

Imagine if you were hiking with your family ...in a remote area..... and you all found a well worn path ... that you all decided to follow....

It led across an open field an up a steep hillside....As you began to climb the hill you could begin to make out laughter and all sorts of happy voices coming from beyond it...along with what sounded like **splashing**...

.... As you crest the top of the hill... you discover a gleaming body water...clear as crystal..... just like what is described as being before the throne of God Himself in heaven....

The sea was full of children playing at the water's edge....As you get closer...their **joy** begins to affect you.... and as you scan the horizon... you can see adults out beyond the children swimming.... some with masks on diving down to explore the depths.... Beyond them... it looks like elephants are swimming around... blowing water from their trunks .... almost as if they had no fear of anything or anyone at all.....

That is a picture of an adventure we are about to begin this morning..... It is an oft cited description of the wonders of a book of Scripture called the **Gospel According to John**...

A book in which it is said... a child can wade and an elephant can swim.

So simple... a brand new Christian can understand it....yet so profound.... the most mature believer can have his understanding of Jesus....enlarged in every exposure to it.

Our sermon series from John will take us at least **one year** to complete.... ..

Yet, I present to you that you will not be tired of it even then, but will want MORE of what God has to say through this book about Jesus.

Because this series is going to be lengthy.... I wanted to give you at least some introduction to this Book.

It is the fourth gospel in our New Testament.... .. (Matthew, Mark, Luke & John)

All 4 of the gospel accounts were written with the sole purpose of making JESUS **known** among the nations... and calling people to follow Him. In other words... these gospels...are God's tools through which **disciples** are made....

**Mark** was written **first**...primarily to authenticate the gospel which Peter was preaching in **Rome**... Mark's emphasis was on the powerful **miracles** which Jesus did...

**Matthew** (written about the same time – late 50's – (25 + years after Chris's ascension into heaven) – Matthew's account was aimed directly at his fellow Jews to prove that Jesus is the long awaited Messiah proclaimed in their OT. Matthew contains extensive genealogies and most of the parables Jesus used to demonstrate Who He is..

**Luke** (written in early 60's) – written by a Gentile to other Gentiles in order to show how Israel's rejection of Jesus as their King had opened the door for all Gentiles to come into His Kingdom. Perhaps the most chronologically organized account of the gospels..

**John** – written **some time later** (some would say as late as 85 AD)

Written by the disciple whom Jesus loved. Unlike the first 3 (synoptics)... **John** gives us Jesus from a different perspective.... a more **intimate** one...

Here is the way I want you to think of these gospel accounts....

Perhaps you own or have been in a room with **Surround Sound**.... from at least one of the speakers comes the bass notes...maybe from behind you come the high notes out of the tweeters.... on another side are the mid range....so it goes...

**TOGETHER**.... you experience a 360 degree **stereophonic** rendering of the actions in a movie... or the nuances of a song.....

That is what God has given us in Scripture to help us KNOW and LOVE Jesus Christ through these gospels.....

**JOHN**, – perhaps more than the other 3 combined...brings us the **heart** of Christ.....

It could be argued that no one on earth was **closer** to Jesus (in this life) than John. For he was the eyewitness of the entirety of Jesus' ministry. From the very first day Jesus began to call His disciples to come follow Him and He would make them fishers of men..... to the day when they stood on the hillside and watched Him ascend into heaven....John was there...

In between... John saw Jesus raise people from the dead, he saw His **transfiguration**... he was the one who leaned on his breast during the Lord's Supper.... He saw His agony in the garden and he was the one to whom Jesus entrusted the care of His mother Mary as He died upon the tree....

Not to mention.... near the end of his life..... it was John (who was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day).....to whom Jesus personally appeared and gave Him the **Revelation** which is the last book of your Bible....

As you read words that God wrote through John.... it is not surprising that he was one whom Jesus referred to as a “son of thunder.”

It is no coincidence that God chose John to record some of the **deepest truths** about Christ we have in our possession until we see Him personally....

This book, John....was written for one reason.... – to **create fresh faith** in your heart.....as your view of Who Jesus is... is supernaturally expanded.....

Listen to how John himself says it...

### **John 20:30-31**

" Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 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."

So whether you consider yourself to be a **mature** Christian....or a brand new Christian..... or maybe someone who is still exploring what all this means.....

**JOHN** – is the book for you.

I am praying.... that God will use it to **INCREASE** our faith..... to enlarge our capacity to BELIEVE and comprehend who Jesus is.... and how we can follow Him today...so that we can enjoy the eternal **LIFE** which alone resides in His Name.

### **PRAY**

In the whole history of the human race.... there has never been a time when **personal opinions** were deemed more **valuable** than they are today.....

Have you noticed that you can not make a phone call to a company....or visit a webpage of an organization without being asked to fill out a survey?

- What did you think of this..... How would you rate that.....

Text your vote now!

Do you realize that the only poll question Jesus ever asked.....was far more important than all other **opinion polls** combined.....

- Jesus asked his disciples..... Who do YOU say that **I am?**

I submit to you....**that** is the question He still has for you this morning.....

And He is not really interested in your summary of who people at your school say He is.... , or your neighbors..... or what Fox News says..... ..

He wants you to answer the question for yourself..... **Who is Jesus?**

There is no more important question you could ever answer.....

God has given you the answer right here in these 5 verses of Scripture.....

B/C Addressing that Question is the chief goal of what John wants to communicate to us as we begin our study of his gospel....

.....**Jesus is God...**

### **John 1:1-5**

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 were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

Before we begin to unpack all God tells us about Jesus here... I want to give you the evidence of the text itself that John is talking about **Jesus** in these verses...

In these first five verses the NAME of the Person whom John is describing... is THE **WORD**....

- Who is the WORD?.... down in v. **14** we get more information....

### **John 1:14**

"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."

The Word is the Son of God..... whom God sent into the world as a **baby**.....to convey the GLORY of Who God is... the GRACE of Who God is and the TRUTH of Who God is to the world....

The Word is Jesus Christ.

I can start there with **you**.... because you already KNOW that is who Jesus is.....

But remember this is a **GOSPEL**..... it is the MEANS God chose to bring people the good news so they could believe in Christ....

The original hearers of John's gospel were not Americans.... they were Greek.

You may know that the NT was originally written in Greek..... because the the whole civilized world at that time spoke essentially one language.... Greek.

John was almost certainly residing in Ephesus (now Western Turkey) when he wrote this and at that time the people of that region were Greeks in both **culture** and language...

the Greek word for “**Word**” is **Logos**.....

Greek Philosophy had popularized the idea that the Logos ... was a Divine force of reason and stability in the universe..... they understood...that the Logos is God’s **ongoing communication** with His creation.....

John starts his gospel with “**In the Beginning** was the Logos.....

Instead of starting His account of Jesus’ life with JTB...(as Mark does)... or with the **current events** of the day (King Herod issuing a decree)...(as Luke does)... or with Jesus’ earthly pedigree (as Matthew does)....

John takes us back to the very edge of our understanding of reality.... the beginning of TIME....

In fact, “in the beginning...” (Leon Morris says) combines two meanings.....

- 1) The Beginning of History –
- 2) The **Root** of the Universe –

The WORD, existed in eternity past..... He has ALWAYS been....

that is why Jesus will later reveal Himself as **I AM** later on in our study.....

I AM the beginning and the end... the Alpha and Omega.... the FIRST and the LAST.

**Jesus is nothing less than.... God.**

THAT is the most basic confession of Christianity..... btw

Jesus is **LORD**!.... He is Yahweh..... He has always been and will always be...

If you **believe** that ...it is evidence that the Holy Spirit has wrought grace in your heart and mind.....

God Himself... has enlightened you to begin to grasp the most important fact in all of history...

Jesus is God....

No where in your Bible says it any more clearly than this passage..

### JC Ryle

The first five verses of John's Gospel are the most concentrated description of Jesus's divinity in all of Scripture. So densely packed with this truth about Christ are they, so precise are the tense of the words... that you could not alter one single word in them without it opening the door to some **heresy**.

(put verse back up)

**Heresy** = a false doctrine that could lead you to apostasy... to deny the gospel.

So... you can be **WRONG** about what is going to happen to the nation of Israel in the days to come..... you can be wrong about whether Spiritual Gifts are still active in the church.... you can be wrong about whether women should be elders in the church.... (and a myriad of other issues)...

And still spend eternity in heaven with God....

But you **can't** be wrong about Who Jesus is..... He is GOD.

Duet 6 says "Hear Oh Israel....the Lord our God the Lord is **ONE**....

ONLY ONE GOD....

ONE Divine Essence....One Being.....(we learn in the NT)-----God is **Tri-UNE**... He exists in 3 distinct Persons...

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit.....

Jesus is the second Person of the Trinity.....

### John 10:30

"I and the Father are one."

Got that? You understand that?

**I don't.**

Here is something that helps me begin to try....

- ONLY two categories of reality in existence - That which has been Created The **ONE** Who Created Everything

This ONE Divine being (my Bible teaches me) exists in THREE persons....

You will hear theologians and hymnwriters refer to Him as the GodHead....

- ONE GOD – three persons...

I don't understand it..... but I **believe** it. Because God has revealed that to be the ESSENCE of Who He is here in the Scripture....

He asks us to walk by **FAITH** (not by sight)...and (because we are His children) to **take Him at His Word**.

ONE DAY... when we see Him face to face.... we will begin an eternity of KNOWING Him in full measure.... (1 Cor. 13) tells us so....

For now,... He has given us **His WORD**

Not in some **abstract** form..... like on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of a library or something.....

But He has sent His Living Word (Jesus) to come into our hearts... so we can know God personally....

Jesus is God...

## 1. He is the Self Communication of God

**Dolphins** communicate with sounds.... dogs / cats can communicate with body language..... but only GOD and human beings created in His image...communicate with **WORDS**...

Through words.... we can express the DEPTH of who we are .....to others...

### John 1:1-2

" In the **beginning** was the Word, and the Word was **with** God, and the Word **was** God. **He** was in the beginning with God"

The WORD of God is a person..... a Person of the Godhead... who IS God...and has been with God before anything else existed...in eternity past...

He is the means of God the Father **COMMUNICATING** with and relating to every portion of His creation....

That is why He is called **the WORD**.

All Words have POWER.... power to build up.... and power to tear down.....

You have seen that in your own life..... Say the right word... causes people to cringe...or to laugh.....

Combine them in the right way you can make some people cry.....

That is from a mind that is THIS big..... and doesn't even use all of its capacity...

Consider the POWER.... of the Word of an **infinite** being.... who when He SPEAKS universes come into being... worlds are destroyed.....

When He speaks....**nothing** stays the same.

If you turn to Genesis....(literally in Hebrew means...In the Beginning..)

You will discover that the first 4 words of Scripture are....

"In the beginning...**GOD**."

John says... in the beginning was the WORD???

The WORD (who is a Person)... is the MEANS the Father uses to CREATE the heavens and the earth...

If you read (Gen. 1)...you would see that God begins to CREATE the heavens and the earth... by SPEAKING....

1:3 "And God **SAID**.....Let there be light... and there was light..."

1:6 "And God **SAID**.... "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters.....it was so..."

1:9 "And God **SAID**....Let all the waters be gathered in one place.....and let the dry land appear.... it was so..."

V. 11, 14, 20, 24, 26 "And God **SAID**...." God created the heavens and the earth... and He made man in His image...by SPEAKING....

God **SPOKE**... through the WORD and it happened.....

Jesus is God

## 2. He is the Agent of Creation

### John 1:3

"All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made."

In our modern world.... we often miss this truth..... Because everywhere we turn we are enamored by Ferrari's and massive football stadiums...and elaborate houses.... and spaceships...and .iphones.....

Who do we give glory to for those? MAN...

Man has been given (by God) the capacity to form, shape and fashion raw materials into useful objects.

The microchip... for example is MADE out of layers of wafers of silicon....

- But do you know what silicon is made out of? **Common beach sand**....

How did the SAND get there? **Steve Jobs** make it in his garage?

No.... God **spoke** it into being through the WORD.

**NOTHING** has been made.... except by Him...

only God CREATES out of nothing... and He does so through His Word...

#### **Colossians 1:16**

"For by him **all things** were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him."

**You OWE** your existence to the Word of God.... and so does everything you can lay your eyes on.... EVERYTHING....was created through Him and for Him..

To HIM be glory forever....

Thankfully..... God's self-revelation through the Word did not stop with the first creation...

Jesus is God

### **3. He is the SOURCE of New Life.**

Legend has it that Ponce de Leon discovered Florida while searching for the Fountain of Youth.....

People in ancient times thought it was somewhere in Northern India..... some spent their lives trying to find it.....

Sound stupid?

Kind of hard for us to throw stones at them when literally hundreds of millions of dollars are spent each year (in our country) on anti-aging creams and surgeries and vitamins.....

I read recently of a book (which you can buy) that discloses some secret exercises...that were supposedly discovered from monks high in the Himilayas.... If you buy the book and do them correctly.... it can grow new hair on your head.... as well as invigorate your sex life....

God wants you to know today..... that even if you could be YOUNG forever..... you still would not have **true life**..... apart from knowing Jesus Christ.

**John 1:4**

"In him was life, and the life was the light of men."

The WORD is the **SOURCE** of New Life..... He has always been the LIFE giver to mankind....

Whatever connection Adam and Eve had in the garden.... with God it was through the WORD....

It was the WORD of God that came walking in the garden to find them after they sinned....

The MEANS of God piercing the **darkness** of your SIN..... was to shine in your **heart** the knowledge of His WORD....

- God **CREATED you as a new creature** in Christ Jesus..... through SPEAKING His WORD into your soul.... in order to give you **new LIFE**....

If you are IN the Light this morning.... through faith in Jesus.... God is calling you to RUN to the fountain... run to your SOURCE.....

**Psalm 36:9**

"For with you is the **fountain of life**; in your light do we see light."

Remember that picture of the crystal sea at the beginning of the message.... where children are playing... and adults are swimming?....

It surrounds the THRONE of the One who is an ever flowing FOUNTAIN of abundant life..... that is found in relationship with Him and **NO** where else!

**1 John 5:11-12**

"And this is the testimony, that God gave us eternal life, and **this life is in his Son**. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does **not** have

life."

This earthly life is a gift from God.... Our bodies are part of the first creation ..... SPOKEN into being... as a SELF EXPRESSION of God Himself through the WORD....

That is why things in this creation are beautiful.... they are expressions of God.

But everything about this creation that we see is going to come to an end.....

It is all destined to burn with intense heat because of the curse of sin... we have brought upon it....

Your life.... in this body.... will one day.... come to an abrupt END...

But the NEW LIFE which God speaks into your heart through the gospel.... is a LIFE that NEVER ends!!!

It is impossible for ANYTHING to extinguish it...because it is the LIGHT of God Himself...

**John 1:5**

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

The light of the GOSPEL has been shining brightly ever since that angel rolled away the tomb and the LIGHT of the World.... the eternal WORD of God... stepped out in **resurrection glory!**

The DARKNESS began to flee on that Day....and the Darkness is still being pushed back wherever the WORD of Christ is spoken.....

It could be.... that through His spoken Word..... God has shone in your heart this morning....

The thick **darkness** of your sin.... as been pierced by the reality that **only** in JESUS will you find true life....

For He alone is the MEANS of God the Father delivering you from an eternity spent in darkness ... with the devil and all his angels...

These things.... God has spoken to you this morning through His Word... that you might **BELIEVE**... that Jesus is the Christ... and through believing you might have **LIFE** in His Name...