

**I. PRIVATE LIFE: 30 YEARS: FROM JESUS' BIRTH TO THE BEGINNING OF HIS PUBLIC
MINISTRY, A. INTRODUCTION, 1. PROLOGUE OF JOHN'S GOSPEL**

PART 2

Introduction

In lesson 1, we looked at the preface of Luke and the prologue of John. In this lesson, we will continue our study of the life of Christ as we combine the prologue of John with Revelation 1:8, Revelation 21 and Revelation 22. May the Lord add His blessings to our study so that the glory of God may be ever increasing on the faces of those who are servants of God.

Memory verse: *"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, 'who is and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty'" (Revelation 1:8).*

Day 1: Jesus "who is": Read John 1 verses 14 and 16-17 and 2 Corinthians 5:17.

1. How does 2 Corinthians 5:17 help you understand what happens as a result of the promises in John 1:16-17?

2. Read Luke: 2:9 and Hebrews 1:3.

a. What do you think the glory of God looked like in Luke 2:9?

b. From Matthew 17:2, how might Jesus' face in the Transfiguration relate to what you learned about Him in Hebrews 1:3?

3. Read John 1:4-5 with Revelation 21:23. Question for thought: From the verses you read today, what do you think the glory of God is?

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4. Read Colossians 1:27 with 2 Corinthians 3:18. Question for thought: What does it mean to you to have “the hope of glory” through Jesus, and from your answer to question 3, why would this glory be life-changing?

Day 2: Jesus “*who is to come*”: Read Revelation 22:12-16 with John 1:1-5.

5. What does Jesus say about Himself in Revelation 22:12-13, and how does it relate to John 1:1-5?

6. What from you read in Revelation 22:16:

a. How is Jesus both the Root and the Offspring of David?

b. What do you think He means when He calls Himself the bright Morning Star?

7. How do you think questions 5 and 6b relate to the phrase in Revelation 21:6, “*It is done*”?

8. Read 1 John 4:11-18.

a. From verse 17, what will be the reason you can rejoice when we hear Jesus say, “*It is done*”?

b. Read Hebrews 8:6. Question for thought: How do you think your answer relates to what you learned about God’s purpose for His sons who have faith in the better promises that are theirs in Christ?

Day 3: Jesus “*who is to come*”: Read Revelation 21:22-23 with Hebrews 1:3.

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9. After reading Hebrews 1:3, look up the word “radiate” in a dictionary. How do you think the word “radiance” in Hebrews 1:3 relates to the passage in Revelation 21:23 that says, “...*for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp*”?

10. For those new to the study of Bible, from John 1:29, who is the Lamb, and what has He done? For those who have previously studied the Bible, how do you think the phrase, “*who takes away the sin of the world*” relates to what we learned in last week’s lesson regarding abundant life? You may answer either question or both questions.

11. Read Revelation 21 verse 8 and 27 with Revelation 22:11-15. Who will not be not allowed to go through the gates into the city, and how does this relate to Galatians 5:19-22?

12. Read John 4:34 with Matthew 7:15-23. Question for thought: How does this help you understand what God’s desire is for His sons and how does this relate to what you have learned in the last questions?

DAY 4: Jesus “*who is to come*”: Read Genesis 3:21-24 with Revelation 22:1-5.

13. According to Genesis 3:21-24, what happened to the tree of life?

14. From Revelation 22:1-2, what enables the tree of life to live and flourish?

15. Read John 4:7-14 and John 7:37-39. How do you think Jesus’ words in these verses relate to what you read in Revelation 22:1 regarding the river of the water of life?

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16. From Revelation 22:1-5, what does it mean to you that the tree of life has a prominent place at the very end of this book of prophecy?

Day 5: Jesus “*who is*”: Read Hebrews 12:1-6

17. From verse 2: *“Let us fix our eyes upon Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the Cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God”*, explain what it means to have Jesus as both the (a) author and (b) as the perfecter of your faith?

18. Read Matthew 5:29-30. From these verses, what does Jesus say to you about the seriousness of sin?

19. Read Hebrews 4:14-16 and Hebrews 7:25. How do these verses help you understand how God works to transform you into the likeness of His Son?

20. Read Hebrews 2:10-18 and John 1:14. From what you learned about “glory” in our questions and the verses in Hebrews 2, list what happens to a son of man who becomes a son of God because *“The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us...”* (John 1:14).

Day 6: Read the notes, and underline anything that is helpful or new to you.

**Part One: Jesus Christ: "...Who Is, and Who Was, and Who Is To Come, the Almighty"
(Revelation 1:8)**

As we read Revelation 21 and 22 we are given glimpses, not only as to what life will be like in the New Jerusalem for those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, but also of the Lamb Himself, standing in the center of the throne of God, Jesus Christ, the "...Lamb, looking as if it had been slain..." (Revelation 5:6). If we are to have abundant life now, then we must know what and who awaits us in the New Jerusalem.

In Revelation 1:8, we read *"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, 'who is and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.'* In Revelation 22:13, Jesus says of Himself, *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."* Alpha and omega are respectively, the first and the last letters in the Greek alphabet. Combined with these two words, the phrase, "who is, was, and is to come" is indicative of the sovereignty of God over all things that were, are, and will be (Wesley's Notes on Revelation 1:8; www.godvine.com/bible/Revelation/1-8).

In the prologue to John, we saw the One "who was," the One who was always in eternity, the Word who was with God and was God, the One who made all things and for whom all things were made. Then the Word became flesh, the One who was begotten of the Father, the Son of God, the radiance of God's glory, the One who lived, rose from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of God; the One who is right now interceding for those who are His own. He is the One "who is." And now we await the One "who is to come" for *"Look, He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see Him, even those who pierced Him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of Him. So shall it be! Amen. 'I am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Lord God, 'who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty'"* (Revelation 1:7-9).

Part Two: Jesus Christ: "Who Is"

In Genesis 1 and 2, we learn that in the eons of time past, when God, the Word, made all that is and established it in time and space, He fashioned a man after His own likeness and put him in a garden, which had in its center the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. God gave the man, whose name was Adam, all he needed for life and happiness. In return, out of love and gratitude, Adam was to live by faith in God, which was to express itself in obedience to His command, *"And the Lord commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die'"* (Genesis 2:16-17). Again, Adam was to live by faith in God, which was nothing less than believing in and living out God's promise, His command to him. What else could faith have been but to believe what God had said to him was true and necessary for his continuing existence and well-being? However, Adam and his wife, Eve, did not choose to obey

God. On the contrary, they chose to listen to the serpent that came to Eve and said, *“Did God really say, ‘you must not eat from any tree in the garden’?”* (Genesis 3:1).

For the first time, there was doubt as to the authenticity of God’s word, and disobedience, which was sin, followed. In one split second of time, the new creation became the old creation that groans as if in the pangs of childbirth as it longs for the coming of the new creation (Romans 8:22), and Adam became the “first Adam” whose sin necessitated the coming of Jesus, the “last Adam,” who was to be *“...a life-giving spirit”* (Romans 8:45). From that time forth, man was denied access to the tree of life, *“So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After He drove the man out, He placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life”* (Genesis 3:23-24). Gone was the time when God walked on the earth with man in the cool of the evening; gone was the time when man was able to reach out and eat from the tree of life and live forever; gone was the time when there was total harmony and good will on earth; gone was the time when man was able to eat effortlessly from every seed bearing plant and every tree with fruit on it without painful toil; gone was the time when childbirth was to be effortless; and gone was the time before the serpent would *“crush your head and you will strike his heel”* (Genesis 3:15). Sin entered the world, and abundant life was lost, lost, that is, until the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us

With man’s fall into sin, all was set in place for God and man to regain what had been lost in the fall, and it would be accomplished through the redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, the Word of God who became flesh to redeem man from the curse, the penalty and power of sin, for in timeless eternity He was *“slain from the creation of the world”* (Revelation 13:8) as He *“took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered Him stricken by God, smitten by Him and afflicted. But He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”* (Isaiah 53:4-6).

Let us never forget that Adam’s fall did not come as a surprise to God. Indeed, before the beginning of time, all “eyes” in the heavenly places looked ahead to the culmination of the ages when God’s purpose for creation would be final: the age in which God Himself will dwell continually with His people in perfect, joyous, never-ending life, not in the old Garden of Eden, but in the Holy City, the New Jerusalem. Let us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, increasingly comprehend why God has redeemed us from the fall. He has saved us by the blood of the Lamb to be a new creation of people who will live by faith in God, expressing itself in obedience to His Word; a new creation of people who are eager to do His will; a new creation of people who are ready and eager to serve Him in this life and for all eternity; a new creation of people who will populate the new creation, the new heaven, the new earth and the New Jerusalem for *“...if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new”* (2 Corinthians 5:17 King James Version). Anything less would not be worthy of God.

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We are the new creation of people who were born sons of men but with the opportunity, by the power of the Holy Spirit through Jesus, to become sons of God for *“to those who believe in His name, He gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God”* (John 1:12-13). These are God’s sons, a new creation of people who are continually being transformed into the likeness of God Himself by the ongoing work of Jesus Christ, the One “who is” by power of the Holy Spirit. It is God’s perfect plan from and for all eternity.

May God give us the spirit of wisdom to increasingly understand that God has redeemed us from the snare of the evil one and has made us His sons who are eager to do His will, whose greatest desire is to love and serve Him for all eternity. This He did by making Jesus Christ, not only the author of our faith, but, just as importantly, the perfecter of our faith as well. Today Jesus, the One “who is,” is seated at the right hand of His Father. The seat is not just a place of honor; it is also a place of much work of intercession for us, for *“Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have One who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need”* (Hebrews 4:14-16). It is by His ongoing work of intercession that God’s promise to transform us into the likeness of His Son is fulfilled as Jesus, the One “who is,” gives us His grace, which is the power of God, to do in us that which we are unable to do by ourselves. It is *“...Christ in you, the hope of glory”* (Colossians 1:27b). Again, it is by His life now, the One “who is”, the One from whom we receive grace in our time of need, that we are saved from a life of selfishness and sin *“since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him! For if we, when we were God’s enemies, we were reconciled to Him through the death of His Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through His life!”* (Romans 5:9-10).

“I, John, your brother and companion...was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet...I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me...and among the lampstands was someone ‘like a son of man,’ dressed in a robe reaching down to His feet and with a golden sash around His chest. His head and hair were white like wool, as white as snow, and His eyes were like blazing fire. His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of rushing waters. In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance.” (Revelation 1:9-16).

Today our Jesus is the One “who is”, the One who is at this very moment gaining from the Father all the grace that we will ever need to obey God in all our trials and temptations for *“...just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy’”* (1 Peter 1:15-17). This grace is the power “to cut and throw away” any part of our body that causes us to sin (Matthew 5:27-30). It is the power of God within us to see fulfilled in us God’s promise to us that *“no one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning because he has been born of God”* (1 John 3:9). And it

is this all surpassing grace that is our protection when we read, *“If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the Law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the spirit of grace?”* (Hebrews 10:26-29).

Part Three: Jesus Christ: “Who is to Come”

Just as each prophecy was fulfilled concerning the first coming of Jesus, so will each prophecy be fulfilled that tells us of His return, the One “who is to come.” And just as we were given a picture of Jesus “who is,” so we are given a picture of Jesus “who is to come,” for John *“...saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True...His eyes are like blazing fire, and on His head are many crowns. He has a name written on Him that no one knows but He Himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and His name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following Him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Out of His mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations...On His robe and on His thigh He has this name written, King of Kings and Lord of Lords”* (Revelation 19:11-16).

With each passing day, the time is nearing for the return of the One, “who is to come.” With each passing day, the culmination of the ages draws nearer, as each day brings us one day closer to the descent out of heaven of the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, the final home of each person whose name is written in the Lamb’s book of life for *“Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life”* (Revelation 21:27). It should be the day for which we long because it will be the day in which we will become citizens of the New Jerusalem.

As glorious as is Christ in us now, with the advent of the New Jerusalem, God Himself will live with us, for *“Now the dwelling of God is with men, and He will live with them. They will be His people, and God Himself will be with them and be their God”* (Revelation 1:3). The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city. There will be no need for a temple in the New Jerusalem because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb will be its temple. There will be no more death, mourning, or pain for God Himself will wipe every tear from our eyes. Never again will we fear darkness nor the heat of the sun because the glory of God, illuminated by the Lamb, will give us light. Never again will we have to come to the Throne of God to receive mercy and find grace in our hour of need because there will never again be an hour of need. As glorious as is the work of the Spirit in us now as we *... “put to death the misdeeds of the body...”* (Romans 8:13), with the advent of the New Jerusalem there will be no misdeeds of the body to put to death. Now we serve God, our Father all the days of our lives. As glorious as is this service now, in the New Jerusalem, we will not only serve Him, but we will reign with Him for ever and ever. As satisfying as is Jesus’ invitation now to eat the bread of which He said, *“...This*

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is My body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (Luke 22:19) and to drink the cup of which He said, ...*"This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood"* (Luke 22:20), how much more satisfying will it be for us to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life and to eat from the tree of life in the New Jerusalem!

On the day of the coming of the New Jerusalem, God's plan from all eternity will be complete. We will drink from the spring of water from which comes the river of the water of life that flows from the throne of God. We will eat from the tree of life which yields its fruit every month as it lines each side of the river of life, for *"No longer will there be any curse. The throne God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and His servants will serve Him. They will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. There will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign"* Revelation 22:3-5). It will do so because He who is seated on the throne will finally say, *"...I am making everything new...It is done"* (Revelation 21:5-6). If this is the life that awaits us, how can we fail to live abundantly now?
