

THE WORD BECAME FLESH

by The Creative Team @ hope

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:1-5)

We spent the past twelve months going through the Book of Acts. For 2012, our Sunday morning messages will focus on the Gospel of John, the fourth of the New Testament Gospels. It was only after much discussion and prayer time that the Creative Team selected this gospel for the new year. Hope's Creative Team consists of David Anderson, Ray Wolff, David Rosh, Erik Joiner, Monique Wolff, and Michelle Joiner. Our fearless teachers David Anderson, Ray Wolff, and David Rosch will be teaching from the scriptures found in this Gospel. We hope this article can provide you with a brief background and introduction to John.

The text does not actually name its author, but it is widely believed the author is the apostle John, also known as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23). The author identifies himself in the last chapter of the gospel, "This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true" (John 21:24). The book is filled with first hand accounts of experiences with Jesus Christ that occurred during Christ's 33 years of life on earth. A majority of the text found in John is unique when compared to the previous Gospels. Scholars generally accept that the Gospel was written during the first century, probably in Ephesus. There are various views on the exact dating of the text, but it is believed to be sometime between A.D. 50 – A.D. 85.

John's Gospel is rather different than the other three Gospels. John describes Jesus as the human form of the divine Son, the incarnation of the Word. He shares his eyewitness accounts of Jesus' public ministry and places a strong emphasis on the miracles and signs of Jesus. He intended to communicate the knowledge of Jesus as the Son of God. "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written 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).

This Gospel also includes what is referred to as "The Passion Narrative" recounting the events of the last supper, Jesus' arrest, trials, crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection. Reading and understanding the historical record of these events is one of the cornerstones of the Christian faith. One of the most well known and quoted scriptures in the world comes from John, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

The Gospel of John presents many important lessons for living life on Earth and determining our eternal destiny. First, the book clearly establishes that Jesus Christ is the Messiah that was prophesized in the Old Testament of the Bible. Second, the book substantiates the purpose of Jesus Christ and the reason He was sent to Earth by God. In addition, the Gospel of John distinguishes itself from the other gospels by focusing less on events and more on spiritual themes. Lastly, there is a clear message in the Gospel of John that helps us understand the truth about God, the truth about eternity, and the truth about making a choice to accept Jesus Christ as our personal Savior.

Of course, a summary of this Gospel can only provide highlights to the actual text and cannot replace it. You are encouraged to read the Gospel of John on your own to learn more about Jesus Christ and His plan for your life. Then join us on Sunday mornings to hear more as we dig deeper into the meaningful scriptures found in the Gospel of John.