

Dr. Dustin Daniels | River Bible Church

John 1:2-5 | Life & Light

Sunday August 9, 2026

WELCOME:

- Bibles in the back—our gift to you.
- My sermon notes are in the foyer—please take them home with you.

REVIEW:

We started our new study on John's Gospel last Sunday.

I gave a fairly lengthy introduction on the Bible itself and how we are to read it correctly.

The Bible is a library of sixty-six divinely inspired books, with many literary genres—so we don't want to read each one the same way.

We don't want to read them *flatly*, but correctly.

We want to read Scripture *sideways*—because each book is connected to the other.

I also provided some background information on the differences within the Gospels.

I hope that long introduction was beneficial to you.

I also presented two personal disclaimers.

LW KEYPOINT 1:

We will be more challenged in John's Gospel than ever before.

That's a good thing!

Being challenged through thinking, meditating, praying, and participating is how we grow spiritually—those are the exercises we need.

We also addressed a cultural issue—the emphasis on our feelings.

As Christians, we don't live by our feelings—we live by God's truth.

LW KEYPOINT 2:

John will offend you with some of your deeply held religious beliefs.

So don't shoot the messenger. Don't quit!

When offended, let me encourage you to find the source of your offense prayerfully, biblically, and relationally.

This takes time and work, but is exactly what is needed to build our spiritual muscle and grow up into spiritual maturity, as the Apostle Paul says.

Finally, we then moved to the Gospel of John, looking at verse one of John's prologue.

We spent a lot of time talking about “the Word”, because John mentions “the Word” three times in one breath!

We learned that “the Word” is a title for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Last week KEYPOINTS:

3. *As the Word, Jesus is the visible manifestation of the invisible God.*
4. *Jesus “was” God—He did not “become God.”*
5. *What God was (is), the Word was (is).*

INTRODUCTION:

Today, we're going to study the remaining four verses that establish the theological foundation of John's thesis for his Gospel—Jesus is God of very God.

He offers *spiritual light* and *eternal life* to sinners.

How does this apply and impact you? Let's find out!

Please stand for the reading and honoring of God's Word.

Let us hear the Word of the Lord:

SCRIPTURE:

John 1:1—*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

John 1:2—*He was with God in the beginning.*

John 1:3—*All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.*

John 1:4—*In him was life, and that life was the light of men.*

John 1:5—*That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it.*

May the Lord bless the reading of His Word.

PRAY:

For it is you who light my lamp; the LORD my God lightens my darkness. For you have delivered my soul from death, yes, my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of life (Psalms 56:13 and 18:28).

EXEGESIS:

John 1:1—*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

John 1:2—*He was with God in the beginning.*

Last week, we learned that “the Word” is a title for the second person of the Trinity—the Lord Jesus Christ.

So the pronoun “He” is the Lord Jesus, and “God” is the Father in verse two.

Why would John repeat what he just said?

Verse 1: ***“The Word was with God.”***

Verse 2: ***“He was with God in the beginning.”***

- Is it because we’re all hard-headed?
- Is it because we don’t listen well or at all?
- Is it because we don’t want to understand? Because if we understand who Jesus is and what He has done, that means we are accountable to Him for how we live.

Yes, to all the above! AND it has to do with something more.

John repeats Himself because the Lord Jesus, being God of very God, is THE most important thing we will ever understand, believe, and confess.

It’s impossible for us to fully understand that Jesus was with the Father in the beginning—that He is uncreated—thus having no beginning.

We live in a world where everything has a beginning.

- Every one of us has a birthday.
- Every company has a founder.

- Every nation has a starting point.
- Every smartphone has a release date.

We instinctively ask, "When did it begin/start?"

But when we ask that question about Jesus, Scripture refuses to answer it—not because the answer is hidden, but because the question doesn't apply.

The Lord Jesus didn't begin— before there was time, before there was space, before there was matter, the Lord Jesus already was.

This means that everything said about God the Father can be said of God the Son.

The Disciple, Philip said...

John 14:8— *"show us the Father, and that's enough for us."*

John 14:9— *Jesus said to him, "Have I been among you all this time and you do not know me, Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

John 14:11—*Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.*

Now, having affirmed in verses 1 and 2 that "the Word" is a title for the Lord Jesus and that Jesus is God of very God, John now proves Jesus' divinity through His works.

John 1:3—*All things were created through him (the Lord Jesus), and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.*

What's going on here? This sounds strange because it's excessively literal.

However, it's the *excessively literal rendering* that makes John's point excessively clear.

There are two parts to verse three, and they say the same thing for rhetorical/stylistic effect.

This is not a mistake; John does this on purpose. He wants to get our attention.

The first part is a positive statement while the second part is negative.

Positively—“all things were created through Him”

And then negatively—“and apart from Him not one thing was created that was created.”

John is saying the same thing twice but in different ways.

Now, aside from the excessive literalness, we can't help but notice the repetition either.

So just as verse one had Jesus' title, “the Word,” in it three times, verse three has the term “created” in it three times.

Whenever you see deliberate repetition in Scripture, pay attention.

Repetition was one way to place emphasis on something.

We might think of it almost like putting something in boldface or adding an exclamation point.

Let me give you two obvious examples: We see this in the OT:

Isaiah 6:3—*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Armies; his glory fills the whole earth.*

We also see it in the New:

Revelation 4:8—*Holy, holy, holy, Lord God, the Almighty, who was, who is, and who is to come.*

We worship a completely holy God—all His attributes flow from His holiness.

We also see this repetition in the Gospels when Jesus repeats Himself,

John 6:47 ESV—*Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes has eternal life.*

So let's break this down:

John 1:3—*All things were created through him (the Lord Jesus),*

All things—not some/couple/most—all means all in Greek (*pas*).

Last week, we discussed how Jesus spoke *all things* into existence. (Gen. 1:3)

So today, let's look at the Lord's handiwork through His creation.

Our Sun is so large that 1.3 million Earths would fit inside the Sun itself.

However, our Sun is small compared to Antares— another star in our galaxy.

NASA says that Antares is 700 times the diameter of our own Sun, 15 times more massive, and 10,000 times brighter

Antares is so enormous that 300 million of our Suns could fit inside it.

Aside from those individual stars,

Scientists estimate that there are hundreds of billions—perhaps a trillion—galaxies in the observable universe.

And NASA says the universe itself is larger than we can observe.

How much larger? We don't know.

What's my point?—Every part of it that exists owes its existence to the Lord Jesus Christ.

When we realize this, it is so clear that we are nothing more than specks on a speck in a speck.

That should humble us!

Just as no one walks away from seeing the Grand Canyon for the first time saying, “Wow, look how grand I am!”

How much more so when looking at the cosmos.

Not only is the Lord Jesus the Creator of the macrocosm of the universe, but He is also the Creator of the microcosm.

Let's put down our telescopes and pick up our microscopes.

Consider just one cell in your body.

Inside that tiny cell is a molecule called DNA.

If you could stretch out the DNA from one single human cell, it would measure about six feet long.

Yet that six-foot strand of microscopic DNA is packed into a nucleus so small that millions of them could fit on the head of a pin.

Scientists tell us that our bodies contain 30 trillion cells.

There is so much DNA packed inside your body that if you could stretch it all out in one long line, it would reach farther than you could ever travel in a lifetime.

What's my point? The Lord Jesus Christ designed every strand because to have a creation, there must be a Creator.

The Lord Jesus is the *first* cause—everything else is a *secondary* cause.

No scientist has ever created a single atom—they only discover atoms that the Lord has created.

In the same way, engineers innovate, and inventors assemble what's already been given to them by God.

But only Jesus creates from nothing and sustains everything.

Colossians 1:17—*He is before all things, and by him all things hold together.*

John 1:3—*All things were created through him,*

Created *through*—the Greek preposition is *dia*, which means “because of/by.”

All things were created *because of* or created *by* the Lord Jesus.

John continues to reiterate that Jesus is not part of creation.

He is the source of creation.

If something exists, Jesus created it.

If it has being, Jesus gave it being.

If it breathes, Jesus is the One who made breath possible.

Nothing made was made apart from the Lord Jesus.

That means Jesus is not one item inside the Creator's toolbox.

Jesus is the One who built the toolbox.

Jesus is not one piece of the puzzle.

Jesus is the One who designed the puzzle.

Whether the world or our culture accepts it or not, there are no exceptions.

Imagine walking into a museum and looking/admiring a painting— while completely ignoring the artist who painted it.

That's absurd.

Yet every day, millions of people admire sunsets, see mountain ranges, hold newborn babies, and gaze at galaxies while refusing to acknowledge the One who made them.

God is not only the creator; God is the sole creator.

Scripture tells us this time and time again in both in the Old and New Testaments.

I want to show you the ten verses in which God speaks about Himself as the Creator.

Isaiah 40:28—*Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of the whole earth.*

Isaiah 42:5—*This is what God, the Lord, says—
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people on it
and spirit to those who walk on it—*

Isaiah 44:24—This is what the Lord, your Redeemer who formed you from the womb, says: I am the Lord, who made everything; who stretched out the heavens by myself;

Isaiah 45:7—I form light and create darkness, I make success and create disaster; I am the Lord, who does all these things.

Isaiah 45:12—I made the earth, and created humans on it. It was my hands that stretched out the heavens, and I commanded everything in them.

Isaiah 48:13—My own hand founded the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summoned them, they stood up together.

The New Testament:

Acts 17:28—For in him we live and move and have our being,

Colossians 1:16—For everything was created by him,
in heaven and on earth,
the visible and the invisible (spiritual),
whether thrones or dominions (earthly kingdoms/nations)
or rulers or authorities—
all things have been created through him and for him.

Romans 11:36—For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be the glory forever. Amen.

1 Corinthians 8:6—yet for us there is one God, the Father. All things are from him, and we exist for him. And there is one Lord, Jesus Christ. All things are through him, and we exist through him.

If anyone doubts Jesus' deity as the Creator, they must defy Scripture.

John 1:3—*and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.*

This is the same statement, but in a negative way—John is crystal clear on Who made who.

John 1:4—*In him was life,*

Last Sunday we learned that although the *tone* of John's prologue is Genesis 1 "In the beginning," the *content* is that of the Gospel.

As we study, we'll discover how "life" and "light" directly relate to salvation/eternal life.

Life and light cannot be separated in John's Gospel.

The word "life" is translated *zōē* (zoe-a).

So, as John begins speaking about life, he's not referring to the physical life in Genesis 1, but rather to spiritual life — eternal life, salvation.

Isn't it interesting how the world/our culture is fascinated with extending life?

Every year there are new diets, new medications, new exercise plans, and more supplements.

Everyone wants a few more healthy years.

However, some people want to live this life forever.

There's also a group of people who want to be brought back to life after they die—it's called "Cryonics."

There's a company in Scottsdale that, for the low price of hundreds of thousands of dollars, will store your corpse in liquid nitrogen in hopes of medical technology to resuscitate you.

These folks want to defeat death—not realizing the Lord Jesus already has.

Jesus doesn't resuscitate with His Gospel—Jesus resurrects.

Resuscitation doesn't do anything for your spiritual life.

If it were possible to be resuscitated after your corpse was placed in liquid nitrogen — you're still unforgiven and estranged from God.

Jesus offers a different kind of life—and it can start today for those of you who don't believe.

A life where death has no power.

Life without end is called salvation.

Without oversimplifying:

KEYPOINT 1:

Salvation is the complete forgiveness and deliverance from sin because of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Salvation is life with Jesus—a life without sin and without end.

When we talk about salvation, we start to think about Heaven.

Heaven will be an amazing place.

We don't have the vocabulary to describe how glorious the New Jerusalem will be.

But salvation is not so much about the place—but the Person.

Heaven is Jesus.

So Heaven is not so much about walking on streets of gold as about being face-to-face with your Savior God forever.

Now, to appreciate eternal life, we must first realize our spiritual state before the Lord.

God tells us that before belief in the Gospel that...

Ephesians 2:1—*And you were dead in your trespasses and sins.*

In other words, we are physically alive but spiritually dead.

Just as a physical corpse can't do anything, a spiritually dead person can't either.

Imagine someone shouting at a gravestone, "Wake up!"

No matter how passionate their voice, the dead cannot respond.

The dead don't need encouragement or resuscitation—they need a spiritual resurrection.

That's exactly what God does in salvation.

Apart from the Lord taking the initiative, spiritually dead people can't know God,

Romans 3:10—*There is no one righteous, not even one.*

That word "righteous" means "perfectly moral."

In other words, there is no one born holy—without sin.

And we think to ourselves, “Of course I’m not perfect or holy! I’m human.”

Yet, holiness is what it takes to enter Heaven.

Leviticus 19:2—*Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.*

Holiness is what’s needed for Heaven!

Not being a good person according to your own definition of good.

BTW, are you really a good person? Let’s take a pop quiz!

1. Have you ever lied? What do you call someone who has lied?— Liar.
2. Have you ever stolen something? It it matter the value. What do we call someone who has stolen? Thief.
3. Have you ever lusted? What does God call someone who has lusted? An adulterer.
4. Have you ever taken the Lord’s name in vain? What does God call someone who does this? A blasphemer.

And on judgment day, the Lord Jesus will roll the tape and say, “How can you call yourself a good person? You’re a lying, thieving, adulterating, blasphemer.

That’s who we are—sinners in the sight of God.

How does a sinner get into Heaven?

Does the Lord Jesus wink at sin?

No, the Lord Jesus died and rose again because of sin.

That’s the whole purpose of His miraculous incarnation.

We have to digest the bad news before we can appreciate the good—here's the Good News:

Romans 5:6—*For while we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.*

Romans 5:8—*But God proves his own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

So the Gospel is not merely that Jesus gives us better instructions for living.

Dead sinners don't need better instructions—they need life.

Sin leaves us spiritually dead and spiritually dark; Jesus gives us life and light.

John now moves from *life* to *light* because we need both.

John 1:4—*and that life was the light of men.*

And now John changes metaphors. The One who gives life to the dead also gives light to those living in darkness.

Light is a metaphor for salvation—think about how light works.

When you turn the light on, you can see.

But when the power goes out, everything changes.

It's dark in this sanctuary with these lights off—even with those doors.

A room that felt safe and familiar becomes strange and uncertain.

When the lights go out, fear may overwhelm you.

We don't realize how much we depend on light until the light disappears.

That is what darkness does.

It confuses. It hides. It disorients.

Have you ever been late to see a movie?

You go from walking in from the daylight (maintee), into a brightly lit hallway and into the dark theatre itself.

At first you can't see anything—you're disoriented.

But after being in the dark for several minutes, your eyes adjust, and things *seem* normal.

Spiritually, that's what happens to humanity—Stay in darkness long enough, and darkness begins to feel normal.

Isaiah 5:20— *Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness,*

People become so accustomed to darkness that they mistake it as normal.

Without the Lord Jesus, we live in spiritual darkness.

We need light. And Jesus is that light.

This is what Isaiah prophesied about the coming of Jesus:

Isaiah 9:2—*The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; a light has dawned on those living in the land of darkness.*

Since the Fall in Genesis 3, everyone (without exception) has been living in spiritual darkness.

Out of God's grace, the Lord chose Abraham (who was worshiping the moon) to be the father of His nation—Israel.

Years later, when the Lord commissioned Moses to lead His people out of Egypt, the first thing He does is reveal Himself as light through a burning bush.

That bush was much more than physical light—it was divine illumination (Ex. 3:2).

John 8:12—*I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.*"

John 12:46—*I have come as light into the world, so that everyone who believes in me would not remain in darkness.*

John 1:5—*That light shines in the darkness,*

Literally, this means "the light shines continually in the darkness."

Think about the metaphors:

Light is a universal symbol of illumination.

What do we say when someone "gets it?" —The light bulb went on.

Spiritually, light refers to truth.

How do we know Truth? Truth refers to God's Word.

Psalms 119:105—*Your word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path.*

The more we know the Word of God, the less we stumble around in the darkness of this world.

Even someone with “little faith”—someone who has a small candle will drive the darkness away.

John 1:5—*and yet the darkness did not overcome it.*

John uses an interesting Greek verb for overcome (*katalambano*).

Katalambano can be taken in several ways.

Some translations render it as "comprehend" or "understood".

A better translation is “overcome/ extinguish.”

Yet the darkness didn't overcome/extinguish it.

The picture here is that darkness can not and will not snuff out a flame.

History is filled with people who tried to extinguish Christianity.

Diocletian, a Roman Emperor, launched the “Great Persecution” against Christians beginning in AD 303.

Christian churches were destroyed, and copies of the Scriptures were burned.

Then, within about ten years, Diocletian died, and things changed drastically.

Constantine issued the Edict of Milan (AD 313), establishing toleration for Christianity.

Under Diocletian, the Roman government burned Bibles—under Constantine, the Roman government helped build churches and preserve the Scriptures.

And two thousand years later, people still try to extinguish the Gospel light.

Churches are closed. Pastors are imprisoned. Bibles are burned. Christians are threatened.

Yet the Gospel keeps crossing borders, entering homes, being translated into new languages, and making disciples.

You can imprison a Christian. You can burn a Bible. You can close a church building.

But you cannot turn off the Light of the world.

The light keeps shining—in fact, the more persecution, the brighter the Gospel shines.

So that's the exposition of the first five verses of John's Gospel.

The Lord Jesus is eternal → Creator → is Life → offers Light.

Therefore darkness cannot overcome Him or His church.

I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. (Matt. 16:18)

APPLICATION:

Do you see what John has done in the opening verses of his Gospel?

He has taken us from the beginning of creation to the salvation of sinners.

The God who said, 'Let there be light,' in Genesis 1, is the same God who said 'I am the light of the world' in John 8.

The Jesus who breathed physical life into Adam is the same Jesus who breathes eternal life to sinners.

The Jesus who hung the stars within the cosmos— is the same Jesus who hung on a cross for sin.

—

So what's all this mean for you today?

Every morning the sun rises whether people acknowledge it or not.

Some people welcome its light. Others pull the curtains closed.

However, the sunrise isn't dependent on how we respond.

In the same way, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Light of the world.

The question is this: Are you living in His light or dying in the darkness?

For those of you who don't believe—I pray that you would ponder that question this week—and keep coming back to hear more of the story.

For those of you who do believe—go shine the Gospel light to one person this week.

PRAY:

BENEDICTION:

*May the LORD bless you and protect you;
may the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
may the LORD look with favor on you
and give you peace.” ’ (Num. 6:24)*

SERMON NOTES:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

POP QUIZ

1. According to John 1:2, where was Jesus in the beginning?

- A. With the angels
- B. With God
- C. In creation
- D. In Bethlehem

(Answer: B)

2. Which statement best describes Jesus?

- A. Jesus became God at His baptism
- B. Jesus was the first being God created
- C. Jesus is eternal, and uncreated
- D. Jesus began when He was born in Bethlehem

(Answer: C)

3. Why does John repeat important truths in the opening verses of his Gospel?

- A. Because he forgot what he had already written
- B. To place emphasis on important truths
- C. Because Greek had no punctuation
- D. To make the Gospel longer

(Answer: B)

4. According to John 1:3, how many created things came into existence through Jesus?

- A. Most things
- B. Spiritual things only
- C. Everything except humanity
- D. All things

(Answer: D)

5. Approximately how many Earths could fit inside our Sun?

- A. 13,000
- B. 130,000
- C. 1.3 million
- D. 13 million

(Answer: C)

6. What does the vastness and complexity of creation ultimately point us toward?

- A. Humanity's greatness
- B. The greatness of the Creator
- C. The limits of scientific discovery
- D. The age of the universe

(Answer: B)

7. What is unique about Jesus as Creator?

- A. He improves things that already exist
- B. He creates from nothing and sustains everything
- C. He created only spiritual things
- D. He created the universe but no longer sustains it

(Answer: B)

8. What is the difference between resuscitation and the life Jesus gives?

- A. There is no difference
- B. Resuscitation restores earthly life; Jesus gives resurrection and eternal life
- C. Resuscitation forgives sin
- D. Resurrection only extends physical life

(Answer: B)

9. According to Ephesians 2:1, what is humanity's spiritual condition apart from Christ?

- A. Confused but basically good
- B. Spiritually sick
- C. Spiritually dead in trespasses and sins
- D. Spiritually neutral

(Answer: C)

10. What happens when people remain in spiritual darkness long enough?

- A. Darkness eventually disappears
- B. Darkness begins to feel normal
- C. They automatically begin searching for God
- D. They become spiritually enlightened

(Answer: B)

REFLECTION AND APPLICATION QUESTIONS

Monday — Jesus Is Eternal | John 1:2

1. If Jesus is truly God, what authority should His Word have over your beliefs, decisions, priorities, and behavior?
2. In what area of your life are you resisting His authority?
3. What should you do with that specific area in your life?

Tuesday — Jesus Is Creator | John 1:3

1. Spend a few minutes observing something God has created—the sky, mountains, trees, your own body. What does creation reveal to you about the greatness of Christ?
2. John says that *all things* were created through Christ. How does knowing that affect the way you use your time, money, abilities, and possessions?
3. What created things do you tend to enjoy more than your Creator?

Wednesday — Jesus Is Life | John 1:4

1. Our culture spends enormous amounts of time and money trying to extend physical life. Why is the eternal life Jesus offers infinitely more valuable than simply living longer?
2. “Salvation is life with Jesus—a life without sin and without end.” How does that description change the way you think about Heaven?
3. If the greatest treasure of Heaven is not merely the place but the Person of Jesus Christ, how does that change the amount of time you spend with Him today?

Thursday — From Death to Life | Ephesians 2:1

1. Scripture describes unbelievers not merely as spiritually confused or sick, but as dead in trespasses and sins. Why is that distinction important for understanding salvation?
2. A physically dead person cannot make himself alive. What does that illustration teach you about your dependence upon God's grace in salvation?
3. Romans 5:8 says, “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Spend time today thanking God specifically for what Christ has done for you.

Friday — Jesus Is the Light | John 1:4

1. The sermon says, “Stay in darkness long enough, and darkness begins to feel normal.” What attitudes or behaviors does our culture now consider normal that Scripture identifies as darkness?
2. Isaiah warns against calling evil good and good evil. Where are you most tempted to allow the culture rather than Scripture to determine what you consider good, true, and acceptable?
3. Psalm 119:105 describes God's Word as a lamp and a light. What specific step can you take to allow Scripture to guide your decisions more consistently?

Saturday — The Darkness Cannot Overcome the Light | John 1:5

1. John says the darkness cannot overcome or extinguish Christ's light. How should that truth affect the way you respond to discouraging events in our culture and world?
2. The sermon reminds us that people can imprison Christians, burn Bibles, and close churches, “but you cannot turn off the Light of the world.” How should that confidence affect your willingness to share Jesus day-by-day?
3. Consider John’s progression so far: *Jesus is eternal* → *Creator* → *Life* → *Light* = *Darkness cannot overcome Him*. Which of these truths about Christ do you most need to remember right now, and how will you apply it this coming week?

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