

# **LifeWay Family Bible Series for Dec. 28: Jesus Christ is life and the light of the world\_122203**

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## **Jesus Christ is life and the light of the world**

John 1:1-18

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From the beginning of human history, people have asked, "Where is God?" Some ask with the cynicism of the scientist, looking for God in a test tube. Others, having been nurtured all of their lives in a secure "family religion," have accepted God's existence with their minds, but not their hearts. Between these two groups are those of us who have a natural, healthy desire to know more about God. This desire begins to develop when we are born into God's family.

The Apostle John wrote his Gospel approximately 30 years later than Mark, the earliest of the synoptic gospel writers. After that time lapse, John had the advantage of perspective. He did not deal with the virgin birth of Jesus as did Matthew and Luke. He began when Jesus was one with his Father in

heaven.

## **The majestic beginning**

Most people define “word” as merely a vehicle by which a thought or action is expressed. Sometimes our words are artificial and fickle. We say one thing and mean something else, or someone misinterprets our choice of words and takes what we say to mean something entirely different. Sometimes we purposely say something in assumed innocence, when in reality there is another meaning behind what we say. Yet when John speaks of the “Word,” he has in mind something far beyond what we usually think about words. For the Jews, a word spoken had unique power. It was a living reality, so they used words sparingly.



The greatest illustration of the power of words was demonstrated when God spoke at creation and life appeared. God's words continue to be active and creative spiritually, as well as physically (Isaiah 55:10-11). God spoke to the heart of Abraham, and he left Ur. He spoke to Moses at the burning bush, and he appeared before Pharaoh. Then we have discovered that one cannot be exposed to the word of God and do nothing about it. It has such power that neutrality is out of the question.

In verses 1-3, John gave a remarkable progression. First, there is the beginning of salvation history, where Jesus was presented as the foundation of God's plan of redemption. Second, Jesus was not only the Word of God, but also the expression of God. Third, he was the one who brings repenting sinners to recognize what God is truly like, as he is reflected in Jesus Christ.

Then, in verses 4-5, we discover Jesus was the life that resides in God—the everlasting life that both creates and redeems. It is an eternal gift that

comes to us through his word. In short, God was in Christ, redeeming the world to himself. God is in his Holy Spirit, revealing to us our sins and also showing us the love, mercy and forgiveness of the Heavenly Father.

### **When God came**

Beginning with verse 6, John moved from the vast expanse of eternity where God has always been, to the earth and to a simple, solitary person. He introduced John the Baptist who was “sent from God.” We see here the sovereignty of God in choosing John to be the herald of the Messiah. He, too, had a miracle birth, though not as miraculous as the virgin birth of Jesus.

John was quick to note that this herald who would come was not the true light he had introduced in Jesus. The light God gave John the Baptist was that of understanding, perception, and moral and spiritual awareness. John was a reflection of the true light found in Jesus.

Yet when Jesus came to his own world, his own people ignored him and passed him by. But those who did receive him were given power to become his sons and daughters because they believed on his name. We were not born “of blood,” or inheritance, nor of “the will of the flesh” by human decision apart from the Holy Spirit, or by “the will of man,” or by a legal transaction based on a cold, calculated business decision. In the verb “become,” there is both a sense of instantaneous regeneration and of progressive growth. Those who receive Christ are constantly in a state of “becoming.” Each of us is a work in progress.

### **When the Word became flesh**

Jesus, who was one with the Father, was an eternal spirit with no limit nor restriction. When he came to earth, he descended from that loftiest of all

heights to become flesh—the lowly, earthly matter from which God formed Adam.

Jesus began a new dimension of existence. He came and “pitched his tent” among us. He did not establish a permanent residence but remained here just long enough to identify with human beings, to understand their temptations, emotions, physical pain and mental anguish. Yet he was filled with grace toward undeserving people, and he became the communicator of truth. He was unique, specially loved by the Father. He came to bring us to God and God to us. In him, the distant, unknowable, invisible, unreachable God has come to us. God can never be a stranger to us again.

### **Question for discussion**

- ◆ In what ways is Jesus unique in his relationship with us?

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