

MARCH 3, 2024

1.1

TRUTH ABOUT GOD

God became flesh to save us.

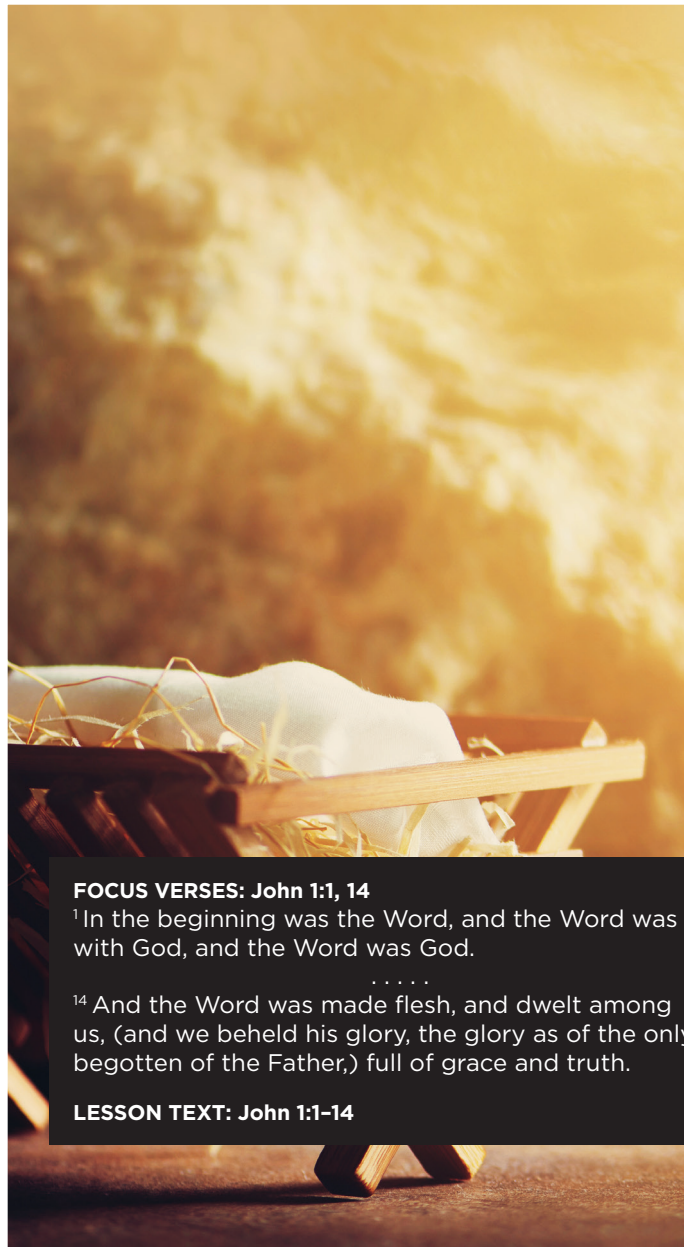
TRUTH FOR MY LIFE

I will know Jesus—
God manifested in flesh.



SERIES 1: JOHN

THE WORD MADE FLESH



FOCUS VERSES: John 1:1, 14

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

.....

¹⁴And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

LESSON TEXT: John 1:1-14



Lesson Title: The Word Made Flesh

Icebreaker: What first comes to your mind when you think of Christianity?

I. IN THE BEGINNING

- A. The Logos
- B. Creator and Giver of Life
 - » *In what ways do Jesus' words bring life besides physical healing?*
- C. The Light
- D. I Will Use My Words to Speak Life
 - » *Who has spoken life to you? How can you speak life to others?*

II. WE BEHELD HIS GLORY

- » *How is God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ in your life?*
- A. The World Received Him Not
 - » *Have you ever faced rejection for the sake of the gospel? How did you respond?*
- B. Power to Become the Sons of God
- C. The Word Made Flesh Brought Grace and Truth
- D. I Will Show Others Grace as I Have Received Grace
 - » *How can you show God's grace in your present circumstances?*

Prayer Focus

- To speak life to others
- To show grace to others

BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

Lesson Text: John 1:1-14

John's Prologue (which encompasses John 1:1-18) sets the stage and introduces major themes for the remainder of the fourth Gospel. These eighteen verses stand as one of the most powerful expositions on Christ's superiority of being, singularity of existence, supremacy of glory and power, and centrality of focus. John was enraptured with the essence, nature, and work of Christ, whom he identified clearly as God, the Creator and self-existent one by whom all things exist and are held together.

"In the beginning," the opening phrase of John's Gospel, corresponds directly to the opening words of Genesis. The readers and hearers of the Book of John would have instantly had their memories pulled to the Hebrew Bible, the opening scene in which the Creator spoke everything into existence.

The language of beginning insinuates a start of something unprecedented. Just as the opening words of Genesis chronicled the story of Creation, John is chronicling new creation in poetic literary fashion. These two creations are not separate; they are intimately connected. In both instances, the "Word" (Greek: *logos*) is the agent of creation. Moreover, the *logos* is not a separate entity—the *logos* is God Himself!

The Word's life and light are so powerful that darkness could not "comprehend" what was happening. This Greek word (*katelaben*) is difficult to translate. Other versions render the meaning "overcome" (ESV, HCSB, NIV), "grasp" (NASB), "mastered" (NET), "extinguish" (NLT), and "understood" (Mounce). Possibly all these meanings can be seen when the incomparable power of God's light is juxtaposed against the pitiful inferiority of darkness. Similar to the way darkness in a room automatically disappears when lights are switched on, the light of Christ destroys the darkness of sin and death even more quickly and efficiently.

The Word refused to stay separate from His people. He chose to come in flesh (which He created) and dwell among His people. The word *dwelt* can also be rendered "tabernacled" and evokes imagery of the ancient Israelite Tabernacle which centrally existed in the camp, the central focus of all Israel (*Apostolic Study Bible*, commentary on John 1:14). John's Prologue and Gospel is an exposé of a God who not only exists in supremacy above all creation and in preeminence before all creation, but loved His creation enough to dwell constantly among them.

"IN THE BEGINNING," THE OPENING PHRASE OF JOHN'S GOSPEL, CORRESPONDS DIRECTLY TO THE OPENING WORDS OF GENESIS.

DAY 1

John 1:1-2

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

² The same was in the beginning with God.

Biblical Insight

The introduction of the Word (Greek: *logos*) in John's Gospel is a grand, poetic opening that progressively reveals His identity. The Word existed, first and foremost. That much is undeniable. The Word was "with God", carrying the connotation of being in intimate relationship with God. Essentially, the Word is close enough to God to render the two indistinguishable and inseparable. No distinction is possible or necessary; God is the Word, and the Word is God.

Daily Devotion

"Thick as thieves" is a phrase you might hear someone's grandmother say if you listen long enough. The words are meant to denote closeness, kinship, walking together, sharing secrets, being "in cahoots"—to reference something else a grandmother might say. The phrase carries the same meaning as the term "peas in a pod" which conjures up images of two round green shapes which look exactly the same and dwell together in a tiny, confined space.

This is the concept we seek to wrap imagery around, whether you have reached senior status or not. God and His Word are "thick as thieves." God and His Word are "in cahoots." God and His Word are "two peas in a pod." If you see one, you have seen the other, for they are one and the same.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 2

John 1:3-4
made.

³ All things were made by 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.

Biblical Insight

The phrase “by him” (KJV) is also translated more commonly “through him” (ESV, NASB, NIV). Likely both meanings are in play, as neither English preposition fully encapsulates the Greek meaning. The Word is both the process by which Creation appeared, and the purpose and process *through* which Creation occurred. Regardless of the English word chosen, the Word is presented as the life force by which humanity exists and is sustained. Throughout John’s Gospel, Jesus is consistently portrayed as the only one through whom life is possible (e.g., John 3:36; 5:26, 40; 6:33; 14:6). Paul repeated these themes in Colossians 1:15–20).

Daily Devotion

It gives life to plants, cleans up our houses, and fills up the bathtubs that entertain toddlers and their rubber ducks for hours. It carries ships across oceans, boils in our kettles, and houses fish of all kinds. It comprises 60 percent of our bodies, yet we need to drink it constantly. We cannot survive more than three days without it, yet only 2.5 percent of the earth’s supply of it is actually drinkable. You’ve already guessed it: water. Humanity can mix up some interesting concoctions, but when it comes down to it, only one liquid works to sustain life.

Similarly, we can string together series of sentences filled with eloquent words in elegant prose or poetry, but at the end of the day, only one Word works to bring life to the masses. We exist and are sustained through the Word of God.



Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 3

John 1:5-9

⁵ And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

⁷ The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

⁸ He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

⁹ That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

Biblical Insight

John the Baptist's role in the fourth Gospel is nuanced slightly. While the other three Gospels highlight his role as the forerunner of the Messiah, John's Gospel portrays him as simply the faithful witness who testified of the Messiah's nature and superiority (1:6-7, 19-36; 3:27-36) (*Apostolic Study Bible*, commentary on John 1:6-9).

Here John's Gospel also introduced the theme of Christ as the Light (Greek: phōs) who stands in opposition to the darkness (Greek: skotia), a theme that would continue throughout John's Gospel (3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35-36, 46) and his other writings (1 John 1:7; 2:8-10; Revelation 21:23-25; 22:5).

Daily Devotion

Thomas Edison attempted to create a light bulb over one thousand times. Finally, through much trial and error at Menlo Park in January 1879, he successfully created his first high resistance, incandescent light. Still, it only burned for a few hours. He conducted several thousand experiments to discover the best conductor of the electricity to provide the most extensive amount of sustained illumination. He tested over six thousand vegetable growths in his search for success.

Jesus in and of Himself is Light, the very thing that caused Thomas Edison "the greatest amount of study and required the most elaborate experiments" ("Edison's Lightbulb," The Franklin Institute). Jesus shines forth in the darkness of a sinful world, sustaining all, saving all, illuminating all. He is light that darkness cannot withstand or comprehend, outlasting any man-made invention or modern convenience. Without question or contest, Jesus is the light of the world.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 4

John 1:10-13

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

¹¹ He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

¹² But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

¹³ Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

Biblical Insight

The irony of the Incarnation is that the Creator, the *logos*, was not recognized by the very creation that existed solely because of Him. Even God's own chosen people, the Israelites, rejected Him. However, anyone who did receive Christ was born as family. (See John 1:12.) This language foreshadows the new birth Jesus would explain to Nicodemus in John 3:3-7. In this context, the term born connotes the moment of becoming God's children and submission to God's role as parent as He enacts the parental duties of raising, loving, and disciplining.

Daily Devotion

In 1975 a young woman was fired from her position as fashion editor at *Harper's Bazaar*. She had been working there a mere nine months. We're not sure of the grounds for her firing. Maybe she didn't fit in at the office, or perhaps her ideas didn't align with the magazine she was meant to be promoting. Those ideas clearly aligned with some sphere of the fashion world ultimately because her name is Anna Wintour, and she went on to become the editor in chief of *Vogue*.

We are not always accepted by those who should welcome us. When our Creator was not recognized by His creation, He continued on in purpose, completing the work for which He was sent. Because of His redeeming work, all who do respond rightly to Him and His gospel inherit eternal life to this day.



Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*

DAY 5

John 1:14

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Biblical Insight

The term *only begotten* can also be translated “one and only” (NET, NIV, NLT). The specific implication of this phrase is the Word’s uniqueness and one-of-a-kind nature. The Word exists solitarily, with none alongside or comparable to Him. The word *as*, which can also be translated “like,” is also important for Oneness theology. John was not saying the Word was God’s only Son, but the Word’s glory could be likened to that which is bestowed upon a unique, only son by his father. If anything, associating the Word with supreme glory only further identifies Him as the Jehovah of the Old Testament. (See Exodus 40:34–38; Isaiah 6:3.)

Daily Devotion

According to the locals, if you stand in a Chinese airport attempting to purchase a ticket to Paris, the attendant at the counter may ask you, “Which one?” They ask because China boasts the town of “Little Paris,” with its own replicas of the Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe, and the fountain from the garden of the Palace of Versailles.

Our world also boasts replicas of relics and buildings such as the Titanic and the Taj Mahal. When the Word of God refers to the “only begotten of the Father,” we can rest assured God’s Word means one and only. There’s none beside Him, none before Him, none like Him. He is 100 percent original, without duplication. No matter which Paris you might encounter Him in, Jesus Christ is the one and only.

Reflection and Prayer

» *What can you do to apply this principle to your life today?*
