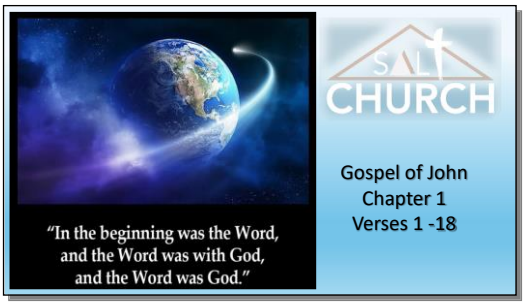
HOW STUDY THE BIBLE 3: Welcome to the third and final in the series **How to Study the Bible.**

We have seen the absolute importance of Context as the first step in understanding God's word. We spent a whole study on it because it is that important. We must be careful not to take a verse out of context and make it say what we want it to say. When we do that… we make the verse a pre-text and that is dangerous. We must start with understanding the text in its context and seek to discover its meaning to the original audience to whom it was written. This way we will not make the mistake of applying promises that are exclusively for Israel for example to the church or to ourselves. We can only start to apply the word of God when we have the basic contextual understanding.

Last time we looked at some simple bible Study techniques as acronyms for example Soap… Apple… Reap… Coma… Salt and I made one up for my name Chris. Try them and try more than one to the text and see the results. Did you manage to produce a study method using your name as an Acronym?



Tonight, I thought it good to look at a passage and study it a bit to draw out its contextual meaning to the audience at the time and to learn the doctrine of the passage and its application to us today.
I have chosen a well-known passage the Gospel of John Chapter 1 verses 1-18.

Even though we know this well I am hoping that by some study we will learn more and see the benefits of taking some time studying the passage. I have to say in the past the research was done through books and Pastors had massive libraries. Today all the books and all the research you need is on the Internet. The internet has made bible study in detail available to all… The warning is to be careful who you listen to… and to check out the site or the person.

CONTEXT: John is the 4th Gospel … The purpose for His gospel John states is in Chapter 20:31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. Remember we looked at the miracles of Jesus in John and each one said something powerful about Jesus Divinity.

Each Gospel looks at Jesus from a different angle.

Mathew... Jewish angle written to Jews has many Jewish concepts.
Mark... Gentile angle written to Gentiles action packed few Jewish concepts.
Luke... Historical angle. A history book eyewitness accounts.
John... Spiritual angle. Who is Jesus really.

All together they make a full picture of Jesus His message His Gospel and His purposes.

History: The Gospel of John was written in a complex world of Greek Philosophy also Hebrew thought…

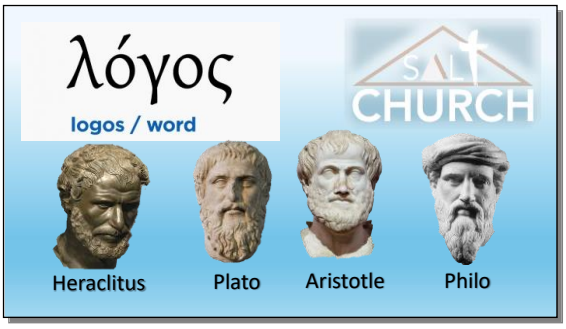
A seeming clash of world concepts and thoughts about where we have come from… why we are here… and where we go after death. John Chapter 1 is the introduction to who is Jesus Christ... Written in code a code that both Greeks and Jews would understand. The code is the various concepts John introduces us to... But whilst Greeks and Jews would instantly get the message, we have to do a bit of work to fully understand… **So, what are the concepts... Let us start by reading the passage…** To speed up our study a bit I have highlighted some key areas in Yellow to point us to some interesting words or concepts that the passage talks about.

1 In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word** was with God, and **the Word** was God. **2** **He** was with God in the beginning. **3** **Through him** all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Here we notice that 3 times so far, a concept is introduced to us called **THE WORD.** On simple reading we can deduce instantly that in the context **THE WORD is a HE and a HIM.** Now **HE and HIM** are **personal pronouns** meaning an actual person and more specifically in the male context…of course later on we discover the Word is a MAN the Man Jesus Christ. So, a simple conclusion is that THE WORD is a HE so therefore is a Male Person.

We also pick up what He has done verse 3… **All things have been made by Him… everything.** At this point we should recognise John 1 in the context of the whole Bible in the parallel to Genesis Chapter one… **In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.** The text of John 1-3 is declaring to its audience that **The Word A Male Person is the Creator.**

In the context of the whole Bible, it becomes clear that the Word… the Male Person is THE CREATOR therefore the word the person **IS GOD**… and this becomes clearer in the rest of the passage. **BUT who is THE WORD? And what did the original hears understand by this concept THE WORD? What did it mean to them?**



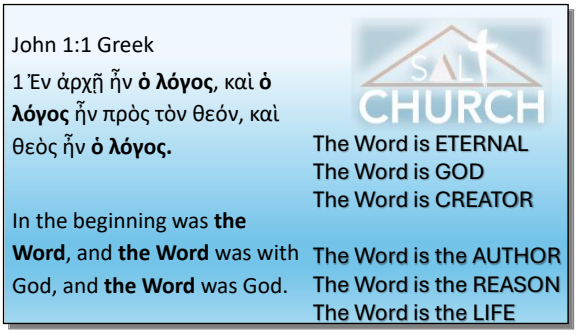
The Greek word λόγος (logos) holds rich and layered meaning, especially in ancient Greek philosophy and in the context of the Gospel of John.

In Classical Greek Philosophy Heraclitus of Ephesus (6th century BC) Used logos to describe the **divine reason or principle that orders the cosmos…** It was an invisible, rational structure behind all change and existence.

In Stoic Philosophy developed 300BC Stoics believed that the universe operated according to reason… They saw logos as the divine rationality that pervades the universe — the soul of the world… they thought that all people had a share of this logos as reason or rational thought.

Plato and Aristotle: Plato associated logos with speech, discourse, and abstract reasoning… Aristotle defined it in the context of the logical appeal — the reasoned argument used to persuade. **No wonder we are so Logical in Western Society we think like the ancient Greeks. Logic… Reason… Boxes…proof**

Hellenistic Jewish Thought (e.g., Philo of Alexandria). Philo, a Jewish philosopher influenced by Greek thought, used logos to refer to: The mediator between God and the world. The logos was God's agent of creation, wisdom, and revelation. Though to Philo not equal to God, the logos was divine and instrumental. **A completely different way of thinking.** This background bridges Greek philosophy and Jewish theology; crucial to understand John's audience.



Let us look at John 1:1 in the original Greek language.

John 1:1 Greek: 1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν **ὁ λόγος**, καὶ **ὁ λόγος** ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν **ὁ λόγος**.

In the beginning was **the Word**, and **the Word** was with God, and **the Word** was God… **The word** is mentioned **3** times in verse 1. In chapter 1 the word is mentioned **7** times so a phrase worth looking into.

In Greek word we know is LOGOS: John's Gospel begins by using the Greek idea of a "divine reason" or "the mind of God" as a way to connect with the readers of his day, who mostly spoke Greek, and John introduces Jesus to them as this divine reason the mind of God **Jesus is God.**

Greek philosophy may have used the word in reference to divine reason, but John used it to INCREASE THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE CONCEPT OF THE WORD. John redefines LOGOS by amplifying the concept.
In John's use of the Logos concept, we find that…

The word is ETERNAL…The word was with God.
The word is GOD.
The word is CREATOR… all things created by The word.

The word is the AUTHOR… of the Cosmos [universe]
The word is the REASON… of the Cosmos [universe]
The word is the LIFE… of the Cosmos [universe.

So, In the Gospel of John, he starts by expanding the concept of the word the Logos representing the divine reason and order in the universe.

John 1:1 states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Johns audience Greek or Jew would have instantly understood what John was getting at. **THE LOGOS OF THE UNIVERSE IS MORE THAN THEY THOUGHT.**

4 **In him** was **life**, and that **life** was the **light** of all mankind. **5** The **light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. **6** There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify concerning that **light**, so that through him all might believe. **8** He himself was not the **light**; he came only as a witness to the **light**. **9** The true **light** that gives **light** to everyone was coming into the world.

2X Life ; 7x Light

The next set of concepts John introduces is Light and Life. The word the Logos is Life. The life of the Logos the word is the Light of all mankind… there is a message for us illumination for all mankind. The logos the word is the light that is powerful, and shines and the darkness cannot overcome it.
John the Baptist is the witness John the Baptist is the prophet to announce the light the light is the logos the light is the word the light is him a he a person.

This really hits the Jews. They are expecting an announcement the announcement of the messiah… who is the logos the word… COULD IT BE MESSIAH.
BUT WHO is the LOGOS WHO is the LIGHT: By now the readers both Greek and Jew will be on the edge of their seats.

In ancient Greek thought, light and life were intricately linked. Light symbolizing higher dimensions and truth, while also being associated with divine power and the life-giving force of the sun. Greek Philosophers developed this connection, exploring light as a principle of the world and a symbol of both **divine immanence [presence] and transcendence. [perfection and grace]**

Light was a Symbol: For the ancient Greeks, light was more than just illumination; it represented truth, clarity, and the ability to understand the world.

Light had a Divine Connection: Light was closely tied to the gods, particularly Helios, the personification of the sun, who brought light and warmth to the world. His radiance was associated with power, authority, and the life-giving force of the sun. and Aether the god of light and the upper sky.

The Stoics a branch of Greek Philosophy saw light as a dualistic force, representing both the physical world and the divine.

Concerning Light and Vision: The Greeks recognized the importance of light for vision, with Euclid even proposing a theory of vision where the eye emits rays to strike objects. This connection between light and sight highlights the significance of light in their understanding of perception and the world around them. Beyond its physical presence, light was also imbued with symbolic meanings. It could represent happiness, victory, glory, and virtue.

In religious contexts, it was seen as a source of salvation and a transformative force… bringing illumination and positive change.

In Judaism, light is a powerful symbol representing life, goodness, wisdom, and God's presence. Light is often used as a metaphor for Torah [law], mitzvot (commandments), and the human soul, suggesting that following God's commandments brings light into the world and one's own life. The concept of light is also deeply intertwined with the idea of Divine revelation and the potential for spiritual growth.

In Judaism Light is frequently used to symbolize life, joy, and positive qualities. It is associated with wisdom, truth, justice, and peace, all of which are seen as essential aspects of a meaningful life.

The Torah is described as a light, guiding individuals on the right path and illuminating their way. Performing mitzvot, or commandments, is likened to lighting a candle, bringing light into the world and one's own soul.

Divine revelation, or God's presence, is often depicted as a light, highlighting the spiritual illumination that comes from connecting with the divine… The Shekhinah, or Divine Presence, is also associated with light, with its radiance believed to be reflected in various aspects of the world, including the new moon.

In Judaism The human soul is also associated with light, with some texts describing it as a "candle of God". Judaism emphasizes the importance of cultivating inner light through learning, mitzvot, and acts of kindness, which can help illuminate one's own life and the world around them.

Light plays a significant role in Jewish rituals, with candles being lit during Sabbath, festivals, and other occasions to signify God's presence and the joy of the moment. The Hanukkah menorah is a particularly notable example, with its eight candles symbolizing the miracle of the oil lasting for eight days. Candles are often considered sacred and not for practical illumination, but rather for their symbolic meaning and connection to the divine.

Judaism emphasizes the importance of spreading light and goodness into the world through acts of kindness, learning, and following God’s commandments. By cultivating inner light and shining it outwards, individuals can contribute to a more just and compassionate world.

The summary on light and Jesus reiterated this at the lighting of the Hannukah candles when He stated in John 8:12 I am the light of the world. Jesus Christ IS THE DIVINE REVELATION THE TRUE LIGHT. Only Jesus Christ can illuminate your life and give you divine revelation that leads to salvation being born again and eternal life. Jesus is the Life and Light of the COSMOS.

10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize
him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive
him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born
not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

He the Logos created the world but is rejected by not being recognised as the creator. He came to the created human beings… and he was not received. Both Humanity and his own people Israel.

BUT… HOPE verse 12 and 13 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

To those receiving him plus believing in his name the logos the word gave the right to be children of God born in a different way not the human way but born of God introducing the concept of being born again. That issue is expanded in John chapter 3 Jesus discourse with Nicodemus.

NOTE the Logos the word now has a name… **WHAT IS HIS NAME?**

14 **The Word** became **flesh** and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the
one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of **grace and truth**. 15 (John testified concerning him.
He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed
me because he was before me.'") 16 Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace
already given. 17 For the law was given through Moses; **grace and truth** came through **Jesus Christ.** 18 **No
one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship
with the Father, has made him known.**

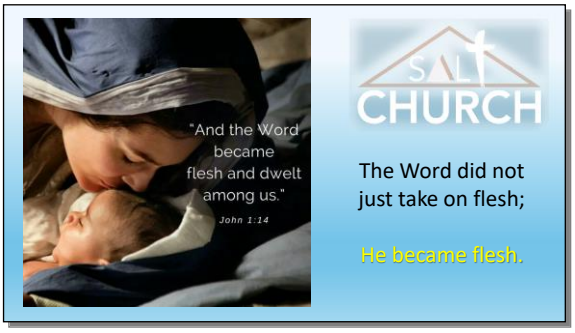
KAPOW now John refines the logos and identifies the word with a person the person Jesus Christ. The next concept THE LOGOS THE WORD BECOMES FLESH. THE INCARNATION… THE EMBODIMENT OF THE LOGOS THE WORD IN HUMAN FORM

The word is ETERNAL…The word was with God… Jesus is the word Jesus is God
The word became flesh a He a Him a person the person Jesus Christ
Jesus is a Son the Son of The Father.
John introduces the Trinity making God relational not ethereal a Person not a concept. John contrasts for the Jewish listeners the law given through Moses = the Old Testament… But a new Testament is coming one not of Law that cannot be kept but a testament of Grace and Truth and Jesus is bringing it. So, John has redefined the Logos the word still further and arrives at the truth.

The word is ETERNAL…The word was with God… Jesus is the word Jesus is God
The word is CREATOR… all things created by The word… Jesus is the word Jesus is the CREATOR OF THE COSMOS

The word is the AUTHOR… of the Cosmos [universe]… Jesus Christ is the word Jesus Christ is the AUTHOR OF THE COSMOS
The word is the REASON… of the Cosmos [universe]… Jesus Christ is the word Jesus Christ is the REASON FOR THE COSMOS
The word is the LIFE… of the Cosmos [universe]… Jesus Christ is the word Jesus Christ is the LIFE OF THE COSMOS NOTHING EXISTS WITHOUT HIM

Verse 18 Jesus has seen God the Father… Jesus Mission on earth is TO MAKE THE FATHER KNOWN.



So, John uses logos in a revolutionary way: There are five things to know about the Word who became flesh. First, God Became Human (v. 14) Second, this Word was with God. He was a person that existed with God in eternity. He was co-existent and co-eternal with God.

Third, this Word was God. "The Word was with God" (v. 1). It emphasizes his nature as truly God. (Beasley-Murray) This Word who was in the beginning, who was with God, was God. "He was in the beginning with God" (v. 2). John repeats it here for emphasis. **The Word, who was God, was with God in the beginning.** Fourth, this Word made all things. Conversely, without him, nothing in the universe was made. "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (v. 3). Only by him were all things made. God created the universe through the Word. This Word was the co-Creator of the universe.

Now this Word who was God became flesh. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (v. 14). The verb "became" (ginomai) means changing one's properties; transforming into a new thing; and becoming into what is not before. **The Word did not just take on flesh; he became flesh.**

So, John tells us magnificently that The Creator became the creature; the eternal became time-bound; "the infinite became finite;" "the invisible became visible;" the "supernatural" became "natural. "God became flesh; God became human. **Thus, Jesus Christ was God and Jesus Christ was human… FULLY GOD DIVINE FULLY HUMAN WITHOUT SIN**

Conclusion: John takes the Greek and Hebrew world views at the time about the logos the word Light and life and very cleverly confirms their thinking but enhances their thinking and philosophy and world view. John takes the concepts and personalises all of them to the Man Jesus Christ who John defines as being the Word The Light and The Life of the cosmos. Jesus is God the creator who has come to His creation to humanity and to the Jewish Nation to bring the illumination light and life that can well up to eternal life.

The condition is that life is given [being born again from God] to those who receive Jesus for who He truly is God Incarnate True God True human and who believe on His Name Jesus Christ. The logos the word has become a person not a distance concept or an ethereal theory but a real concrete person the person Jesus Christ.

John chapter 1 emphasizes Jesus' pre-existence as the Word of God, his incarnation as Jesus, and his role as the source of life and light for humanity. The chapter highlights Jesus' divine nature and his mission to reveal the Father.
Amen.