

**John 1-2**  
**Tape #C2542**  
**By Chuck Smith**

Shall we turn in our Bibles to the gospel according to John.

The gospel of John was the last of the gospels that were written. It was written towards the close of that first century, written by John, for the purpose of convincing people that Jesus is the Christ, that by believing in Him they might have life in His name. John declares his purpose in writing these books. He said, "Many other things did Jesus which are not written, but these things were written that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and by believing have life in His name" (John 20:30-31). So there is a definite purpose in John's mind as he wrote this book. And because this is the reason for this book, it is the best book to encourage an unbeliever to read. Because John wrote, "That they might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, and by believing have life in His name." That's why he wrote it. And he's very up-front in telling you why he wrote it. And so it was written to counteract some of the false concepts concerning Jesus Christ, a lot of the heresy that had developed in the very first century.

Now, Paul the apostle warned the Ephesian elders that, "After I'm gone, I know that there are going to be wolves that are going to come in, not sparing the flock of God, but seeking to draw men after themselves, and from your own group there will be those who arise who will even deny our very Lord." And before Paul was gone long from Ephesus, these things were already happening. The false teachers were moving in, perverting the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ. A system known as Gnosticism was one of the early systems of belief that permeated the church and began to draw people away into false concepts concerning Jesus Christ.

The church wasn't very old before the Arian heresy arose, the denying of the deity of Jesus Christ, putting Him on the level of man. Gnosticism, with its concepts of Jesus and really confusing concepts of Jesus, part divine, part man, and yet, a sort of a phantom kind of a thing. They made up stories that as He walked on the sandy beach, He wouldn't leave footprints because He wasn't really real. And their idea was: anything that is real is evil, the world is so evil that God could not have created the world. And so, originally there was the pure holy God and emanations went out from this pure holy God, and finally, one of these emanations got so far from God that it no longer knew God; and it was from this emanation that created the world, and thus the world was created by an evil force and everything material is evil, and so Jesus could not have been a man, else He would have been evil. So, He was a phantom and a lot of weird

things. And, so John wrote this epistle, or this letter, this gospel actually, in order to correct some of those early false teachings that have begun to permeate the church.

Now, it is interesting that as the writers begin the gospels, they each one picked a different place to begin. And with the gospel of Matthew, he began with the generation or the genealogy of Jesus going back to Abraham. And when Mark began his gospel, he began it at the baptism of Jesus by John. When Luke began his gospel, he began it with the enunciation to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. But when John begins his gospel, he goes clear on back to the very beginning of time, which had no beginning. He goes back even further than Genesis. The book of Genesis is the beginning of creation, "In the beginning, God created..." But God existed long before He created. And so, in Genesis you go back to the beginning of creation, but before that, God was. God existed. So, John goes back to that infinite eternal past and declares,

*In the beginning was the Word (1:1),*

Now, the Greeks talked much about the Logos. And according to the Greek philosophy, everything pre-existed in a thought. Anything that you see existed in thought before it became form. In other words, this pulpit here began with a thought. Some craftsman had in his mind a design, an idea for a podium. And so, he drew it out on a piece of paper, but it was the expression of his thought. And so, before anything exists, it has pre-existed in a thought. So, to the Greek philosopher, the thought was the origin of things. Well, the Bible takes you one step further back. It said if there was a thought, then there had to be a thinker, because you can't have a thought without a thinker. So, in the beginning, God, "In the beginning, was the Word." And so, it actually goes back even before the thought, you have the existence of the One who thought, or the existence of God. So, "In the beginning, God," here, "In the beginning was the Word," He was existing then.

*and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (1:1).*

Powerful declaration of the deity of Jesus Christ. So plain, so straight, so forthright, that even a little child in reading it could not be confused. It would take a Jehovah Witness to confuse this passage of scripture. And they did, by the insertion of an article "the". "And the Word was a God." But they had to create something that doesn't exist in the original language in order to twist this whole thing around. John is starting out with the plain declaration that Jesus, the Word, is God. Just as straightforward, forthright as can be declared.

*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 (1:2-3).*

So, now he comes to creation. You see, John goes back before creation. In the beginning, before there was anything, there was the Word. He was with God, He was God, He was in the beginning with God. And then creation, "All things were made by him."

In the account in Genesis, we read, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The word *God* in Hebrew there is Elohiym, which is a plural form. Now, there are those who say, "Well, the plural form was used for emphasis." But that appears to be an invention. Because God is also referred to as the singular, and if it is used only for emphasis, then it would be confusing to use the same term to refer to God in the singular. It is my opinion that when the God, El singular, is used that it is a reference to the Father. That the "Elohiym" is a reference to the tri-unity of the godhead, one God existing in three persons. "And God said, Let us make man in our image and after our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). Who was God talking to? In the divine counsels there was that creation, the Father, the Son, the Spirit, in the divine counsel. "Let us make man in our image after our likeness."

Here in John, the first chapter, Jesus is ascribed as the creator of all things. Paul, as he is writing to the Colossians concerning the pre-eminence of Jesus, declares that He is not only the creator, but He is the object of creation, by Him were all things made and for Him. So, He is not only the creator, but the object of creation. "All things were made by him," the universe around us and all of its life forms.

*and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; but the darkness comprehended it not [or apprehended it not, or could not lay hold of it] (1:3–5).*

Jesus said, "I am the light of the world: he that cometh unto me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12). Now, here it is declared that the light shineth in darkness. This is the reference to the coming of Jesus Christ to the earth. Here He is, the light of the world shining in the darkness, but the darkness is not apprehended.

*There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness (1:6–7),*

And twice we will read of John's witness. Here in chapter I, verse 15, "John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake." And then he also testified in verse 34, "And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." That's the testimony of John the Baptist concerning Jesus Christ. So,

*There was a man who was sent from God, his name was John. He came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might*

*believe. He [John] 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. He was in the world, the world was made by him, and the world knew him not (1:6–10).*

Can you grasp that one? Jesus, the Light...He came to shine in the darkness, the true light. He was in the world. We're already told that all things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. He was in the world and the world was made by Him, and yet, the world knew Him not. That is, the world of man. It would appear that there aspects of nature and of the world that did know Him. It is interesting that those who were possessed with evil spirits often cried out, "We know who you are!" Evidently, the winds and the waves knew who He was. For when He was standing in the little ship and it was about to sink, when He spoke to the wind and waves and said, "Peace, be still!" they obeyed His voice, they knew who He was. The rocks evidently knew who He was, because when the Pharisees were encouraging Him to rebuke His disciples on the day of His triumphant entry, He said, "I say unto you that if these should hold their peace, these very stones would immediately cry out." They knew who He was. But it was only the darkened minds of man that failed to recognize Him. He was in the world, the world was made by Him, and yet, the world knew Him not. Evidently, that little donkey knew who He was. No man had ever ridden on that little donkey before, and yet, I'm sure that when Jesus sat on him, he was just as docile as could be. He knew who He was.

Someone has put words in the mouth of that little donkey; I think it was Chetterton. I don't know if I can recall it or not. It's coming, it's working, the juices are flowing and the circuits are coming together...

"When fishes flew and forests walked and figs grew upon a thorn, some moment when the moon was blood, then surely I was born. With an ugly face and ears like errant wings, the devil's walking parody of all four-footed things. The ancient outlaw the earth with stubborn, tattered will. Mock me, scourge me, I am dumb, but I hold my secret still, fools. I also had my day, one fierce day in sweet. I heard the shouts around my ears and there were palm branches at my feet."

The story of the donkey, I missed one line in there. I'll get it one of these days.

"He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not." One step further,

*He came unto his own, and his own received him not (1:11).*

He said, "I am come to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." His own; He was their promised Messiah. He came to His own, but they said, "We have no king, but Caesar." They

said, "We will not have this man to rule over us." And his own received Him not, and the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, He was despised and rejected of men. But, glorious good news!

*As many as received him, to them gave he the power and the authority to become the sons of God, even as many as believed on his name (1:12):*

So, here He is, in the beginning with God, the creator of all things, coming to His creation not being recognized, not being apprehended, coming to His own not being received, and yet, as many as would receive Him and sow the gospel of grace, as many as would receive Him to them He gave the power to become the sons of God. The Son of God becoming man in order that He might make each of us sons of God who would believe in His name.

*Which were born, not of blood (1:13),*

You cannot become a son of God through physical genealogy. I am not a son of God because my parents were Christians. My children are not Christians because I am a Christian. It's not of blood, it's not something that you can inherit from your parents or pass on to your children. This dynamic life as a child of God is

*not of the will of the flesh (1:13),*

It is not something that you can set your mind to and become. That is, "I am going to live this new dynamic life. I'm not going to walk in darkness any more; I'm going to live a generous, self-sacrificing life, the life that is the ideal that God has declared for man." You can't do it by the will of the flesh.

*nor is it by the will of man (1:13),*

It isn't by the force or coercion of others, or the encouragement of others. You cannot come into this new life because someone is pushing you or coercing you into it. This new birth can only come from God, born of God, as a child of God.

So, I was born once by blood, by the will of the flesh and by the will of man, here I am. That was my physical birth. But my spiritual birth can't take place that way. The spiritual birth has to come from God. And so, I have been born again by the Spirit of God, the new life.

*And the Word was made flesh, and tabernacled among us (1:14),*

This is, of course, the tremendous swing of the pendulum, if you can follow it. In the beginning was the Word, He was with God, He was God, He was in the beginning with God, and all things were made by Him. The divine, eternal creator. "And the Word was made flesh, and He dwelt among us..." This tremendous downward sweep from the area of the infinity into the realm of the finite, from the eternal into time. Surely our minds cannot grasp the scope of this.

The disciples, as years passed, and they had an opportunity to really reflect upon Jesus and their acquaintance and their relationship to Him, I'm certain were more and more amazed and marveled at what actually transpired.

As John begins his first epistle, he begins it much the same way as he declares, "That which was from the beginning, which we have seen, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes and gazed steadfastly upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of Life; (For that life was manifested, and we've seen it, and we bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us;)" (1 John 1:1–2). John is just reflecting on his relationship with Jesus. "That which is from the beginning, which we have heard..."

And suddenly they realized, "When we heard Him talk, we were listening to the voice of God. When we looked upon Him, we were looking upon God. When we touched Him, we were touching God. That eternal life! We saw Him, we gazed, we touched." Oh, the wonder of it all! And, John stands in awe and wonder of that experience that he had had.

Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." When Philip said, "Lord, just show us the Father, and we'll be satisfied." He said, "Philip, have I been so long a time with you, have you not seen me? He who hath seen me has seen the Father; how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The works that I do I do not of myself: but the Father, he doeth the works. Now, believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake" (John 14:8–11). In other words, "I've been doing the work of God. I've been showing you the Father."

We'll read in a moment, "No man has seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has displayed Him." He has made Him known, He has declared Him. He that hath seen me has seen the Father. And so, do you want to know what God is like? Do you want to know the truth about God? Then you must look at Jesus Christ and study Him carefully, for He was God manifested in flesh. For the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, in order that He might reveal the Father unto man. Because man had developed such wrong concepts of God.

God has been maligned and lied against continually by Satan. And even today, Satan continues his work so that people have all kinds of grotesque, false concepts concerning God.

One of the most common phrases in profanity is that God would damn certain things or certain people. And you hear it so often, as though God is just desiring to damn everything and everybody. Nothing could be farther from the truth. God himself declares, the Bible declares concerning God, "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to

repentance." And God cried to Israel and said, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?" saith the Lord, "Behold, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Turn ye!"

People see God as fury and wrath and judgment and fire and thunder, when in reality, He has a heart that yearns after your love and your fellowship. How people misread the Bible even.

In the book of Genesis when man first fell, and God came into the garden to commune with man and Adam hid himself, for he realized that he was naked, and God said, "Adam, where art thou?" Now, we have the words, but we don't have the tone of voice, and that's what people put into their own minds, the tone of voice. And so often, a person in reading that, puts in that tone of voice of an arresting officer holding the gun on the bank robber, "Hold your hands up, or I'll blast a hole through you!" "Adam, where art thou?!!" But, as I read the whole scripture, and I understand God through the whole revelation of Himself, I'm convinced that rather than the bark of an arresting officer, to hear the voice correctly, you will hear it as the sob of a heartbroken Father. "Adam, what have you done? Adam, where are you?" Just that broken heart of God over the failure of man. And this is what Jesus shows to us as He weeps over Jerusalem. "Oh, Jerusalem, if you only knew your possibilities, if you only knew the potentials, if you only knew the things that belong to your peace! But you don't. They are hid from your eyes, and as a result of your ignorance, devastation is going to come." And we see His chest as it is heaving, and we hear Him as He is sobbing, as He cries over Jerusalem, and the terror that will come because of their blindness, because of their ignorance. "If you only knew, if you only knew." And He weeps as He looks at the city and He knows the impending doom that is coming because of the path that they have chosen. And there you see the broken heart of the heavenly Father as He is weeping over the lost estate of man. Jesus came to reveal God. The Word became flesh and He dwelt among us in order that we might know the truth about God.

There was a publisher of a newspaper who declared himself an agnostic. And yet, every year his wife, who was a Christian, and the children would go to church for the Christmas Eve service and, because it was Christmas Eve and a family celebration, he went yearly with them, as the children would give their recitations and their programs and sing the carols. But this one particular year he decided that he wasn't going to make his annual pilgrimage to the church because he saw it as an act of hypocrisy. He said, "I do not believe in the incarnation, I do not believe that Jesus was God in the flesh. For I don't see any reason why God would have to come in the flesh. And therefore, I'm not going to be a hypocrite any longer. I'm not going to church with the family on Christmas." And despite all of the persuasive efforts of the wife, he could not be dissuaded from his position. And so, on Christmas Eve he saw the family leaving in a blizzard

to go to the church to celebrate the Christmas Eve program, as he sat by the fire, got out a book and began to just sort of settle in to his reading.

Before long, a little bird tried to fly into the window, attracted by the light of the fire inside. And suffering outside in the blizzard, this little bird started flying up against the window, beating itself against the windowpane trying to come inside. It distracted him from his reading, and he thought, "Well, little bird go away!" But it wouldn't, it kept trying to fly in. And so, he finally decided, "Well, I guess I'll have to do something about it." And so, he went down to the barn and opened up the door and turned on the light, so that the little bird would be attracted to the light in the barn, hoping that it would see the light and fly on down and find the shelter there in the barn from the blizzard. Walking back up to the house, he found the little bird on the outside still trying to fly into the window. By now, it had begun to bloody itself from just flying up against the pane of glass. So, he tried to show the bird that there was the light on in the barn, and there was a place down there for it to go and to get warm and to be sheltered from the storm. And he started to sort of "Shoosh!" at the bird and swing at it a bit, but the more he did, the more frantic the little bird became in trying to fly into the glass and began to injure itself even more. And he found himself talking to the little bird. He said, "Little bird, I don't hate you, I'm trying to help you, don't you understand little bird? I'm your friend. I don't mean you harm, I want to help you. Poor stupid little bird, don't you know?" And then the thought came into his mind, "Oh, if only I could become a bird for a moment to communicate to this poor little creature that I don't hate it, I'm trying to help it." And suddenly, the light flashed! God became man because man so misunderstood God. He didn't hate man, He wasn't trying to harm man. He wanted to help man. He went into the house, got his overcoat and everything and headed off for church and met the family. He saw the reason for the incarnation, that God might communicate to us the truth about Himself, the truth that had been lost in the garbled concepts man had created of God.

So, the Word was made flesh, and He dwelt among us,

*(and we [John said] beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,)(1:14)*

We are sons of God through faith, but we have been begotten again through our faith, we've been born again. But there is only one begotten Son in the sense that Jesus was begotten of the Father and we beheld Him as the only begotten of the Father,

*full of grace and truth (1:14).*

Now, John. There was a man sent from God; his name was John. He wasn't the light. He came to bear witness of the light.



*And John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This is he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for he was before me (1:15).*

Now, John was, by physical birth, a cousin to Jesus. However, John was born before Jesus was born. Probably in about the sixth month of Mary's pregnancy when John was born. Yet, John is saying of Him, "He is preferred before me: for He was before me." So, he is talking about that pre-existence of Jesus prior to His incarnation.

*And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ (1:16–17).*

Now, when God made man, God made man for fellowship. That was the purpose of God creating you, that He might receive just that praise and glory and all from your fellowship with Him, that He might enjoy and just receive that joy and blessing of just fellowshiping with you. You say, "Well, that sounds sort of selfish to me." Well, perhaps it was. Nothing I can do about it. That's why God created me. That's the only reason why God created me, really, that I might have fellowship with Him. That's the primary purpose, that we might have fellowship with Him.

Now, if you are not fulfilling that primary purpose of your life, then your life is bound to be empty, unfulfilling and ultimately frustrating. Because you're not fulfilling the basic purpose for which God created you. You're not answering to that basic need and necessity in man of worshipping God, fellowshiping with Him. But man did not live on this planet long before he broke that fellowship with God by disobedience, sinning against God in his disobeying of the commandment of God. And the net effect of sin is always that of severing fellowship with God. "God's hand is not short, that He cannot save; neither is his ear heavy, that He cannot hear: but your sins have separated between you and God" (Isaiah 59:1–2). Sin always has that effect of separating a man from God.

God said to Adam, "In the day that you eat you will surely die." That is, the death of the consciousness of God within the heart of man. The death of the life of God, that Spirit of God and that life of God within man. It happened. Adam ate and that death took place, that spiritual death.

Now, God still longed for fellowship with man, but that fellowship had been severed by man because of man's sin. Now in order that man might have fellowship with God, something first had to be done about man's sin. And so, God sent Moses and God gave to Moses the law, the law of the sacrifices, the covering of sin, making possible the restoration of fellowship with God. And in part of the sacrificial offerings were these offerings that were just fellowship offerings. The communion offerings, the meal offering, in which I just would just sit and eat with

God and fellowship with God after the sin offering; then, that offering of consecration, the burnt offering, and then, the peace offering, the fellowship offering, where I just sit down and eat with God and fellowship with Him, but that could not be until first of all the sin offering. I had to take care, first, of the sin. And so, under the law and under Moses, the covenant of God through Moses, there was that provision for the covering of sin so that sinful man could be restored into fellowship with God and could sit and commune and eat with God.

But these offerings of the bulls and goats could not put away sin. All they could do was cover sin, and they could point to an offering that God Himself was going to make, by which the sin of man could be put away so that the fellowship between man and God could be totally and completely restored.

And so, the law came by Moses. This is not looking at the law in a derogatory sense. This is looking at the law as God intended it as a tool by which man could come into fellowship with God, but an imperfect tool because of man's failure. There's nothing wrong with the law, it was good, it was holy. But man was still sinful, and thus, the necessity of year after year the offering of the sacrifices for sin.

So, God has established now through Jesus Christ a new covenant of grace and truth. By the law, Moses' covenant with God, but now through Jesus Christ a new covenant, a new covenant that is established on the grace of God and the truth of Jesus Christ. So, "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

*No man has seen God at any time (1:18);*

Of course, people immediately say, "Well, what about Moses?" When God said to Moses, "What would you like?" He said, "Lord, I'd just like to see you." And God said, "You can't see Me and live." But God said, "I'll tell you what, you get there in the rocks and I will pass by and then you can see the afterglow." It says "the hinder part," but it's actually the afterglow of God having passed by a spot and then Moses looking at the radiation of the afterglow. And he became irradiated in looking at that. His face began to shine so that when he came back to the children of Israel they couldn't look at his face. They said, "Cover it, man, you're shining. We can't stand to look at your face." But no man has seen God at any time. Your physical body just couldn't handle that. It'd be like trying to stand in the sun; you'd be consumed.

Now, God has promised that the pure in heart shall see Him, but not in this body. We're going to have to have a change of body. Paul said, "This corruption must put on incorruption, this mortal must put on immortality" (I Corinthians 15:53). One day I expect to see God, but not in this body, in my new body. This body is designed for the earth of the earthy, designed for the environmental conditions of the earth. My new body, far superior, designed for the heavenly

environment. And in that new body, I can behold the face of the Lord and I can sit and worship at His feet. What a glorious day that will be!

No man has seen God at any time;

*but the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath manifested him (1:18).*

Declared Him, demonstrated Him, brought Him forth into full revelation, He has revealed Him to us.

*And this is the record of John [the Baptist], when the Jews sent the priests and the Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who are you? (1:19)*

John was baptizing, we read, in the wilderness, and multitudes of people were going out, being attracted by this man. And so in Jerusalem, the religious leaders got upset, "This guy's out there baptizing and we didn't send him out there and he doesn't have our authority." And they sent the priests and Levites out to ask the guy, "Who are you anyhow?" And this is the record of John.

*He confessed, and he did not deny; but he confessed, I am not the Messiah (1:20).*

And that was really, "Who are you? Are you saying that you are the Messiah? Are you pretending?" He said, "I am not the Messiah." And because the word *Christ* is Messiah, so you've got to remember that. "I am not the Messiah."

*And they asked him, Are you then Elijah? (1:21)*

Now, the prophecy said that Elijah would first come and turn the hearts of the children to the fathers before the coming of the great day of the Lord. And so, "Are you Elijah?" The Jews even to the present day at their Passover services, in their home at their Passover celebrations, have the chair, the empty chair. The door is open, waiting for Elijah. "Are you Elijah, forerunner of the Messiah?"

*And he said, I am not (1:21).*

Now, this brings confusion to some people because in Matthew's gospel, about the seventeenth chapter, Jesus talking about John said, "This is Elijah, if you're able to receive it." But John said, "I am not." That is, he is not the full complete fulfillment of the prophecy of Elijah. He came in the spirit and the power of Elijah.

Going back to Luke's gospel, chapter I, when Gabriel the angel appeared unto Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, as he was ministering during his course in the temple. And when

Zacharias saw the angel standing there at the right side of the altar, he was greatly afraid, and he said to Zacharias, "Fear not, I am Gabriel, I am standing in the presence of God and I have been sent unto thee to let you know that your wife Elizabeth in her old age is going to conceive and bear a son and thou shalt call his name John, and he shall go forth in the spirit and the power of Elijah to turn the hearts of the children to their fathers." And he began to tell him of the ministry of his son, John the Baptist. "He'll go forth in the spirit and the power of Elijah." But when they asked John plainly, "Are you then Elijah?" he said, "No." And they said,

*Are you that Prophet? (1:21)*

Now Moses promised, "And there shall come a prophet like unto myself; and to him shall you give heed" (Deuteronomy 18:15). "Are you that prophet that Moses spoke about?"

*And he said, No (1:21).*

Twenty questions!

*And they then said unto him, Who are you? that we may give an answer to those who have sent us. What do you say of yourself? And he said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as was predicted by Isaiah the prophet. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why do you baptize then, if you are not the Messiah, or Elijah, or the Prophet? And John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there is standing one among you, whom you do not know; He it is, whose coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe I'm not worthy to untie. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. And the next day John saw Jesus coming unto him, and he said, Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! (1:22–29)*

Oh, what a tremendous statement concerning Jesus: the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

How did the Lamb of God remove the sin? By a sacrificial substitutionary death. That was just deeply imbedded in their mind as a result of their culture and their worship and their religion. How then is Jesus to take away the sin of the world? By His substitutionary death. "Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world."

*This is he of whom I said, After me there comes 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 I am come baptizing with water (1:30–31).*

Now, "I knew Him not" and then we have a new phrase, "But that He should be made manifest to Israel, I have come baptizing with water. That's why I'm here, in order that this Man might be made manifest to Israel. He's my cousin, I didn't realize who He was. I knew Him; I didn't know who He was. I didn't know that He was the One. I know that God sent me to prepare you the way of the Lord, make straight His paths, but I didn't know who He was. But the purpose of my being here is that He might be made manifest to Israel. And I knew Him not, but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore I am 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 baptizes with the Holy Spirit (1:32–33).*

So John said, "I didn't know Him until I saw the Spirit like a dove coming and resting upon him, and I know that the one who told me to go out and baptize also told me that the one that you see, the Spirit descending and staying upon, that is the one who is going to baptize with the Holy Spirit."

And John said,

*I saw and I bare record that this is the Son of God (1:34).*

John was sent as a witness of the light. What is John's witness concerning Jesus Christ? He is the Son of God.

*Now the next day after this John was standing with two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as he walked, he said, Behold the Lamb of God! (1:35–36)*

Again, he had said earlier, "Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." Now he just says, "Behold, the Lamb of God."

As John is writing the book of Revelation, the book of Revelation centers around the Lamb of God. To understand the book of Revelation, you've got to see the Lamb. And our first view of the Lamb of God, of course, is in the first chapter of Revelation, as he describes Christ in His glory. But then, as he gets into the heavenly scene, chapter five, when he was weeping, sobbing convulsively, because no one was found worthy to take the scroll or loose the seals and the elders said unto him, "John, don't sob. Behold, the Lion of the Tribe of Judah hath prevailed

to take the scroll and loose the seals. And I turned and I saw Him as a Lamb that had been slaughtered. And He came and He took the scroll out of the right hand of Him that sitting upon the throne. And when He took the scroll out of the right hand of Him sitting upon the throne, the twenty-four elders came forth with their little golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints, and they offered them before the throne of God. And they sang a new song saying, 'Worthy is the Lamb to take the scroll and loose the seals, for He was slain and has redeemed us by His blood'" (Revelation 5:5–9) "Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world."

One day, by the grace of God, we'll be standing in that heavenly scene and we'll see Him as He comes and takes the scroll and we'll hear there, "Behold, the Lamb of God who has taken away our sins, the sin of the world."

So, John is now with two of his disciples and John is saying to his disciples, they're standing there talking, he says, "Behold, the Lamb of God."

*And the two disciples heard what John said, and they followed Jesus (1:37).*

Now, John's testimony of Jesus is, "Hey, you know, I'm only an attendant to the bridegroom, and I'm honored when the bridegroom is honored, and He must increase, I must decrease." So, John is now pointing his own disciples to Jesus. And one of those disciples happened to be Andrew, the brother of Peter. And so, these two disciples started to follow Jesus and,

*Jesus turned, and he saw them following him, and he said, Who are you looking for? And they said unto him, Rabbi (which is, being interpreted, Master,) where do you live? And Jesus said, Come and see. And they came and saw where he was living, and they stayed with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour (1:38–39).*

It was getting late in the afternoon, four o'clock.

*One of the two which heard John speaking, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother (1:40).*

Now, Andrew, we're not told too much about. He's Simon Peter's brother, but it is interesting that in the New Testament we always find Andrew bringing people to Jesus. That seemed to be his ministry, just bringing people to Jesus, but what a beautiful ministry that is! It was Andrew who brought the little boy to Jesus with the five loaves and two fish. And you'll see him bringing people to Jesus. So, Andrew, first of all,

*found his own brother Simon, and he said unto him, We have found the Messiah, which is, being interpreted, the Christ (1:41).*

So, there you see the Christ is Messiah.

*And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, You're Simon the son of Jonah: and you shall be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone (1:42).*

"You're Simon, the son of Jonah, but you're going to be called Cephas, the stone."

*The following day Jesus came forth into the area of Galilee, and he found Philip, and he said unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, which was the same city where Andrew and Peter originated (1:43–44).*

Actually, Andrew and Peter evidently moved from Bethsaida to Capernaum because Peter had a house in Capernaum where Jesus stayed. But Bethsaida was probably their hometown on up about five miles from Capernaum around the Sea of Galilee and up near where the Jordan River comes into the Sea of Galilee. Now,

*Philip found Nathanael, and said unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph (1:45).*

"We found Him, the one that Moses wrote about, the one the prophets have written about--Jesus of Nazareth."

*And Nathanael said unto him, Can any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip said unto him, Come and see (1:46).*

Nazareth evidently didn't have too good of a reputation. And so, Philip's answer was just a good answer, "You just come and see."

*So Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and he said of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! (1:47)*

You're a straight shooter.

*And Nathanael said unto him, How did you know me? And Jesus answered and said unto him, Before Philip called you, when you were sitting there under that fig tree, I saw you. And Nathanael answered and said unto him, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; you're the King of Israel. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? [Stick around,] you're going to see greater things than that! And he said*

*unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, After this you're going to see the heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of man (1:48–51).*

Where do we find that in scripture? The heaven opened and the angels ascending and descending. Remember when Jacob was running from his brother Esau and he came to Bethel and he was tired and he was scared and he got a rock for a pillow, and he went to sleep and dreamed. In his dream he saw the Lord of heaven standing at the top of the ladder, and the angels of God were ascending and descending. And God spoke to him and said, "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." And in the morning when Jacob got up, he said, "Truly the Lord is in this place and I knew it not."

Now, Jesus, in essence, is saying, "I am the ladder. I am the access by which man can come to God. I'm the One who ties heaven and earth together. You're going to see heaven open. You're going to see the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man." So, the Son of man is the ladder by which heaven is joined to earth.

When one of Job's friends counseled him, "Look man, just get right with God and you'll be over with your problems," he said, "Thanks a lot, you bag of wind! You tell me get right with God. You think you're helping me? Who am I that I can plead my case with God? God is so vast, I look for Him and I don't see Him! I look to my right, I look to my left, I look behind me, and I can't see Him." And he said, "There is no daysman between us who can lay his hand on us both. God is so vast. He fills the universe. I can't see Him. How can I plead my case with Him when I am just so nothing and God is so great, and there's no one between us that can touch us both. Heaven is so high, how can I ascend? How can I plead my case before God?" But Jesus is the answer to that cry of Job. The daysman who stands between God and man, who touches God and who touches me. The daysman between us. He is the ladder that has bridged from the infinite to the finite, from eternal to the time.

## **Chapter 2**

*Now in the third day there was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there (2:1):*

Cana of Galilee is about five or six miles from Nazareth. You're starting from Nazareth, you come over the top of the hill from Nazareth, and you sort of start down this valley that ultimately brings you out to the Sea of Galilee, and it's the path or the road that went from Nazareth to the Sea of Galilee. And Cana is just a little village there. "There was a marriage there in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there."



*And Jesus was invited, and his disciples with him, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus said unto him, They've run out of wine. And Jesus said, What business is that of mine? My hour is not yet come (2:2-4).*

"Woman, what are you trying to do to me, you know? My hour is not yet come."

Now Mary knew more than she was saying. She had pondered all these things in her heart and now she began to realize the full impact of what was happening with this child that was born of the Holy Spirit.

*And his mother said to the servants (2:5),*

Now, it's interesting, Jesus sort of ignored her in a sense. "Woman, what have I to do with you? My hour has not yet come." But Mary said to the servants,

*Whatever he says for you to do, do it. And there were there about six waterpots of stone, that were the type that is used for the purifying, so each of them held two or three firkins apiece (2:5-6).*

And a firkin is about nine gallons, so eighteen to twenty-seven gallons apiece. So, they're good size water pots, the kind that you use for your cleansing ceremonies.

*And Jesus said unto them, Fill the water pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And he said unto them, Now draw it out, and bear it to the governor of the feast. So, they took it to the governor of the feast. And when the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and he knew not its origin, from whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water, they knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and he said unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when everyone is pretty well drunk, then he brings out the worse: but you have kept the best wine until now. Now this is the beginning of miracles which Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him. And after this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and the brothers, and his disciples; and they continued there not many days (2:7-12).*

So, the turning of water into wine, the beginning of the miracles of Jesus. And it is interesting to me that it was at a festive occasion, a marriage feast, and the first miracle, of course, of Christ is very interesting and, perhaps, significant to many.

*And the Jews' passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and he found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the*

*changers of money: And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and he poured out the changers money, and overthrew the tables (2:13–15);*

I love it! There are those who try to picture Jesus as a rather effeminate person, you know, just the kind who wouldn't swat a fly. Just sort of weak and... Oh, but He was a man's man. He came in and when He saw what was going on in his Father's house and He was upset. And He took and made a whip and started cleaning things up, picking up the tables and dumping them over. And it's interesting, one fellow could do so much upsetting of that whole thing, and yet, they couldn't handle Him. I mean, they had to let Him go. Why? Because He was a man's man and they didn't dare to challenge Him.

*He said unto them that sold the doves, Take these things out of here; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise. And his disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of thine house has eaten me up. Then answered the Jews and said unto him, What sign do you show us, seeing that you're doing these things? And Jesus answered the Jews and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up (2:16–19).*

Now, this is an accusation that was brought against Jesus at His trial. "He said that if we'd destroy the temple, He'd rebuild it in three days." Now, they didn't understand what He was talking about. He was talking about His body. But they thought that He was talking about this monstrous building that Herod had begun to construct for the Jews. Herod died before it was ever finished, but he had drawn the plans and had begun the construction of this tremendous temple with its huge stones. And at this point, when Jesus was about thirty years old, they had been working, building on it for some forty-six years. And it would take them another nineteen years to complete it. And there were huge stones, some of them weighing, according to Josephas, as much as one hundred and forty tons.

And so, Jesus said, "Destroy this temple and I'll build it again in three days."

*And they said to him, Forty-six years was this temple in building, and will you rebuild it in three days? But [John tells us] he was speaking of the temple of his body. After he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said. Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and he*

*needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man (2:20–25).*

There were many that believed in Him, but Jesus did not commit Himself to them. He knew all men. He knew what was in man. He knew the fickleness of men. You didn't have to tell Jesus about people, He already knew. How many times do we tell Jesus all about ourselves? He already knows. He needs not that any should testify of man.

So, we move now into chapter 3, and you're going to have a couple of weeks, three weeks or so to study this one over, so you ought to really get it down tight. Chapters 3 and 4 when we come back to the gospel of John.

Shall we stand.

I know some of you want to know if it was real wine that Jesus made. Was it fermented wine or unfermented wine? I don't know. You want me to know things that I don't know. However, the governor spoke of the type of wine that they had to make a person drunk, and the general procedure was to serve your good stuff when everybody's taste buds are fresh and your minds are clear and when it starts getting foggy bring out your junk. They won't know what they are drinking by then. I don't know. I do know that the scriptures teaches that the wine is water and that strong drink is raging and that he who is deceived by it isn't wise. I do know that for an overseer in the church; they are not to be given to wine. A person who has been chosen for the office of the bishop or overseer in the church is not to be given to wine. So all I can do is answer for myself, and I do not and will not drink wine because of my position. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.

I really love the freedom that I have in Christ, the freedom to do or even more important to me, the freedom not to do. I'm glad that I am not bound by something that you know is pulling me down and tearing me down and I can't get away from it. I'm glad that I'm not under the power of something like that. So it may be lawful to do if it can bring me under its power or bring me under its influence, which is a common term. He's under the influence, what does it mean? He's under the power of it.

Now all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of them. I don't want to be. I love my freedom. I like having a clear mind. I like having this freedom that I have. It is absolutely glorious to be so free in Christ Jesus.

So, as you well know I don't set rules for others. I only encourage you to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. Seek it pre-eminently. Seek it diligently. Seek it with all your heart. Follow after the Lord. Don't be deterred by anything. May the God of peace, may the God of love keep your heart and mind steadfast in Jesus Christ that you might grow into that

perfect, complete, mature child of God. That person that He wants you to be, conformed into the image of Jesus Christ, coming into the fullness of the stature of the measure of Jesus Christ.

God bless you, God keep you, and watch over you till we, by His grace, gather together again to learn to worship.