

## The Gospel of John Session 1

**Background:** John's gospel was written somewhere between AD 85 and 90. Here's why that is significant, that means that everything John recorded happened between 50-60 years prior. The persecution of the church was in full swing; Rome had destroyed Jerusalem and dispersed the Jews and yet John was fully committed to who Jesus Christ was on earth and is now. Matthew, Mark and Luke are synoptic gospels meaning that they are remarkably similar and are intended to be "seen together" to gain the whole view. They focus more on the ministry of Christ in Galilee. John's gospel is different from the others in that it focuses on what Jesus did on and around Jerusalem. Each gospel presents Christ in different aspects:

- **Matthew** – He is presented as the king of Israel and it's the only book that the phrase "kingdom of heaven" appears in
- **Mark** – He is presented as the servant. The emphasis is on what Christ did instead of the parables. Mark is an action book
- **Luke** – He is seen as the Son of man. He refers to himself more as that title in this gospel and there's more teachings and parables in this book
- **John** – He is presented as the Son of God. John really stresses that he is God in the flesh.

**John 1:1-3** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. *John wants us to know right from the first verses of his book that Jesus is equal with God and that he is God! He speaks of him before his entrance into the world and even before the existence of the world. Before he was born in Bethlehem and in eternity past, he was known as the Word and that he is one person of a three-person Godhead. One God in three manifestations. The Word made all things of creation, and nothing was made without him!*

**John 1:4-5** In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. *Jesus does not just possess life; he is its origin and sustainer. He is the creator through whom all biological life began. He provides eternal life that satisfies the soul's deepest hunger. His divine life brings spiritual illumination and moral clarity to humanity. He reveals God's true nature and exposes the reality of our own hearts. Because of him, we can see who God is and what we really are.*

**John 1:6-9** There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. John the Baptist was sent from God with one purpose, to prepare Israel to receive their Messiah. Just as the sun shines on every human being on the earth, Jesus has affected every human being that has ever lived because his work of redemption goes all the way back to Adam and stretches forward to the last people to walk this earth.*

**John 1:10-13** He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 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: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. *Imagine, the Creator of all things walked among humanity and was not even recognized. He came specifically to the house of Israel, and they didn't receive him as their Messiah or King. The first time he preached in his hometown, they tried to push him off a cliff! But there were some who "received him"...believed who he was and saw their need of him. Those that received him were given power to become the sons of God. His name means "Jehovah saves" so to believe on his name implies that you believe him to be the Savior and that you need him to save you. The born-again are not so because of their own desire, nor passed down through blood, nor of their own will, but it's a work wholly of God.*

**John 1:14-16** 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. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. *When the Word became flesh and was born in Bethlehem, he then became the Son of God. You can't have a son without a birth or a beginning; the Word had no beginning because he is eternal. When he was made flesh, he didn't "begin", his form of existence changed in the incarnation. John is referring to the mount of transfiguration when he says "we beheld his glory" because Jesus was glorified before them there. The word fullness means "total package" of all that God is. Jesus is an inexhaustible storehouse that we can receive from for every need that we have. "Grace for grace" is like waves crashing on a shore. One "wave" of grace is immediately followed by another. As soon as we use the grace needed for one occasion, a fresh supply arrives for the next.*

**John 1:17** For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. *The New Covenant brought in because of and by Jesus Christ is superior to the Old Covenant of law. He is the perfection of grace and truth and walked in both every day.*

**John 1:18** No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*. *God appeared to many in the Old Testament but not in the fullness of His glory. No man has or could behold God like that, but the Son has seen Him as He is and presented Him to us. We know more about the Father because of the ministry of the Son.*

**John 1:19-24** And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I *am* the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. *There hadn't been a prophet in Israel for 400 years when John the Baptist was sent by God. He shook the nation up to the point that the elders and religious leaders sent a committee to find out who he was. He plainly told them that he was not the Christ, nor the prophet that Moses spoke about, nor was he Elijah who Malachi prophesies returning before the great day of the LORD. He references Isaiah 40:3* The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

**John 1:25-28** And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. *They want to know why John is baptizing since he's not Christ or Elijah. In other words, they want to know how he's authorized to do this and why. John's baptism was a token of repentance. He lets them know that there is "one among them" that they don't recognize whose worth is so much above John that he isn't worthy to untie his shoes.*

**John 1:29-34** The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. *John was declaring the whole purpose of Christ to them when he said, "Behold the Lamb of*

*God, which taketh away the sin of the world". God allowed in His law a ceremonial system of substitute animals dying in place of the guilty. John was boldly proclaiming Jesus Christ as the God's substitute for the sin of the whole world. God let John know ahead of time how he would recognize Christ. When he would baptize him, he would see the Spirit of God descend upon him like a dove and rest on him. John plainly said before that happened, he didn't know who he was. John baptized with water, Jesus baptizes with the Holy Ghost.*

**John 1:35-39** Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. *Before Christ came on the scene, John had disciples. People that he mentored and taught how to follow God. When he cried "Behold the Lamb of God" two of his disciples left John and followed Jesus. He saw them following and asked them what they were looking for. They responded by calling him "Master" and showed interest in being with him so Jesus invited them in.*

**John 1:40-42** One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone. *Andrew was so blown away by his time with Jesus that he quickly believed he was everything they were looking for. He believed it so much that he immediately found his brother and brought him to Jesus. He looked Simon over and called him by name and told him who his father was revealing his supernatural knowledge, then he announces that he is changing his name to Cephas. God changes people's name to reflect the work He does in their lives and to match their character.*

**John 1:43-51** The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto him, Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the

fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And he saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man. *When Jesus finds people, they go out and find other people to bring to him. The Lord went into a region for the purpose of finding one man – Phillip. Then Phillip went and found Nathanael probably because they were friends or maybe family and he's excited about meeting Jesus. He declares to Nathanael that he is the one that we have been looking for, the prophesied one. Nathanael is skeptical when he hears that Jesus is from Nazareth nevertheless, he goes. Jesus "reads his mail" showing to him like he had Peter, that he knows all things. That was all Nathanael needed to completely believe on the Lord Jesus Christ! Jesus said because you believe this, you will see greater things in the future. Heaven, being opened with angels ascending and descending upon him, is the same image Jacob dreamed about except with a ladder. Jesus Christ is the way to the Father and Heaven. He spans the gap like the ladder in Jacob's dream.*

**Tonight's application:** The power of reaching one. We don't read of great works or preaching done by Andrew. He's barely mentioned in scripture, BUT we read that he first found his own brother and brought him to Jesus. He was definitive about who Jesus was and convinced Simon Peter to go with him to experience the Lord for himself. Simon met Jesus, a great work began in his life immediately which led to Peter being the lead disciple and the chief apostle. Thousands were converted to Christ through his preaching and mighty works were done through him that we marvel at. He wrote two New Testament letters and was a pillar in the first century church. This should motivate us to want to bring people to Jesus because we don't know what he may do through their lives. Nearly everyone in the church world has heard of D.L. Moody, the 19<sup>th</sup> century preacher that saw thousands be converted through his ministry. But no one has heard of Edward Kimball, Moody's Sunday school teacher that led him to the Lord in the back of a shoe store where Moody worked. Edward Kimball and Andrew prove that there's power in reaching one!