

- Raises from the dead- to complete everything necessary to save us by offering us new life...
- **Only God could do that...**

Him: Wow that actually makes sense!

Jesus is only able to be the Lamb of God who is able to take away the sins of the world because He was God...

This is incredible! This is for us!!! So, here's what you need to understand... **Jesus is God**

Ok, let's keep reading:

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 All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.**

Ok so, John repeats himself in **verse 2** and then he builds off of it in **verse 3**... I love this, and this is such a powerful tool to use when you engage people from other religions, we'll talk about that in just a min...

But here's what Paul shows us, he shows us that **God's agent for creation is the Word!** Watch the significance of this here...

All things were created through him [the Word]

Could have left it at this, but then you could say, *well maybe He was created to create everything...*

And John said, I ain't finished keep reading chump!

John says: **and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.**

What John shows us here is that **the Word, Jesus, isn't in the created category, because he is the one that created everything...**

For Him to have been created would mean that He would have to created Himself, and if you don't exist you can't bring yourself into existence! Everything that falls into the category of creation was made by Him, so He can't be in that category!⁴

Jesus was not some special man that God created, He wasn't some really good guy that God bestowed special privileges to... He has always existed as the 2nd person of the Trinity for all of eternity...

So, here the second thing that you need to see here, and that is that **Jesus is eternally pre-existent**

- This really goes hand in hand with the first point that we held up that **Jesus is God**, but it provides even further clarity for the nature of the Trinity and eliminates the possibility of **modalism...**
 - ***Debunk modalism**- God takes on different modes... Dad, husband, son... Water, ice, mist... **Heresy ...**

It's also a big deal when you talk to people from other religions...

- **Jehovah Witness & Mormons** say that *Jesus is a created being and later recognized as a god...*

Example Jehovah Witnesses coming to the house... Jesus was not God...

- I always take them to John 1...
 - They object with verse 1: *Theon verse Theos...*
 - They botch it on their translation, but all you have to do is take them here to **verse 3**
- *My question*: how can you be made right with God?
- Their answer is your works...

It's Jesus' preexistence that proves His ability to be God... That's why both of these points are so important...

*Alright let's keep reading... **verse 4...***

4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. **5** That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it.

Life: Jesus brings physical life as the agent of creation and spiritual life means of salvation...

Light: Jesus illuminates the darkness this happened at creation, but He also does this ...

- *Key theme in the book of John **light** and **darkness...**

Example: *Walking through the woods in the dark... Difficult... you need a light so that you can see the way... **Jesus is the light so that we can see the way to God and the ways of God...***

The light exposes the way, and it also exposes who we really are...

Verse 6: little narration aside here we talked about this a few weeks ago... **6** There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. **8** He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

- John the Baptist **was sent by God and assigned with a specific task, to bear witness and to testify about Jesus so that people would believe...**

Verse 9: The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him. **11** He came to his own, and **his own people** did not receive him.

Creation didn't recognize the creator... but he goes even further to say that **his own people didn't receive Him...**

⁴ John Piper

Who were his people, the Jewish people... And you know the group of Jewish people that had the hardest time recognizing him were, **the religious people...**

By the way, the *sinners* didn't have a problem recognizing Him... The worldly people loved Jesus!!

- **What people need is truth-** they need to know what they are doing is wrong- we need to be the ones to tell them, and when we do they will hate us and will persecute us...
 - *Sounds a lot like what the Pharisees did... Give them law...*

I think what we miss in the whole- give them the truth thing is that Jesus is the truth... What people don't need is the law, what they need is Jesus and when their heart is captivated by Jesus then you better believe they will begin to follow Him...

And here's my fear as we look at the fact that Jesus' **own people didn't receive Him...** Is that if this was true then for people who could look Jesus in the face and smell his breath and reach to and touch Him, how much more true is that for us today???

My fear is that many people in America know Church, but do they know Jesus?

- We know how to do religious things...
- We care more about religious rituals than the redeemer...

Appeal to knowing but not knowing...

- Know *of* Jesus, but they don't know Jesus...
- Going through the motions...
- People know religious rituals we're supposed to do but when you zoom out it doesn't look much different than the world but with a little religious jargon...

What does **knowing** look like? Not just acknowledging **that** He existed but believing and surrendering to Him...

Starting with your salvation... **Your heart...**

- When you recognize the magnitude of who Jesus is, when you see His nail pierced hands and understand what it means, and you believe, Jesus begins to captivate your heart...

Then move to actions... **It means that you begin to follow Him not as the means of salvation but because of your salvation-** that's big!

When you're captivated by Jesus, your actions will follow... And **following Jesus looks a lot different than religion...**

***Jesus was the life and the light. Do our lives emit the same thing? Are we widows for His light to shine through us, and are we carriers of the life He's given to us...**

When Jesus captivates your life you begin to follow Him and when you begin to follow Him you begin to shine light like He shined light, and you begin to radiate life as He radiated life, because you are a carrier, and ambassador of life...

When we talk about following Jesus... and **when we look at Jesus' life it looked radically different than the Pharisees...** *OK He was God, alright well look at Paul or anyone else in the NT...*

Highly religious but had no relationship with Jesus...

Which means that our lives should look significantly different than the rest of the world, significantly different than those that claim a religious entity...

Because if where following the person of Jesus it changes everything...

Does your life look like Jesus?? Are you bound by the law or bound by love, because followers of Jesus are bound by love not the law...

Some of you are like I don't know if my life looks like Jesus??

- *Great news you have the bible!*
- *Some of you don't know Jesus because you're not in His word...*

Jesus is the foundation of who we are that impacts everything...

- **1 John 2:** the Barometer, Litmos test... the way we prove that we know Him is that we follow him...
- Track: Believe, receive and follow...

Many claim Jesus but don't follow Him, you're missing Jesus... Many look religious but have no relationship, you're missing Jesus...

Do our lives look like Christ, are we following Jesus?!??

All of this is rooted in your understanding of Jesus and who He is and what he's done for you... do you really understand and believe the gospel???

- If your life isn't captivated by Jesus have you really experienced Him??

John 5: Jesus confronts religious leaders...

- How many people are there that know scripture, know about Jesus, but they are missing the nature of ***who Jesus is and what that means for their salvation and sanctification...***

We are called to follow Jesus... This reorients everything for us...

Time, talent, treasure... COVID is happening now

- you can give..
 - How many Christmas' will look different this year because we're being generous... Our Christmas should look different...
- you can serve in unique ways
- you can reach out to people to check in and pray... have you asked your community group what needs exist??

Jesus is the light and the source of life

Conclusion [VAMP]

Let's keep reading, **verse 12**

12 But to all who did **receive** him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who **believe** in his name, **13** who were born, not of natural descent, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.

The good news of being able to be children of God...

You have **the right** to be a son or daughter of God, not because of what you have done, but because of who Jesus is and what he's done...

If people are honest- they want to know how they can get to God...

- We just answered that- don't miss it... You have the chance to be part of God's family...
- A son or daughter...

For some of you this has lost is umph... This is why we always say that we never get past the gospel...

- John wrote these things so that we would believe...
- Would you believe...
- This was God's plan...

For all who would receive, believe... would you do this...

Appeal to non-Christian...

- Some of you know about Jesus but you don't' know Jesus...

In the NT, ***everyone that encounters Jesus walks always different, or they walk away rejecting...***

Would you believe!

Been a Christian 5min or 50 years... Would you allow this Christmas to reorient your heart...

- Would you **actually** start to follow Jesus...
- Means you're going to have to dive into the bible and look!!
- It's going to cost you, it's going to be radical, but it will be worth it..

1. Jesus is God

2. Jesus is eternally pre-existent

3. Jesus is the light and the source of life

Pray