

## **Series: The Gospel of John**

### **Background to the series**

When the lockdown, due to Covid-19, started in March 2020, we were due to go to Zimbabwe to train our friends there from the book of John. The initial lockdown was 21 days, so I started messages in Afrikaans on the 21 chapters of the book of John. Now, more than six months later we are still not able to travel to Zimbabwe. I therefore decided to translate these messages in English and Shona so that my friends, who I did the original preparation for, can also benefit from them.

### **Day 1: The Word: God's final and decisive message**

#### **Prayer**

O God, open our eyes to the wonder of your Gospel as we read today. Grant that we will seek Your will and not instant solutions for our own selfish benefit or short-term worries. Teach us to trust in You fully and walk step by step in Your truth.

Fill us now with Your love. Fill us so much that it will overflow into joy. A joy that transcends all understanding. A joy that will overflow to everyone around us in this time of crisis.

Amen.

#### **Introduction**

When we look at the Gospel of John we need to start at the purpose of this book. We need to understand why John wrote this book. After that we will also step into the first few verses, that will be our goal for today.

#### **The purpose of the book**

We find the purpose of the book in John 20:30-31. There is written:

*30 Now Jesus did many other **signs**  
in the presence of the disciples,  
which are not written in **this book**;*

*31 but **these** are written  
so that you may believe  
that*

*Jesus is the Christ,  
the Son of God,  
and that by **believing**  
you may have life  
in his name. (John 20:30-31)*

So, he gives us signs. Signs that needs to convince us of something. Why? There is written “so that...” these are written so that you may believe... he repeats it two times.

so that you may believe

that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God,

Jesus the Christ, the Son of God. What happens when we believe it?

that by believing

you may have life

in his name

In whose name? The name of Jesus Christ. So, the Gospel of John gives us the answer to how we may have life: We need to look at the signs that is written in this gospel, but also the signs that we see in our lives, that we may believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

## **In the beginning was the Word**

John starts his Gospel by showing us who Jesus Christ is. He begins with the words: “In the beginning...” The whole Bible starts with the words: “In the beginning...” So, John jumps back to the start of the Bible. The other Gospels tells us about the birth of Jesus Christ as the start of the Gospel. But John goes back much further:

1 In the beginning was **the Word**,  
and **the Word** was with God,  
and **the Word** was God.

He emphasises again:

2 He was in the beginning  
with God. (John 1:1-2)

We find it in a few places in scripture. Here is a good example in Jude 1:25:

*to the only God, our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. (Jude 1:25)*

So as far as you can think back, so far back, but also where we are now and to all eternity, Jesus Christ is there.

He says:

In the beginning was **the Word**,  
and **the Word** was with God,  
and **the Word** was God.

Here we see him emphasising “the Word” three times. If we read a little further in John 1:14, which we will discuss later, it says:

And **the Word** became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14)

So, John 1 starts by speaking about Jesus Christ as **the Word**. **The Word** that was **with God** and that was **God**. But it He is more than just a message. He is the final and decisive message. Why do I say that? I find the reason in Revelation 19:11-13.

*11 Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called **Faithful and True**, and in **righteousness** he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. 13 He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is **The Word of God**. (Revelation 19:11-13)*

So, **Jesus as the Word** is the one who will bring the final and decisive message. And therefore, the Gospel of John is of great importance to us.

### **Let us conclude.**

The reason why the gospel of John was written was  
That we may **believe, and have life!**

The first two verse of John 1 showed as what to believe  
We need to **believe** that **Jesus is the Son of God**.

Just as it is written here: The Word was with God and the Word was God. In the first verse John gives us enough information to believe. We actually don't need to read the rest of the Gospel. If only we realize that this is the final and decisive message.

So, our theme for today:

#### **The Word:**

**God's final and decisive message**

**Do you believe it?**

### **Reflection**

Read the passages again and write down what you learned about God and about Jesus Christ.

### **Thanksgiving**

When you reflect on these passages, what thoughts of gratitude is the Holy Spirit stirring up in your heart? Where to does it want to overflow? Write down one, very specific, thing that you are going to do differently during today.

### **Prayer**

Close the session with a prayer as the Spirit guides you.