

DISCOVERING  
GOOD NEWS  
IN JOHN

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author & KARLA DORNACHER  
illustrator



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS  
EUGENE, OREGON

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## Discovering Good News in John

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Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97408

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

ISBN 978-0-7369-8145-3 (pbk)

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To all those joining us in this journey to discover the good news that Jesus offers: Welcome! May your journey through John's Gospel be richly rewarded as you grasp the depth of God's love and the greatness of his plan. May you abide in the vine and bear much fruit (John 15:5).

- All of us



To Janeen, Nora, and Jim and Sally, my mentors whom I value so much! And to Kathy, thanks for being my mom's best friend, who brought the Good News to our family! You are each in heaven, enjoying the Savior and you are hearing, "Well Done, Good and Faithful Servant." Thank you for pouring God's Word, the love of Jesus, and the desire to serve Christ into my heart.

- Pam



To Linda Vernier, who first guided me into knowing God and who gave me the Bible in which I discovered who Jesus is: Thank you, my dear friend! To Clay, your love and help made this book possible.

- Jean E.




To my precious husband, Michael, who is now at home with Jesus. Thank you, my love, for believing in and accepting the good news of God's love, because even though I miss you terribly, I know I'll see you again before you know it!

- Karla

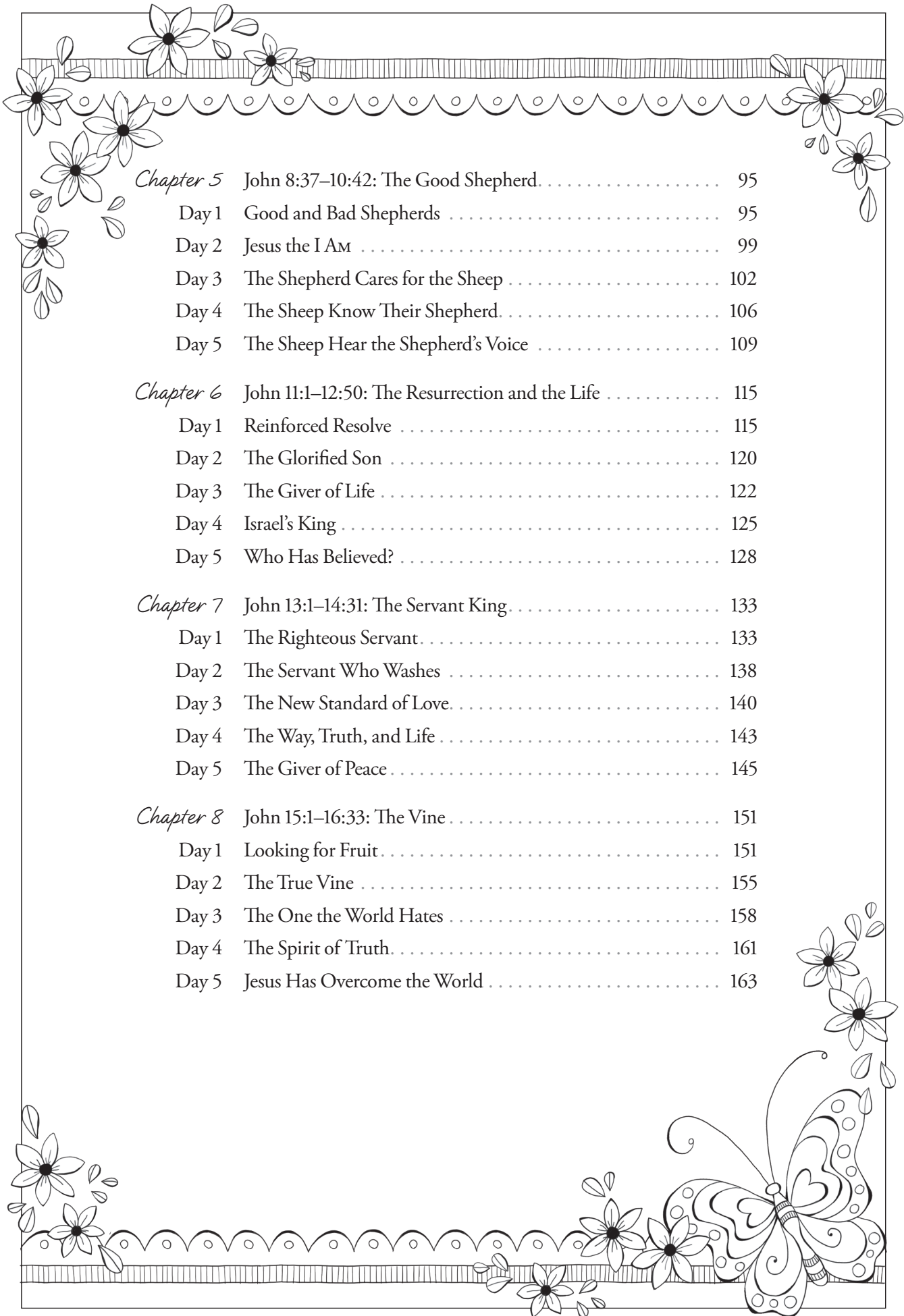


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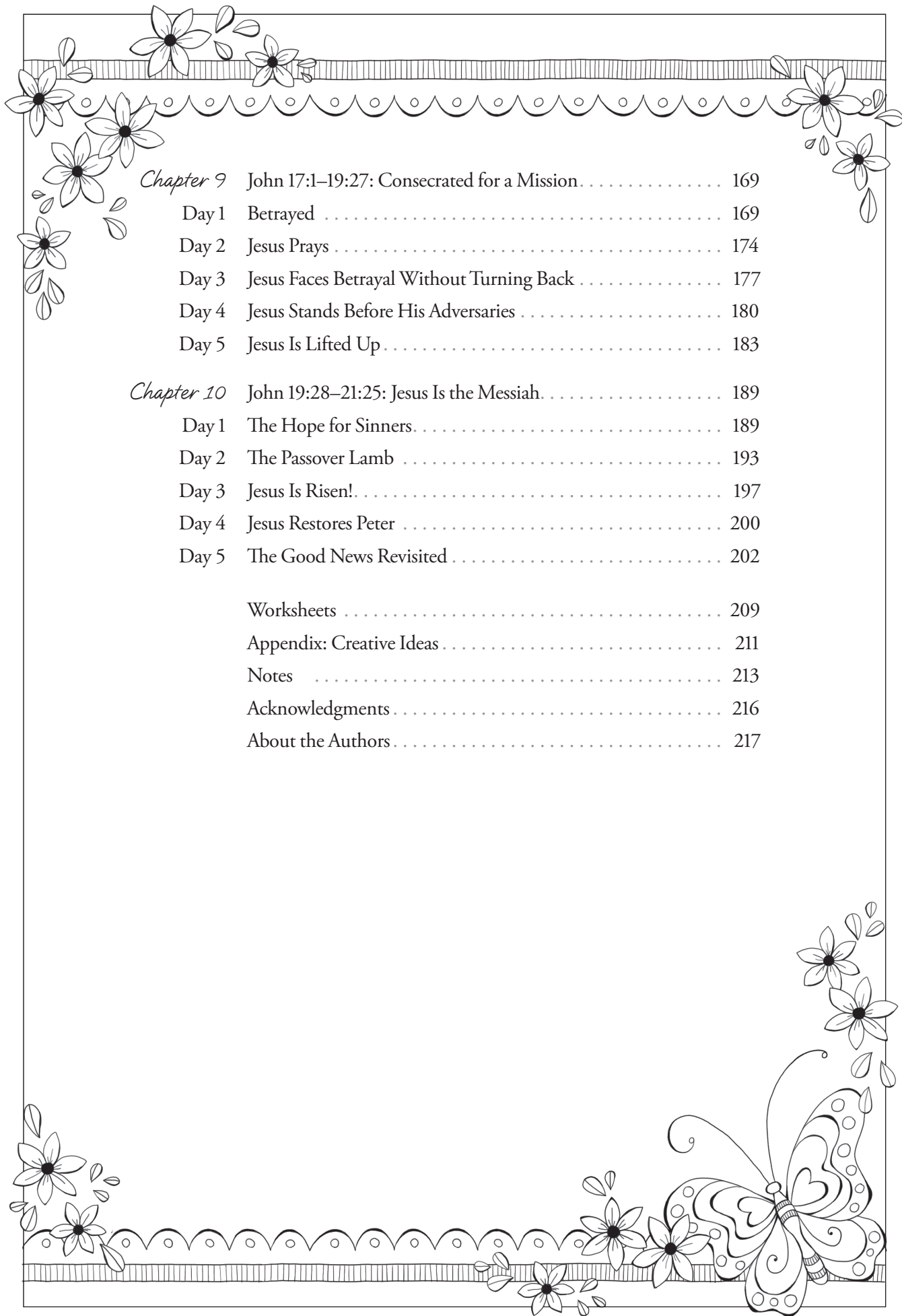
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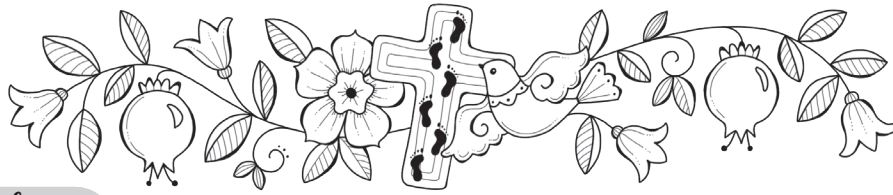


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## Introduction

### Do You Want to See Good News in John?

(Jean) became a Christian through reading the Gospel of John. And since then I've met others who also became Christians through reading John's Gospel, including former Muslims. John's clear presentation of the good news Jesus preached amazes me, so I was eager to write an in-depth study of his Gospel, and I rejoiced when Pam and Karla wanted to join in.

When I was 14, a new friend told me the Bible says people have to pray to receive Jesus in order to go to heaven. I thought that was ridiculous. After all, wasn't Jesus just some shepherd who liked children but couldn't get along with adults—so people killed him?

I wasn't going to take this friend's word for it; I wanted to read the Bible and investigate for myself. After all, I'd been told conflicting things about him. My dad told me God didn't exist and that to think otherwise was stupid. My closest girlfriend told me the way to heaven was for my good deeds to outweigh my bad deeds at the end of my life. Now this teenage boy was telling me I was separated from God and had to pray certain words to have a relationship with him and go to heaven.

My mother was a lapsed Catholic who didn't even want to discuss God, but I believed he existed, probably because my maternal grandmother had told me he did and that he was good. Although my dad and his parents mocked the Bible, this grandmother esteemed it. I trusted her because I'd never known her to lie to anyone or to try to deceive me, and she and my grandfather were the kindest and most caring adults I knew. Additionally, the existence of the world with all its complexities suggested a creator. I reasoned that a good God would want to communicate how to reach him in a way people could discover. An all-powerful God could put how to reach him in written form—such as the Bible—and preserve that message throughout centuries.

I started reading my girlfriend's Bible when I was at her house, and then she gave me a copy—a paperback New Testament called *Good News for Modern Man*. Every day I rushed through my homework so I could open that Bible and read about how to get to heaven.

When I finished reading the first three Gospels, I was disappointed that the authors talked so much about Jesus. I thought, *Wow, that guy argued a lot. No wonder people didn't like him.* Besides, I didn't want to read about *him*; I wanted to read about God and the way to God.

Then I began reading the Gospel of John, and in those powerful pages I discovered the good news that changed my life forever.

That's why I'm so excited to share this study on discovering good news in John's Gospel. John details the message of good news Jesus preached. He explains how God, through signs and prophecies that Jesus fulfilled, gave evidence that he sent Jesus. Nonetheless, some rejected Jesus's message, and John examines why, including what was behind all those arguments. He shows God's purpose for the cross and why it was essential to bring people the hope of eternal life. And finally, John offers evidence that Jesus rose from the dead.

John's Gospel is remarkable. We're glad you're joining us for this journey in *Discovering Good News in John*.

#### Why We Wrote This Discovery Book for You

Pam, Karla, and I, with our different paths and gifts, have connected over our love for interacting with God's Word and encouraging others to experience the hope of his promises and faithfulness.

Jean K. Pam Karla





## The Treasures in Each Chapter

We collaborated on this book to inspire *you*. Here's what you'll find in every chapter.

### *Daily Lessons—Jean*

You'll hear from me throughout this journey. In each chapter, I share an introduction that explains the Old Testament passages John alludes to or quotes. The chapters have five daily lessons that will take 20 to 25 minutes to finish. Each Day 5 lesson concludes by guiding you in a private time of worship and prayer. The lessons use these icons:

 This personal question is designed to help you apply what you're learning to your life and to possibly spark a rich discussion with others.

 This activity guides you in prayer and worship.

 This is an activity with further instructions on [www.DiscoveringTheBibleSeries.com](http://www.DiscoveringTheBibleSeries.com).

### *The Little Details—Jean*

Along the way you'll see sidebars titled The Little Details. These are extra insights for both seasoned Christians and seekers who thrive on details.

### *Pam's Heart-to-Heart with the Great I Am—Pam*

Pam's Heart-to-Heart with the Great I Am devotionals invite you to rest in God's strength and love. She shares some of her go-to ways for remembering and holding on to the promises of Jesus. She'll take you forward with faith and hope.

### *Karla's Creative Connection—Karla*

You'll hear from Karla at the end of each chapter. She'll encourage you to connect creatively with God and others as you delight in God's eternal plan throughout this study.


### *Illustrations—Karla*

The bookmarks and coloring pages will help you connect with and memorize God's Word as you color and meditate on each verse. You can also slip designs under a page in your Bible, sketchbook, or journal for tracing.

### *Creative Ideas—All of Us*

The Creative Ideas appendix offers ways to express, experience, and meditate on Scripture passages. Discover your favorites! What a gift it is to have God's eternal plan to save us etched on our minds, hearts, and spirits.

## Discover More on [www.DiscoveringTheBibleSeries.com](http://www.DiscoveringTheBibleSeries.com)

 Here are the extras you'll find on our website:

- Instructions for how to use this discovery book for both small groups and individual study
- A small group leader's guide
- Timelines
- Links to worship music to go with each chapter
- Links to Karla's art instructions
- Links to articles that go deeper into chapter topics
- More inspiring ideas



# Chapter 1

## John 1:1–2:25 The Word Was God

Who Is Jesus?

### Day 1

#### There Is Good News

The Gospel of John holds a special place in my heart because I (Jean) became a Christian while reading it. That's why I'm excited that you're joining Pam, Karla, and me on this journey to discover its good news. After all, we all need good news!

*Gospel* means “good news.” And indeed, the book of John tells of the good news Jesus proclaimed during his three years of earthly ministry. In the pages that follow, we'll discover what that good news is. And believe me, it's very good news!

The author of this Gospel—John—was one of Jesus's earliest disciples. That means he was an eyewitness to much that happened. In fact, John was one of the inner three whom Jesus often pulled aside: Peter, James, and John. Thus, he experienced firsthand some things the other Gospel writers had to learn from him and these other two men.

#### God's Word to Us in the Old Testament

John assumes his readers are familiar with the Old Testament, so let's look at a few OT passages that will help you understand his Gospel. Throughout this book I'll bold phrases and words to indicate where John references Old Testament terms. I'll also italicize words from the Bible passage we're exploring.

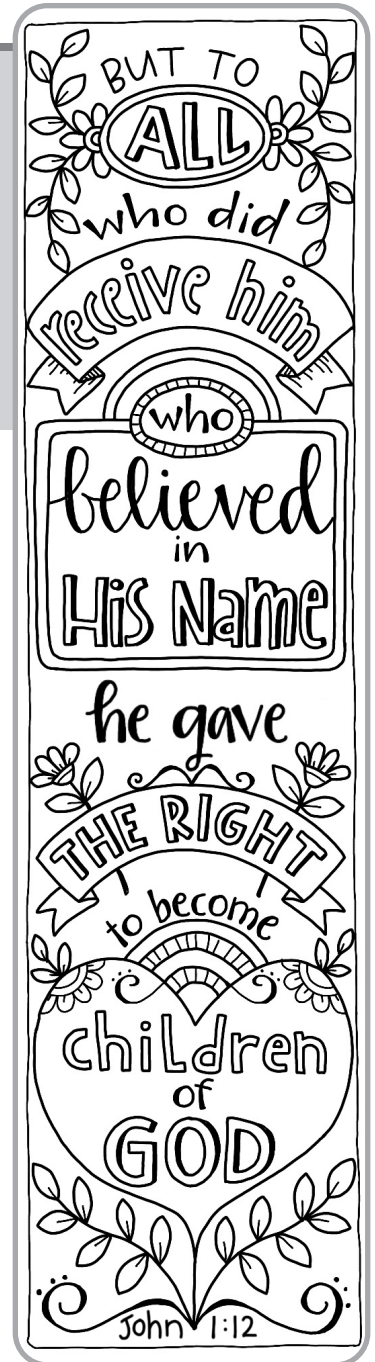
#### *The Prophet and Leader Moses Led an Exodus from Slavery*

John often mentions the prophet **Moses** and events in Moses's lifetime. God called Moses to lead the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt to the land God promised their ancestor, Abraham. The slave masters were harsh, even killing newborn boys to control the Hebrews' population growth.

When Moses told Pharaoh (Egypt's ruler) that God demanded he let his people go, Pharaoh refused. So God gave **signs** to confirm he had sent Moses. These signs included **turning water to blood**. Moses announced that the last sign would be the death of all firstborn males. This plague judged Egypt for killing Hebrew boys.

But Moses told the Israelites to sacrifice an unblemished **lamb** and paint its blood on the top and sides of their doorframes before roasting and eating the lamb that evening. Then when the destroyer came, he would **pass over** the houses displaying lambs' blood.

Just as Moses said, that night the Israelite sons did not die, but the Egyptian firstborn males did. Then Pharaoh told Moses to take the Hebrews away.





## The Little Details

### Messiah

As noted in the text, David and his descendants who ruled were anointed as kings. Because of that they were called *anointed ones* or *messiahs*.

Any prophets and priests anointed for service could also be called *anointed ones*. For example, Moses anointed Aaron and his sons as priests, and the prophet Elijah anointed Elisha as prophet in his place (Exodus 28:41; 1 Kings 19:16).

The anointings of Old Testament kings, priests, and prophets foreshadowed the anointing of Jesus as King, High Priest, and the prophet like Moses. We'll see these unfold in John's Gospel.

Consequently, God told the Israelites they must celebrate **Passover** every year by sacrificing a **lamb** to eat in commemoration of his deliverance.

Moses led the people to Mount Sinai, where God spoke **Ten Words**, better known today as the Ten Commandments. There God instructed the people to build a **tabernacle** where he would place his presence so they could meet with him. The Israelites entered a covenant with the Lord wherein they would keep his **law** and he would provide the promised land for them to live as his people. Moses warned that if the people broke their covenant with God, he would send them away from the land.

To disobey God's law was sin, but the law had provisions to **take away sins** so people could fellowship with God. Namely, priests could offer sacrifices to atone for **sins**. (We'll learn more about atonement in the next chapter.)

Moses prophesied that one day God would send a prophet like him, and he said when the **prophet like Moses** appeared, the people must be sure to listen to him.

### The Prophet and Messiah David Ruled Israel

Eventually, the people wanted a king to rule them. A prophet anointed David as king. He ruled over all the Israelites in the promised land, which was then called Israel. God told David that one of his descendants would build a **temple** for him and have a throne that lasted forever. When David's son built a **temple** to replace the tabernacle, people hoped he was the king whose throne would last forever.


Priests or prophets anointed David and his descendants as kings, so they were called **anointed ones**. The transliteration of the Hebrew for *anointed one* is **messiah**.

### Later Prophets Promised a Future Messiah

When David's grandson took the throne, Israel split into two kingdoms: Israel and Judah. David's descendants ruled Judah, but Israel abandoned the temple and God right away. So prophets warned that God would exile them if they didn't repent.

The people, however, refused to turn back to God, so eventually he announced that exile was imminent. But he also promised to bring the exiles back later. Moreover, he said that one day he would give them another anointed king—another **messiah** descended from David—and that this king's throne would last forevermore (Isaiah 9:7). This messiah would be called **Mighty God** and **Everlasting Father** (Isaiah 9:6). Abundant **wine** would flow in his reign (Amos 9:13-14; Isaiah 25:6).

In the meantime, God comforted the exiles with a promise to one day pardon their sin (Isaiah 40:1-2). At that time, they should prepare for something special.

 Take a moment to pray for insight as you read God's Word.

1. Read Isaiah 40:3-5 below. Underline what a voice says to prepare in the wilderness. Box what it says to make straight in the desert. Circle what will then be revealed.

A voice cries, "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD; make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed."

A voice cries out because **the Lord God is on his way**, and the people must prepare for his visit.

2. In Isaiah 40:9 (NIV) below, circle what the herald is bringing (two words mentioned twice). Underline how the herald should deliver the message. Box the message.

You who bring good news to Zion, go up on a high mountain. You who bring good news to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid; say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"

Here, the herald should shout the **good news** that **God has arrived**.

### God Promised a Future Light of the World

God also told of a future suffering servant who would be a **light**, who would die like a slaughtered **lamb**, and whose soul would make an offering for guilt, bearing people's **sin** (Isaiah 49:6; 53:7-12). He said this about his **word** (Isaiah 55:10-11):

For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall **my word** be that **goes out** from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I **sent** it.

### God's Word Comes to Pass

Just as God warned, Israel went into exile in Isaiah's day. A little over a century later, a foreign king burned Judah's temple and exiled its people too. Although the people returned from exile and built another temple, foreign kings continued to rule them. The people longed to have their own king again.

### God's Word to Us in John

When Jesus was born, foreign kings had ruled the Jews for about 500 years. Many eagerly awaited the king (the Messiah) God promised to send. They wanted him to overthrow Rome's rule and establish their own kingdom on earth.

Now that we understand the background to John's first two chapters, let's read them. They will mention a prophet named John. Note that this is John the Baptist, not John the apostle who wrote the Gospel bearing his name.

3. ♥ Read John 1:1–2:25. What stands out to you from your initial reading of these passages? Why?

That's it for today. We learned a lot about what preceded Jesus's arrival on earth. Tomorrow we'll dig into the details of John's incredible prologue.

📖 Go to [www.DiscoveringTheBibleSeries.com](http://www.DiscoveringTheBibleSeries.com) to download biblical event timelines you can keep handy as you go through this discovery book.

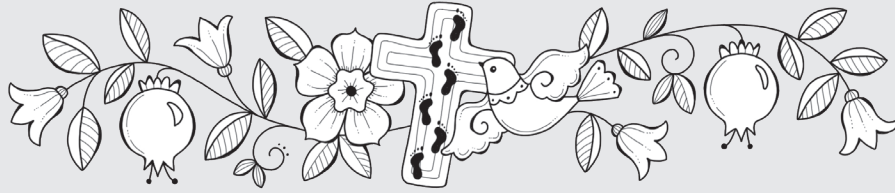


### The Little Details

#### Greg D. Gilbert: The Gospel

The word "gospel" derives from the Anglo-Saxon term "godspell," meaning "good tidings" or "good news." The Greek word *euangelion* ("gospel") and its verbal cognate *euangelizomai* ("evangelize" or "speak good news") together occur more than 130 times in the NT. Whether used in a military, imperial, or religious sense, a "gospel" was always a *message* of good news. It was proclaimed with words, had a definite content, and expected a response from those who heard it.

The gospel that Jesus and his earliest followers proclaimed was no different. It was a well-defined message of good news: Jesus the Messianic King had come to establish God's kingdom on earth and forgive sinful people through his own substitutionary life, death, and resurrection, thereby qualifying them to inherit God's kingdom if they would turn from their sin and rely on him to save them.<sup>1</sup>



## Pam's Heart-to-Heart with the Great I Am—"I Am"

*"Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"*

John 8:58 NIV

The name "I am" is the connection of Jesus, God incarnate of the New Testament, to the person of God from the Old Testament. When God called Moses to free his people from the bondage of slavery in Egypt, Moses expressed how intimidated he was to share the plan to the leaders of the Israelites:

Moses said to God, "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" (Exodus 3:13 NIV).

God answered him then, and this answer can encourage each of us now:

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I AM has sent me to you'" (Exodus 3:14 NIV).

### This Is Good News!

There is one God, and this God is self-existent. He calls himself "I am" because no one created him! He is the Creator who set history in motion. The creation story (chapter 1 of the first book of the Bible you hold) explains that God created light and dark, the sun, the moon, vegetation, animals, and fish, and as he looked at all he created each day, he commented that it was good. When he fashioned man and woman, he said that was *very good*!

*Good* in Hebrew is *Tob*, which I summarize into an easy-to-remember definition: all that is beautiful, beneficial, blessed, and best. God initiated creation, and he cultivated relationship with Adam and Eve. The garden he made for them to dwell in was also beautiful, beneficial, blessed, and best. When Adam and Eve disobeyed and blew their opportunity of a forever in paradise, even then God intervened. In his mercy, he allowed death to enter so humankind would not be chained to decay and destruction forever. Then God set in motion the redemption of all humankind:

God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Romans 5:8 NIV).

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life" (John 5:24).

God's love sets prisoners free from literal slavery in the Old Testament and from bondage to sin in the New Testament—through Jesus. The "I am" came to earth as both fully human and fully God to give his life for you and for me. So the ultimate good news is that Jesus is the "great I am!" He was there at creation, so Jesus, "I am," the Creator, is the answer to everything you need in life! And this is *tob*!

In the Gospel of John, we see Jesus giving many word pictures describing who he is. You will be doing a deeper dive into these qualities of Christ in this creative devotional experience. You will gain strength by studying John and the "great I am." Years ago, while writing *Becoming a Brave New Woman: Step into God's Adventure for You*, I explored these metaphors of Christ to help me and my readers gain courage, confidence, wisdom, and peace no matter what life was sending our way. Which do you most need to hang your heart on today to gain hope for tomorrow?

- *Jesus is the Word*—When you need clarification, wisdom, or discernment, look to the ultimate guide (John 1:1).

- *Jesus is the light*—When you need guidance, look to him for your next step (John 1:4; 8:12; 9:5).
- *Jesus is the bread of life*—When you feel empty inside, look to him for fulfillment (John 6:35,41,48,51).
- *Jesus is from above*—When you need perspective, look to him and ask to see life from his vantage point (John 8:23-24; 12:32).
- *Jesus is the Son of Man*; he is truly human and sympathetic to our frailties, and yet he is perfect—When you're feeling fragile, fallible, and frail, look to your sympathetic Lord for aid (John 8:28).
- *Jesus is the gate for the sheep*—When you need a place of safety, go to him, and you'll find rest (John 10:7,14).
- *Jesus is God's Son*—When you need power beyond your own to cope with life, take your concern to him (John 10:36).
- *Jesus is the resurrection*—If you feel hopeless, despondent, or frustrated, look to the One who raised himself from the grave to raise you up and give you hope and help (John 11:25).
- *Jesus is the true vine*—We must be connected to him for nourishment (John 15:1).
- *Jesus is King*—When you need to appeal to a higher power, a greater authority, appeal to Jesus, who reigns in majesty (John 18:37).
- *Jesus is the living water*—When you're thirsty for something to quell your longings, to handle the cravings that seem to overpower you, look to Jesus, and his presence will bring refreshment (John 4:10).
- *Jesus is God*—When you need forgiveness, grace, mercy, eternal life, and a fresh start, go to the Author of life (John 13:19; 14:11,20; 18:8).<sup>2</sup>

Pam<sup>o</sup>

## Experiencing Scripture Creatively

The arts played a big part in Israel's worship of God. Experiencing Scripture through multiple means helps plant its messages in us so we can better remember its truths. It also gives us more ways to draw near to God in worship.

The Creative Ideas appendix to this book lists many ways you can engage with Scripture creatively. Peruse the ideas for inspiration when you have a little extra time. In addition, I (Jean) suggest ideas tailored to each chapter at the end of the Day 1 lesson. Here are this chapter's suggestions:

- Color Karla's full-page illustration at the end of this chapter while repeating the words of the verse aloud. (Bonus: This is a great way to memorize Scripture!)
- Color the sidebar toppers using different color schemes. Pick your favorite to use on the bookmark on this chapter's opening page.
- The bookmark on this chapter's opening page is reproduced at the end of the book. Color and cut it out to use or to give as a gift.
- Choose a verse that stood out to you from what you read today. Follow Karla's instructions at the end of the chapter for designing a bookmark.
- Write a letter about what it means to be adopted into God's family.







## Day 2

### The Little Details

#### The Gospel Beginnings

When writing a biography about someone, how far back should an author go? In modern times, biographies often start with parents. But in ancient times, they might even include genealogies.

The Gospel of Mark begins with the testimony of John the Baptist about Jesus (Mark 1:4). Matthew, written for a Jewish audience, begins with Abraham's day, for all Jews descend from Abraham (Matthew 1:1). Luke was written for a Gentile (non-Jewish) audience and begins with Adam's day, for all humans descend from Adam (Luke 3:38).

But John goes back even further, to the beginning of time.

## Jesus Is the Word

In a theologically rich prologue, John lets us know right away that this man he's going to tell us about is no ordinary man.

### The Word Was God

4. Read John 1:1-2. (a) When did the Word exist? (b) With whom was the Word? (c) Who was the Word? (d) With whom was he in the beginning?

Even though this Gospel is a biography of a man who lived in John's time, John begins by quoting the first words of the Old Testament: "In the beginning" (Genesis 1:1). He places the Word with God at the beginning of creation and calls the Word *he*.

Genesis tells us that God spoke the universe into existence (Genesis 1:3). Elsewhere, God's word came to prophets (Jeremiah 1:4). Additionally, his word healed and delivered (Psalm 107:20). New Testament scholar D.A. Carson writes, "In short, God's 'Word' in the Old Testament is his powerful self-expression in creation, revelation and salvation, and the personification of that 'Word' makes it suitable for John to apply it as a title to God's ultimate self-disclosure, the person of his own Son."<sup>3</sup>

John also tells us that the Word *was with God* and *was God*. This is not unprecedented. For instance, one prophecy said the descendant of David who would reign forever would be called "Mighty God" (Isaiah 9:6-7).

5. According to John 1:3, what was made through the Word?

In the beginning, then, God created everything by his Word.

### The Word Was Life and Light

6. In John 1:4-5 below, circle the two occurrences of life. Draw a star ★ around the two occurrences of light. Box the two occurrences of darkness.

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.

Life and light are themes that thread throughout John's Gospel. In the beginning, God gave life to all creatures on earth. He also gave the stars and planets for light, illuminating our world.

7. Read John 1:6-8. (a) Whom did God send (verse 6)? (b) What was his purpose (verses 7-8)?

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In the beginning, then,  
God created everything  
by his Word.  
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These verses speak of John the Baptist, a prophet who called Jews to repent and be baptized. Here the Gospel speaks not just of the lights God created in the beginning but also of the light that dispels spiritual darkness so that people may believe.

8. In John 1:9-11 below, draw a star ★ around who was coming into the world. Circle where he was, what was made through him, and what didn't know him (the same word given three times). Underline who didn't receive him.

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

All things were made through the Word (verse 3), and the world was made through the true light. So the Word is the true light and the light of men (verse 4). *True* here means "real" or "genuine."<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 50:10-11 warns people of the danger of living by their own lights (that is, man-made philosophies) instead of trusting God. It says living by false lights ultimately brings torment.

In John, we see that the true light enters the world, but the world is in rebellion and doesn't recognize him. The light shines on everyone, but some don't receive that light. In particular, the Word's *own people* don't receive him.

### The Word Grants the Right to Become Children of God

Now we come to our key verse.

9. Read John 1:11-13. (a) What did the Word give to those who received him and believed in his name (verse 12)? (b) What were they born of (verse 13)?

This is good news indeed. The Word gives the right to become children of God to those who receive him and believe in his name. They become his children by being born of God, not by blood descent from human parents such as Abraham and Sarah (from whom all Jews descend) or even Adam and Eve.

D.A. Carson explains what *receive him* means:

*"Yet to all who received him..."* Another way of describing these people is to say that they *believed in his name*. The "name" is more than a label; it is the character of the person, or even the person himself. The entire expression does not guarantee that those who exercise such faith are genuine believers...but at its best, such faith yields allegiance to the Word, trusts him completely, acknowledges his claims and confesses him with gratitude. That is what it means to "receive" him.<sup>6</sup>

John still hasn't identified the Word, but he's about to.

### The Little Details

#### Poetry in John

John sometimes uses poetic devices. For instance, John 1:1-3 appears to be a chiasm in which elements equal distance from the center are related:

In the beginning  
was  
the word  
and the word  
was  
with God  
and God  
was  
the word  
This one  
was  
in the beginning with God

These verses can also be arranged in a double chiasm:

In the beginning  
was  
the word  
and the word  
was  
with God  
And God  
was  
the word  
This one  
was  
in the beginning  
with God<sup>4</sup>





## The Little Details

### Jay Sklar: *Jesus as God Dwelling Among People*

One of the major themes of Leviticus is that the heavenly King, in his love for his people, comes to dwell in their very midst in the tent of meeting... This is taken to a whole new level with Jesus. First, Jesus comes as God in the flesh to dwell among us (John 1:1,14). It is no longer God in a tent, dwelling among a people, yet physically separated from them in the Most Holy Place. It is now God in the flesh, walking among them, touching them, embracing them, suffering with them and ultimately suffering for them—and for us!—all because of his great love for humanity (2 Cor. 8:9; Heb. 2:14-18; 4:15). Second, God's presence in the Old Testament was especially associated with the tent (Exod. 40:34-35) and then later the temple (1 Kgs 8:10-11). But since Jesus' death and resurrection, it is especially associated with his followers, who are described as a "holy temple in the Lord," of which "Jesus himself [is] the chief cornerstone" (Eph. 2:20-21). It is among this people... where God now dwells by his Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:22).<sup>8</sup>

## The Word Became Flesh

10. In John 1:14 below, underline what the Word did. Circle what people saw. Double underline "only Son." Box what the Son was full of.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

This verse is packed with theological significance. First, the Word who is God *became flesh*—what we call the incarnation.

Second, the words translated *dwelt among us* are more literally "pitched his tabernacle, or lived in his tent, amongst us."<sup>7</sup> Moses built a tent as a place where God could dwell among his people in a special way. Now Jesus has come in a tent of flesh to dwell among people.

Third, in the phrase *we have seen his glory*, the word *we* refers to the disciples and others who were with Jesus. *Seen his glory* reminds readers that the Israelites saw God's glory on Mount Sinai when God gave the Ten Commandments (Exodus 24:16). Also, when Moses dedicated the tabernacle, God's glory shone in a cloud that filled it (Exodus 40:35). Just as God's glory was visible in the exodus, so God's glory was visible in Jesus.

Fourth, *only son* is sometimes translated "only begotten" (NASB, KJV) because it's a special phrase. It means a father's "one and only, best-loved Son."<sup>9</sup> It's an allusion to Genesis 22:16, where God described Isaac to Abraham as "your son, your only son" even though Abraham had another son.

Finally, *glory full of...grace and truth* alludes to Exodus 34. There, Moses asked God to show him his glory (Exodus 33:18). The Lord passed before Moses in a cloud, proclaiming that he is "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Exodus 34:6). D.A. Carson explains that the word translated *steadfast love* has to do with graciousness, and the word translated *faithfulness* means "truth" or "faithfulness." So the "two words that John uses, 'full of *grace* and *truth*,' are his ways of summing up the same ideas."<sup>10</sup>

In summary, then, the Word became flesh and tabernacled among people, displaying his glory. Moreover, the Father sent his Son, who is the Word.

11. Read John 1:15-16. (a) What did John the Baptist say about the Word who became flesh (verse 15)? (b) What have we received from the Word's fullness (verse 16)?

John the Baptist was older than Jesus and began ministering before Jesus did, but he insists that Jesus is greater than he, saying "because he was before me," referring to Jesus's pre-existence as well as his greater status.

## The Word Is Jesus Christ, Giver of Grace and Truth

12. In John 1:16 below, underline what John says they have all received from the Word's fullness.

For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

Grace is unmerited favor, so this is good news.



13. In John 1:17 below, circle what was given through Moses. Draw an arrow from “Moses” to “law.” Circle what came through Jesus. Draw an arrow from Jesus to what you circled. Box Jesus’s title (the last word).

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Now we know the identity of the Word: Jesus. And John gives Jesus the title *Christ*. Just as *Messiah* comes from the Hebrew for “Anointed One,” so *Christ* comes from the Greek for “Anointed One.” Thus, John means that Jesus is the long-awaited King who will rule forever. He also means that Jesus is a descendant of King David. Therefore, *his own people* who *did not receive him* in verse 11 refers to the Jews.

The Jewish people’s identity rested on the Mosaic law. But John contrasts the law coming through Moses with grace and truth coming through Jesus. Jesus is like Moses in that he brings something from God.

14. In John 1:18 below, box who has seen God. Underline who has made God known.

No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

The Lord God made his glory visible to Moses in a limited way, but Moses did not see God’s face.<sup>11</sup> God is invisible, though he at times makes his presence known in a way that humans can sense. Such manifestations are called *theophanies*.

Jesus, the only God who is at the Father’s side (or in his bosom), has now made God known through the incarnation.

So far, John has given us several pieces of good news. In Jesus, God himself became flesh to dwell with humans and make God known. Jesus gives life and light, and he grants the right to become children of God. Moreover, grace and truth come through Jesus.

In the next lesson, we’ll discover what a contemporary prophet said about Jesus.

## Day 3

### John the Baptist Testifies About Jesus

We read John’s prologue yesterday and learned that Jesus is God, Jesus is with God, and Jesus was in the beginning with God. We also learned that he grants the right to become a child of God to those who believe on his name.

15. ♥ (a) Have you received Jesus and believed on his name so that you can have the right to become a child of God (John 1:12)? (b) If not, what questions or obstacles hold you back?

John the Baptist was a prophet who called Jews to repent from sin and turn to God because something important was about to happen. He had a huge following that attracted the

### The Little Details *Bethany Across the Jordan*

When we travel, I’m always surprised to find cities with the same name as those in my California county. Apparently, something like that went on in the areas over which Jesus walked.

“Bethany across the Jordan” in John 1:28 is not the same as the Bethany in Judea near Jerusalem where Lazarus lived (John 12:1). This Bethany (or “Bethabara” as it’s alternately spelled) is either a place unknown today or an alternate spelling for Batanea. Batanea is the area where Jesus later withdrew when the Jews tried to kill him (John 10:40). It had a different ruler than Judea did.

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In Jesus, God himself became flesh to dwell with humans and make God known.  
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