

EVERY DAY WITH JESUS (November 30 – December 6)

Savor a segment of the gospel each day so that you may...

“...grow in the grace and knowledge of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ.” “II Peter 3:18)

A brief background about the Gospel of John. WRITER As in the case of each of the books of the Bible, God is the Author. Here He used John as His “pen”. As in the case of the other gospels, the writer does not use his own given name to indicate authorship. Four times he described himself as *“the disciple Jesus loved”*. What a beautiful way to see yourself! It’s the way John and GOD (!) want each of us to see ourselves – loved by Jesus. **UNIQUE FEATURES** A precious beginning which goes back not just to Bethlehem but to heaven. Not just to the beginning but before time to eternity. Many incidents and words of Jesus not recorded by the other three gospels. Ten different chapters (4,6,8,9,10,11,13,14,15,18) where Jesus used the expression “I AM” in a way that His Jewish hearers would understand He was declaring Himself to be the true God with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Four priceless chapters of words spoken by Jesus on the night of His betrayal (14-17). Details of Easter and the time until His ascension that were not made known by the other gospels.

MONDAY, November 30 - Please read: John 1:1,2 **Background:** These verses present to us profound truths. That truth is clear. At the same time it is beyond our comprehension. It is meant to be accepted in humble awe-inspired faith. In these verses John uses a wonderful name for our LORD, Jesus. He calls Him *“the Word”*. Take a look ahead to verse 14 of this chapter which shows that Jesus is indeed the One about whom John is writing. **Questions:** 1. Why is *“the Word”* an excellent name for Jesus? 2. What is the significance of the statement *“in the beginning was the Word”*? 3. How many persons are called *“God”* in these two verses? And, what does that tell you about the true God? **Possible answers:** 1. Calling Jesus *“the Word”* is an especially apt name for Him. In the Person of Jesus – through His words and works – the true God communicates most vividly about Himself and our salvation. As we shall see in verse 14, Jesus is *“the Word”* incarnate, that is, in the flesh. 2. It is significant that *“in the beginning”*, that is when time began, *“the Word”* was already in existence. He is eternal, uncreated. 3. Two persons are called *“God”* in these verses. One is God, the Father. The other is *“the Word”*. The fact that both persons exist at the same time is a clear indication that the true God consists of more than one Person at the same time. **Prayer:** Father in Heaven, thank You for revealing to us the wondrous mystery and reality about the eternity and equality that Your Son share with You and the Holy Spirit. Enable us to hold firm in faith to facts which You have clearly communicated eventhough they are so awesome we cannot fully comprehend them. Amen.

TUESDAY, December 1 - Please read: John 1:3-9 **Background:** *“Life”* and *“light”* are two very important concepts presented in the gospel of John. Later, in two of His famous *“I AM”* statements, we shall here Jesus claim to be both life and light. (8:12 & 11:25) Here He is credited as the Source of both. In verse 5 the word translated *“understood”* is probably better translated *“overcome”*. **Questions:** 1. Is verse 3 repetitious? Why would the Lord restate this thought? 2. What does verse 3 clearly state about the origin of all things? 3. *“Life”* and *“light”* are from God. They are opposed by death and darkness. What is the outcome of this opposition? 4. What was John the Baptist’s assigned duty? 5. How was John’s role different from ours and how was it the same? **Possible Answers:** 1. Stating this truth in two ways makes it doubly emphatic and incapable of being misunderstood. 2. All things owe their origin to God. The God who created them includes at least two persons. Elsewhere we learn that, beside the Father and *“the Word”*, the Spirit of God also had an active role in the origin of all things. (Cf. Genesis 2:7; Psalm 104:30). 3. Although opposed by death and darkness, life and light cannot be overcome; rather, they overcome. This victory is from God and He gives it to those who trust in Him. 4. John the Baptist’s duty was to be a witness to the Light so that all people might believe through his testimony. 5. John was called to be a prophet and his specific duty was to announce that the time of the fulfillment had come and to point people to Jesus. We too are to bear witness to the Light so that people might hear and believe. **Prayer:** Dear Jesus, You are our Life and our Light. Help us to live in Your light and thus to share it with all others for Your glory and their salvation. Amen.

WEDNESDAY, December 2 - Please read: John 1:10-13 **Background:** In John’s use of the word *“world”* is often meant not the world as God created it, but that part of creation that is in opposition to God **Questions:** 1. John refers to two huge tragedies in connection with the appearance of the Word. What were they? 2. What glorious status did those who believed in Him receive? 3. With respect to those who believed in Jesus, what fact does John make absolutely clear? **Possible answers:** 1. Creation, specifically the human race, did not recognize its Creator! With the exception of the human race, all of nature was clearly obedient to Him during His earthly lifetime. The disobedience of the human race was especially seen in the fact that His own people, who ought to have known God and His promises not only from nature around them but from His revealed word, refused to accept Him. 2. Those who did believe in Him received the status of

being God's children. 3. Receiving Jesus, that is, believing in Him is a birth that is totally caused by God! It isn't something into which you are born, that is, "*not of natural descent*". It isn't something produced by man's own decision ("my own thinking or choosing" as Luther described it in his explanation to the 3rd Article of the Apostles' Creed) – "*not of human decision or a husband's will*". Rather it is all God's gracious doing – "**born of God**"! **Prayer:** Father, thank You forever for making me Your child by Your grace, causing me to be spiritually born from You by Your Spirit through Your Word. Amen.

THURSDAY, December 3 - Please read: John 1:14 Background: In the words of this verse, the writer takes us back to the beginning of the most important events in history. All history looked forward to it and everything since needs to look back to it. Not only history but eternity is centered in this moment in time; for, it was planned before time began and the blessings that come from it never end! **Questions:** 1. What does it mean, "*the Word became flesh*"? 2. Why? Why would God "*makes his dwelling among us*"? 3. Whether people would admit it or not, what was clearly seen as one observed Jesus? 4. What special characteristics did He display? **Possible answers:** 1. God became man. The Word always was God, now the Word became man. 2. He came to dwell among us that we might some day live with Him in His house! 3. Although His outward appearance was that of an ordinary man – and a humble one! – He was clearly extraordinary, glorious! 4. He especially showed and established "*grace and truth*". He, and HE alone, was totally filled with both. **Prayer:** Dear Jesus, thank You for graciously coming to live among us for the purpose of making it possible for us to go to live with You forever! Amen.

FRIDAY, December 4 –Please read: John 1:15-18 Background: John the Baptist's God-given task was to prepare the way for the promised Messiah. John's preparatory words "He is coming" turned to "Here He is" when Jesus began His public ministry at the time John baptized Him. **Questions:** 1. John the Baptist's mother Elizabeth was six month's pregnant at the time Mary became pregnant with Jesus. How then can John say of Jesus "*...he was before me*"? 2. What eternal reality about our relationship with God does the gospel writer present in verse 16? 3. John writes "*No one has ever seen God*", how is this statement reconciled with Biblical accounts such as God's appearance to Abraham, Jacob, Moses etc? **Possible answers:** 1. As a man, Jesus is younger than John the Baptist; but, this Person Jesus is also God, who, as we have seen, existed from eternity before time began. 2. The relationship we have with the LORD always has us on the receiving end and God on the giving end. Even when we give Him gifts and praise, such activities on our part are a gift from Him that we are simply returning to Him. (That is why Paul can speak of the grace of giving, that is, the gift of being able to give and of actually doing so. II Corinthians 8 & 9.) 3. All of the times that the LORD graciously permitted Himself to be seen were, by the same grace, limited so that sinful man would not be consumed by the holy glory of the LORD. Jesus is God. He has "the "Insiders" complete unveiled view of God. Thus He alone is able to give us the complete firsthand picture of God. **Prayer:** Jesus, You are filled with grace and truth. We praise You for imparting that grace and truth to us so that we might know God as our Savior. Amen.

SATURDAY, December 5 – Please read: John 1:19-28 Questions: 1. What are some admirable qualities about John the Baptist that we see here and which we would do well to imitate? 2. What might we perhaps hear foreshadowed in this exchange between the priests and Levites and John the Baptist? **Possible answers:** 1. John is straightforward and honest. He has a clear understanding of himself and of Jesus. He is humble about himself but bold for the LORD. He knows what God wants him to do and he does it. 2. Do we hear in their questions and see in their manner a spirit that isn't really seeking information and is not open to belief but rather is filled with judgment and opposition such as they would later continually give to Jesus? **Prayer:** Lord, give us a clear understanding of You and of our relationship to You. Then make us aware of Your will and willing to do it for Your glory. Amen.

SUNDAY, December 6 – Please read: John 1:29-34 Background: God's prescribed worship for His Old Testament people involved daily sacrifices. Innocent victims vividly slaughtered before the eyes of the worshipers. In this way the LORD taught them that the price of redemption would be costly – an innocent victim would need to die to suffer the consequences of man's sin and provide needed ransom. **Questions:** 1. How is this Lamb to which John points different from all the lambs that had been sacrificed up to this point? 2. Jesus was John the Baptist's cousin; yet, what did it take for John to really know Him? **Possible Answers:** 1. This Lamb is not brought by man but sent by God. He is a human not an animal sacrifice. He is absolutely pure. His blood is precious, since it is God's blood. It is powerful, able to remove the guilt and stain of sin. Once offered, it never could or would need to be repeated. 2. Not just human understanding but direct revelation from God would be necessary for John to see and subsequently confess that his human cousin is also the eternal Son of God, his Savior and the Savior of all. **Prayer:** O Holy Spirit, You made it clear to John that Jesus was the Son of God and Savior of the world Whose way he was to prepare. Help us to clearly see Jesus too and then to clearly confess Him as the One who has taken away not only our own sin but the sin of the world. Amen.