
TAKING THE **WHOLE WORD** TO THE **WHOLE WORLD**

GO BACK A BILLION YEARS,
PUT DOWN YOUR STAKES,
AND OUT OF ETERNITY,
THE LORD JESUS WILL
WALK OUT TO MEET YOU.

*Jesus was already there
at the beginning.*

DR. J. VERNON MCGEE





WHERE THE RUBBER MEETS THE ROAD



IN THE BEGINNING

Dr. J. Vernon McGee



This article is an excerpt from the **John Bible Companion**. You can download the full digital booklet here.



The Gospel of John is one of the easiest books to read, yet one of the most profound Gospels to understand. We might get the surface meaning easily enough, but to understand the deep truths, we need the Lord Jesus to be our teacher.

John the Apostle, one of Jesus' disciples and close friends, wrote this Gospel in the last ten years of his life, between 90 and 100 A.D. —more than 60 years after Jesus' resurrection and ascension to heaven. The other three Gospels were already written, each serving a unique audience and function.

Another interesting note—John tells Jesus' story in chronological order. Look closely and you'll see a ladder on which you can fit Jesus' entire three-year ministry. ("The next day ... the next day ...," like in John 1:29 and 35.) He also often tells us the city or area where the action took place.

John's ultimate purpose in his Gospel is to explain that Jesus is God—and also fully man. He tells us of both His eternality and humanity—when Jesus was tired (John 4) and when He cried (John 11:36). Unlike the other Gospels that called Him "Christ," John uses His human name, "Jesus." Why? Because God became a man.

John 20:31 is the key to understanding the Gospel of John: *"But these [things] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."*

The Gospel of John was written that we might "believe"—that word is used over 100 times just in this book. To believe in something is an act of the will. That looks like this: When you hear the facts of the gospel, you recognize that Jesus died for your sins according to the Scriptures, and you trust Him as your Savior who died to pay the penalty for your sins. That's believing.

Now, let's dive into this marvelous book at the beginning. The first couple verses of the Gospel of John sound like something from Genesis 1:1. Look at four great, earth-shaking statements in these two verses:

- ① **"In the beginning was the Word ..."** The beginning in Genesis goes back to the creation of the physical universe, a very long time ago. But even then, the beginning was already past tense ("in the beginning was the Word"). Go back a billion more years, put down your stakes, and out of eternity, the Lord Jesus will walk out to meet you. He's already past tense! He did not begin. He was already there when the beginning was.
- ② **"... And the Word was with God ..."** Jesus was separate and distinct from God the Father; He was "with God." But if He's with God, can He be God? The next phrase sets us straight.
- ③ **"... And the Word was God."** One of the highest and most profound titles we can call God, the Son, is "The Word." The name for Jehovah was such a holy word that it is never pronounced. But this name, "The Word," gathers up everything that was said of Jesus in the Old Testament, and presents Him as God, "in the beginning." This is a clear, emphatic declaration that the Lord Jesus Christ is God! In Greek, the sentence is arranged, *"God was the Word."*

The first three statements in John’s Gospel tie the truth down: Jesus is God.

4 And who is this God, Jesus Christ?

- He’s the Creator. “All things were made through him ...” (v. 3).
- He’s life itself. “In Him was life ...” (v. 4)
- His life was the light of men. “... And the life was the light of men” (v. 4).

To illustrate that, we meet John the Baptist. John the Baptist bore witness to the light, but he was not the light. Light only comes through the Word of God. Without the Word of God, there’s no light, but we can walk in the light when we come to the Word of God.

Then John tells us the tragic news that though Jesus is the Creator of the world and took our humanity upon Himself, the world rejects Him. He came to His own world, and His own world wouldn’t receive Him.

But not everyone. There is good news. “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name” (v. 12).

When you receive Jesus’ life by faith, you are given a new birth. Your new life doesn’t come through your own effort or by anything you do to earn it—not even by learning the Bible. Your new life in Jesus comes through the direct action of the Spirit of God.

HERE’S MORE WONDERFUL NEWS ABOUT JESUS:

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (1:14).

“The Word became flesh.” Did you ever notice that John’s Gospel doesn’t mention Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem? It’s because the One he’s talking about is too big for Bethlehem. A little child was born in Bethlehem, but the Son walks out of eternity. He takes upon Himself our humanity. That’s the Christmas story in John’s Gospel.

“The Word ... dwelt among us.” The word “dwelt” means to “pitch a tent.” Our human bodies are just frail little tents in which we live. The Apostle Paul used the same image in 2 Corinthians 5:1,4. The God of Eternity came to this earth and pitched His tent here with us.

“And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” Think about it—if God was made flesh, He certainly limited Himself. But John says Jesus was full of grace and truth. “Full” means you just can’t have any more. Jesus brought all the deity with Him in one person—full of grace and truth.

Though it’s true no one can see God the Father (v. 18), when you see His Son, you see His glory with your own eyes. When you look at Jesus, “the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father,” you understand who God is.

- Jesus didn’t come from God’s head to reveal the wisdom of God.
- He didn’t come from God’s foot to be a servant of man.
- He came to serve God, to do “the will of Him who sent Me” (John 6:38).
- He came to serve His Father by revealing God’s heart.

Jesus Christ led God out in the open. The God of this universe, the Creator of everything, wrapped Himself in human flesh so that He could bring God the Father out into the open so that men can know Him.

My friend, the only way in the world you can know God is through this One, Jesus Christ! But to do that He had to become flesh. He had to become one of us in order for us to know Him. We could not go up there to understand Him; He had to come down here and bring God to where we are.

MY TURN

- 1 If you read the Gospel of John in one sitting, it would take about two and a half hours (or 30 minutes a day for five days). **If you invested this time, it would be like sitting down with Jesus’ best friend and asking him, So what was Jesus like? Worth it?**
- 2 **Dr. McGee said John 1:1-2 was like Genesis 1:1-2 which is like 1 John 1:1-2.** What similarities/differences do you see?
- 3 **Is the Gospel of John your favorite Gospel?** If yes, why?

FIELD NOTES

TAKING THE WORD TO THE WORLD

MORE THAN A BIBLE IN A NIGHTSTAND:

THRU THE BIBLE PARTNERS

WITH  ShareWord Global

Ever notice the Bible in most hotel nightstands?

Who put those Bibles there? What stories can be told of how God works in people's lives because of those Bibles? Just ask anyone associated with the ministry of the Gideons and they'll tell you of their evangelistic roots "to see souls saved."

Ten years ago, The Gideons International in Canada launched new avenues of ministry both domestically and around the world under the name ShareWord Global. In addition to sharing Bibles, ShareWord Global partners with local churches to invite people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and then leaves them with a copy of Scripture to help them on that journey. From their beginning, they saw interest in the gospel and opportunities only God could have orchestrated.

This is where a beautiful partnership developed between ShareWord Global and THRU the BIBLE. **ShareWord Global realized their focus on evangelism only took local churches part way. They needed tools for discipleship.**

With his decades of global ministry experience, THRU the BIBLE's Canadian director, Ray Alary, stepped in to advise ShareWord Global's direction. **He pointed them to places in the world where he saw God at work. He also offered them THRU the BIBLE's core content, five years of Dr. McGee's systematic Bible teaching through the entire Word of God. This is what churches needed to round out their ministry.**

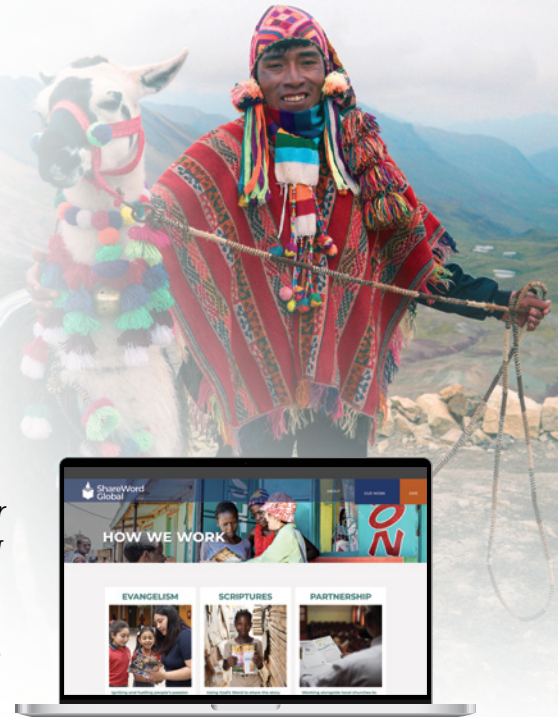
"The exciting part is churches that work with ShareWord Global demand help—not just evangelism, but discipleship," Ray says enthusiastically. "It's a beautiful partnership; no one competes with each other, and each has a defined way they do things. In places where people are minimally literate, we're using simplified material and audio resources in their heart language. It's working really well. **The Word of God speaks for itself. Dr. McGee puts the meat on it. It's a comfortable way to go through Scripture.**

"Today we use radio players and SD cards in places where radio signals don't reach. When technology changes, we'll do it differently. **ShareWord Global now trains local pastors, in person for several days, patterned after THRU the BIBLE's Home Groups in India.** Currently in the Dominican Republic, we're working with 1100 groups.

"Where do we go next? Our hearts are set on ministry in Nicaragua and Cuba, then we'll see about Chile, Peru, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, and the Middle East."

SHAREWORD GLOBAL SAYS "WE ARE CALLED TO 'GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL THE NATIONS' (MATTHEW 28:19) AND SO, WE GO. TOGETHER, WE CAN TELL THE WORLD."

SOUND FAMILIAR? PRAY FOR THIS BEAUTIFUL PARTNERSHIP AS TOGETHER WE EXPLORE ANOTHER WAY TO TAKE THE WHOLE WORD TO THE WHOLE WORLD.





HOW TO PUT THE PAST BEHIND YOU

Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. –Philippians 3:13, 14

Do bad decisions or harsh words you've spoken keep you up at night? Do you spend time wishing you could change the mistakes you've made? If so, you're not alone. This listener in Angola can relate. Here's his story:

"After a few years in prison, I'm now on probation. It has been difficult for me to reintegrate into society. People look down on me, and I am filled with shame for things I've done. Your programs are helping me understand that God accepts me as I am. Please pray that I can let go of my past and move forward by following Jesus."

That's a great request. Today let's intercede for everyone on the Bible Bus struggling with the past. As we turn to God with our sin and repent, may we be reminded that He both forgives us, forgets it (Isaiah 43:25), and calls us to move forward with confidence in Him.

This is an example of the email our World Prayer Team receives every weekday. Together, we are traveling the world on our knees, interceding for one country at a time. We invite you to join us in covering the entire earth with prayer every year.

GO TO TTB.ORG/PRAY TO SIGN UP.

What's Happening at **THRU** the BIBLE

CELEBRATING AN AMAZING MILESTONE WITH MINISTRY PARTNER,



DO YOU HAVE YOUVERSION'S BIBLE APP ON YOUR PHONE? If you do, it's one of the

500 million times it's been installed around the world. The YouVersion app has over 2,600 Bible versions and 1,100 audio Bibles available in over 1,700 languages.

A pioneer of long-form audio in YouVersion, **THRU the BIBLE currently has 576 audio plans in 13 languages in the app**, as well as devotional summaries of Dr. McGee's New Testament studies.



THRU the BIBLE's VP of Communications, Barb Peil (second from left), joined our YouVersion partners in late 2021 to **celebrate, honor, and thank God for the amazing work He allows us to do together.**





THRU the BIBLE

A WORD FROM GREGG HARRIS

Any Way Possible

- ✓ Terrestrial radio
- ✓ Digital radio
- ✓ Television
- ✓ YouTube.com
- ✓ Speaker boxes
- ✓ MP3 players
- ✓ Apps
- ✓ Alexa, Roku
- ✓ Carrier pigeon

Yes, whatever it takes, that's what we'll do. **We're so committed to getting God's whole Word to the whole world that we're exploring the most out-there option** (OK, maybe not carrier pigeons), which just might be the answer to reaching someone unreachable any other way.

We know one delivery method that never fails. James 5:16 says "the prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" (NIV).

Partner with us in prayer that God's Word and THRU the BIBLE will go places this month we never dreamed possible.

Go ahead—pray right now. God is listening, and He's proven over and over again that He answers.

Grateful for your partnership,

Gregg Harris
THRU the BIBLE, President



WHY STUDY JOHN?

Join in the studies on THRU the BIBLE MARCH 2—APRIL 26 or anytime online, by podcast, or by mobile app.

Come sit at the feet of the last living disciple of Jesus. By this time, everyone knew the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Likely the early church had asked John to write his own Gospel, filling in the gaps with the stories he had been telling and preaching for more than sixty years.

"The words in the Gospel of John are simple, but the meaning is deep ... John is the most profound Gospel, more spiritual than the other three, something that would enable us to grow."

—Dr. J. Vernon McGee

TIME WITH JESUS:

- ✓ **In chapters 1-12**, we'll walk with Jesus through His first three years of ministry.
- ✓ **In chapters 13-21**, we'll follow Him in His final three weeks on earth.

KEYVERSE

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" —John 1:1, 14

EVERYTHING JOHN WRITES ABOUT IS INTENDED TO HELP THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS GROW IN THEIR FAITH AND GOD'S GRACE. Dr. McGee will guide us through ...

- ① **JESUS' BIRTH:** "John takes us down the silent corridors of eternity, through the vast emptiness of space, to a beginning that is not a beginning at all."
- ② **JESUS' EARTHLY LIFE:** "The disciple John 'declared' Him—he exegeted Jesus, he led Him out in the open where we can see Him and come to know Him better."
- ③ **JESUS' RESURRECTION:** "John gives more about the resurrected Christ than does any other Gospel writer ... more than all the others put together. It's because John walked and talked with Jesus after the Cross and he never forgot it."

Our study in one of the greatest books of the Bible will be a walk down memory's lane in the most significant season of all of history. Imagine the Holy Spirit bringing scenes and conversations back to John's memory as he wrote. It must have felt like yesterday as he recalled the sound of Jesus' voice and recounted precious events with Him, reliving every nuance. **Experience it with us on THRU the BIBLE.**

ON THE ROAD

Greetings FROM THE BIBLE BUS



ON THE BIBLE BUS

“A year ago, I found your program, and with your help I'm back in church! I'm 42 now and professed Christ was Lord when I was 22. After seven years in the church, my spirit was full, but I was led out into the wilderness and got lost out there.

Now with your help my wife of 25 years and I are back walking in the light. I love your daily prayer emails. Praise God for you. May God richly bless you, my beloved.”



“Thank you all for the letters you read and the wonderful program you provide. Reading the Bible and listening to Dr McGee’s teachings is like having a textbook full of information you want to understand (the Bible) and the solution manual sitting right next to it. **I’ve been listening daily since the new 5-year journey began this year. I’ve always struggled as a Christian with how to actually study the Bible. I read and meditate and pray, but study was difficult. Now, this is my Bible study!** Steve, I heard you mention that you speed up Dr McGee’s voice (haha!), but I have to say I love that he speaks slowly. It gives me time to really think about and process what he’s saying and take notes!”



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