

Chapter 15: The Word

Turn now to the Gospel of John as this book was written by one of Jesus' closest disciples. Therefore by reading John's account we can gain a very deep insight into the life and purpose of Jesus. His writings will demonstrate to us the impact of Jesus' ministry, His teachings and how He fulfilled the prophecies that we previously studied. Let us begin by reading John 1.

Word, Light and Life

Let us consider what John is telling us in chapter 1 about Jesus. He uses some interesting words to describe Him. Let us examine those to better understand what we must learn from this chapter:

Verses	Explanation
1 - <i>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God</i>	This verse is similar to the Genesis account of creation. (Genesis 1) Remember how God created the earth by speaking it into existence. Notice also that the Word is described as both being God and being with God from the beginning.
2 - <i>He was in the beginning with God.</i>	Notice the use of the word "He". This refers to a person who was with God in the beginning.
3 - <i>All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.</i>	All things were created through God. Through this person ("He" – verse 2) all things were made.
4 - <i>In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.</i>	Here the life that is given to us is described as light.
5 - <i>And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.</i>	Anything opposed to life i.e. death is described as darkness. We have already learned that sin brings forth death; therefore if light is life then sin is darkness as it brings death to us.
6 – 9 - <i>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.</i>	We have already learned that John the Baptist prepared the way for Jesus. Here it is spoken that John bore witness of "the Light". These verses identify Jesus as "the Light" and as light is given to every man who comes into the world, Jesus can now be identified as the life of all mankind.
10 – 13 - <i>He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive</i>	Anyone who receives Jesus becomes a child of God.

<p><i>Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.</i></p>	<p>To receive Jesus we must accept His identity as Messiah and saviour and believe in Him.</p>
<p><i>14 - And the Word became 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.</i></p>	<p>Jesus is identified as “<i>the Word</i>” who existed with God in the beginning and God’s son.</p>

After examining these verses we can conclude that Jesus existed with God, and is a part of God since before the time of creation. He is the physical manifestation of God, our very life force, and embodiment of all that is good. All things were created through Him, and as a result of believing in Him we are accepted into God’s family as His children. Jesus was sent to earth as a man who is God’s only son being born of a woman (Mary) but conceived by God Himself through His manifestation of The Holy Spirit as we learned in Luke’s Gospel.

The Lamb

In verses 29 – 36 John the Baptist identifies Jesus as the Lamb of God. In chapter 12 we learned the purpose of the lamb in the old sacrificial system. Consider the following scripture that we previously studied:

*32 `If he brings a lamb as his sin offering, he shall bring a female without blemish.
33 `Then he shall lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill it as a sin offering at the place where they kill the burnt offering.
34 `The priest shall take some of the blood of the sin offering with his finger, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and pour all the remaining blood at the base of the altar.
35 `He shall remove all its fat, as the fat of the lamb is removed from the sacrifice of the peace offering. Then the priest shall burn it on the altar, according to the offerings made by fire to the LORD. So the priest shall make atonement for his sin that he has committed, and it shall be forgiven him.*

Leviticus 4:32-35 (NKJV)

This describes how a lamb was sacrificed as an atonement offering for sin. John the Baptist calls Jesus “*the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world*”. Therefore we can conclude that Jesus is God’s sacrifice, whom He gave to provide forgiveness for sin to all of the world, but as we previously discussed this requires belief in Jesus, as only through believing in Him can we have our sins forgiven and truly enter into God’s family.

Revealing the Will of God

Read Luke 4. This Chapter reveals to us how Jesus was tempted by Satan and how He proclaimed His ministry. Notice also that in verse 43 He mentions that He must preach the “*kingdom of God*”.

Due to the fact that He is the Christ (Messiah) anyone who believes in Him will enter the God's kingdom and He will be their King.

Read John 2-3. In verses 13-22 we learn that Jesus drove the traders out of the temple. Let us consider His actions from our perception of God's commandments. The sacrificial system as we previously discussed was initiated by God to allow mankind to seek atonement for sin by sacrificing an appropriate animal. As we reasoned together this sacrifice was intended to come from a person's wealth as animals were a measure of someone's financial status at that time, and were considerably more important to the survival of one's family than they are today as they were used for food, trade, and manual labour.

When Jesus saw traders in the temple selling animals for sacrifice He showed His anger to them because this act dilutes the meaning of the sacrifice. To simply purchase an animal to be sacrificed does not have the same sentiment as giving away one of your prized possessions. Also these traders were making profit from the sacrificial system, which caused people to disregard the seriousness of the atonement sacrifice, as it simply became a business that exploited people's need to perform this ritual, and provided a method of allowing them to offer an animal which did not belong to them hence making the sacrifice meaningless.

In chapter 3 we learn more about God's plans for mankind, which are fulfilled through Jesus. For the first time in our study He begins to explain some of the deeper details of His purpose and events that were about to take place. This is revealed to us through a documented conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus the Pharisee.

A Pharisee is a person who was one of the religious leaders of the Jews at that time. They strictly follow the laws given by God to Moses and are responsible for teaching them to the people of Israel, and performing temple services. The meaning of this name is 'to separate' or 'the separate people'. They enjoyed a slightly higher level of status than a priest or vicar would hold within the Christian church. Therefore Jesus was having this conversation with a very influential leader of the people.

Nicodemus is stunned by Jesus' teaching as He informs him that if you are to enter the kingdom of God you must be "*born again*", and then elaborates on this statement by mentioning that "*unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God*". John the Baptist spoke in John 1:26-34 of Jesus being the Son of God, and the one who will baptise with the Holy Spirit. Therefore to enter God's kingdom we must receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which is given from Jesus to all those who believe in Him. At this point we become born in the spirit.

What we are learning here is of great importance. Jesus' ministry is fully revealed in this chapter. We have already learned that He is the Son of God, the one who baptises in the Holy Spirit, the King of Israel, and in this chapter we learn how He will redeem mankind. Consider the following:

Jesus says to Nicodemus:

16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

17 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

18 "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

19 "And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

20 "For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed.

21 "But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

John 3:16-21 (NKJV)

John says to his disciples and the Jews:

35 "The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand.

36 "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

John 3:35-36 (NKJV)

Therefore when we consider what Jesus and John have testified we understand that believing in Jesus will bring us forgiveness for our sins and everlasting life. We see that John uses the term Father to describe God and declares Jesus as His son. We already understand from studying John 1 that any person believing in Jesus will also become a child of God, and as a result of our faith, we will enter His family.

Through faith in Jesus we become born again. We die to our old ignorant lives of sin and embrace a new life of truth. However to believe in Jesus it is vitally important to understand His works and teachings. We must understand Him by learning about His life from the Gospel's. We must learn the mystery of how He can redeem us from sin by believing in Him and how this was accomplished.