

Lessons from the Gospel of John (11): An Introduction to Life and Building

Bible reading

You may find it helpful to also read John 1:1-51.

John 1:1, 4, 14, 42

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

14 And the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Begotten from the Father), full of grace and reality.

42 He led him to Jesus. Looking at him, Jesus said, You are Simon, the son of John; you shall be called Cephas (which is interpreted, Peter).

Introduction

In the first ten lessons in this study of the Gospel of John, we saw that John chapter 2 established the principle of life, which is to change death into life, and that this principle was found in all of the subsequent cases in John. As we journeyed through nine cases from John chapters 3 through 11, we saw that Christ as life can meet man's every case. Now we want to return to the very beginning of the Gospel of John and realise that this book is not just a book of life, but it is a book of life *and* building. These two points run throughout the whole book of John and actually throughout the whole Bible.

Bible study reading

Please prayerfully read through the following portions of ministry related to this lesson.

The Bible is very consistent. If you read it with insight and with the heavenly vision, you will discover that it begins with life and building. We see life and building in Genesis 2. Immediately after the creation of man, life was introduced. After the Lord God created man, He placed him in a garden in front of the tree of life (Gen. 2:7-9). Following this mention of the tree of life, we see the flowing river and three precious materials: gold, bdellium, which is pearl, and onyx, a precious stone.

The book of Revelation also speaks of life. Revelation 2:7 says, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." This certainly is a reference to the tree of life in Genesis 2. Revelation 2:17 says, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone." This verse speaks of a stone which, according to the Bible, has no purpose other than that of building. In the last two chapters of Revelation, which are the last two chapters of the Bible, we see the building of the New Jerusalem. In the New Jerusalem the river of life flows and the tree of life grows in the waters of the river (Rev. 22:1-2). Thus, it is clear that the Bible ends as it begins, with life and building.

We have seen that the Bible begins and ends with life and building. The Gospel of John, the bridge between the two ends of the Bible, is also a book of life and building. A few words from the first

chapter of this gospel will convince us of this fact. "In the beginning was the Word...In Him was life" (1:1, 4). The Gospel of John does not say, "In the beginning was doctrine, and in it was knowledge." No, it says that in the beginning was the Word, that the Word was God, and that in this One, the Word who was God, was life. Therefore, we find life in the first chapter of John. Furthermore, verse 42 of the same chapter speaks of a stone. When Simon was brought to the Lord by his brother Andrew, He gave him a new name, Cephas, which means a stone. In the same chapter we are told that in the Lord was life and that one of His disciples became a stone. What is the meaning of this? It means that life not only quickens, enlivens, and regenerates, but also transforms. Life will transform the believer into a stone.

We need to read the Bible carefully. In Genesis 1 God was alone. At the end of the book of Revelation, God is in the center of the holy city, New Jerusalem, which is His enlargement. In the beginning we find God Himself without any expansion or enlargement. However, throughout the ages and generations God has been working Himself into His chosen people. Eventually we all shall become His building, a building which is the enlargement of God Himself. Hence, this building will become God's expansion, and this expansion will express God in a corporate way. This is God's building... This is exactly the revelation of the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John reveals that the Triune God is dispensing Himself into His believers and that all His believers, as a result of the transfusion and infusion of the Triune God into them, become His enlargement. This enlargement of the Triune God is the expansion, the building, and the expression of God. (*Life-study of John*, msg. 1, section 1)

Going deeper

Please read or listen to these materials for an in-depth study of this lesson.

Further reading:

[*Life-study of John*, msg. 1](#)

Radio broadcast link:

Broadcast 1, [*A Foreword to the Life-study of the Gospel of John*](#)

Footnotes from Recovery Version of the New Testament:

John 1:1, footnote 1

John 1:4, footnote 1

John 1:42, footnote 1

Questions for personal or corporate study:

References in brackets indicate readings or broadcasts that may be helpful in answering the questions.

- Explain with verse references how we can say that the entire Bible is a book of life and building.
- Explain with verse references how we can say that the Gospel of John is a book of life and building.
- What is the significance of the changing of Simon's name to Peter? (John 1:42, footnote 1, Recovery Version of the New Testament)

Next week

Life's Purpose—To Build the House of God

Throughout the Bible, there is a consistent thought. It begins in Genesis and ends in Revelation with life and building. Life is Christ as God dispensed into our being. That is why He told us to eat Him as the bread of life and to drink Him as the water of life. As this life is dispensed into us, we become His expansion, His building, and His expression. In the beginning of Genesis, God is alone, but through all the ages God has been dispensing Himself into us, and now He has an enlargement. The Gospel of John can be considered a bridge between the two ends of eternity. We will now trace these two points of life and building through the Gospel of John. We will begin in chapter 2 with an account which clearly shows that the purpose of life is to build the house of God.

Works Cited

Lee, Witness. *Life-study of John*. Anaheim: Living Stream Ministry, 1985. www.ministrybooks.org

*All verses and excerpts © 2020 Living Stream Ministry.
Used by permission. Reproduction is prohibited.*

Copyright © 2020 Amana Trust
Registered in England and Wales
Charity number 1093401, Company number 4366897
Bower House, Orange Tree Hill, Romford, Essex, RM4 1PB