

John's Gospel – New series – No. 1/

Read John 1: v. 1-18.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. ⁶ There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all 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 gives light to every man coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: ¹³ who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. 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. ¹⁵ John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" ¹⁶ And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared *Him*.

Introduction

The theme of the Gospel can be found in John 20: v. 30-31.

³⁰ And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

John's Gospel deals with the signs that Jesus Christ gave during His earthly ministry which prove His deity. (this means that He is God in human form on this earth at the time.) These signs were seen by dependable witnesses, His disciples and many other people. John wants the people who read and hear his gospel to believe in Jesus Christ as saviour and Lord and to receive "New Life" in His name.

It is important that we understand that Jesus wants to be our Lord and Saviour. When we become a Christian, we can't just do what we like. We must submit to Jesus and God's word the Bible. Jesus exposes in Matthew 7 : v. 21-23 that many people will get it wrong concerning salvation and belief in Jesus.

(Matthew 7 : v. 21-23.)

²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'

We prove that Jesus is Lord of our life by doing His will when we have a personal relationship with Him. If we try to obey Jesus and God's word, the Bible without a personal relationship, then we become legalistic and it just becomes another religion. There are too many religions in Japan, don't start another one by being a legalistic Christian.

As I teach through John's Gospel, my prayer is that we will all believe Jesus more fully and that our new life in Jesus will become vibrant and overflowing with God's love.

If we are not yet a Christian then John's Gospel is very important. You will discover all you need to know from the whole Bible and what it means to follow Jesus. You will discover the Old Testament teaching that points us to the need /or Jesus as your Saviour and Lord.

In Luke's Gospel chapter 24: v. 7 Jesus, after His resurrection, tells two strangers on the road to Emmaus all about Himself from the whole of the Old Testament. To understand the gospel and the teaching of Jesus, we must understand the Old Testament.

The first three gospels, which are Matthew, Mark, and Luke deal primarily with the events in the life of Jesus Christ. John deals with the spiritual meanings of these events. John goes deeper and presents truths that are not emphasized in the other gospels.

John has done a big favour for Bible teachers and preachers. He has given us an introduction to his gospel in the first 18 verses. These verses introduce us to the major themes of the gospel.

There are direct parallels between the verses in the introduction and the rest of the gospel. John uses words in his introduction that are later explained to us in his gospel. Words like, light, life, witness, true, world, glory and truth.

The rest of the book is an expansion of the introduction.

It is a bit like a tourist guide who meets you at the entrance to the most beautiful building in the world. You stand in the entrance with this guide and he explains to you what to expect in this beautiful building. By having this introductory talk you will then be better able to appreciate what is inside this building.

We need to have the fullest picture of Jesus Christ that we can get from John's Gospel. Therefore we need to investigate parts of the O/T fully as they come up within the text.

In Chapter 1: v. 1-18 John introduces us to lots of major themes. These themes have a link to other parts of the gospel and they form a complete introduction to the gospel.

We will not have time today to deal with all of these themes in full, but at least they will be mentioned, like the tour guide at the entrance to that beautiful building.

Today's sermon is like an advertisement of what is to come over the next 12 months.

1. The first theme is the Pre-existence of the word - John 1: v.1-2

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God.

Quote also John 17:5

⁵ And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

Q. Why did John use the word "WORD" and not just say JESUS?

The reason is that John frequently quotes from or alludes to the Old Testament.

The Hebrew word that John uses is “dabar” and this word is connected to God’s powerful activity in creation. We find this Hebrew word quoted in the Old Testament.

(Read Genesis 1: v. 3

³Then God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

Psalm 33: v. 6

**By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.**

So here we have it from the O/T – God speaks and His WORD creates.

Psalm 107: v. 20 = God healed through His word. God’s word in the O/T is God’s expression in CREATION, REVELATION, and SALVATION.

This is why John applied the “title” to Jesus. All that the “WORD” was doing in the O/T, Jesus is doing in the N/T. John wanted to connect Jesus with what the “WORD” was doing in the O/T and the most suitable word to use, was the “WORD”. Therefore John wants us to understand that the same Jesus that created the world and operated through the Old Testament history of Israel, is the same Jesus that walked on this earth 2,000 years ago. It is the same Jesus that John knew, loved, and believed to be God in human form.

It is the same Jesus that we need to believe in if we are to have New Life in His name.

**2. The second theme is Life and Light - 1: v.4
and Light rejected by darkness, but not quenched by it. (1:5)**

Quote the parallel passages in

John 5:26, ²⁶For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself,

John 8:12, ¹²Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

John 3:19. ¹⁹And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

It is clear that in the introduction, John is talking about creation. God in Genesis 1: v. 3 brings light into the darkness. However as this is an introduction to the rest of the gospel it is very clear that John is also referring to the Light and darkness involved in Salvation. In this gospel we will discover that the darkness is not just the absence of light but “positive evil”.

We know from John 3:19 that people don’t like the light of God. Why? Because their deeds are evil.

Satan does have a kingdom and the gospel message rescues people out of his darkness.

It is important to note that v. 5 tells us that the light can never be put out by the darkness.

Even in the book of Revelation where there is some awful stuff, Jesus wins in the end.

We will discover a lot in John’s Gospel about Light and Darkness as it relates to Salvation and the spiritual battle for the souls of men and women. We need to be prepared to engage in the battle for the souls of men, women, boys and girls. John’s Gospel will teach us how to do this.

3. Jesus Christ not received by His own - v. 11 = 4:44.

Q. What does this mean? He came to His own?

John here is asking us to go back into the Old Testament. He is reminding us of God's covenant people, the Jewish Nation. The Old Testament is all about God choosing Abraham and his descendants to be His very own special people. The whole of the Old Testament is mainly about God's dealings with His chosen nation. God sent Jesus into this world to die for His chosen people, the Jewish nation.

However only a small part of that Jewish nation received Jesus as God's rescue package.

Although verse 11 is not good news, verse 12 is good news. Those who receive Jesus are grafted into God's covenant and become children of God.

It is important that we read Romans chapter 11 and understand it. We must especially understand v. 25 of Romans 11.

²⁵For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.

“.... Blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in..”

We need to understand that Jesus suffered rejection. Therefore all true Christians will suffer in the same way at different times in their life. We must pray for one another when we are rejected and hurt by those who don't follow Jesus.

4. Being Born of God and not of the Flesh – 1: v. 13 - this verse connects to 3:6 , 8: v. 41-42.

John here introduces us to the theme of the “New Birth”. Being born into the family of God is quite different from being born into a human family.

In verse 13 which parallels 3:6 and 8: 41-42 John is clear to introduce us to the Sovereign Grace of God.

1. John says that nobody becomes a Christian because of any cultural background (blood) probably referring to the Jewish nation.
2. Nobody can become a Christian because of the will of the flesh, sexual union.
3. Nobody can become a Christian through a head decision without first having their heart touched by God's Holy Spirit.
4. The New Birth is something that God does, he re-births us spiritually. God does a sovereign work in the hearts of people, in answer to the cry of their hearts.

The NLT puts it like this

John 1:13 New Living Translation (NLT)

¹³They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God

5. Seeing God's Glory – 1:14 7 18 = 12:41 & 3:16

Two Glories are described in the Bible – the awesome Glory of God that we cannot see which is described in v. 18. And the glory of God revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. Here in v. 14 John is referring to the glory of God revealed in the person of Jesus Christ.

In John's Gospel we are going to see the glory of God, revealed in and through Jesus Christ.

As we study John's Gospel, let us pray that God's glory will be seen in our lives as we yield to God's Holy Spirit. If we profess faith in Jesus, we are instruments in the hands of God. God can use us to reach a hurting community with the love of Jesus. However the community must first see the love of Jesus in action in our community at OIC.

Are you hurting at the moment? Do you need to say sorry? Do you need forgiveness?

Is there anything stopping God's Holy Spirit flowing through you?

If there is then today is a day to get right with God, so that you may see His Glory flow through you.

6. Truth in Jesus Christ 1: 17 = 14:6

John is introducing us here to the difference between Law and Grace. Later on he is going to make sure that we fully understand the difference. John wants us to be sure that our mind –set is always focused upon the "GRACE" of God.

It is a known fact that many Christians who have been wonderfully saved by God's Grace, often back slide into legalism.

I have discovered over many years that if a Christian, who may be born again, does not really understand GRACE, then he or she is not able to display GRACE in their life. They will not behave GRACEFULLY towards other believers who do not fit into their legalistic box, or theological conviction.

Simple explanation between the LAW and GRACE.

The Law says we are guilty of breaking at least one of the 10 commandments, either in deed or in our mind.

Grace says, although you are guilty, I love you and have sent my Son Jesus Christ to take the punishment for all of your sins, past, present and future.

Grace is a gift, it is undeserved, unmerited, and only because of Jesus and His death on the cross.

Jesus is our substitute sacrifice. He dies in our place. We will discover later from the Old Testament the importance of substitute sacrifices for sin.

7. No one has seen God except the one who has come from God's side 1:18 = 6:46.

John is well aware of the O/T thinking about God. Let us look up a few verses in the O/T.

Exodus 33 – 34. & Isaiah 6 – only a hem of God's glory etc.

For Sinful man to see God's glory would bring death – Ex. 33:20, Deut. 4:12, Ps. 97:2.

However now because of Jesus, God has made it possible for Him to reveal Himself through the person of Jesus. - WOW, how AWESOME.....

Application for us today?

In closing we must consider how this introduction to John's Gospel applies to our lives here today in Japan.

1. We may carry a mental image of Jesus that does not reflect the real Jesus as taught to us by the apostle John. We may have to be willing to re-align our thinking on Jesus. Are we all willing for re-alignment? It may involve changes in our minds and behaviour?
Will you commit your self today to be willing for this alignment if needed?
2. We should today consider how "Awesome" Jesus is and be shocked that He is mainly rejected by the population of the world, especially in Japan.
3. If we are a Christian today, we should be humbled by the knowledge that it was God's work that brought us to trust and believe in Jesus. Our obedience to God's word shows how grateful we are for this.
4. We must be confident that what we are about to discover in John's gospel is reliable information about Jesus. However we must be hungry to know Jesus more and obey Him, whatever the cost for us personally.

It is my prayer that John's Gospel will change my mind and your mind, aligning it with God's word.
It is my prayer that God will speak to all of us through John's Gospel. If we obey the Holy Spirit, God will bless OIC and use all of us for His Glory.

AMEN – Short prayer - can be translated later.