

🔍 that you may believe

that you may believe the light

Sept 11 .....Word in the Beginning

Sept 18 .....Word Became Flesh

Sept 25 .....John the Baptist

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Oct 9 .....Philip and Nathanael





# Pastor's Introduction

I took a class in college on public speaking. One of our assignments was to give a persuasive speech. In a persuasive speech, you begin with a thesis, which is something you want your audience to believe or do. Next, you support your thesis with arguments that undergird your thesis. I have no idea what the subject of my speech was, so it must not have been very impactful! The apostle John wrote his Gospel as a persuasive speech. His intent is to convince his reader to believe in Jesus as the Messiah. All the stories he includes are in support of his thesis. At the end of the Gospel, he writes, "But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name (John 20:31)." Beginning Sunday, September 11 we will begin a new series through the Gospel of John entitled "That You May Believe" that will conclude in May 2023.

The Gospel of John is an incredible story of the life and mission of Jesus Christ. John is written differently than the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). They are written as a synopsis, basically in chronological order, of the events of Jesus' life. John is written thematically. As we study through the Gospel of John, we will highlight these themes and study the book according to the themes. We will begin with the theme of light and darkness. Then we will identify the seven signs given by John. After that we will study the teaching discourses of Jesus, followed by His "I AM" statements. At the end of the series, we will examine the passion week and the forty days following Jesus' resurrection. As John states, all these themes and stories were included so that you may believe. My prayer is that this series will point people to Jesus and that they would believe in Him as Savior.

Ed. TG



**Participant Guide for September 11, 2022**

## **Word in the Beginning**

John 1:1-13

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### **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Have you ever stopped watching a movie or reading a book because the beginning didn't spark your interest? What is an example of this for you? Next, talk about a time when you were watching or reading something and were immediately hooked. What was it about the beginning that hooked you?
2. In our passage today, John starts his gospel with what is often considered one of the most majestic and brilliant literary introductions ever. What about the first five verses makes what John is about to say so compelling?
3. Looking at the first 13 verses, what repeated words do you see? What repeated themes do you see? How does John use repetition to set up his gospel?
4. One of John's primary literary devices that he uses in his gospel is to compare and contrast. Why do you believe he writes in this manner? How does he use comparing and contrasting in his introduction?
5. What does this passage have in common with Genesis chapter one? Do you believe that John is purposely mirroring Genesis chapter one, and if so, why do you believe he is doing so?
6. What important point is John (the author) making about John (the Baptist) in verses 6-8? What is John the Baptist's position and role in relation to Jesus? How are we to follow John the Baptist's role? Why is it so important for us to understand our position in relation to Jesus? How does that understanding inform how we share the gospel with others?

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, consider this: how has Jesus been the light in the dark times of your life? How did his presence change your circumstance?



**Participant Guide for September 18, 2022**

## **Word Became Flesh**

John 1:14-18

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### **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Has there ever been a time when you were apart from a loved one and could only talk to them over the phone, Zoom, or FaceTime? Even though you could still be in touch, were any of those ways truly able to replace being with them in person? Why or why not? What is it that is special or different about being able to be in the presence of someone?
2. We cannot understate the significance of verse 14. What is so powerful about John's claim that "the Word became flesh?" Think back to John's original audience. Why would this bold statement, "the Word became flesh," be so radical?
3. Verse 14 continues that the Word not only became flesh, but he also came to dwell among them. Was the concept of God dwelling among his people new? In what ways had God previously dwelt among his people? (If you need help, see Exodus 25:8-9; 29:46; Zechariah 2:13) What would be different about God coming in the flesh to dwell among his people compared to previous ways that he revealed himself?
4. At the end of this passage, John links Moses to Jesus. How does he connect the law coming through Moses with grace and truth coming through Jesus Christ?
5. For a second time in this passage, John uses the phrase "grace and truth." Why does he use this repetition? What point is he trying to make?
6. In the documentary "Expelled," Ben Stein interviews renowned atheist Richard Dawkins. In the interview, he asks Dawkins what he would do if he met God after he died. Dawkins responds, "Bertrand Russell had that point put to him, and he said something like, 'Sir, why did you take such pains to hide yourself?'" What would have been your response to Dawkins? How can being prepared with a response like this help you share the gospel?

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ John said that Jesus would come and rank ahead of him (v15). Does Jesus rank ahead of you in your life? What would that look like?



**Participant Guide for September 25, 2022**

## John the Baptist

John 1:19-28

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### Highlight

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### Explain

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Are you the type of person that runs away from confrontation or are you the type of person that runs toward confrontation? What do you think your response to confrontation reveals about yourself? Can anyone share examples of where they've handled confrontation positively or negatively?
2. Why did the Jews confront John the Baptist? What was the reason behind their line of questioning?
3. In John 1:23, John the Baptist directly quotes Isaiah 40:3. What would've been the reaction of this Jewish mob for John the Baptist to make such a radical claim?
4. Read Malachi 4:5. Whose coming does this verse foretell? Do you believe the Jews thought a resurrected Elijah was coming or just someone like Elijah? (See 2 Kings 2:11) What did Elijah represent to the Jews? (See 1 Kings 17:1-7 and 1 Kings 18:25-29)
5. John the Baptist's role was to prepare the way for the Messiah. How do Christians play that role today? How do Christians serve as a voice crying out in the wilderness of our culture?
6. Over and over, the Bible tells stories of people who came with unpopular messages. Can you think of any Biblical examples? What often happened to God's messengers in those stories?
7. Is our message of the gospel unpopular? Especially as American Christians, are we surprised when our message is unpopular? If so, why are we so surprised?

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ John the Baptist shared about the coming Messiah and was confronted by the crowds. Will you be bold enough to follow his example?

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**Participant Guide for October 2, 2022**

## **Lamb of God**

John 1:29-42

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### **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Our reaction to seeing something awesome like the ocean, wildlife, Sunsphere, Statue of Liberty, or a stadium is to nudge the person next to us and tell them, "Look!" Have you ever been traveling and come across something incredible to behold? What was it, and what was your reaction? Why were you so excited to point it out to someone else?
2. In verse 29, the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) translates the Greek word *ide* (pronounced ee-dey) as "look." But the way that John uses the word "look" is not a mere, "oh, hey, look at that." It is more like, "BEHOLD!" or "Everyone! You have to come see this!" Why was John so excited to see the Messiah coming? How do you think the passing by of Jesus made him feel? Why is that first glimpse of Jesus so significant?
3. Read Luke 1:5-8: Who is Zechariah? What was his role in the temple? What sort of duties would Zechariah have been responsible for carrying out? What role did lambs play in the life of the Jewish people?
4. When John the Baptist proclaims Jesus as "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world," should he have given a "spoiler alert" warning? What are the implications of this statement?
5. What happens the second time in this passage when John the Baptist points to Jesus (verses 35-39)? What is Jesus' response when they start to follow him? What do you think the two disciples were looking for?
6. Just like John the Baptist and his disciples, everyone is looking for something. What are some of the ways that we can direct others to "Look!" or "Behold!" who Jesus is? How can verse 39 give us a model for helping others see and follow Jesus?

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ How are you daily "looking for Jesus?" We are called to point others to Jesus but also remember to point yourself back to him.

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**Participant Guide for October 9, 2022**

## **Philip and Nathanael**

John 1:43-51

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### **Highlight**

Action Step:

Which verse(s) spoke to you this week?

### **Explain**

Sermon and discussion notes:



## Apply

1. Has anyone ever told you about a great new movie, TV show, or restaurant, but you were skeptical that it could truly be as good as it was advertised? What was it? Did you give it a try? If not, what held you back from giving it a try? If so, was it as good as advertised? How did your initial skepticism influence your decision on whether to go?
2. What was Nathanael's response to Philip sharing that he had found the one Moses wrote about? How did Nathanael's prejudices and skepticism come out in this statement? What are some prejudices of our time that hold people back from seeking Jesus?
3. Philip's reply to Nathanael to "Come and see" is simple yet profound. How could you use this response, or something similar, to counter someone's objections to Christianity?
4. Verse 50 is the first time in John's gospel that we see Jesus refer to himself as the "Son of Man." How does this verse connect to Daniel 7:13? What is the significance of Jesus connecting himself to Daniel's prophecy?
5. Throughout chapter one, how has John confirmed Jesus' identity? How is John building his case for defending that Jesus is the Messiah?
6. What has been Jesus' primary mission up to this point in the story? How is he including his followers in his mission? How does he still include his followers in his mission today?

## Respond

→ **Challenge - What are you going to do in response to the truth communicated today?**

- ◆ This week, look for places where your daily walk with Jesus may be impacted by hidden skepticism in your heart.

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