

SERIES TITLE: “PROOF OF LIFE: THE SIGNS OF JESUS”

SERIES KEY SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: (John 20:30-31)

Series Central Teaching/Learning Theme: To prove that Jesus is The Messiah by looking at the evidence (signs) in John to equip believers to share their faith with confidence.

I. Creating Interest in the Series

A. Share the following information:

There has been a lot of media coverage over kidnapping and hostages. The terrorists killing of Nick Berg and Daniel Pearl have caused a wide-range of emotions.

Denzel Washington recently starred in a movie “Man on Fire” about a little girl who was kidnapped in Mexico City. His job was to protect her and then go get her once she was kidnapped.

A few years ago Russell Crowe and Meg Ryan starred in a movie called “Proof of Life”. Crowe was hired to rescue Ryan’s husband who had been kidnapped in a South American country.

Mel Gibson starred in a movie called “Ransom” where his son was kidnapped. In every instance of kidnapping negotiators will not negotiate without some proof of life. Either hearing the victims voice or seeing some sign that proves that they have who they say they have. Each step along the way the negotiator wants more proof that the person is still alive.

The Gospel of John was written to reveal who Jesus was to the Ephesians and it continues to give proof of His life for all today.

Read – ([John 20:30-31](#))

This is the purpose of John to reveal Jesus as the Christ by sharing some of His signs (miracles) so that people would believe in Him and have life.

State - Over the next 11 weeks we will look at proof that Jesus is the Messiah. People still want proof of His life today and we will be able to give this proof by the end of our study of The Signs of Jesus.

B. Optional Method – State a debate

Divide the class into 2 groups, one group will be trying to prove that Jesus is the Messiah and the other group will try to prove that He was not. (In a large class you may need to select 8-10 people to be on each side and have them debate in front of the class. You could even enlist people beforehand and have them work on their presentations before class.)

Instruct both groups to use the Scripture passages from the series to prove their points. (Allow about 10 minutes for this activity).

To begin the debate state – **Today** we will hear a debate to see if one side knows enough evidence to prove that Jesus is the Messiah and to see if the other side can adequately counter their claims.

After you have allowed the debate to rage on a little stop the debate.

Read – ([John 20:30-31](#))

State – This is why John wrote the Ephesians, to give signs that Jesus was the Messiah so that they could have life. Over the next 11 weeks we will look at proof that Jesus is the Messiah. People still want proof of His life today and we will be able to give this proof by the end of our study of The Signs of Jesus.

SESSION TITLE: “Proof of Life: Thee Word”
FOCAL PASSAGE: (John 1:1-18; 20:30-31)

Central Teaching/Learning Aim: To help the learner examine the proof of the pre-eminence of Christ and to challenge him/her to take that message to a lost world.

A. Display the question “What’s in a name?” Share some real names from the following list.

Al Kaholic Bea Sting
Anita Potty Bell E. Flopp
April Showers Ben Gay
B. O’Problem Bill Board
Barb B. Cue Stu Pidd
Barbie Dahl Stanley Steamer

Ask – Can anyone share the meaning of your name? (It would be good to bring a book of names and have some look up the meaning of their name).

Read - (John 1:1-3)

“Word” or the Greek “Logos” means the expression of what is in one’s mind. God expressed Himself through Jesus Christ and Jesus “The Word” was with God from the beginning.

Jesus is not a human that God gave divine inspiration to. Jesus is God and God expressed Himself to mankind through the “Logos”.

State – Today we are going to discuss the pre-eminence of Christ and how He has the power to save.

B. Optional Method – Movie Clip “Spider-Man”

Start: 01:30:25

Stop: 01:33:00

Synopsis:

In the beginning of the movie Spider-Man, Peter Parker undergoes a transformation. Bitten by a spider that’s been subjected to genetic experimentation, Peter develops superpowers. Beneath his lycra union suit beats the heart of a hero who nightly swings between the skyscrapers, looking for some endangered soul to rescue.

One such soul is Mary Jane, a young woman he secretly loves. She falls for Spider-Man—but not for Peter Parker. Mary Jane (M.J.) doesn’t know who Spider-Man really is—even when he comes to her rescue.

Just after Peter and M.J. part company outside a diner late one night, four thugs approach M.J. and back her into an alley. Peter watches as one of the men pulls a knife on her. M.J. tries to defend herself for a moment, then, suddenly Spider-Man appears, spins a web, and ties up the four bad guys.

Later, M.J. and Peter discuss her mysterious rescuer, and she confesses her love for Spider-Man. Mary Jane is impressed to learn that Peter “knows” Spider-Man. In fact, Peter admits he’s had a “conversation” with Spider-Man about Mary Jane. She presses him to know what Peter told her hunky heartthrob.

Peter searches for the right words; “I said, um, ‘Spider-Man,’ I said, ‘the great thing about M.J. is when you look in her eyes, and she looks back in yours, everything feels not quite normal, because you feel strong—and weak at the same time. You feel excited, and at the same time terrified. The truth is you don’t know the way you feel, except you know the kind of man you want to be. It’s as if you’ve reached the unreachable, and you weren’t ready for it.”

What Peter describes is the same phenomenon we experience when we come to know Jesus Christ. Looking at the God-Man, we feel weak, but he makes us strong; we are terrified, and at the same time more exhilarated than we’ve ever been in our lives; and in him we see the person we want to become.

Spider-Man (Columbia Pictures, 2002), written by Alvin Sargent, directed by Sam Raimi

State – In today's lesson we will see Jesus revealed as God.

Read – (John 1:1-3)

State – Today we are going to discuss the pre-eminence of Christ and how He has the power to save.

BOOK Getting Into the Word

Utilize the questions in the *Discussion Guide* to examine the Scripture passage.

LOOK Getting the Word into Life

A. Place members into groups and have them complete the group assignment.

TOOK Conclusion

A. Display and/or play the following part of the song "What If God Was One Of Us?" Joan Osborn released the song in 1995. She received 5 Grammy nominations and won a Grammy that year.

"What If God Was One Of Us?"

If God had a name what would it be?
And would you call it to his face?
If you were faced with him in all his glory
what question would you ask if you had just one question?

Yeah, Yeah, God is great
Yeah, Yeah, God is good
Yeah Yeah yeah yeah yeah

What if God was one of us?
Just a slob like one of us
Just a stranger on the bus
Trying to make his way home

If God had a face
What would it look like?
And would you want to see
If seeing meant that you would have to believe
In things like heaven and Jesus and the saints
and all the Prophets....

Next - place members into groups and have them discuss answers to the questions in the song based on today's Scripture passages.

Challenge members to take the message that Christ is God to a lost friend this week.

B. Optional Method – TV show clip or trailer "Joan of Arcadia"

Show the clip from the CBS show "Joan of Arcadia."

State – in the show God visits Joan through different characters in the movie to communicate His future signs He will perform.

State – The truth is, that God has visited each of us through His Son Jesus. He took on human form and did signs and wonders to point man to God.

Place members into pairs and have them practice sharing their faith. Ask them to focus on (Rom. 6:23) and today's passages as the texts to share the Good News. Challenge them to take this message Beyond the Walls this week.

Note: Throughout this series we will suggest a key verse to challenge members to memorize each week. Display the verse and have the class repeat it out loud. Challenge members to memorize it this week.

MEMORY VERSE

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God,
even to those who believed in His name.

John 1:12

DISCUSSION GUIDE (Teacher's Copy)

1. What is the meaning of the term "Logos"? (John 1:1)
(Jesus is God's Word to reveal His heart to mankind. Jesus and God are one.)
2. What is the theological significance of (v. 2)?
(If Jesus was with God from the beginning then He is not a created being but He is God.)
3. According to (v. 3) what was Christ's role in the creation?
(He created all things. He is God.)
4. How should knowing personally the creator of all things affect the way you live your life?
5. What parallels can be seen between (Gen. 1:1-4) and (John 1:1-4)?

Genesis	John
In the beginning	In the beginning
Old creation	New creation
Earthly light	Spiritual light
Light is separated from darkness	Light defeats darkness

6. What was the mission of John the Baptist? (vs. 6-7)
(He came to bear witness of the Light)
7. How is our mission similar to John the Baptist's, yet different?
(We both should be sharing the Light with the lost world but our message is about a risen Savior who is returning. John's message was about a coming Savior.)
8. Why would the Lord's own people reject Him? (vs. 9-11)
(They were looking for a conquering King, not a humble servant.)
9. Why is it sometimes more difficult to witness to family and close friends?
10. What is the great promise of (John 1:12)?
(All who will receive God and believe on His name can be saved.)
11. Who saves whom according to (v. 13)?
(It is nothing that man does. It is according to the will of God)
12. How would you explain the incarnation to a skeptical person? What does it mean to you?
13. What is the purpose of the book of John according to (John 20:30-31)?
(To prove Jesus through His signs that He is God and believing in Him gives life.)

DISCUSSION GUIDE

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Group Assignment

Given the following statement – “Jesus was either a liar, a lunatic or Lord”, discuss how you would disprove the liar and lunatic theories and prove that He is Lord.

How would you prove your points to lost skeptics?

Utilize Scripture passages and develop a strategy to make your point.

Daily Devotionals for Next Week

"Proof of Life: I Am"

(John 6:35 ; 8:12 ; 8:58 ; 10:7-9 ; 10:11-15 ; 11:25 ; 14:6 ; 15:1, 5)

Monday – Read (6:30-40)

- ØHow does Jesus use the crowd's interest in food to illustrate what He wants them to understand?
- ØWhat promise does Jesus make in verse 35 to those who come to Him?
- ØSince bread was an essential staple back then, what does Jesus' claim in verse 35 mean?
- ØSpend time in prayer thanking Jesus for the life He's provided.

Tuesday – Read (John 8:12; Matthew 5:14-16 ; John 8:52-58 ; Exodus 3:14)

- ØWhat promise does Jesus make in verse 12 to those who follow Him?
- ØHow can you be a light bearer to those who misunderstand who Jesus is?
- ØWhat was Jesus' claim in verse 58 and why did it cause such an outrage?
- ØSpend time in personal worship of your God and Savior—Jesus Christ.

Wednesday – Read (John 10:1-18 ; Psalms 23)

- ØWhat promise does Jesus make for those who enter through the gate?
- ØWhat is the relationship of the shepherd to his sheep?
- ØHow do the sheep respond to the shepherd?
- ØHow will you discern Jesus' voice from those that vie for your attention today?

Thursday – Read (John 11:17-27 ; 14:1-6 ; 1 Timothy 2:5 ; Acts 4:12)

- ØWhat promise does Jesus make with His claim in verses 25-26? Do you believe this?
- ØWhat difference does the hope of eternal life make for you?
- ØHow would you respond to someone who says, "There are many ways to God"?

Friday – Read (John 15:1-17 ; Galatians 5:22-23)

- ØWhat does it mean to "remain" or "abide"? What is the result? (15:8)
- ØHow are you to live your life according to verse 5?
- ØWhat are the fruits of the Spirit? (Galatians 5:22-23)
- ØWhat kind of fruit would you like to see in your Christian life? Ask for it today.
- ØChallenge yourself in this study of John to seek after an understanding of who Christ is. Know your God so you can serve Him better.
- ØPray for the discipline to be a true Disciple of Christ.

EXEGETICAL What it meant to Theophilus back THEN
REAL LIFE "Proof of Life: The Word" (John 1:1-18; 20:30-31)

(Exegetical . . . What it meant to the World back THEN)

THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH JOHN WROTE DOWN THE SIGNS JESUS DID – JESUS WHO WAS THE REEXISTENT WORD/LIFE/LIGHT THAT BROUGHT EVERYTHING THAT EXISTS INTO EXISTENCE, BUT WAS NOT RECOGNIZED BY THE WORLD HE MADE TO BE OR EVEN HIS OWN PEOPLE, DESPITE THE TESTIMONY OF JOHN; THIS JESUS WHO GAVE THE RIGHT TO BECOME GOD'S CHILDREN TO ALL WHO BELIEVED, THOSE WHO WERE BORN OF GOD AS A RESULT OF HAVING SEEN THE FATHER EXEGETED THROUGH HIM AS DEMONSTRATED THROUGH THE INCARNATION – WAS SO THAT HIS READERS MIGHT BELIEVE THAT JESUS WAS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, AND THAT IN/ BY BELIEVING THEY MIGHT HAVE LIFE IN HIM.

I. The divine, Preexistent Word brought everything that Existed into being and Became the life/light that Shined in the darkness, (1:1-5).

A. The Preexistent Word (Jesus Christ – vs. 17) WAS . . .

1. . . . in the beginning (before time, space, the universe began), (1a),
2. . . . in intimate fellowship with God, (1b),
3. . . . in the very nature of God (was God – in essence, nature), (1c),
4. . . . in the presence of and in activity with God (at creation), (2).

Note: The "in the beginning" phrase in 1 & 2 echoed Genesis 1:1.

B. Through/in His (the Word's – Jesus Christ's) Work of Creation . . .

1. . . . all things Became, (3a),
2. . . . not one thing that Became Became without Him, (3b),
3. . . . life Became, (4a),
4. . . . life that Became Became the light of men, (4b),
5. . . . light in the darkness Shined, (5a),
6. . . . the darkness could not Extinguish the light, (5b).

Note: See Bruce and other commentators for the theological and spiritual significance of the terms "word," "life," "light," and "darkness." Consider also that verses 1-2; 3-5; 10-12b; 14; and possibly 16-18 comprise five stanzas of an ancient hymn with narrative interludes in 6-9; 12b-13; and 15 (see Witherington).

[II. The One concerning whom John Bore Witness, so that all men Might Believe through Him, Was the true light that enlightened every one Coming into the world, (6-9).

A. A man named John, having been Sent from God, Became (on the scene), (6).

B. The Purpose for which the man Came as a witness was to Bear Witness concerning the Light (i.e., Jesus), (7a).

C. The Purpose for which the man Came to Bear Witness concerning the Light was so that all men Might Believe through Him, (7b).

Note: The use of "through" likely foreshadows the signs given by Jesus (through Him) as proof of His claims to be the Divine Savior.

D. The Purpose for which the man, who was not the Light, Came was so that he Might Bear Witness concerning the Light, (8).

Note: John (the Apostle) clarified that John (the Baptist) was not the Light. Some at the end of the first century were still thinking that John, rather than Jesus, was the one to whom they should maintain the highest loyalty.

E. The One concerning whom John Bore Witness Was the true Light that enlightened every one Coming into the world, (9).]

Note: This first narrative interlude explained John's purpose . . . to bear witness concerning the Word/Light (Jesus Christ) so that all men might believe. This was also the purpose of the Gospel of John (see 20:30-31).

III. The Result of many – though not the world which Knew Him not, nor Israel which Received Him not – Receiving Him [the Word/Life/Light] was that He Gave them the authority To Become the children of God, (10-12a).

A. The Response of the world – among whom He (the Light) Was and which (world) had Become (into existence) through Him (the Word) – to His coming was that they Knew Him not, (10).

B. The Response of His own [Israel – to whom He Came] was that they Received Him not, (11).

C. The Result of many Receiving [Believing in] Him [the Word/Life/Light] was that He Gave them the authority To Become the children of God, (12a).

Note: The contrast between the groups was significant. The world in general and Israel in particular did not recognize and receive the Eternal, Creator God. But to a remnant – all those receiving Him (Jesus Christ) – He gave the right to become

the children of God.

[IV. The Manner in which those who Believed – in the Word that Was (vs. 1), in the Life that Shined (vs. 5), that is, in Jesus Christ – became the children of God (12a) was not by natural or human effort or desire, but by Being Born (supernaturally) of God, (12b-13).]

Note: This parenthetical explanation introduced yet another key theological thought in John's Gospel: being born, not naturally, but spiritually by a supernatural act of the Spirit of God and in connection with faith, or believing.

V. The Result of the Word Becoming flesh (taking on a human body and a perfect human nature) and Living among those He had created was that they Saw (Beheld) His glory, a [proper] glory – as of the most beloved of a father, Who (the most beloved) was full of grace and truth, (14).

Note: This most important statement told of the unimagined incarnation of God. He Who was transcendent, He Who was spirit, took on human flesh and a human nature and lived among men. While religions may have dreamed of men becoming gods, no one had imagined that God would become a man. Yet that was John's message. And in so coming, the Word/Life/Light displayed God's true glory. To see Him was to behold God! That glory demonstrated the fullness, the completeness of His grace and truth in perfect balance.

[VI. The Content of John's Witness concerning this Man about whom he Cried Out was, "This Was the one about whom I said, 'after me comes one who Came before me because He Was before me,'" (15.)]

Note: John testified that Jesus, not himself, was the One to take prominence because He also had precedence. John recognized Jesus' eternal "being."

VII. The Demonstration of abundant grace by the One Being in intimate relationship with the Father, even though no man had ever Seen God, was that He, the most beloved, Exegeted (revealed) the Father, (16-18).

A. The Proof that He (the Word) was full of grace (vs. 14) was that all (who believed) had Received grace upon grace (abundant grace), (16).

B. The Reason all (who believed) Received abundant grace (vs. 16) was because, whereas the Law was Given through Moses, grace and truth Came through Jesus Christ, (17).

C. The Demonstration of abundant grace by the One Being in intimate relationship with the Father, even though no man had ever Seen God, was that He, the most beloved, Exegeted (revealed) the Father, (18).

Note: Jesus exegeted or explained God to the world. He alone, because He was God and was intimately related to the Father, could reveal God.

VIII. The Purpose for which John (the Apostle) Wrote about the signs Jesus Did, not even including many more which Jesus Did before many witnesses which were not Written down, was so that his readers might Believe that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God, and that in/by Believing they might Have life in Him, (20:30-31).

(Theological . . . What it means to believers ALWAYS)

THE INCARNATION OF THE ETERNAL "WORD" (JESUS CHRIST, TRUE GOD AND BELOVED SON OF THE FATHER) MAKES LIFE AVAILABLE TO ALL WHO BELIEVE IN HIM.

I. The Eternal "Word" of God (Jesus Christ) Created all that is and Revealed God to the mankind, (1-5).

II. All who Believe in Jesus (as the Word/Life/Light of God) supernaturally Become the children of God, (10-13).

III. The Incarnation of the eternal "Word" has Revealed the glory of God to mankind, (14, 16-18).

IV. God-Sent human witnesses Elicit faith by Testifying to the Preeminence of Jesus, (1:6-9, 15; 20:30-31).

(Pedagogical . . . What it means for us NOW)

I. Jesus, the Eternal Word/Life/Light of God . . .

A. . . . made everything that is, (1:1-3).

B. . . . shined in the darkness (revealed Himself to a fallen world), (4-5).

II. All who believe in Jesus Become "children of God."

A. Mankind in general refused to believe in Jesus, (10).

B. Israel in specific refused to believe in Jesus, (11).

C. All who believe in Jesus Become "children" of God, (12-13).

1. Becoming a "child of God" is not a "man thing."

2. Becoming a "child of God" is a "God thing."

3. We need only believe.

4. God gives spiritual life, eternal life.

III. Jesus (Eternal God) Became Human, Revealing God to us, (14, 16-18).

A. Eternal God Became fully human, (14a).

B. Eternal God Took Up Residence on earth, (14b).

C. Eternal God Revealed God to mankind, (14b; 16-18).

IV. God's human witnesses Testify to Who Jesus Is.

A. John (the Baptist) Testified of Jesus so that you might believe, (1:6-9, 15).

B. John (the Apostle) Testified of Jesus so that you might believe, (20:30-31).
V. WELCOME THE WORD.

Nicene Creed (@381 A.D.)

We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
and was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son.
With the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come.

Apostles Creed (between 200 & 700 A.D.)

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
the Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:
Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended to the dead.
The third day He arose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.