

Jesus: Word, Light, and Life of God

#0973

Study given by W.D. Frazee—October 8, 1966

Several Sabbaths ago we had a blessed time studying a chapter in the Bible, you remember, in Malachi; that was from the Old Testament. This morning we're going to study some things from the first chapter of John. One of the great purposes of coming to God's house on God's day is that we may hear God's Word. Through the Bible, God is speaking to us.

John 1, beginning with the first verse:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 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. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He 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, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" John 1:1-14.

You will notice in these opening verses that Jesus is set forth as the Word, the Light, the Life—three great words that express the revelation of the Father. Calling Him the Word brings to us the thought that He is the expression of God's thinking. We think and then we speak words. God thought and Jesus came to this world to be the spoken Word, the revelation of God's thoughts. Also He is set forth here as Light, the Light of men. Since He was with the Father from the beginning, He shares with the Father in that eternal pre-existence which belongs to deity. In Him "is life original, unborrowed, underived" (*Desire of Ages*, page 530). In the beginning He already was. There never

was a time when He was not with the Father. "In the beginning was the Word..." From the beginning was the life and this "...life was the light of men." (See John 1).

It was Christ who, the first day of creation, spoke into the darkness, "Let there be light." Every ray of light that has ever shown upon this world has come from Jesus. And when through sin the earth was shrouded in darkness, Jesus came from heaven to reveal the light of God to men. Now there is one word which comprehends, it includes, all three of these. In fact, this one word is what the Word was designed to say, and what the Light was designed to reveal, and what the Life was designed to demonstrate, and that word is *love*. And so the same John who wrote this book, in his epistle says:

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" 1 John 4:8.

Love is the *thought* of God, and Jesus, the Word, was God's thought made audible. He revealed love. Love is the *life* of God. "He that loveth not," the Scripture says, "...abideth in death" 1 John 3:14. And Jesus is God's life, God's love, revealed to us.

Love is the light of God. Selfishness is darkness. Love is light. And upon the world's dark night, the Son of Righteousness has arisen, "...with healing in His wings..." (Malachi 4:2).

The sad part of the verses we have read is that when Jesus came as the Word of God, the Light of God, the Life of God, very few recognized it. You know, sometimes today, when God has a message, a truth for the world, there are those who think that they are passing judgment upon it as they say, "Well, I don't see very much in that." We need to remember that the world at large saw very little when Jesus was here 2,000 years ago. The Roman world went on much as if He had not come. The world of culture and education continued on its tradition-bound ways. The religious world into which Jesus was born resisted Him and His teachings. It is true that by and by, as the result of His coming, there came some great changes in the world. But my point is that during the time He was here, He was largely unrecognized. John sums it up in the 11th verse:

"He came unto his own, and his own received him not" John 1:11.

So my dear friends, if we are waiting for the world to recognize truth, or the messengers of truth, we may wait in vain. To each of us Jesus comes as He came 2,000 years ago. It may be in an unexpected way; it may be with some change in our life that He points out that needs to be made. Oh what a shame it is if, as He comes to us, His own, we recognize Him not; we receive Him not; we leave Him waiting on the porch while we busy ourselves with the custom rounds.

But while many did not receive Him, those who *did* receive Him, received with Him, what? Power. Power to *do* what? To become the sons of God. As many as did

what? Received him and believed. So this morning, if we receive Him and believe Him, we too have the power to be God's children. And this spiritual birth makes us the children of God. The 15th verse:

"John bear witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me" John 1:15.

John the Baptist recognized that although Christ was born into this world after he (John) was, yet He had existed from eternity with the Father. He recognized in Christ the Sent of God. And John the evangelist, the writer of the book, adds:

"And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" John 1:16.

I like this expression "and grace for grace." This means, friends, that every time we receive grace, the way is open for us to receive *more* grace. Every time God gives us grace, *if* we receive it, it means that He is going to give us some more, and some more, and some more. "Grace for grace." Did He give you grace yesterday? He will give you some more today. Has He given you grace today? He'll give you more tomorrow.

"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" John 1:16-17.

There are those who read this verse and think that the law is set aside, but Paul tells us very plainly in Galatians 3 that the law is our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The fact that the law came through Moses and grace and truth came by Jesus Christ doesn't mean that *either* of them can be set aside. One member of the family may bring home some bread and another bring home some beans or milk. We'll use both when it comes time to eat, won't we? That's right. And so we need the law that came by Moses; we need the grace and truth that was revealed through Jesus Christ.

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" John 1:18.

Think of it! Only one being in *all* the universe has truly, fully seen God the Father. No one else was fully acquainted with it. Even the angels who are there in heaven—they had not been able *fully* to enter into the counsels of the Most High. Lucifer thought he wanted to, but he certainly took a poor way to indicate his interest, didn't he? He missed it. But there was One who understood God; this was Jesus, the Father's Son. And so into this world, this one lost planet, Jesus came that He might reveal that which He knew—that was the Father.

Now we're down at the Jordan. There is a deputation that has come, a group of men from Jerusalem.

“And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ” John 1:19-20.

They were looking for the Messiah. What did John say? “I’m not the Messiah.”

“And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet?” John 1:21.

That was Moses. Some of the Jews thought that Moses was coming back.

“And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias” John 1:21-23.

Note that John recognized that he was the fulfillment of what? Prophecy. That’s right. He was the fulfillment of prophecy. Do Seventh-day Adventists recognize that they are the fulfillment of prophecy? Yes. I love to hear Elder Richard’s voice coming over the air waves, quoting this same prophecy: “...the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord.” And the Voice of Prophecy, heard literally around the world, is a part of this great movement which is fulfilling Bible prophecy. Isn’t it a wonderful thing, friends, to be a part of a movement that knows its place in time and in Bible plans? Thus the Bible is to us not merely a ‘good’ book of some things that happened long ago and some teachings of long ago; it is an up-to-the-present, up-to-the-minute timetable, an up-to-the-minute schedule, and as we study the Bible, we find again and again where we can say as Jesus said in the synagogue:

“This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” Luke 4:21.

My point is, John was doing that that *day*. They said, “Who are you; are you this?” “No.” “Are you that?” “No.” “What are you?” “Oh, I’m the one that Isaiah prophesied about, the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord.”

“And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe’s

latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing” John 1:24-28.

Who was John talking about when he said, “There’s one among you, there’s one standing right here in this crowd today, that I have come to prepare the way for?” Who was he talking about? He was talking about Christ, that’s right. And oh, with the deepest interest they must have looked around and they thought, “Who is it?” They didn’t see anybody there they thought looked like Jesus Christ. Their ideas of what the Messiah would look like were so different.

Were you ever sent to a depot to get somebody— a bus depot, a train depot, or the airport, for somebody you had never seen, and you wondered how you would find them? Looking all around that crowd, they couldn’t see anybody that looked like a Messiah. Was He there?

So watch how God in His goodness comes close to people:

“The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him and saith, Behold the lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh 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 am I come baptizing with water” John 1:29-31.

What does John mean, “I know him not”? Why, John had never met Jesus until the day He came to be baptized. The Lord had arranged it that there should be no opportunity for the people to think that they had gotten together and conspired. The Holy Spirit had told John that Jesus, the Messiah, would come and receive baptism at his hands and He gave him a sign.

Listen as he tells the story here:

And John bear 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 baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bear record that this is the Son of God” John 1:32-34.

Who was it that sent him? God.

So John had identified Him. The Messiah was there among them. You notice the expression, “the next day.” First we see Him the day when, hidden in the crowd and

unnoticed, John says, “the Messiah is among you.” The next day John points Him out, “Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.” This is the one!

“Again the next day [this is the third day, you see] after John stood, and two of his disciples; And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the lamb of God!” John 1:35-36.

Now watch what follows:

“And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was about the tenth hour” John 1:37-39.

(That is about 4 o’clock in the afternoon.)

Now notice. Here one day John the Baptist says, “the Messiah is here among us.” The next day he points out Jesus, “Behold the Lamb of God.” The third day, he points Him out again and especially to two of his disciples. One was Andrew; the other was John the Evangelist, who sixty years later wrote this record, inspired by the Holy Spirit. And as John the Baptist pointed out the Messiah for the second time, in the hearts of these young disciples of John the Baptist was kindled a holy fire, an unquenchable longing. They said, “We must get close to that One.” And so they followed Him. And we see them there going down along the banks of Jordan through the willows and these disciples following—awed, perhaps in a sense just a bit timid, and yet so anxious to make contact—respectful... waiting... but following.

Jesus knew what was in their hearts and He turned and said what? “What are you looking for? What would you like?” How often God asks us questions to get us to commit ourselves, to get us to express ourselves. And may I say to you young people, and older ones too, don’t be afraid to go after help. Don’t be afraid to go after advice. Don’t be afraid to go after instruction. And if it takes a little effort, okay. Valuable things usually cost something.

And so these two, out of all the multitudes that had heard John speak, were the two that *pressed* themselves into the presence of Christ. And as Jesus said, “What do you want?” they didn’t timidly say, “Oh nothing, I guess.” Oh no! They said, “Master, (or Teacher), where do you live? Where are you staying?” indicating, of course, that they wanted to spend some time with Him. Jesus didn’t repulse them. What did He say? “Come and see. Come and see.”

And oh the Bible tells us many things and some things I’d like to know. I’d just *love* to know where it was Jesus took them that afternoon. I wonder if He had a little

tent down there by the riverside or whether He was just camped under the willows or where He was. But anyway it says, “they came and saw where he dwelt and abode with him that day.” It was 4 o’clock in the afternoon. Wouldn’t you love to have heard what He said and what they said?

This, my dear friends, was the beginning of the Christian church. And everybody that has ever been a member of the Christian church, and there have been millions through the ages, was invited by somebody who was there in that little prayer band of three men that afternoon by the Jordan. Everybody. Everybody.

Now notice how the leaven began to work immediately:

“One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus...” John 1:40-42.

How long did it take Andrew to get into action in getting a convert? One day. One day. He found Jesus at 4 o’clock in the afternoon and before sunset he had his man and was back with him!

“...And when Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, a stone” John 1:42.

Now watch how Jesus spreads the influence, widens the circle:

“The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see” John 1:43-46.

Did Nathaniel come? Oh yes. I want you to notice how Philip said the same thing that Jesus was saying to the others. Jesus had said to the disciples the day before, “Come and see.” Now this next day, the fourth day of the story, Philip is echoing it to his friend Nathanael. What does he say? “Come and see. *Come and see.*”

And friends, what He had wasn’t some great temple. It wasn’t some vast cathedral. It wasn’t some large institution. It’s doubtful if He was even in some rented dwelling. He was probably just out under the trees. But what was it? What was there? Oh, that *Word* was there which spoke from the heart of God. That *Life* was there. That

Light was there. And men came to hear the Word, to see the Light, to share the Life. Oh, that you and I may share with others that Light, that Life, that Word, as Andrew did with Peter and as Philip did with Nathanael.

Now I want to read you an interesting comment on this in *Desire of Ages*, page 141, and then I want to hear from you.

“With the calling of John and Andrew and Simon, of Philip and Nathanael, began the foundation of the Christian church. John directed two of his disciples to Christ. Then one of these, Andrew, found his brother, and called him to the Saviour. Philip was then called, and he went in search of Nathanael. These examples should teach us the importance of personal effort, of making direct appeals to our kindred, friends, and neighbors. There are those who for a lifetime have professed to be acquainted with Christ, yet who have never made a personal effort to bring even one soul to the Saviour. They leave all the work for the minister. He may be well qualified for his calling, but he cannot do that which God has left for the members of the church.

There are many who need the ministration of loving Christian hearts. Many have gone down to ruin who might have been saved if their neighbors, common men and women, had put forth personal effort for them. Many are waiting to be personally addressed” *Desire of Ages*, page 141.

I want to read that last sentence again and then I want you to say it with me: “Many are waiting to be personally addressed.”

Together:

[Congregation repeats with Elder Frazee: “Many are waiting to be personally addressed.”]

Again:

[Congregation repeats with Elder Frazee: “Many are waiting to be personally addressed.”]

Is somebody waiting for *you*? Yes. Somebody is waiting for you. Think of it! You have in your hands a key that fits a certain lock, a word that will reach a certain heart. Somebody I can’t reach, you *can*. “Many are waiting to be personally addressed.”

What if you *do* bungle? Brother Qualls, I suppose there's many a colporteur that bungles the first day he goes out, right? Or even the first week, or perhaps sometimes thereafter. But he keeps knocking on doors, ringing door bells, seeking to get in, right? And someday, it might be the first day, but *someday* he places a book, he gets an order, right? And usually he forgets the discouragements and the disappointments in the joy of having succeeded. Dear ones, if you and I will keep talking to people, (this is the thing I would like to have us focus on as we come to the focus of this chapter), if we will keep on talking to people about coming to Jesus, God will give us souls as He did back there at the beginning of the church.

Now I'd like to hear a word this morning from somebody who caught an inspiration today in this morning's service and by God's grace you've got to do something about it. Will you stand up and put in words your conclusion and your determination. God will be pleased, so pleased, to hear you and the angels will write it down in the book.

[Testimony service followed by congregation singing the closing song, *Bring Them In.*]

Our heavenly Father, we thank You with all our hearts this morning that the Word has revealed Thy thoughts, the Light has shone into our hearts, and Thy Life has been shared with us through Jesus, Thy dear Son. Teach us now how to share with others what Thou hast shared with us. For His dear sake He died for us. Amen.

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