

**UPPER ROOM ADULT BIBLE STUDY**  
**“The Gospel of John”**  
**Pastor Jim Otte**  
**Spring – Fall, 2019**

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**Lesson 2:** Introduction (Continued)  
John 1:1-18. The Word Made Flesh

**A. The rise of heresies was threatening the people’s confidence in the truth.**

1. **John the Baptist sect** – Baptized by John, but never evolving beyond; appealed to his prophetic voice (**Acts 19:1-7**).
2. **Judaizers sect** – believed that, in order to be a Christian, one must become Jewish first, i.e. be circumcised; follow the Jewish traditions; etc.
3. **Gnosticism** – dualism: matter is evil; spirit is good.
  - a. A perfect God cannot touch matter (evil); therefore God did not create the world/universe.
  - b. A ‘creator god’ did create the world, but it is not the “real” God.
  - c. Cerinthus quote: *“the world was created, not by god, but by a power separate from him, and far distant from that Power who is over the universe, and is ignorant of the God who is over all.”* (Barclay, p.12)
  - d. Gnostic beliefs about Jesus:
    - i. Since divinity could only exist in the Unseen World, Jesus was not divine in the Seen World.
    - ii. Jesus could not be flesh and blood (matter).
    - iii. Jesus, therefore, was not the God-Man Savior of the world.
4. **Modern day references to God, which echo Gnostic influences:**
  - a. “Higher Power”
  - b. gods of reincarnation
  - c. “immortality” (no beginning/no ending) of the soul
  - d. New age references to God as a primary energy source
  - e. Jesus as “teacher,” but not as divine Savior
5. **Problem with Gnosticism:**
  - a. God is disinterested in mankind, because He cannot touch matter (essentially evil)
  - b. God has no love for mankind.
  - c. God does not seek closeness with man; man must seek closeness with God via secret knowledge, codes, etc., which are hidden in the scriptures and other books of wisdom
  - d. Jesus is not the Savior of the world; God is not interested in saving mankind.

**A. John's use of the stories of Jesus' ministry, His teachings, and His miracles directly address the Gnostic heresies.**

- a. "All things were made through Him..." John 1:3
- b. "For God so loved the world..." John 3:16
- c. "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us." John 1:14

**B. John spells out the purpose, for which he is publishing this gospel:**

- a. **John 20:30-31.** "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> 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."

**C. Outreach Applications (to a post-Christian culture):**

1. Strive to meet people where they \_\_\_\_\_ (as a starting point).
2. Keep your faith \_\_\_\_\_ (identity as a baptized & beloved child of God) strong through the Word & Sacraments.
3. Your core will be \_\_\_\_\_.

**John 1:1-5**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not a thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In him was life,<sup>[a]</sup> and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

- a. **"was the Word...with God...Word was God." – "Logos"** – The Holy Spirit moved John to write the word "Logos" in order to introduce Greeks to Jesus! He shifted their understanding from "logos" as a thing – to "logos" as a person.
  - a. the Jewish understanding of the "logos" was:
    - i. the power of the spoken word
      1. **Genesis 1** – "And God said..."
      2. **Isaiah 55:11.** – "so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."
    - ii. The power of godly wisdom; i.e. the Book of Proverbs.
  - b. **"Logos" to the Greek mind was:**
    - i. The power of the reason of God, bringing order out of chaos, i.e. "the Mind of God."
    - ii. Man's ability to reason resulted from the "Mind of God" being in mankind.
    - iii. Heraclitus: "all things happen according to the Logos"
- b. **"He"** – The Christ was present "in the beginning" before time existed.

- c. **“All things were made”** – the Christ was present and active in the creation of the material (Seen) world.
- d. **“In him was life...the light”** – “life” and “light” are among the central themes in the gospel of John, as is “death” and “darkness.” The benefits of light contrast the drawbacks of darkness:
  - a. **Light brings order; darkness brings fear of what you can’t see.**
  - b. **Light reveals; darkness hides.**
  - c. **Light guides with clarity; darkness blinds.**
  - d. **Light overcomes darkness; darkness is hostile to the light.**

#### **D. Outreach Applications to a Post-Christian Culture**

- a. Trust in the power of \_\_\_\_\_ Word.
- b. Remember that people in darkness can be blinded if the light is \_\_\_\_\_ bright too suddenly.
- c. When you live the “light,” some people in the darkness may be drawn to you.

#### **E. Implications of the Post-Christian Culture**

- a. God did not create (make out of nothing) the universe and us.
- b. God can make no legitimate claim on us, either as our Creator, our Redeemer, or our Sanctifier.
- c. Therefore, God’s Word has no bearing on how we live our lives and is no source of security (faith, hope, or love).
- d. Problem:
  - i. We were created in God’s image desiring a deep connection with our Creator.
  - ii. The hole in our souls can only be satisfied by that connection.
  - iii. Absent that connection with God, we will seek security in externals.
  - iv. Externals (fig leaves) ultimately fail and can offer no enduring security (hopelessness/helplessness).
  - v. Escape from the hole in our souls becomes attractive: suicide, depression/anxiety; addictions; etc.