

Full of the Life & Revelation of God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 16 October 2022

Preacher: Pastor Cal Morrison

[0 : 0 0] Well, this morning we are in a series called More Than Flesh and Bones in John's Prologue. And so if you have a Bible, please turn to John chapter 1.

Last week, Alan introduced John's Prologue with the first three verses. And now we're going to be looking at only verse 4 and 5 today. But I'm going to read the first five verses from John chapter 1.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. Amen. What is the secret to life?

[1 : 1 7] Where did life come from? Why does our little planet seem to be absolutely teeming with life, yet we can't seem to detect it anywhere else in our universe?

Are we just that lucky? As much as the Earth is in the Goldilocks zone in our solar system, there are a million more factors needed for a planet to be suitable for our kind of life.

Did the Earth just come to a point of ticking enough boxes for life to arise, and then complex life to evolve enough into us? Well, there's a story about a group of scientists somewhere far off in the future who thought they had figured out the secret to life.

It was a final nail in the coffin for God. They had shown that they simply had no need for God. So they decided to tell God, and while God listened patiently to their reasons for not needing him, he then replied, Confidently, the scientists agreed.

But God said, We're going to do this just like I did in the old days with Adam. The scientists said, That's fine by us. And the scientists bent down and began to gather samples of dirt.

[2 : 4 3] But then God stopped them and said, No, no, no. You need to go get your own dirt. Now, of course, I'm not saying that science is the enemy of God, nor scientists.

They are not. But this is simply to illustrate the folly of leaving God out of the equation when searching for the origin of life. The other day, one of my sons was making a maze out of blocks, and I was keen to see if he would remember to make an exit as well as an entrance.

You see, leaving God out of the equation and only looking within this universe for the origin of life is like entering a maze with no exit.

You might never find the answer, but only find dead ends. When looking only within our universe for the origin of life, certain assumptions are made. Firstly, that what is needed for life comes from this universe.

And secondly, that by finding it, we could actually give rise to life. But like the maze, do these assumptions create a maze with no exits?

[3 : 53] You see, what the Bible asserts is that only God has what is necessary for life, and only God can give life. Life does not come from the material stuff of our universe.

Life comes from outside the universe, namely from God himself. And according to John 1, from the Word who was God, what's the secret to life?

Shh, in Him was life. In Him was life. And if life was in Him, that is, in the Word who was in the beginning, the Word who was with God and was God, and if all things were made through Him, then life is not something that merely rises from a mixture of things that are made, but life comes from Him.

You see, the Scriptures point to this. Now, why does this matter? In 1952, there was an experiment to recreate what was believed to be the conditions of Earth's early atmosphere, to mix certain gases in a glass container, and then introduce an electrical spark, to test if life could arise from chemical reactions in the right conditions.

Now, this experiment became famous because there was a degree of success. This experiment produced a chemical reaction that led to the formation of a number of amino acids, which are said to be the building blocks for life.

[5 : 31] This experiment in 1952 seemed to open the possibility that life on Earth could have come about by natural process from inorganic matter.

Is that game over for Christianity? What does this mean? Did this experiment really show not only that life could arise from non-living material, but that all that is needed for life to arise is the right chemical ingredients, a spark and a reaction?

Does that mean that nothing outside of our world is needed? Nothing supernatural is needed for life, and certainly not a God. Well, we shouldn't think that science is the enemy of God.

It is not. Nor should we simply disregard science, as though science is doing one thing, and our belief is at the expense of reason. But, it's important to know that these experiments, like this one in 1952, doesn't come anywhere close to creating life.

It's not even a case of, if we had enough time, we could jump enough hurdles that we would get there eventually. You see, this approach is always based on the assumptions that, one, what is needed for life comes from within this universe, and two, that by finding it, we could actually give rise to life.

[6 : 56] But not all scientists take this approach. This is simply the approach of scientific materialists and atheists. You see, they have no choice but to hold out hope that with enough time, we will jump enough hurdles to find a materialistic route to life.

But the truth is that the unfolding picture of scientific discovery over time is consistently doing the opposite. You see, with time, scientific discovery doesn't seem to be moving toward that, but seems to be increasingly moving away from it.

In a sense, scientific discovery is always catching up with the reality that is presented in the Scriptures. And this is exactly what we would expect if the Bible was true, which we believe it is.

And so, not only does Scriptures point to the fact that life doesn't come from here, life is in Him, but even creation itself points to the fact that life comes from outside of creation, namely a creator.

For example, the experiment in 1952, scary as it was to believers, was later shown to be somewhat irrelevant because there is now more evidence that the early atmosphere did not have those conditions in the first place.

[8 : 25] Yet, let's assume for a second that they did. What if they did? Did that guy who did the experiment create life in this glass container?

No, he did not. He might have formed a few amino acids, but amino acids, building blocks, though they may be, are not life. As scientist Paul Davies says, making the building blocks of life is easy.

Amino acids have been found in meteorites and even in outer space, but just as bricks alone don't make a house, so it takes more than a random collection of amino acids to make life.

Like house bricks, the building blocks of life have to be assembled in a very specific and exceedingly elaborate way before they have the desired function. And so, while there are constantly different theories and experiments to try and find the source of life, to try and produce things that we are made of, we are made of things like amino acids, it seems that we are no closer to finding what gives us life and being.

Or as C.S. Lewis puts it in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, when Eustace states, he's in Narnia and Eustace states, in our world, a star is a huge flaming ball of gas.

[9 : 49] And Ramandu replies, even in your world, my son, that is not what a star is, but only what it is made of. You see, there's a world of difference between the material that is animated and the animation itself.

Even if we did have all the right ingredients, if we could assemble the building blocks in the right way and form a man out of dirt, we still do not have the breath of life that we could make him alive.

Life does not come from anywhere inside this creation. You see, the implication of verse 4 in him was life, is that life, life has no beginning.

Life did not arise from matter, because life was in the one who existed before the matter was created. Life precedes matter, not the other way around, because life is in the one who precedes matter.

Life was already in the one who then created all the matter. God in his divine essence is unchanging, we know that. And so, if life is in him, then life has always been in him.

[11 : 02] Just as John 5 says, as the Father has life in himself, so he granted the Son to also have life in himself. Or as John writes in 1 John 5, this is the testimony.

God gave us eternal life, and this life is in the Son. This life is in his Son.

And so, who is his Son? Proverbs 30, verse 4, who has ascended to heaven and come down? Who has gathered the wind in his fists?

Who has wrapped up the waters in a garment? Who has established the ends of the earth? What is his name and what is the name of his Son? Surely you know. In him was life.

The Son has life in himself. This life is in his Son. What is the name of his Son? John tells us that it is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

[12 : 03] And that by believing in him, you will have life in his name. While this universe, space, time, and matter, we're all created. Space, time, and matter were created.

Life is not a created thing because life was in him, the creator. It is part of God's divine nature which the Son animates all living things with.

You see, the incredible thing that we see in Jesus is that though he was a man who walked this earth, he was far more than flesh and bones. He himself is the very source of life, of all life.

Not in the sense that he was the first to have life as if he ever had a beginning, but that he himself is the living one. Before anything was made, there was life because life is a part of the divine nature of the living one.

This is called aseity, the aseity of God, the aseity of the Son of God. That is, he is self-derived, he is self-originated, self-sustaining, self-existing, self-dependent.

- [13 : 20] Nothing in creation gives him life, he has life in himself. He needs nothing outside of himself to live. He is completely self-dependent, self-existing, self-originated.

Exodus 3, 14, when Moses says, who are you? What is your name? He says, I am that I am. I am.

I just am. Yahweh, he is the self-existing one, ever, always has been, always will be. Yahweh, the Lord. Here in the New Testament we find out who that is because John 18, not to get ahead of myself, no one's ever seen God.

No one's ever seen God. But the only God who is at the Father's side, he has made him known. And so Jesus comes, the embodiment of Yahweh. He is God, the Son of God.

He is Yahweh. Therefore, he is, I am. John 8, 58, before Abraham was, I am. And just if you think, oh, Jesus never claimed to be God.

- [14 : 33] After they said that, the people picked up stones. If you want proof, the Jews picked up stones, not just to throw at him, to tease him and bully him, to kill him, to put him to death by stoning for blasphemy because he was claiming to be God.

Jesus is, I am, self-existing. Everything in creation, look at yourselves, look at everything in creation, even stars, grass, plants, planets, everything in creation depends on something outside of itself to exist and to live.

This week, I just read of a thing called the immortal jellyfish. Partly, it can, you know, just keep going, it can get to a certain age and then be reborn. Tell you one thing, take it out of the water and it's going to die.

Everything in creation depends on something outside of itself. Take away breath, take away oxygen, take away our blood, we die. Take away the gas from the stars, the end.

Take away the light and the water and the grass withers. Everything's dependent except him. And you see, John saw him.

- [15 : 47] John, the one that's writing that, he saw him in flesh and bones. Oh, but he came to know and see that he was someone far more than just Jesus the carpenter from Nazareth. He was unimaginably more than flesh and bones.

He wasn't just the supposed son of a carpenter. He was the son of God. He was the word who was in the beginning, the word who was with God, the word who was God, the creator of all that exists and the source of all that lives.

You see, even creation itself points to aseity. Even the atheists know this because there has to be something that is eternal. You can't just go back, go back, what was before this and what was before that and what was before that and what was before that and it goes on for infinity.

There's got to be something in the beginning that was eternal, that always was. Even atheists know this but they won't call it God. We know this is God and him was life.

All that has ever existed and lives comes from him and John later saw him in a vision recorded in the book of Revelation and he said this, before he has seen him in flesh and bones and he came to know that he's more than that and then in Revelation he sees him and he says, when I saw him I fell at my feet as though dead but he laid his right hand on me saying, fear not, I am the first and the last and the living one.

- [17 : 17] What is the implication if life is in him? You see, we think that death is the end but he says, I am the first and I am the last and if life is in him then death is not the end.

If we come from nothing then maybe death is the end but we do not come from nothing. Does life come from non-life? No. Life has no beginning. In him was life because he is the living one.

It's his very nature to live and therefore anything else that is living is only living because he is the living one and all living things therefore get their life from him.

John Piper puts this beautifully when he says this about this verse. He says that ultimate reality is living. Ultimate reality is alive.

Ultimate reality is a living person. Life is the original reality not nothingness.

[18 : 21] See, when people think that then they look toward the future as if nothingness is the end. As if that's the original reality. It's not. Before anything existed there was life.

Life in him. And here's the point. I think this is the point that John's making. If you're alive today if you're not you won't hear this don't worry but if you're alive today the fact that you're alive is evidence of the living one who made you and gives you life.

Otherwise you wouldn't be alive. Paul says this to the folks in Athens. He says God gives to all mankind life and breath and everything.

And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling places that they should seek him and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.

Yet he's not far from each one of us. for in him we live and move and have our being. What makes you live?

[19 : 43] What makes you move? What gives you being? You see if you have life if you have breath if you have anything the period even that you live in and the place where you dwell these things are supposed to help you feel your way towards God and find him.

Yet he's not far from each one of us. The implication is that our very lives our living and our breathing and our moving and our being ought to lead us to find God and acknowledge the very one who has life and who gives us life and breath and everything.

the fact that you're moving and living and breathing and being is evidence of God and where do you get that from?

This is the amazing thing. This is not separate from God. God doesn't just give you some sort of budget of life that you can just go off and do something with.

Your breathing your being your cells living today are in him not separate from him. You're only alive because you are part of the living one.

[20 : 56] Anyone in creation anything the grass outside the plants on your mantelpiece anything that is living has their life in him in him.

That's the great thing. We should acknowledge God. God we should acknowledge God because we get our life from him and in him. Those even who don't believe in him have their living and being in him.

That's why you should acknowledge him. And so what relevance does Jesus have to any of us today? Well in him was life and so if you live and if you move and if you have been then you are not far from God.

and I don't mean not far as in he's just round the corner you just need to turn the corner and you'll find him. I remember as a child any child whenever they're going to walk with an adult an adult says it's just round the corner.

Oh yeah really? That means ages away. When this says God is not far because in him we live and move and have our being it means that God is feel you can feel him but the very energy flowing through your body you can feel God because he's the living one and you only have life because of him because it comes from him.

[22 : 32] He's the very one who animates you right now today right this very moment he's the one who animates you. the very one that animates those that picked up stones to kill him how patient is he?

If you're alive that simple fact and experience is supposed to lead you to the one who gives you life namely Jesus the son of God and from the smallest creature in the depth the deepest trenches of the ocean to the largest eagles that soar through the skies from the grass on the ground to the sheep that eat it to the people who shepherd the sheep this planet is teeming with life and it all actively comes from Jesus for not only were all things created by him and through him and not only is he before all things Colossians says in him all things hold together he's the beginning he created the world but every moment of every day he upholds the universe by the word of his power Hebrews 1 2 and 3 he's more than flesh and bones he is full of the life and revelation of God in him was life and the life was the light of men

Jesus gives the life that is himself and reveals God by his light you see that life is light that life is the light and revelation of God it's supposed to lead us there supposed to point us there and it would if we weren't blind he's the one who brings light to men and all men need this light if we are to find God you see what Paul spoke to the people in Athens was to those who were in the dark those just like us who did not receive the oracles and covenants of God as a nation they worshipped so many gods because they couldn't see which one was the true God they were in the dark in times of ignorance Paul says so much so that they had an altar to the unknown God just to cover all bases and so while in the dark all they could do was feel their way toward God but they couldn't see him to find them without the light shining into their darkness yet even the Jewish people themselves who were given much more light that they could be a light to the nations even they were in the dark and so although the life that he gives to us is the light of men even prior to seeing who Jesus really is the life we have is not like the life of animals and vegetation we have understanding and conscience that we should be able to see his eternal power and divine nature in the things that have been made says Romans 1 we should be able to interpret the voice of the heavens declaring the glory of God we should be able to sense in our conscience that life comes from a living creator yet despite that light that is inherently in the life that we have from him there is a darkness that has blinded us from recognizing it and so as Alan said last week he's not only the creator of life but he is the creator of new life as much as verse 4 implies that any and all life come from him it also implies that new life eternal life and true light can only come from him can only come with him and in him

Psalms 36 verse 9 says with you is the fountain of life in your light do we see light and so while at times people might say about inviting Jesus into your life the truth is the amazing truth is that Jesus invites us into his life Jesus invites us into himself the truth is that our lives have always been from him and in him and although mankind did not acknowledge that fact Jesus comes full of the life and revelation of God in order that he might invite us into his life for only by entering into his life can we ever truly see and live and so although we see on our little planet life all over the place that originates in him we are constantly seeing this life subjected to death although this life was the light of men what we experience is darkness but the problem is not with him the problem is not with his life or his light because the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it what does that mean well if you look at verse 4 from the point of view of the son of God ever in his divinity ever the source of life and light beyond the limits of this universe yet filling all things then look at verse 5 as that very person manifesting himself on earth to those who were given life and light but are dying in darkness firstly the light shines we need to stop there we need to know the light shines it's a great song by Graham Kendrick shine Jesus shine why?

because it's his very nature to shine he can do nothing but shine because he is light he is light and in him there is no darkness at all and so if you cannot see him it's not because he is not shining but it's because something is blinding us secondly he shines where?

[28 : 31] in the darkness he shines where we are he shines where he is most needed he shines so that we may see him though he is light he has come into the darkness even to shine into the darkest recesses of our hearts Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4 the one who said let there be light has shone the light into our hearts so that we might see the glory of God in the face of Christ he has come into enemy territory the light has come into the darkness he has come into enemy territory not immediately to banish the darkness but to rescue those who are trapped by it to open the eyes of the blind to bring people out of darkness into his marvelous light the darkness the darkness has not overcome it now John uses a Greek word here that can either mean overcome or understand and it's like the English word grasp it could mean to physically grasp someone or it could mean to understand something and so while I was wrestling with this and I was trying to grasp it myself

I became convinced by others that John knew exactly what he was doing he knew that this had two meanings he knew it could mean either one thing or another thing and in fact he knew that it means both things both apply when the light shone in the darkness the darkness did not grasp it the darkness could neither recognize or understand the light nor could it take a hold of it to overtake it to overcome it both of these things are true when the son of God manifest on earth he came in the name of Jesus that was his name and he came as light John recalls in chapter 12 when Jesus said I have come into the world as light or in chapter 8 when Jesus said I am the light of the world whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but have the light of life he came into the darkness as light and although the light has shone in the midst of the darkness the darkness had no effect on him whatsoever we cannot say that of ourselves but for him he came right into the darkness and darkness had zero effect on him didn't affect him at all and this is important in the theme of John because we see who Jesus is by the fact that there was no darkness in him no darkness and even his death was not due to any of his own dark deeds he was pure light and no amount of darkness that surrounded him and pressed in on him could darken any part of him whatsoever the darkness simply could not touch him and it could not understand him could not compute the light that he had and that he was nor could it touch him or affect him in any way and although his death was not due to his own dark deeds was his death a victory for the darkness when the darkness seized his physical body and put him to death did the darkness in any way diminish or extinguish his light the answer is no it may have looked like that for a moment but just as it was impossible for the author of life to be held by death so it was impossible for the light to be overcome by darkness he's more than flesh and bones yet it is possible for man to be held by death it is possible for man to be overcome by darkness you see these verses lead us to ask ourselves do we acknowledge the one who who gives us life the very life that we have do we acknowledge him do we understand his light how do we respond to the life and light that he gives us that's the question of John how do we respond

Jesus said to those before him in John 12 walk while you have the light lest darkness overtake you darkness isn't ever going to overtake Jesus for he is the light but darkness may overtake any one of us darkness is never going to overtake the light himself but darkness can overtake those who don't respond to the light Jesus shines into darkness what do you do with that yet to those who do respond John 12 those who do believe in the light he says they will become sons of light I don't want to press into that because Ron will go further into what that means at the start of next month when he picks up in verse 9 and next week David will explore what God does to prepare people for the light but what a glorious thing it is what a glorious thing it is to see that life is in him and Jesus this man walking about the earth yet everything that is alive comes from him if you've ever walked next to a pylon and you hear that buzz

Jesus is walking about buzzing with life I mean he can't help but give life to everything in light like the woman that went up and touched him where did that power come where did that power go who touched me zapped with life everyone he touches everywhere he goes life he is life it comes from him because life is in him a life that neither comes from chemicals nor even depends on chemicals but comes from him and depends on him and to know that as Piper says that life life is the original reality not death not darkness not nothingness life death is not the end he's the last he's the first and last and the living one he's the the original reality the ultimate reality before anything was made there was life because life was in him and if you are in him then you will always have life and light to know that he's the source of the very life that you experience today he's the light that shone into the darkness to enable you to see him and to live in him what does that mean you see while while you see the abundance of life on this planet now while you think about the revelation of his light and what that brings now even if you're not a Christian you see the life on this planet this planet has a super abundance of life compared to the universe life is teeming on earth yet life is always dying but look at it look at it everywhere man you let that go crazy you don't touch that you don't cut your grass it's just going to explode everywhere life everywhere life life life so hard to tame

I know that personally I need to get my last cut in before winter and life is teeming if that's what we experience we experience now and if you are a Christian and you have been given the light to see the revelation to see who he is and you see the glory of God in Christ if you see that now oh what what will it be like then if all of this life can flourish in a world of death and if we can see something of the glorious light of God in a world of darkness then just imagine what it will be like when all that is left is the original eternal life and his glorious unending light what will it be like then when that is all that is left his life and his light oh how amazing how glorious it is to have Jesus Christ well we're going to reflect just now we're going to play a song and video that we're not going to sing we're just going to listen to the words and reflect on the fact that in him is life and light we think about this darkness is passing away the light is already shining so we're going to