

Life Group Notes 10/09/2022
Mark Warren John's Gospel Week 1

If these notes are useful to you, and you've enjoyed them, or if you have observations or questions feel free send me an email with your comment or observations at tbeachhead@comcast.net.—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.

(This is written to give you good things to enjoy, because look again at what Paul told Timothy (1 Tim 6:17-18)! I think he was thinking of us at the time: **17 Instruct those who are rich in the present age not to be conceited and not to put their hope in the uncertainty of wealth, but in God, WHO RICHLY PROVIDES ALL THINGS TO ENJOY. 18 Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, and to be generous and ready to share...**)

The following ice breaker is just a starter for your group. The message comes after the bar. Please be obedient and enjoy!

CROWD BREAKER What is the best news you heard this week?

Note: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP. The purpose is to unite, not divide; to proclaim fearlessly the freedom the gospel brings. Any part of these notes might be appropriate as a crowd breaker for your own group. The goal is to create memories from Sunday that will serve for a long time. BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study. This study is also a great devotion, taken slowly through the week.**

Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions Pastor Mark has raised this week, 10/09, John 1. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.**

The Beginning

(Genesis 1:1-2; Hebrews 11:1-3)

1In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2**He was with God in the beginning. **3**Through Him all things were made, and without Him nothing was made that has been made. **What do you see?**

Look up Genesis 1: 1In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. **Do you see the Word here?**

2Now the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep. **Do you see the Word here?** And the Spirit of God was hovering over the

surface of the waters. (See Scribe's note on the Spirit's "hovering" below.) **Do you see the Word here? Which part of the Trinity do you see? What is the Holy Spirit doing?**

3And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light. **Do you see the Word here? Who is spoken as soon as God speaks? What does the Word do? Is anything made without the Word being spoken? Why is this so significant to the gospel? (How does faith come?)**

How is the Whole Trinity involved in creation? Why is Jesus so much more than any other prophet? Why is He not merely a superhero??

4In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. **Is it significant that "life" is in the Word? Why? Is it significant to the Genesis account that we know that the Word is life, and the life is the light?** **5**The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (Scribe's note: The Greek word here is the past tense from *katalambano*, which means "to grasp." The Greeks used this word as we do, meaning to take hold of, to seize, to grab or...to understand. "The darkness [just] didn't get it" is a possible translation.) **What influence does darkness have on light? Can you increase darkness (can the light in a room full of lit candles be obliterated by increasing darkness?) What is the ONLY way to increase darkness? (Ask yourselves: What is the impact of censoring the Bible in a public school?) What influence does light have on darkness? In Carlsbad Caverns, where no light penetrates, how many candles are required to illuminate the entire cavern? Why are Christians so often daunted by the darkness?**

The Witness of John

6There came a man who was sent from God. His name was John. **7**He came as a witness to testify about the Light, so that through him everyone might believe. **8**He himself was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. **Quick quiz: Where does the light come from?**

9The true Light who gives light to every man was coming into the world. **10**He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. **Why did the world not grasp the light?** **11**He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. **12**But to all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God. **Describe this right. What do we have access to that we never had before? Once you have the right, what is your next step? What have we received if we received the Word? If we have the right to become a child of God, how do we actually become one?**—**13**children born not of blood, nor of the desire or will of man, but born of God. **Explain. What do you see here? Whose will is involved? How does this connect to being "born again," a concept we will visit in chapter 3?**

The Word Became Flesh

(Psalm 84:1-12)

14a The Word became flesh (**See Scribe's note on Mary's pregnancy below.**) and made His dwelling among us. (**See Scribe's note on "making His dwelling among us" below.**)

Mark speaks of something Jesus will say in John 6. **Look up John 6 53** So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, you have no life in you. **54** Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. **55** For My flesh is real food, and My blood is real drink. **Explain what Jesus is inviting people to eat, in the context of the Word becoming flesh. What are we being called on to eat? How does consuming God's Word give life?**

14b We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (**See scribe's note on Glory below. Explain what we have seen.**)

15 John testified concerning Him. He cried out, saying, "This is He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because He was before me.'" (John the Baptist was six months older than his cousin, Jesus. **How important is it to John that we understand rank and order? How does Jesus come after John? How much longer before John's time was Jesus? Explain.**)

16 From His fullness we have all received grace upon grace. (Scribe's note: Think "grace on top of grace...") **17** For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **18** No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is Himself God and is at the Father's side, has made Him known. **What is the apostle saying about Jesus here? How does one encounter God, then? Explain what Jesus means when He says, "When you've seen me you have seen the Father." What exactly we seen? Whom have we heard speak when we hear Jesus speak? Can you say, "I've heard Jesus speak?"**

Mark says, "The Law was only given to show us what we are doing wrong. It's like a signpost telling us to stop, and when we don't stop there are consequences." **Is there anything wrong with that? Why is "grace and truth" even more constructive for our well-being and ultimate relationships? Rather than being judged by the Law, what judges us today? Has the Law changed? What has changed?**

The Mission of John the Baptist

(Isaiah 40:1-5; Matthew 3:1-12; Mark 1:1-8; Luke 3:1-20)

19 And this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him, "Who are you?" **20** He did not refuse to confess, but openly declared, "I am not the Christ."

21 "Then who are you?" they inquired. "Are you Elijah?"

He said, "I am not."

"Are you the Prophet?"

He answered, "No."

22 So they said to him, "Who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"

23 John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet:

“I am a voice of one calling in the wilderness,
‘Make straight the way for the Lord.’”

24 Then the Pharisees who had been sent **25** asked him, “Why then do you baptize, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?”

26 “I baptize with water,” John replied, “but among you stands One you do not know. **27** He is the One who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.”

28 All this happened at Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing. **Now how many times have the apostle and the baptist emphasized order? See the Scribe’s notes on John and his baptism below.**

Jesus the Lamb of God

([Matthew 3:13–17](#); [Mark 1:9–11](#); [Luke 3:21–22](#))

29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! **30** This is He of whom I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because He was before me.’ **31** I myself did not know Him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that He might be revealed to Israel.” **Now how many times has the apostle emphasized this order? Why is this so important? This time John calls Him the “Lamb of God?” Why the “Lamb of God?” How does the Lamb take away the sins of the world?**

32 Then John testified, “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and resting on Him. **33** I myself did not know Him, but the One who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is He who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ **34** I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.” (**Trivial pursuit: When did John the Baptist first recognize Jesus? (See Luke 1:41) Do you think he remembered the encounter? How did John recognize Jesus this time?**)

Scribe’s note: At least two baptisms are mentioned by John the Baptist in all four gospels. What are they? Who baptizes in water? Who baptizes in the Spirit? Why can only Jesus alone baptize in the Spirit? Whose Spirit is He?

The First Disciples

([Matthew 4:18–22](#); [Mark 1:16–20](#); [Luke 5:1–11](#))

35 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. **36** When he saw Jesus walking by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!” **37** And when the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. **What is John’s disciples’ response to their teacher? How do we know John is not leading a cult?**

38 Jesus turned and saw them following. “What do you want?” He asked. They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are You staying?”

39 “Come and see,” He replied. So they went and saw where He was staying, and spent that day with Him. It was about the tenth hour. (Note: 4PM)

40 Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard John’s testimony and followed Jesus. **41** He first found his brother Simon and told him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated as Christ). **What is Andrew’s first action when he meets Jesus? Why? What significance did John’s testimony have in Andrew’s response?**

Mark points out John's progression in introducing Jesus, first as the Son of God from before all time, then as the Lamb of God according to John the Baptist's testimony, and now Messiah, the Christ or Anointed One, anticipated in the prophets of old. **What is John the writer preparing us, the reader for?**

42 Andrew brought him to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which is translated as Peter). **What is Peter's response to Andrew's testimony? Why is this moment significant for the history of the world? Answer this: Where did Peter first encounter Jesus: at the lake? Or by the river Jordan? Think about why this is important. Did Peter and the others just up and leave their nets in an act of emotional enthusiasm, or did they already know Who Jesus was?**

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

43 The next day Jesus decided to set out for Galilee. Finding Philip, He told him, "Follow Me." **44** Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the same town as Andrew and Peter. (Scribes note: The Jordan River stretches from its springs at the base of Mount Hermon in Northern Galilee, through the lands bordering Capernaum in the north of the Sea of Galilee and south from that inland sea (a freshwater lake) down to the south past Jericho to end in the Dead Sea, where, with no issue, its waters become poisonous salts. Jesus was clearly in region of the northern Jordan.) **Why would Philip just up and leave his nets? Why is it significant that he is from the same town as Peter and Andrew?**

45 Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the One Moses wrote about in the Law, the One the prophets foretold—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

46 "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. (Scribe's note: Nazareth is an easily traveled 25 miles from Bethsaida on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. We know from the gospels that Mary and the family frequented the region and came to Jesus in Galilee. Here we have the very last chronological mention of Joseph, Jesus' father in all the gospels. **Moses wrote about one coming after him almost 1500 years earlier. What is the impact of Philip's claim on Nathanael? Why would Philip mention Nazareth and Joseph? What impact does the father's name have on a son's reputation? Describe how the gospel got spread from John's very first announcement.**)

47 When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, He said of him, "Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is no deceit." **What gift of the Holy Spirit is Jesus exercising here? What effect does this gift have on Nathanael? Take a peak at 1 Corinthians 14: 24** But if an unbeliever or uninstructed person comes in while everyone is prophesying, he will be convicted and called to account by all, **25** and the secrets of his heart will be made known. So he will fall facedown and worship God, proclaiming, "God is truly among you!" **What is the heart's response to a word of revelation?**

48 "How do You know me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus replied, "Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree."

49 "Rabbi," Nathanael answered, "You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" **What is Nathanael's response?**

50 Jesus said to him, "Do you believe just because I told you I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." **51** Then He declared, "Truly, truly, I tell you, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

How does the Word open up a promise of a far more extraordinary life? Why does Jesus call Himself the Son of Man (See notes below)?

Mark's recap. "In the beginning was the Word. The Word brings light and life to us. Church, I earnestly desire that you get into God's Word and allow it to be light and life to you. He says that when you consume His Word, the bread of life, it nourishes Who you are." ***What do you see? Have you been seeing more and more lately? Can you share?***

Mark says, "There is so much chaos and so much noise that we need something to ground us. And that is His Word. We need light and we need truth, and He is the Light and the Truth. ***What do you think? What will you have, personally, when the Bible is forbidden to you? Did you ever hear the story Mark related about the Chinese church memorizing pages of the Bible? Do you think the sense of urgency has increased? Can you describe why or how?*** My challenge for you is to eat the Word. Eat your Bible. ***Do you have a testimony? What has helped you? If you are reading more than before what has helped?***

Mark prophesied, "This scripture is what is going to hold everything together for the storms ahead. That when the seas are swirling and the storm intensifies, you have to come back to the word of God to find the rock that is your salvation. Where will you be when technology is taken away?" ***What do you think when you hear this?***

Take the time to pray.

Scribe's notes:

On the four gospels: "The parable of the elephant and the five blind men." Critics of the four-gospel presentation of the gospel of Jesus Christ point out the dissimilarities in each, and the seeming contradictions. There is a parable that is often told to illustrate how stories vary when told, and it's at least enlightening here. There were five blind men who were led to an elephant to describe it to the world of the blind. The first described the elephant as a long snake that hung down whose mouth became two moist holes through which it breathed and received food. The second described a long rope-like structure dangling loosely between two generous flanks with hair at its tip. The third described a huge, cavernous cask-shape that was suspended in mid-air, and the fourth described a tree trunk similar in shape to that of a palm tree that was able to separate itself miraculously from the ground in which it was planted. Finally, the fifth likened the elephant to a voluminous sheet of tissue that waved like a flag in the breeze. Same elephant. Five different descriptions. ***Were they accurate, to the extent of the knowledge that the description represented? Was any one description wrong? Which was the most accurate? Could the elephant be understood without the collected knowledge of each description? When the trunk, the tail, the leg, the belly and the ear were finally understood as all parts of a whole creature, how was science enhanced? Explain why five independent denominations***

of the elephant church develop and go to war with each other, denouncing one another as cults?

On John, the manuscript: Scholars have contested John's gospel for its significant differences from the other "synoptic" gospels, and it was once argued that John was a later addition to the collection. This argument fell apart by the weight of the numbers of Early Church Fathers who quoted from the gospel. The Papyrus fragment #52 from John 18:31-33, one of the earliest known fragments of the New Testament, dates to around 150 A.D., mere decades after the original is known to have been written. It is one of the most significant pieces of physical, archaeological evidence for the authenticity of the gospel that we have.

On the Spirit "hovering" over the waters, Genesis 1: The Hebrew: *rachaph* means "To grow soft, relax, brood over (as a mother hen its brood)." This is not a helicopter hovering. This is Life awaiting life.

How the Word became flesh. When did Mary become pregnant? If you look at Luke's account of the birth of Jesus, a detail is often overlooked that has led to almost blasphemous accounts of Jesus' birth. Reading from Luke 1 we see Mary asking Gabriel the angel how she can possibly become pregnant, being a virgin. Follow the exchange: [34](#)"How can this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

[35](#)The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God. [36](#)Look, even Elizabeth your relative has conceived a son in her old age, and she who was called barren is in her sixth month. [37](#)For no word from God will ever fail."

[38](#)"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it happen to me according to your word." Then the angel left her.

When she heard, "...no word from God shall ever fail," what did Mary receive into her heart by faith, taking God literally, at His Word? How did that Word become flesh?

On God dwelling among us (John 1:14): "So the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The Greek word translated "dwelt," is too rich a word to ignore in the context of Jewish Law, observance and expectation... The word *skenoō* means to pitch one's tent. "God came and camped out among us." Or, "God came and pitched his tent in our campground." The theme that describes our life on this earth as living in a temporary dwelling is found throughout scriptures, and especially clearly when Paul talks of this life and the next. **Look up 2 Corinthians 5:1:** [1](#)Now we know that if the earthly tent we live in is dismantled, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands. [2](#)For in this tent we groan, longing to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling,..." Note that this is a

truth that Jesus lived before us, but, loving the Bible, you're going to notice something else: God the Father started it with Moses in the desert. It is no accident that God dwelt in a tent, called The Tabernacle, in the desert, and His tent was pitched in the Israelites camp. He camped out with Israel from the days they left Egypt. **What does this suggest?** Notice also, Moses and the High Priest alone were invited to come into the innermost part of the tent/tabernacle, the "Holiest of All," the "Holy of Holies," which lay in the third portion of the tent behind a thick curtain called a "veil." When Solomon traded the tent for a temple, one of the wonders of the ancient world, that veil separated the inner sanctuary where the candle and the alter of incense burned incessantly from the innermost, the Holy of Holies, was of legendary thickness. That is the veil that was "rent asunder" or torn in two from the top to the bottom the moment Jesus gave up His Spirit on the cross. **What prevents us from dwelling in God's tent today? Who is camping with Whom in Whose Campground?**

On Glory: "Glory," is the word Greek, *doxa*. A *doxology* is a song of honor and praise. Glory is a prime motivator for tyrants and kings. Napoleon was known to be a glory hound. They are always seeking reputation, a significant renown that carries well and retains its honor well after their own departure.

On John the Baptist and his baptism. John's baptism was a reflection a well-known practice in Judaism in Jesus' day, but John's prophetic ministry was famous. By his lifestyle, teaching and practice, he gained a reputation that terrified the Pharisees and the Sadducees and that was recognized throughout Judaism, wherever Jews were found in the Empire. John is one of the most significant characters in the New Testament. He was the first mentioned in Luke's and Mark's Gospels, and his ministry is prominently displayed in Matthew 3 and John 1 immediately after the Creation song. John himself acknowledges Isaiah's song about him from Isaiah 40: ¹"Comfort, comfort My people,"

says your God.

²"Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and proclaim to her
that her forced labor has been completed;
her iniquity has been pardoned.

For she has received from the hand of the LORD
double for all her sins."

³A voice of one calling:

"Prepare the way for the LORD in the wilderness;
make a straight highway for our God in the desert.

⁴Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill made low;
the uneven ground will become smooth,
and the rugged land a plain.

⁵And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
and all humanity together will see it.

What do you notice in Isaiah's prophecy that we can look forward to? How much more can we expect to be revealed? How does Malachi enhance this

promise: 4:¹“For behold, the day is coming, burning like a furnace, when all the arrogant and every evildoer will be stubble; the day is coming when I will set them ablaze,” says the LORD of Hosts. “Not a root or branch will be left to them.”

²“But for you who fear My name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, and you will go out and leap like calves from the stall. ³Then you will trample the wicked, for they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day I am preparing,” says the LORD of Hosts.

⁴“Remember the law of My servant Moses, the statutes and ordinances I commanded him for all Israel at Horeb.

⁵Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and awesome Day of the LORD. ⁶And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. Otherwise, I will come and strike the land with a curse.” **Why is this comforting to you, personally? How is John the Baptist Elijah? How is he not Elijah?**

On Jesus' title, The Son of Man: Jesus calls himself the Son of Man throughout the New Testament. This is a title that carries itself over from the Old Testament prophets, in particular, Ezekiel, whom God often addresses as “Son of Man,” directly translated from the Hebrew *ben Adam*, “Son of Adam.” It's important to recognize what is happening here, because God is recognizing title and dominion in the address. Adam was the designated Ruler of the earth, with the delegated authority over every living thing. His son would be heir and title bearer, bringing with the title the rule over “every living creature that crawls upon the earth” as God had delegated to Adam in the Garden.

Jesus, as Son of Adam, is laying claim to the restoration of all power and authority that was stolen in the Garden, and re-establishing rule on the earth. There is no accident in the title, but a deliberate declaration of the right to that authority. When Jesus rose from the dead in Matthew 28, He declared, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me...”, signifying indomitable victory, incontestable

authority and all rights. He had won back what Adam had lost, and He won it back on behalf of the sons and daughters of Adam.