Day 1
Read John 1:1-5

1. How does the author of the gospel of John identify himself? John 21:20-24 (Read the article at the end of the lesson for more information on the apostle John.)

For Your Information: "The author of the Gospel of John does not identify himself by name, but his identity can be learned from the dialogue recorded in 21:1-24. The author calls himself 'the disciple whom Jesus loved'...This was the same 'disciple who...wrote these things' (21:24). The author had to be one of the twelve apostles because he is described as leaning on Jesus' bosom at the Last Supper, an event to which only the apostles were invited (13:23; see Mark 14:17). These details imply that he was one of the three disciples closest to Jesus: Peter, James or John (see Matthew 17:1). He could not be Peter, because 21:20 states that Peter looked back and saw this one Jesus loved, and in another place asked a question of him (13:23,24). On the other hand, James was martyred too early to be the author of the Gospel (see Acts 12:1,2). Thus it is reasonable to conclude that this book was written by the apostle John. This conclusion is supported by early Christians such as Polycarp (A.D. 60-155), who was a follower of John." - The Nelson Study Bible (1754)

2. What was John's purpose in writing this gospel? John 20:31

3. What does John say about his “testimony/record?” John 19:35 (Compare 1 John 1:1-3)

For Your Information: "Each of the gospels emphasizes a different origin of Jesus.
- Matthew shows Jesus came from Abraham through David, and demonstrates that He is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament (Matthew 1:1-17).
- Mark shows Jesus came from Nazareth, demonstrating that Jesus is a Servant (Mark 1:9).
- John shows Jesus came from heaven, demonstrating that Jesus is God.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are known as the three synoptic gospels. Synoptic means 'see-together' and the first three gospels present Jesus' life in pretty much the same format. The first three gospels focus more on what Jesus taught and did; John focuses more on who Jesus is. John shows us who Jesus is by highlighting seven signs (miracles) of Jesus. Six of these miracles are not mentioned in the first three gospels." - David Guzik

The Eternal Word

4. Record the phrases that describe “the Word” in John 1:1-2. (Note: Who is the Word? 1:14,17)
   • 1:1
   • 1:2

For Your Information: "In the beginning”
"The Greek phrase can mean the moment of beginning (of history) or the root cause (of everything). John’s Gospel is full of phrases that can have more than one meaning.” - John (Life Change Series) (20)
"The word ‘was’ indicates that the Word already existed at that point in the past labelled ‘the beginning’...John is saying that the Word has existed from eternity.” - Africa Bible Commentary (1252)
"The literal rendering of John’s first sentence is, ‘In beginning was existing the Word.’” – Charles Swindoll (24)
5. From 1:3-4, list the phrases that describe what the Word does.

6. Compare John 1:3 with Genesis 1:1. What conclusion do you draw about the Word?

For Your Information: "In the mind of the ancient Jews, the phrase 'the word of God' could be used to refer to God Himself.
The Greek philosophers saw the logos as the power which puts sense into the world, making the world orderly instead of chaotic. The logos was the power that set the world in perfect order and kept it going in perfect order. They saw the logos as the 'Ultimate Reason' that controlled all things. Therefore, in this opening, John says to both Jews and Greeks: 'For centuries you've been talking, thinking, and writing about the Word (the logos). Now I will tell you who He is.'" – David Guzik

7. Underline how Jesus' deity is described in the following verses.
   • Philippians 2:6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, NIV
   • Philippians 2:6 Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped NASU
   • Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. NASU
   • Hebrews 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word... NIV

8. What does Christ’s “life” bring into our lives? 1:4
   • How does Acts 26:18 define light and darkness?

9. How does the power of the light compare to darkness? 1:5

For Your Information: "The word translated 'comprehend' (1:5) can mean (1) to take hold of; (2) to overpower; or (3) to understand. Therefore, this verse may mean that darkness did not positively take hold of or understand the light, or that darkness did not negatively overcome the light. Both statements are true. Humans did not appropriate or understand the light, nor did they overtake or over power it. Although Satan and his forces resist the light, they cannot thwart its power."

– The Nelson Study Bible (1755)

Applying the Word: How does the description of the Word in 1:1-5, impact your understanding of God?
Day 2
Read John 1:6-13
John the Baptist’s Ministry

10. What was John’s role concerning the light? 1:6-8 (Compare the prophecy in Luke 1:76-77.)


   • It’s origin (1:4)
   • It’s relationship to darkness (1:5)
   • It’s nature (1:9a)
   • It’s availability (1:9b)

13. What phrases in 1:10-11 describe mankind’s reaction to the Word?

14. List the phrases in 1:12,13b that describe how a person becomes a child of God.
   • List the three phrases that describe how a person doesn’t become a child of God? 1:13

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**For Your Information:** “Depending on the context, world can refer to (1) the universe; (2) the earth; (3) humanity; or (4) the human system opposed to God.”

“The world did not know Him “Here [world] applies to the material and spiritual environment in which men live...The world as a system had no comprehension of the manifested Word, and no place for Him...This ignorance was the basis of the conflict, for what the world did not appreciate it rejected, and what it rejected, it hated.”

- The Nelson Study Bible (1757)
- Merrill C. Tenney (67-68)

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**IT’S GREEK TO ME** "believe" (1:7,12) Strong’s #4100 pisteuo; to have faith (in, upon, or with respect to, a person or thing), i.e. credit; by implication, to entrust (especially one’s spiritual well-being to Christ). – Strong’s Concordance

“The Greek term pisteuo means "to acknowledge the truth as truth.” To believe in Christ is, first, to accept what He says as truth. Second, and more importantly, pisteuo means 'to trust, to rely upon, to derive confidence in something or someone. When I say I believe in Jesus Christ, I declare that I trust Him, I rely on Him, I have placed my complete confidence in Him.”

- Charles Swindoll (17)

“believe in His name (1:12) To the ancients, someone’s name represented the essence of his character. To believe ‘on the name’ (literally) of the Word means to trust who the Word really is...In Greek accounting documents, ‘on the name of’ has the sense of 'to the possession of.’ So, John may also be saying that believing means yielding ourselves to be owned by Him whom we believe in.”

- John (Life Change Series) (23.24)
Day 3
Read John 1:14-18
The Incarnation

15. Compare John 1:14a to 1:1. What does this add to the account of the “baby in Bethlehem?” (Luke 2:6,7)

16. When Jesus manifested Himself in the flesh, what was He revealing to us? 1:14 (Compare 2 Corinthians 4:6)

17. Underline the words that describe Jesus’ incarnation (becoming flesh) in the following:

- Hebrews 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil. NIV
- Romans 8:3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. NIV
- Philippians 2:5-8 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, NASU
- 1 Timothy 3:16 Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body. NIV
- 1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh. NKJV
18. What did John the Baptist understand about Jesus? 1:15 (Compare Colossians 1:17)

19. What does Christ’s life mean for us? 1:16 (Compare Ephesians 1:6,7)

- How does this surpass the revelation given in the Old Testament? 1:17 (Compare Hebrews 10:1; Colossians 2:17)

20. What else did Jesus’ life on earth bring? 1:18 (Compare John 17:26; Hebrews 1:1,2)

21. List the titles given to Jesus in 1:14-18.

For Your Information: "The law was a shadow of the real thing that was to come, even though it was the will of God and was based on the grace of God. The fuller revelation of God through Jesus Christ reveals further grace. That is why John speaks of our receiving one blessing after another (1:16). The true thing foreshadowed in the law has now come."
- Africa Bible Commentary (1253)

"These verses suggest that what has now been revealed in Christ is much better, as it constitutes the full revelation of God, in contrast to the incomplete picture that the human race previously had, expressed in the law. In fact, in 1:18, John says that for the first time God Himself has truly been made known – in reality...The Lord Jesus never came to introduce a new religion called ‘Christianity.’ He came to introduce Himself and His Father in an open, direct way, as had never before been experienced."
- W. M. Henry (8,9)

"It is an inexhaustible supply of grace (grace for grace) and truth, contrasting with an order of rigid laws and regulations given through Moses."
- David Guzik

For Your Information: Romans 1:18  NIV Translation: "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."

"John has carefully presented his evidence and shown that this Jesus of Nazareth, this carpenter’s son, could be none other than the Son of God – because He’s eternal (vv. 1-2), because He’s the Creator (v. 3), because He’s the source of life (vv.4-13), because He’s God’s manifested glory (vv.14-17) and because He’s the unique explanation of God (v.18)."
- Charles Swindoll (EC 14)

"God is Spirit (4:24) and is invisible (see Col. 1:15; I Timothy 1:17) unless God choose to reveal Himself. Humans cannot look at God and live (Ex. 33:20)...God became visible to human eyes in the man Jesus. It is through seeing the Son that we see God. We cannot see Him today, but we know Him through His word."
- The Nelson Study Bible (1758)

Applying the Word: How would you explain why God became “flesh?”
Day 4
Read John 1:19-34
John’s Ministry

22. Why do you think the religious leaders in Jerusalem (1:19,24) were interested in John’s ministry? See Mark 1:5

23. Why would the leaders have thought John might be the Christ, or Elijah, or “the prophet” (1:20,21)? See Malachi 3:1, 4:5; Deuteronomy 18:15

24. How did John portray his ministry? 1:23 (See Isaiah 40:3)

25. Instead of defending his authority (1:25), how did John answer? 1:26,27

- How did John’s baptisms differ from Jesus’? Compare 1:26 with 1:33b (See also Matthew 3:11)
26. List the titles and roles John the Baptist used to describe Jesus.
   • 1:29
   • 1:30
   • 1:33
   • 1:34

27. What was the purpose of John’s baptisms?
   • John 1:31
   • Mark 1:4

28. How did John come to know Jesus? 1:32-34 (Compare Isaiah 11:1,2; 61:1)

   For Your Information: “In the Old Testament, the Israelites sacrificed lambs at the Passover feast (see Ex. 12:21) and as offerings (see Lev. 14:10-25. Jesus Christ is the lamb that God would give as a sacrifice for the sins not only of Israel, but of the whole world (Isaiah 52:13-53:12).” - The Nelson Study Bible (1759)

   For Your Information: “John and Jesus were cousins, so they probably knew each other. But John apparently did not know that Jesus was the Messiah. All John knew was that he was to baptize with water and that the Messiah would be made known to Israel through him.” - The Nelson Study Bible (1759)

   Applying the Word: In what ways has the Lord called you to serve Him at this time of your life? How content are you in doing these things? What does John’s example teach you?

Optional Digging Deeper
Memorize John 1:1

Optional Digging Deeper
From Matthew 3:13-17, how did John feel about baptizing Jesus?

Why did Jesus want John to baptize him?

What significant event happened after Jesus’ baptism that is not recorded in John?
JOHN THE APOSTLE

One of Jesus' twelve disciples, the son of Zebedee, and the brother of James. Before his call by Jesus, John was a fisherman on the Sea of Galilee, along with his father and brother (Matt 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20). His mother was probably Salome (Matt 27:56; Mark 15:40), who may have been a sister of Mary (John 19:25), the mother of Jesus.

Although it is not certain that Salome and Mary were sisters, if it were so it would make James and John cousins of Jesus. This would help explain Salome's forward request of Jesus on behalf of her sons (Mark 20:20-28). The Zebedee family apparently lived in Capernaum on the north shore of the Sea of Galilee (Mark 1:21). The family must have been prosperous, because the father owned a boat and hired servants (Mark 1:19-20). Salome the mother provided for Jesus out of her substance (Mark 15:40-41; Luke 8:3). John must have been the younger of the two brothers, for he is always mentioned second to James in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

The brothers Zebedee were the first disciples called by Jesus after His baptism (Mark 1:19-20). This happened immediately after the call of two other brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew (Mark 1:16-18), with whom they may have been in partnership (Luke 5:10). Three of the four-Peter, James, and John-eventually became Jesus' most intimate disciples. They were present when Jesus healed the daughter of Jairus (Mark 5:37; Luke 8:51). They witnessed His TRANSFIGURATION (Matt 17:1-2; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28-29), as well as His agony in Gethsemane (Matt 26:37; Mark 14:33). Along with Peter, John was entrusted by Jesus with preparations for the Passover supper (Luke 22:8).

James and John must have contributed a headstrong element to Jesus' band of followers, because Jesus nicknamed them "Sons of Thunder" (Mark 3:17). On one occasion (Luke 9:51-56), when a Samaritan village refused to accept Jesus, the two offered to call down fire in revenge, as the prophet Elijah had once done (2 Kings 1:10,12). On another occasion, they earned the anger of their fellow disciples by asking if they could sit on Jesus' right and left hands in glory (Mark 10:35-45).

Following the ascension of Jesus, John continued in a prominent position of leadership among the disciples (Acts 1:13). He was present when Peter healed the lame man in the Temple. Together with Peter he bore witness before the Sanhedrin to his faith in Jesus Christ. The boldness of their testimony brought the hostility of the Sanhedrin (Acts 3-4). When the apostles in Jerusalem received word of the evangelization of Samaria, they sent Peter and John to investigate whether the conversions were genuine (Acts 8:14-25). This was a curious thing to do. The Samaritans had long been suspect in the eyes of the Jews (John 4:9). John himself had once favored the destruction of a Samaritan village (Luke 9:51-56). That he was present on this mission suggests he had experienced a remarkable change.

In these episodes Peter appears as the leader and spokesman for the pair, but John's presence on such errands indicates his esteem by the growing circle of disciples. After the execution of his brother James by Herod Agrippa I, between A.D. 42-44 (Acts 12:1-2), John is not heard of again in Acts. Paul's testimony to John as one of the "pillars," along with Peter and James (the Lord's brother, Gal 2:9), however, reveals that John continued to hold a position of respect and leadership in the early church. As might be expected of one of Jesus' three closest disciples, John became the subject of an active and varied church tradition. Tertullian (about A.D. 160-220) said that John ended up in Rome, where he was "plunged, unhurt, into boiling oil." A much later tradition believed that both James and John were martyred. The dominant tradition, however, was that the apostle John moved to Ephesus in Asia Minor, and that from there he was banished to the Island of Patmos (during Domitian's reign, A.D. 81-96). Tradition also held that he returned later to Ephesus, where he died some time after Trajan became emperor in A.D. 98...

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