

**In the Beginning *Jesus is the LIFE***

**John 1**

***EBC Advent 2024***

**Introduction**

Good morning!

This Advent season we are focusing on how the Apostle John presents the Lord Jesus to us in the introduction of his famous gospel, John 1. Our purpose in doing so is so we can fix our minds and hearts on Jesus the Savior this Christmas season, and understand better exactly WHO He is and WHAT He has come to do.

**Review: Jesus is the WORD**

Last week Pastor Michael helped us unpack the first line of John's introduction of Jesus, whom he refers to as the "Word of God". As the "Word", Jesus comes to deliver grace to cover our failure as God's agents in the world, and His truth to enable us to reclaim God's purposes for our lives.

This morning, we will continue our exploration of John's introduction of Jesus by examining how Jesus is the source and embodiment of "life" – eternal life – which is now being offered by Him to all people in all places.

Typically, when believers refer to "eternal life" we often default to talking about "heaven when I die" and the blissful afterlife where there is no more pain, sickness or death. However, as we will see, John gives a very different definition of eternal life; for John eternal life is defined by union with the Lord Jesus, and something that we don't have to wait until we die to experience, but something that is being offered to us even now!

Let us pray...

**Exposition of John 1:**

Let's turn our attention back to John's introduction here in chapter 1.

John 1:1-5.

Next week we will look more closely at the term "light", but today we will closely examine how John refers to Jesus as the "life".

Now, there is a translation issue with our English bibles between verses 3-4. For most of you, the translation reads this way:

<sup>3</sup> *All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.* <sup>4</sup> ***In him was life***, and the life was the light of men.

However, since the original reading in Greek did not have punctuation and verses the way our English Bibles do, then another way to read these verses is like this:

*And without him was not any thing made...**That which has been made was life in him** and the life was the light of men.*

Now, whenever we encounter translation differences based on a discrepancy or difference in how to best understand the grammar and syntax of the original Greek writing, we have to ask ourselves the all-important question: *what did the author mean to communicate?*

So, what was John intending to say about Jesus being the agent of *life*?

To answer this question, we need to ask two things:

- 1) Are there any OT quotations, allusions, or parallels that help us understand what John might have meant by “life” in relation to Jesus as the WORD of God?
- 2) How does John describe “life” Jesus offers in the rest of his gospel?

*“Life” in the OT*

In the book of Genesis, we find God creating all things by the power of His Word (voice, command). Chapter one details how human “life” is supported by the created environment God makes. In chapter two, we get more detail on exactly how God gives life to His human creation.

Gen. 2:7-9

God breathes, and the man comes to life, and has all he needs for physical life. But then there are these two trees – one of life, but then a second one of the knowledge of good and evil.

God encourages the man to eat of all the trees – assuming the main one would be the “life” one, but not of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for in that case he would surely die (lose life).

Well, as most of you probably know from the story, they eat of this tree and receive a death sentence – a sentence which hangs over human beings to this very day! But notice the conclusion of the narrative:

Gen. 2:22-24

Did you catch this? They are barred from the tree of Life – the fruit that enables them to live forever. All the other fruit trees remain available, and still are, which can sustain human life but only for a limited time. But this tree, the most important one, is no longer accessible. Why? Because the life-presence of God is no longer immediately accessible. In other words, the purpose of creation is to establish a place where God could dwell with human beings, His beloved creation. The tree of Life was a symbol, a physical symbol of their dependence on God and of their relationship to Him, the fellowship they enjoyed within His presence. But now, that has been removed.

Summary: the loss of access to “life” in the Garden is...

*Physical*

*Moral*

*Spiritual*

However, the story does not quite end there. God would make a new family, starting with Seth to Noah and eventually to Abraham (Abram). The covenant promise given to Abraham for land, people, and blessing comes to a climax with Moses, who offers the people God's calling and requirements for them to enter the land.

Deuteronomy 30:15-20

So, there it is – the call to choose life! And this call to life would eventually become crystalized with a new “tree of life” which consisted of a physical temple, which promised to mediate God's presence and life to the people as they worshipped Him appropriately.

Let me show you some examples:

Psalms 36:7-9

Psalms 16:11

Psalms 84:1-2

However, as you know from the story – the first temple was destroyed as a sign of judgement. And a second one was built during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah – but it was not producing “life” for the people, but instead it produced conflict and corruption. And so, many leading up to the day of Jesus were asking the question: where is God? When will He return to the Temple in glory and produce “life” again in His people? Did not the prophets promise this?

Ezekiel 37:24-27

*In the OT, “life” consists of communion with God and is realized through covenant-obedience and temple-worship. However, God's people are both unwilling and unable to maintain it!*

*“Life” in John*

Moving back to John, he shows us that Jesus is not only the originator of life in creation, but is the very source of where life is found. Let me show you some other examples from John about the relationship between “life” and Christ.

Jesus tells Nicodemus...John 3:16

Jesus tells the woman at the well...John 4:13-14

Jesus tells the crowds bread of life...John 6:35-40; 68-69

Jesus tells Mary and Martha...John 11:25-27

Jesus tells Philip...John 14:6

Jesus defines eternal life in His prayer to the Father...John 17:1-5

John's purpose for writing his gospel...John 20:30-31

*In the NT (John), “life” consists of communion with God and is realized through Jesus Christ (who fulfills the covenant and embodies a new temple, where sins are forgiven and relationship with God is restored). Through the Spirit (conversion), God's people become willing and able to attain it!*

So, based on this OT background, here is how I suggest we translate John 1:1-5.

In the beginning was the Word,

December 8, 2024

Pastor Grant Clay

And the Word was with God,  
And the Word was God,  
He was in the beginning with God.

All things came to being through Him,  
*And without Him not one thing came into being*  
*What has come into being in [communion with] Him was [eternal ] life,*  
And the [eternal] life was the light of all people.

So, what do we say to all of this?

“Come into union with me, and you will have life!” – Jesus

**Main Idea:**

*All who come into union with the Lord Jesus Christ will overcome the curse of sin/death and receive eternal life*

**Application:**

Come into union with me and you will have LIFE!