

Bible Study

Christian Beliefs

John 1 v. 1 – 18



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Introduction

In our Bible Studies we will be using a booklet from 'A Life Builder Bible Study' series. Our overall theme for these studies is: CHRISTIAN BELIEFS. The studies were originally written by Stephen Eyre, but we will be modifying them in order that they become more usable for both home study and Church study.

These studies give us the opportunity to study the Bible in a greater depth and to reflect on what it is saying to us.

If you are unable to be with us in church and have decided that you will be doing the studies from home, it is suggested that you do the study on a Wednesday morning, for an hour, starting at 10.30am. Get yourself a tea or coffee, a Bible, pen and paper (for any notes you want to make) and begin studying.

We do hope that you enjoy the studies that have been produced!

Context

Knowing what we believe is foundational to a healthy relationship with God and others. These studies on Christian Beliefs explore what Christians need to understand about some vital topics:

God, Christ, The Holy Spirit, God's Word, human nature, salvation, the church and the 'last things'.

Having a good grasp of these beliefs will equip us to make sense of the world we live in, strengthen our assurance of our own identity in Christ and direct us to a life of integrity.

Some Thoughts To Help You While You Study

The purpose of the study is:

To grow in our gratitude to God for coming to us in Jesus Christ and making us his children.

The study of Jesus is called **Christology**. It is usually divided into two parts: (1) his **person** (his deity and his humanity) and (2) his **work** (how he saves us). In this passage we get a glimpse of these two different aspects of Christology, although the primary focus is on his person.

God is a mystery. Our limited minds must bow before the mystery of God as he chooses to reveal himself. We must be faithful to the Scriptures as they make God known to us.

In human communication we write words on pages. Divine communication is not only words on a page (Scripture) but also human flesh – **incarnation**. Only God has life in himself that is **self – generating**. Light not only refers to understanding but also stands in contrast to darkness. As light, Jesus is the essence of good that stands in opposition to evil. The implicit resistance to God, that is, the presence of darkness, means that every generation has a choice to make. Christianity goes through periods of decay and revival because of this ongoing resistance.

Historical extremes to avoid regarding the character of Jesus include:

Arianism – Jesus was created by God. **Modalism** – there is one God revealed in three forms. **Docetism** – Jesus was not truly human, he just

took on the appearance of humanity to communicate with us.

Apollinarianism – Jesus had a human body but divine soul.

Monophysitism – Christ had only one nature ~ divine; Jesus' body was somehow more 'divine' than ours.

For further study on God as Trinity:

The Father is God: 1 Corinthians 8 v. 6; John 5 v. 23 – 24, 26; 8 v. 54

The Son is God: John 8 v. 58 – 59; Colossians 1 v. 15 – 19; 2 v. 9

The Holy Spirit is God: Psalm 139 v. 7; Acts 5 v. 3 – 4; Hebrews 9 v. 14

A Place To Take Notes

Study 3 – Jesus: God With Us

Almost everyone believes **something** about Jesus. Some suggest that he was merely a great teacher. But as C. S. Lewis wrote, any serious look at the Gospels rules out that option. In fact, Lewis reduced our options to three words: **Liar**, **Lunatic** or **Lord**.

If Jesus knew he was not God but chose to deceive others anyway, then he is a **Liar**. If he truly thought he was God but was self – deluded, then he was a **Lunatic**. However, if Jesus was neither a liar or a lunatic, then the third option is inescapable – he is **Lord** and has the right to be believed and obeyed.

PERSONAL REFLECTION: What are some common opinions in your experience that people express about Jesus?

Through their accounts of Jesus' teaching and actions, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John show us his divine character and the eternally saving work he achieved for us. In classic theology this is referred to as 'the person and work of Jesus'. The Gospel of John is the most explicit of all four Gospels in declaring Jesus' person and work in its opening verses.

Read John 1 v. 1 – 18

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT:

John writes with images and metaphors, referring to Jesus as the **Word**, the **Life** and the **Light** (**John 1 v. 1 – 9**). What do these images communicate about him?

How have you experienced Jesus as Word, Life and Light?

The opening words about the Word are not easy to comprehend

(**John 1 v. 1 – 4**). As we seek to unravel these puzzling words, we are confronted with our limited ability to comprehend God. How do you respond to the idea that the Word is both God and with God?

What actions that only God can do are attributed to the Word?

Why might these verses and others like them lead early Christian theologians to develop the doctrine of the Trinity – that there is one God but three persons?

How does John's mention of light versus darkness prepare us to understand the outcome of Jesus' earthly ministry (**John 1 v. 5, 10 – 13**)?

Not only is Jesus God, but he became human (**John 1 v. 14 – 15**). This is referred to in classic theology as the Incarnation. Why might the incarnation be described as the ultimate miracle against which all other supernatural works of God pale in comparison?

How do these verses speak to the mistaken teaching that Jesus was merely an enlightened human with a highly developed 'God consciousness'?

How do these verses speak to the mistaken teaching that Jesus became God because of the outstanding quality of the moral life that he lived?

John claims that they all received 'one blessing after another' from Jesus (**John 1 v. 16**). What blessing does he refer to in **John 1 v. 12, 13**?

What are some of the blessings you have received from your relationship with God through Jesus?

Something to Do Now

Thank God that he has come from heaven to enter the events of your life.

Something to Do Later

The privilege of becoming children of God is given to those who believe in the name of Jesus.

Perhaps you could enter more fully into the emotional knowledge of this reality by picturing yourself as a child sitting in the lap of God as your heavenly parent.

Sit there for a while and enjoy the care and security of his loving presence. After you have spent time in his presence, make a note of how it affected you.

Now use the opportunity to Pray