

*the year*  
of LIFE & LIGHT



*a fresh start in  
the gospel of John*



# A YEAR OF LIFE AND LIGHT: STUDIES IN THE PROLOGUE OF JOHN

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# HOW THE GOSPEL CHANGES US

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Happy New Year, Grace!

We are at the beginning of new days filled with possibilities and hopes, and I believe this year will be one of the best years we've ever had at Grace. God is doing great things in His Church, both here and around the world, and this is the perfect chance to recommit ourselves to all that God has for us in this next season. So what does that look like?

To follow Him this year, we need to recognize that God has already given us everything we need for our deepest happiness and joy: the gospel. The good news that Jesus took our sin upon Himself and gave us His righteousness in return is the foundation of our lives and the anchor for our soul. We no longer have to work to please God; instead, He is pleased with His Son and accepts us because of Jesus' sacrifice on our behalf.

The word *gospel* is a Greek word that was used by rulers to announce good news or a positive impact for the nation — like a victory in battle or a benefit for the people. Early Christian writers use this word the same way; they wanted us to know that what Jesus

taught came from a King, and it was good news that transformed the whole kingdom.

I know it's easy to think *I've heard all of this before*, but that's probably one of the most common ways we short circuit our faith. The gospel is not some form of initiation into our Christian faith — it is the center of our faith.

We don't just accept grace and move on to works; we must plumb the depths of grace to sustain every day of our Christian lives. And when we dig beyond a surface acceptance of the gospel, we see that the Spirit uses it to change us in some very significant ways.

First, because the gospel teaches us Jesus is both the source of and focus for our love, it helps us order our life and priorities. If we pursue love itself as the goal rather than Jesus as the goal, our whole life will be spent looking for an object for that love — a person, a career, a purpose. This is one of the big problems in our culture today: we're not sure what or who to love. However, when we prioritize Jesus and His mission and

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teachings, we gain clarity, and are freed to love the right things in the right order.

For example, our culture tells us that youth, pleasure, and wealth are the true indicators of a life well-blessed, and so we often waste our time, money, families, and spiritual, physical, and mental health pursuing them.

Yet, when we compare the life of Jesus to the world's message, we see something entirely different: a man scorned and suffering; a man filled with faith in the middle of hardship; a man who entrusts Himself to His Father in heaven. We see a servant whose trust is not in the “here and now” philosophies of this world, but in His love for eternity. Jesus sees a better day ahead, one where sin and death is finally defeated. And He invites us to join Him in it.

The gospel changes our view of love by freeing us of from the tyrannical voices in our lives that compel us to grab a life not worth living and certainly not worth loving.

Second, because the gospel changes what we love, it also changes what we prioritize. When we love Jesus as first

and foremost in our lives, it means we change what we prioritize as important — the way we order our days. Someone who once was a workaholic because he loved money more than Jesus is now set free to prioritize his church, his family, and his friends. He's no longer listening to the voices of those who falsely say that life is measured by what you have. He is free to spend time with others without guilt and shame. His priorities have changed because what he loves has changed.

The gospel not only changes what we love and what we prioritize, it changes who we are. Unlike any other form of self-improvement in this world, the gospel doesn't deal with just the symptoms. Christ's sinless death changes our very condition before God. He no longer sees us as sinners. He sees us as perfect through our friendship by faith with His Son. This is more than just some theological idea — it's practical. We are freed from guilt and shame and hiding. He's covered everything we have done or will do! As He changes us in Heaven, we are changed on earth.

Lastly, the gospel changes where we will spend our forever. If all of these previous things we've mentioned

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were not enough, the gospel tells us that we will spend forever in a place beyond our comprehension, where God Himself dwells. Our forever will be filled with unimaginable joy and rest. How can we ask for anything more than that?

This January at Grace, we are beginning at least an entire year of teaching through the gospel of John. We want you to know these truths, to believe them, and to be changed by them from the inside-out — so what better way than to teach through this eye-witness account of Jesus' ministry and work on our behalf? I'm excited to get started.

As the new year begins, let's recommit ourselves to the gospel and its rich blessings. If we do, no matter what happens, it's going to be a wonderful year.

I love you guys.

*Mike Adkins*  
*Senior Pastor*



# THE BOOK OF JOHN: A READING GUIDE

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*As we begin a year of in-depth teaching in the gospel of John at Grace, here are some questions, answers, and strategies for this study.*

## WHY STUDY JOHN?

John's gospel is one of the great masterpieces of world literature. By any measure, it is one of the greatest books ever written. Its style is simple yet sophisticated. It is spiritually rich, philosophically profound, emotionally satisfying, and life-transforming.

It provides us with the most famous verse in the Bible (3:16), and its prologue (1:1-18) has been hailed by the religious and non-religious alike as one of the greatest lyrical compositions ever written. It was the most popular gospel of the early Church, in which it was symbolically represented with the image of an eagle, graphically depicting the spiritual heights to which the gospel soars.

## WHO WROTE THIS MASTERPIECE?

For the first one thousand eight hundred years of the church's existence, the almost unanimous opinion was that John was written by John the son of Zebedee, one of the three members of Jesus' inner circle of disciples (Peter and John's brother James being the other two.) The reason for this was two-fold:

First, the internal evidence of the book points to it. John, like many of the books of the Bible, is formally anonymous, yet John's gospel provides more direct indications of its author than nearly any other book. In 21:24 the author says that it is the "beloved disciple" who is bearing witness about these things.

Who is the "beloved disciple?" He was one of the twelve, because he was with them during the last supper (13:23), and he had been with the disciples since the beginning of Jesus' public ministry (1:35-40), which is a mark of authentic apostleship. Also, he was an individual that was close to Jesus' inner circle and yet, the disciple John is not directly named in this book,



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even though Peter, Phillip, Judas, Thomas, etc...are. If John is not the author, this would be a most curious omission. And the “beloved disciple” is often in the company of Peter in similar situations as the disciple John in the other gospels.

Second, the external evidence from Church history claims John as the author. Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna who died in AD 155, was personally discipled by the apostle John, the son of Zebedee. Polycarp personally discipled Irenaeus, the bishop of Lyons, who wrote in AD 180 that the “beloved disciple” was John, the son of Zebedee.

Therefore, the best explanation for all of the evidence is that the “beloved disciple” is John, the son of Zebedee.

## DOES IT MATTER WHO WROTE IT?

Yes and no. “No,” in the sense that the ultimate authority for the book does not rest in your identification of the human author but in the Spirit-induced encounter with

the living Lord Jesus Christ that the book is meant to facilitate.

But “yes” in the sense that the book’s potency and power are founded upon the reality of historically-accurate, theologically-authoritative, eye-witness testimony.

## WHAT IS THE POINT OF THE BOOK?

John does not leave us to guess or pontificate. He tells us directly why he wrote his gospel:

*Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; 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. (20:30-31)*

This is the key to understanding and encountering Jesus through John’s gospel. As you read it remember that this is not a “life” of Jesus in the modern sense.

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This is not a “biography.” John’s gospel only covers 21 days of Jesus’ life! The point of the book is to confront you with Jesus in such a way that you believe in Him and find life in His name. The point is theological and transformational — theological in that it tells you who Jesus is; transformational in that as you encounter Him you are changed by Him. The book is filled with the extraordinary claims of Christ and great conversations with Him — all of which are meant to inform and transform you.

## HOW DOES THAT WORK?

The first thing you have to do — if you are going to encounter the risen Christ in the Word by the Spirit through the Gospel of John — is read it. A lot. In chunks. From start to finish. Over and over. The gospel was not designed to be nibbled on, one or two verses at a time. It was meant to be consumed in large blocks. It was meant to be encountered as a whole.

So set this as a goal during our year-long study through John: try to read through this whole gospel in one sitting, at least 20 times this year. It will take you roughly 2 hours. If that is too daunting, stop at the natural breaks: read 1-12 and then 13-21.

For the first several times through, keep in mind John’s purpose. Let that shape your reading. John’s goal is to present you with evidence that Jesus is the Christ, so that you believe in Him and have life in His name. So let these three things shape your reading: evidence, belief, life.

**Evidence:** As you read remember that John is presenting you with honest testimonies from honest men and women—testimonies about what they saw, heard, and experienced. Faith is no leap in the dark, it is a leap into the light. Examine the evidence.

**Belief/Faith:** Let John’s most famous verse be a lens through which you read the entire Gospel: *For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son,*

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*that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.* As you read, ask yourself “What must I believe about Jesus?” John is presenting you with very clear, compelling, and controversial things that you have to believe about Jesus. Make a note of them as you read. For example, read chapter 1:19-51 and mark all of the different names or titles that people call Jesus: Son of man, Lamb of God, etc...You should have about twelve of them. And then trace how John develops each name throughout the book.

Also, make a note of how each section and conversation brings out a different aspect of who Jesus is. You will notice that belief in Jesus is not some vague, indiscriminate, undefinable thing, but you are called to believe that He is the Giver of Living Water (4). He is the Life-Giver and Judge of all the earth (5). He is the Bread of Life (6), and the Water of Life (7). He is the Light of the World (8) the Good Shepherd (10) and the Resurrection and the Life (11). Another good reading exercise is to read the whole book and mark every time you see the word “believe” (or a cognate, i.e., belief, believed, etc...). Count them all. You should have over

100. Finally, go back and ask yourself “Exactly what am I being asked to believe?”

**Life:** Ask yourself how believing in these things brings life. The goal is transformation. John’s offer is that, through the Spirit, you can experience eternal life in the here and now.

So, as you read, always ask yourself at least two main questions that will lead you to the very heart of the gospel: 1) Who is Jesus? [Or what does this text tell me about Jesus? His person? His work?] 2) How does believing this about Him bring life?

As you continue to read you will want to begin to try and understand the internal logic and order of the book. You will notice that John has organized his gospel in a simple way:

1:1-19: This is the prologue, where all of the essential themes are introduced.

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1:19-12:50: This section has classically been described as the book of “signs.” Here John gives you Jesus’ public ministry.

13-20:31: This section has been called the book of the “passion” or the book of “glory.” Here the focus is on the last week of Jesus’ life. His private ministry to his disciples in the upper room (13-17) and then his public execution and resurrection.

21: This is the epilogue.

The more you read through these sections, the more you will notice connections and curiosities. For example:

You will notice that John structures the beginning of Jesus’ ministry around “the next day.” It would seem as if there are 7 days, beginning with the light dawning through John the Baptist’s testimony and climaxing in the wedding feast at Cana. Is this foreshadowing the new creation?

And the final week of Jesus’ life is structured around 7 days, climaxing in the empty tomb. Is this the accomplishing of the new creation?

You will notice that much of the action in the first half of the book revolves around central festivals in Israel: Passover, Sabbath, Tabernacles, and Hanukkah. It is almost as if John is saying: Jesus is the Lamb of God, transforming the Passover; He is our rest, transforming the Sabbath; He is the new Moses accomplishing the new exodus by providing true manna in the desert and living water; He is the embodiment of the Tabernacle feast as the light of the world.

You will be drawn into a much bigger story, as Jesus is presented as the culmination and the fulfillment of the long history of Israel. Try to trace the connections.

And as you keep reading ask the Lord to help you enter into the beauty and the glory of Christ.

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John's gospel is designed to offer you the same invitation that Jesus offered to Phillip when Phillip was curious to know more about Christ: Come and See.

(1:39)

You are invited to come and see. Come and see the King who is also the Creator, Ruler, and Lord of heaven and earth. Come and see the Word made flesh. Come and see the Bringer of Light and the Destroyer of Death. Come and see the glory, the wonder, and the beauty of the One who is worthy of worship and obedience. Come and see the Light of the World who dispels the darkness that is both in the world and in our hearts. Come and see the One who was willing to leave heaven and His Father's side to bring us to eternal life.

Come and see.

*Pastor Dr. Ben Bailie  
Grace Lake Nona*



# REJECTION IN THE PROLOGUE OF JOHN

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There is no pain like rejection — no pain like offering your heart and affections to someone only to have them returned broken and abandoned by indifference. Rejection is a bitter thing to taste. It has a way of humbling and piercing the soul. It can make one feel isolated and betrayed, and when it is all said and done, it can leave you feeling crushed.

Perhaps the greatest issue when battling rejection is wondering why it even happened. Did you say something wrong when you asked them out on a date? Did you not have the right experience to get the job? Did you not pitch the deal well enough in the sales meeting?

Whatever the hurt, or whatever doubts we may have, we must always remember that Christ faced the ultimate rejection so that He could rescue us from our own.

It is in the prologue to John's Gospel that we get a clear picture of that rejection, from Jesus' own people, the Jews. John 1:9-11 says, "The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the

world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own people, and his own people did not receive him."

In His opening section, John wants his readers to understand the purpose of Jesus' birth. The creator of all things, the King of all kings, came to be a servant of mankind. He came to be rejected by His own, so that by faith anyone could be reconciled to God.

John's prologue beautifully unwraps the thread of rejection from the swaddling clothes in the manger to the burial clothes in Jesus' tomb. In doing so, he weaves together the garment of eternal hope for all those that put their faith in Christ, and what binds it all together is the rejection of Jesus.

Contrary to what many may believe, the life of Jesus was one filled with exclusion in spite of His deity. From his birth to his death, Jesus lived a life of rejection. They had no room in the inn the night His mother gave birth to Him. King Herod tried to kill Him. His own brothers and sisters mocked Him. The Pharisees condemned Him, the Sadducees criticized Him, and the Scribes constantly

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interrogated Him. In His moment of greatest distress His disciples denied Him, His people falsely accused Him, and the Roman government crucified Him. Even in his death Jesus had to use another man's grave.

Jesus' life was one of constant abandonment. However, Jesus' rejection had been appointed and ordained by God. The humiliation and crucifixion of Jesus was God's divine plan before the foundation of the world. But why? Because Jesus took the rejection we deserved from God because of our sin. And now, those who put their faith in Christ will be accepted as children of God.

Jesus' rejection accomplishes two things for believers. First, it allows Jesus to sympathize with us in our earthly rejection. Jesus can be a comforter to us in the midst of any rejection we face. He can sympathize with us in every pain and suffering. He has undergone the loneliness, and He has faced desertion from those far off and from those closest to Him. So when we pray to God, we are not praying to someone that has not experienced our pain. We go before God we have confidence in knowing that He knows every trial and struggle we face.

Because He has endured them too, He can supply our needs in the midst of them.

Second, Jesus' rejection gives us assurance to know that, through faith, God will never reject us. God went to great lengths to display his love for us on the cross. Even when we were in sin Christ died for us, the ungodly. Romans 8:1 reminds us that, "there is no condemnation for those of us who are in Christ Jesus." John even writes in John 3:18, "whoever believe in him is not condemned." We could easily exchange the word condemned with rejected in those verses. God has made a promises to never reject us, turn away from us, or leave us. If you are in Christ, you can be in the highest of heights or the lowest of lows and God is still there with you. God will never reject those who have placed their faith in Christ.

We all face the possibility of rejection in a fallen world, but there is a day when that possibility will be no more. Until that time, if your faith is in Christ, rest in this:



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“Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you.” Deuteronomy 31:6

*Pastor Brian Allen  
Grace Winter Garden*



# SALVATION, ETERNAL LIFE, AND THE TRINITY

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In 2009, during the BCS National Championship game, Tim Tebow almost caused Google to crash. Well, maybe that's a bit of hyperbole — the search engine was not close to giving in, but it was inundated with queries about “John 3:16.” This well-known passage of scripture was trending because people were curious about the inscription on Tebow's eye black during the game.

John 3:16 says this: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”

This verse is a glimmer of hope in a dark world — a profound and concise statement of truth, that, if taken seriously, transforms hearts and ensures “eternal life.” Clearly, Tebow knew this, which is why he decided to seize the spotlight and point people to Jesus.

However, although Tebow's firm stance for the Christian faith was appreciated, did the people typing “John 3:16” into Google actually understand what it said?

Better yet, did the Christians who already knew John 3:16 understand what they had heard so many times? The verse is straight forward, right? So, why would this question need to be explored?

John's entire gospel was written that “whoever believes” will receive eternal life. This eternal life is often referred to as a free gift — a gift given by God, who, in his very nature is triune: Father, Son, and Spirit.

These persons are each fully God, each equally God, and each fully possessing the one undivided divine nature. This gift of life is unilateral, meaning Christians do nothing to earn salvation; it's accomplished by the Father, through the Son's death, burial, and resurrection, which was powered by the Spirit. This is the *gospel*, the good news. So, if the entire book of John was written so that those who read it and believe will receive eternal life, it's important to understand what the implications of eternal life are for the here and now.

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John gives a concise definition of “eternal life” that is most likely different from what people normally think:

*And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent (John 17:3).*

For most believers, the phrase “eternal life” conjures up two realities: Salvation ensures the removal of sin and the escape of death – especially Hell. These two realities are absolutely true, and both belong to John’s teaching about salvation, but is this all the triune God intended for those who believe? Do the implications of eternal life only have bearing on our existence after we perish physically?

If it was possible to sit across the table from John and ask him what he means by eternal life, most would be surprised by his response. Eternal life consists of more than simply the removal of sin or an escape from Hell. Eternal life is more than just “fire insurance.”

Eternal life is trinitarian. It’s an invitation to relationship, where personal knowledge of God is on the table. This communion that’s offered is with the Father, and the Son, empowered by the Spirit who dwells within the hearts of Christians. This reality has significant benefits for the believer’s life, long before the day he or she takes their last breath.

Within the eternal triune God there is a love that exists that is outside human understanding. Perfect communion, perfect love, perfect submission is experienced within what theologians call the Godhead. When someone becomes a Christian, he or she immediately reaps the benefits of eternal life.

“Eternal life consists in sharing in the gracious overflow of the Father’s eternal love for the Son in the Spirit” (Kostenberger & Swain). Christians share in this overflow of love as children of God who have been grafted into God’s beloved Son as branches into a vine (John 15:1-11). What a beautiful picture. A union exists

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between believers and the triune God that begins with a reception of Jesus and His gospel. This means eternal life is a reality that should be experienced in the present, it's not something merely for after death. Yet, so many miss the opportunity to engage with God's presence, which is before them each and every day.

When eternal life is given by the triune God, the Spirit comes and rests with the one whose heart has been transformed. By His presence, the Spirit continues to guide believers into "the way and the truth and the life" of Jesus (John 14:6). The Spirit's coming in the life of the Christian includes the coming of the Father and the Son, because He mediates and manifests their presence. The Spirit's presence establishes the trinitarian dwelling of God with his people both now and forever (Kostenberger & Swain). Understanding this is monumental to one's spiritual journey.

Through the indwelling of the Spirit, Leviticus 26:12 is fulfilled in a distinctly trinitarian way. "And I will

walk among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people." God's personal presence is mediated to believers by the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Kostenberger and Swain help clarify this when they write, "Ultimately, the Father revealed his name through the Son so that by the indwelling Spirit all who believe might enter into eternal life, joyful fellowship of the triune God, a fellowship where the Father and the Son mutually glorify one another in the Spirit." This joyful fellowship is what Christians are invited into, to participate in, to follow the leading of Jesus and glorify God through their life.

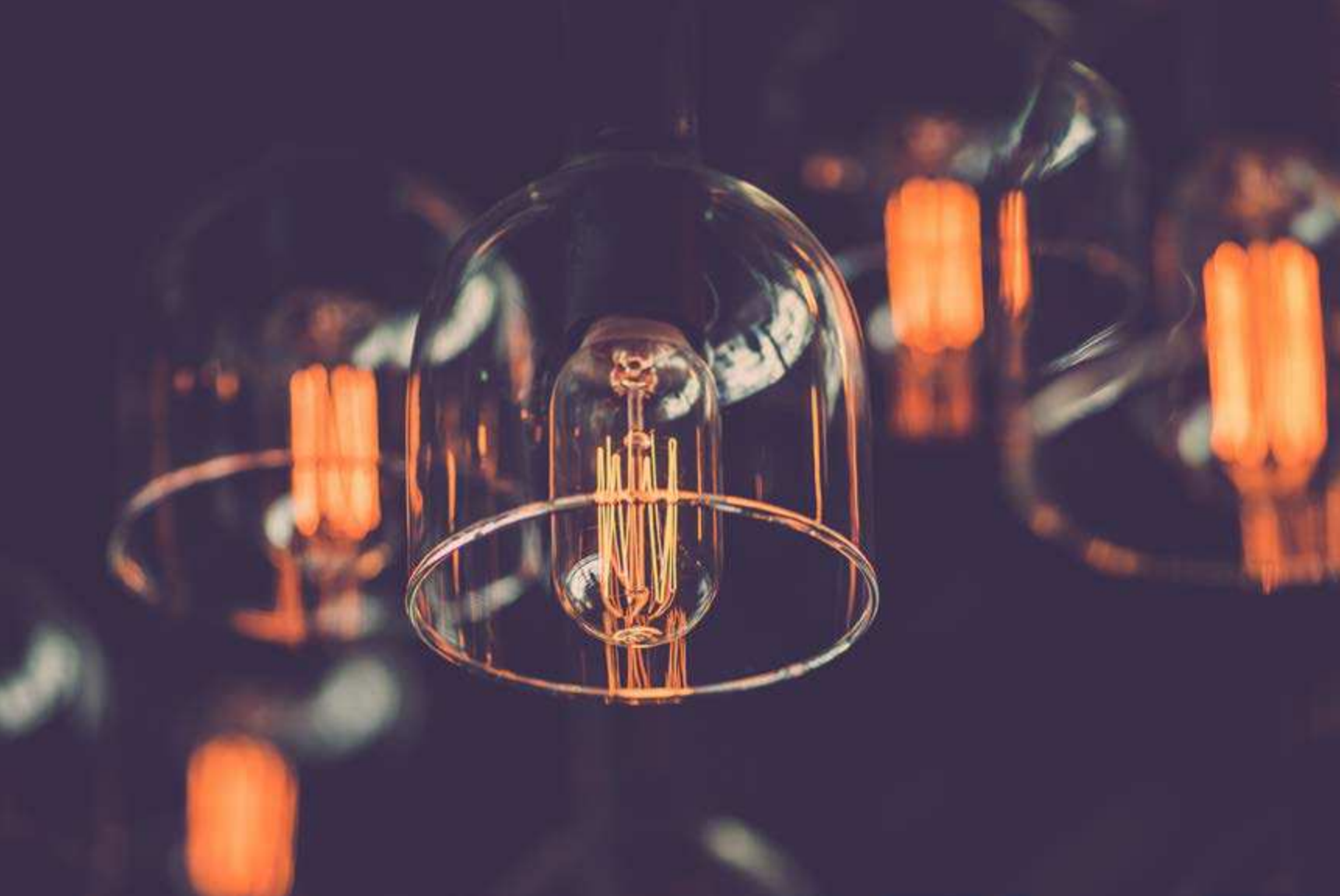
If you're are a Christian. If you love Jesus and have been transformed by His love, you have been brought into the triune family of God. You've been brought into a sacred space where — although it's mysterious — you have the opportunity to be in relationship with the Creator of the cosmos. This is not something you have to earn, it's the reality that exists. The time you spend with the Lord is not something you do to earn his love and favor, it's the

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manifestation of the eternal life that you now live out of. Press in, understand that you don't have to wait until Christ returns or calls you home to reap the benefit of eternal life. You have eternal life. Find a space, go before the triune God, and engage in the relationship that you have as a result of His love for you.

*Pastor Bobby Raulerson*  
*Grace Oviedo*



# A THEOLOGY OF THE TABERNACLE

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Theology is the study of God (*Theo* = God; *ology* = study of). So is biblical theology simply the study of God that is biblical?

Well, yes and no. In the past thirty years, a field of study has formed that has been specifically termed “biblical theology.” Its purpose is to look at biblical themes as they unfold throughout the stories of the Bible.

For instance, if you wanted to look at a biblical theology for sacrifice, you would look first at the animals that God killed for Adam and Eve in the garden to cover them up (Genesis 3:21). You would see the theme develop further as God provided a ram in the place of Abraham’s son, Isaac (Genesis 22:13) — a sacrifice that is a substitute. The sacrificial theme is teased out even more throughout the sacrificial system that God put in place in Israel. It would all point to the ultimate sacrifice: Christ.

Systematic theology (which is what we walk through in Grace’s theology classes) looks at a single topic and then defines that topic using scripture, but the scriptures used come from all over the Bible and are not progressive. Biblical theology differs from systematic theology because it is dependent upon the place and timeline in the biblical narrative where the topic is found.

One of the benefits of biblical theology is that it exposes how intricately scripture has been woven together. In particular, this kind of theological study makes the Old Testament come to life as we attempt to explore the big picture of the Bible.

Graeme Goldsworthy is an Australian Anglican minister that has written extensively on biblical theology and he defines it as follows, “God’s revelation is embedded in history and involves a historic progressiveness...biblical theology involves the quest for the big picture, or the overview, of biblical revelation. It is of the nature of biblical revelation that it tells a story rather than sets out timeless principles in abstract. They are given in an historical context of progressive revelation.”



# A THEOLOGY OF THE TABERNACLE

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We can apply the principles of biblical theology to explore the theme of the tabernacle and the presence of God as it unfolds in the Bible, including in the prologue of John.

From the beginning, Adam and Eve in the garden were a perfect model of the tabernacle in its truest sense: meeting place between God and his people. The Garden of Eden itself is a sort of proto-tabernacle.

The tent of meeting is the next iteration of the tabernacle — the first physical structure created where God meets with humanity.

The tabernacle is built later, a temporary structure built for the people of Israel as they wandered in the desert before entering into the Promised Land. Numerous chapters in the Old Testament are devoted to describing its exact proportions. Part of the structure includes the Most Holy Place where the actual presence of God dwells, with specific instructions on who can enter and how they can enter. Only the High Priest of Israel can

enter into this Most Holy Place once a year on Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Even then, it is only through performing detailed instructions of blood sacrifices of a bull and a goat for his sins, his family's sins, and the people of Israel's sins. The system showed Israel the need for a sacrifice in order for a sinful people to enter into the presence of a Holy God.

Years after entering the Promised Land, Israel finally received instructions on how to build a permanent temple in 2 Samuel chapters 6 and 7. It will be David's son, Solomon, which will oversee its construction. Once again, God gives specific instructions for this holy place where God meets his people. This is where His presence will dwell. All of these instructions and all of the sacrifices are pointing forward to a sacrifice that will one day deal with sin finally and completely.

But in 586 BC, this temple is destroyed, and the people of Israel begin to wonder how God will now meet with them? Without a temple or a tabernacle in this period of exile, is the presence of God lost?

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In Ezekiel 11:16, God says through Ezekiel to these faithful exiles, “I will be a sanctuary to them.” This is tabernacle and temple language. God is showing them that they do not need a physical structure for his presence to dwell with them. The real temple is where God is, not where a bunch of bricks are.

The city of Jerusalem and the temple are eventually rebuilt under Nehemiah, but the point has been made; God does not need a building to meet with his people.

This leads us to the prologue of the Gospel of John. Verse 14 reads, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth” (ESV). That word translated as “dwelt” is actually the Greek word, *skēnoō*, which is translated literally as “tabernacle.”

So in a real sense, God came to tabernacle and dwell among His people through Christ. He is the ultimate temple, the ultimate tabernacle. God now meets with his people through this Word made flesh. All of the temple and tabernacle language finds its fulfillment in John 1:14

and eventually further in Revelation 7:15:

*Therefore they are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence.*

and again in 21:3:

*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.*

While the temple and tabernacle may both feel antiquated and irrelevant to us in 21st century America, understanding their significance in the Old Testament helps us understand the significance of Christ and a holy God dwelling with a sinful people. Our true and better temple is Emmanuel: God with us.

*Pastor Caleb Brasher*

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WEEKLY MESSAGE NOTES  
AND QUESTIONS

WEEK 1: JANUARY 8  
THE WORD IS WITH GOD | JOHN 1:1-2

Message Notes:

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WEEK 1: THE WORD IS WITH GOD | JOHN 1:1-2  
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND  
DISCUSSION

What do we know about John, the author of this book?

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Why do you think John starts the Gospel like this? What does it say about what John's intent in writing this book?

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John's purpose in writing this Gospel is found in John 20:30-31. If his purpose is to bring people to faith, why should people who are already Christians study it as well?

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Jesus did not come into being, he just was. Is this idea a new concept for you? For both new believers and life long Christians, how does this truth impact your thoughts on Jesus?

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What do you hope will happen for your faith as a result of studying the Gospel of John?

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WEEK 2: JANUARY 15  
LIGHT AND LIFE | JOHN 1:3-5

Message Notes:

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WEEK 2: LIGHT AND LIFE | JOHN 1:3-5  
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND  
DISCUSSION

What do we learn about the nature of God in the first five verses of John? What do we learn specifically about Jesus?

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People often think of the Son as the redeemer, and the Father as the creator. Perhaps that was what you thought before this study. How does the imagery of Jesus as the creator change the way you look at Genesis 1?

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In what way is Jesus the light in your life? What does that mean?

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If you could ask John one question at this point, what would the question be? Discuss with your Grace Community.

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WEEK 3: JANUARY 22  
A WITNESS TO THE LIGHT | JOHN 1:6-8

Message Notes:

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WEEK 3: A WITNESS TO THE LIGHT |  
JOHN 1:6-8  
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND  
DISCUSSION

John the Baptist is sent into the world to bear witness to the light - God created him with a purpose. Do you feel you were created with purpose?

Bearing witness about the light is the duty of all believers. It's the main way people come to know Jesus and are given eternal life. Who has God put in your life that you should share the Gospel with? How do you plan to do so?

At this point in the series, what have you felt God saying to you through the Gospel of John? In what ways have you been challenged?

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WEEK 4: JANUARY 29  
REJECTION AND ACCEPTANCE | JOHN 1:9-13

Message Notes:

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WEEK 4: REJECTION AND ACCEPTANCE |  
JOHN 1:9-13  
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND  
DISCUSSION

Take time in your Grace Community to share testimonies of how you became a Christian.

When John says that his own people did not know him, who is he referring to? Why do you think they did not know him?

How is one saved and reconciled to God? What is required of us? Why do people always seem to think there needs to be more to it?

What does it mean to become “children of God?” What are the implications of being God’s children?

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WEEK 5: FEBRUARY 5  
THE GLORY OF GRACE | JOHN 1:14-18

Message Notes:

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**WEEK 5: THE GLORY OF GRACE | JOHN 1:14-18  
QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND  
DISCUSSION**

Why is both glory and grace important to John in these verses? How are these both displayed in Jesus?

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In verse 17 we see a comparison of the law and Jesus. What are the differences between the law and what Christ offered? Does Jesus nullify the law?

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Can a person with the right doctrine and knowledge of Jesus still be an unbeliever? If so, how or why?

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As we wrap up the introduction of the Gospel of John, how has your view of Christ changed? In what way do you hope to grow moving forward?

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# ABOUT GRACE

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Grace is one large church in many smaller communities, with a mission to help people take their next step toward Christ.

Our local, neighborhood campuses worship in Orlando, Oviedo, Winter Garden, Clermont, Lake Nona, and at Edgewood Children's Ranch. Each of our campuses shares a central vision and organizational structure under the leadership of Senior Pastor Mike Adkins, but each campus also has its own pastor-teacher and leadership team. We believe this is the best way we can keep church feeling like family and also reach the vastly diverse neighborhoods of Central Florida.

Our teaching pastors and our worship pastors work together week by week, bringing many voices into unity to plan our ministry and our worship services. They take common scriptures and ideas for each weekend and bring them to life around songs, challenges and themes that reach our unique communities.

Our teaching and worship pastors also trade campuses every so often, too, allowing our people to hear from a plurality of elders and keeping Grace from being built up around one central person.

## WHAT WE'RE ABOUT

Expository, gospel-centered teaching, both in Sunday worship and in regular classes and workshops.

Modern worship woven with liturgy and creedal confession, focusing on the work of Christ and not ourselves.

Corporate communion, personal confession and prayer every week.

Spiritual friendship and connection through sacrificial service and Grace Communities.

Gospel-focused family ministry that centers around what God has done for your kids through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Celebration of ancient seasons like Advent and Lent to prepare for holy days.

## CAMPUS LOCATIONS

### GRACE ORLANDO

Meets at Edgewater High School  
3100 Edgewater Drive, Orlando  
Services Sundays at 9:15 & 10:45a  
Senior Pastor Mike Adkins

### GRACE OVIEDO

Meets at Indian Trails Middle School  
415 Tuskawilla Road, Winter Springs  
Services Sundays at 9:15 & 10:45a  
Pastor Bobby Raulerson

### GRACE WINTER GARDEN

Meets at Whispering Oak Elementary  
15300 Stoneybrook W Winter Garden  
Services Sundays at 10a  
Pastor Brian Allen

### GRACE CLERMONT

Meets at Grassy Lake Elementary School  
1100 Fosgate Drive, Minneola  
Service Sundays at 10a  
Pastor Caleb Brasher

### GRACE LAKE NONA

Meets at Eagle Creek Elementary  
10025 Eagle Creek Sanctuary Blvd, Orlando  
Service Sundays at 5p  
Pastor Dr. Ben Bailie

### GRACE EDGEWOOD

Serves Edgewood Children's Ranch  
1451 Edgewood Ranch Road, Orlando  
Service Sundays at 3p



DISCOVERGRACE.COM