



Are You Running Out of Wine?

YOU know that the first miracle of Jesus was turning water into wine, right? But why?

Why not the feeding of the multitude or raising the dead? Or at least, walking on water? That could have been more spectacular for a first!

Yet, look at the elements in the story – a wedding, a feast, Jesus with his mother and his disciples (That’s a powerhouse cast!), water in six stone jars (used for purification), and wine (which is now used to turn into the Blood of Jesus in the consecration part of the Mass).

Whoa! That’s indeed loaded with deep meaning – especially as John wrote in his Gospel.

That’s what we’ll uncover in Talk 2: *The Wedding at Cana*, in our mind-blowing, spirit-lifting series, *Come and See!* (A Bible Study on the Gospel of John).

And as we learned last Sunday in Talk 1, this should not just be meditation literature. Our study should lead us to believe, trust, and worship God, to *Come and See, Hear, and Experience Jesus*.

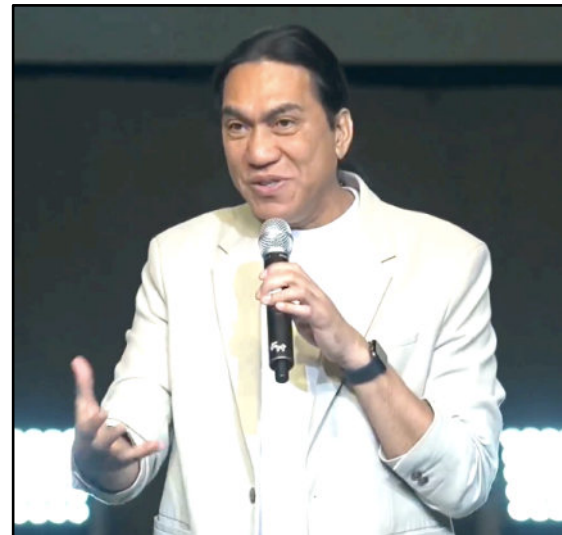
Because when your wine runs out – your resources, your reserves, your passion, your patience, your joy, your peace, your faith, your hope, and your love – then know that *The Best Wine is here – His Name is Jesus!*

Get ready for another life-changing Feast!

Welcome to The FEAST where *You are loved!*

Mayroong Magandang Mangyayari Sa ‘Yo!

Alvin Barcelona



WELCOME
to our brand-new
Feast Talk series:
COME and SEE
Talk 2:
The Wedding at Cana



LETTERS

Listen...

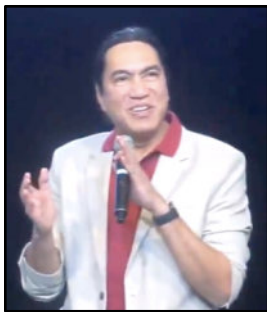
IN last Feast Sunday's Gospel, we read that Jesus asked His apostles, "Who do you say that I am?"



The ever-loyal, every-faithful Peter gave a smart answer. But he could hardly understand what Jesus said next.

If you were in Peter's shoes, how would you have reacted? That's the question Fr. Regie Malicdem (*center*) asked us during his Homily last Feast Sunday. Read on, *page 3*.

This issue of *The Feast Family* is about our Lord Jesus' conversations we must listen to. And if we listen well, we will have *hope*-- for solutions, relief for our burdens. Just like Fr. Kali Llamado and Fr. Regie present in their book, *Lord, Is There Hope for Me?* introduced by Bro. Audee Villaraza as he welcomed us to The Feast, *page 10*.



Another interesting conversation was between Jesus and Mother Mary during the Wedding at Cana-- the topic of today's Feast Talk, the second of our new series, *Come and See*. Bro. Alvin introduced the Talk on *page 1*.

In Talk 1 of our series, we learned about John the Apostle and John the Baptist and the mind-boggling similarities or differences between John's Gospel and Genesis. Confused?

Well, we were enlightened as we listened to the conversation of Bro. Bo Sanchez and son Bene about the issues. Come and see, hear, experience, *page 19*.

So, what conversations are you listening to?



All for God's Glory,

Randy Borromeo
Media Ministry
Executive Director





Holy Mass



TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

Homily

Excerpts:

My dear Brothers and Sisters, we thank the Lord for gathering us this morning to celebrate the peace of His love and mercy through this Holy Eucharist.

In a special way, Father Kali and I wish to thank all of you for this opportunity to celebrate this Mass with you this morning.

I am Fr. Regie Malicdem and our presider is Fr Kali Llamado. We are both priests of the Archdiocese of Manila. From 2015 to 2022, we were together at the Manila Cathedral. But sometime in 2022, we had a reshuffling of assignments.

Now, I am assigned as Chaplain of two mall chapels in Makati, The Mary Mother of Hope at Landmark, Makati, and the Chapel of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary at SM Makati. I am one priest who can legally go to the mall every day☺



Presider:
REV. FR. KALI LLAMADO



Homilist:
REV. FR. REGIE MALICDEM
on the Gospel Mark 8:27-35

Fulfillment of Isaiah's Prophecy

Father Kali is studying in Rome. He just finished his first year. He'll return to Rome to resume his second year in the coming days. Let's keep on praying for him. He's making himself an expert in Rome. If you happen to be in Rome, you might see him there. He speaks Italian well. He haggles well in stores☺

I thank the Lord that I have been allowed to be with you today. After several invitations, I'm finally here. I once said yes to an invitation here, but the event was canceled. I was nervous this morning because it was raining and my coming here might be canceled again. It's my first time here to celebrate Mass with you.

My dear Brothers and Sisters, we cannot really blame Peter for wanting to spare Jesus from suffering as we heard in our Gospel this Sunday. If we were in Peter's shoes, we would have reacted in the same way. Just imagine what happened in our Gospel.

Jesus asked His disciples: "Who do you say that I am?"

Peter gave the correct answer: "You are the Christ. You are the Messiah."

Jesus said, "As the Messiah, I will suffer. I will be rejected. I will even be killed."

We see that by saying this, Jesus is the fulfillment of what the prophet Isaiah described in our First Reading today-- as the suffering servant of God.

Perhaps, Peter couldn't understand how someone like Christ could suffer and even be killed. As a friend of Jesus, he could not understand how his friend would have to suffer and die. That's why Peter rebuked Jesus.



First Reading: Isaiah 50:5-9

The Lord GOD opens my ear that I may hear, and I have not rebelled, have not turned back. I gave my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who plucked my beard; my face I did not shield from buffets and spitting. The Lord GOD is my help, therefore I am not disgraced;

I have set my face like flint, knowing that I shall not be put to shame. He is near who upholds my right; if anyone wishes to oppose me, let us appear together. Who disputes my right? Let that man confront me. See, the Lord GOD is my help; who will prove me wrong?



Challenges to the Apostles

In another version of this Gospel, Peter even said to Jesus, "Forbid it, Lord, that such things would happen to you!"

Because of that, Jesus called Peter "Satan!"

What was Peter's fault? Was it wrong to show his concern for Jesus by wanting him to be spared from suffering and pain? Any friend would do that. You would do that to your loved ones.

Love means showing our concern for the people we love. Love means attending to the needs of those we love.

In our Second Reading today, St. James said: "To show love and concern for others is not just love. It is also an expression of our faith."

But there are times when love means allowing our loved ones to suffer and experience pain.

There are times when love also means letting our loved ones face difficulties and hardships in life. There are times when love also means seeing them struggle and persevere-- not because we do not love nor care for them, but because suffering, pain, and difficulties make them better persons.

Through those challenges, they are transformed into stronger and more resilient persons.



Second Reading: James 2:14-18

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him?

If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead. Indeed someone might say, "You have faith and I have works." Demonstrate your faith to me without works, and I will demonstrate my faith to you from my works.



Too Easy on the Youth

Maybe the reason there are many people nowadays, especially the young ones, have low pain tolerance-- they easily give up on life-- is that we have made life so easy for them.

Just to give you an example: Sometimes, the parents would tell their kids, "Eat."

Once the kids sit at the dining table, they would say, "I don't like the food."

The parents would then panic. They would say, "What do you want? Mommy will cook it for you."

Occasionally, tell your kids, "If you don't like the food, then don't eat. Go hungry. We don't have any other food."

At times, young people deal with small matters like it's the end of the world.

One child said to her mommy, "I don't want to live anymore. My boyfriend broke up with me!"

The mom said, "Child, you're only 13 years old. You will meet more men in the future."

A little dose of suffering can do a lot of good for us. It'll make us strong. It'll teach us to be in solidarity with other people who are also suffering.

When I was in my fourth year of high school in the early '90s, our English teacher taught us how to make a term paper. The first lesson she taught us was how to make its title page.

She said, "There should be a distance of two inches from the top of the page to the first line. From the first line to the next line, there should be a space of one and a half inches. From the last line to the bottom of the page, there should be a space of two inches. Finish your title page today and I will check them tomorrow."

Nowadays, it's so easy to do that on your computer. In the '90s, there were computers already then, but the only program was WordStar and you needed a floppy disk too. Monitors then had no margins. It was a trial-and-error thing. Some of you can relate with me.

Expression of God's Love

The next day, our teacher arrived and the only thing she had with her was a ruler. She called us one by one to her table. She checked the measurement of the margins. If the measurements were incorrect even by 1 millimeter, she tore our paper in front of us and threw our paper in the trash can. That's just the title page. The body of the paper wasn't included yet. We shed sweat, blood, and tears before our term paper was accepted.



At that time, we cursed her a lot. But when I reached college, we were asked to write a thesis. It was very easy for me because I learned the discipline from my high school teacher. If she made it easy for us in high school, I would have had a hard time in college.

She passed away a few years ago. I went to her wake, and I told her, "Ma'am, I forgive you."

But I also said, "Ma'am, please forgive us too for what we said about you."

Sometimes, sparing our loved ones from suffering and pain is not really love. Sometimes, letting them suffer and letting them experience some forms of pain is also an expression of love. That is how God also deals with us.

Responsorial Psalm: Psalms 116: 1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

R. (9) I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

*I love the LORD because he has heard my voice
in supplication, because he has inclined his ear to me the day
I called*

R. I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

*The cords of death encompassed me; the snares of the
netherworld seized upon me; I fell into distress and sorrow,
and I called upon the name of the LORD, "O LORD, save my life!"*

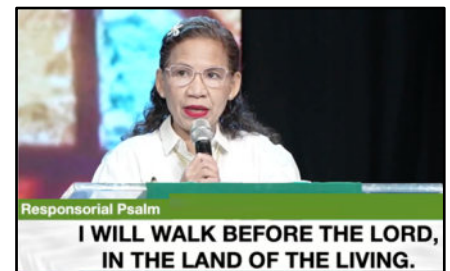
R. I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

*Gracious is the LORD and just; yes, our God is merciful.
The LORD keeps the little ones; I was brought low, and he saved me.*

R. I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.

*For he has freed my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.
I shall walk before the Lord in the land of the living.*

R. I will walk before the Lord, in the land of the living.



Welcome!



BRO. AUDEE VILLARAZA:

Good Morning, Good Morning, FEAST!

Can we give a big hand now? If He has blessed you this week, if He provided for you this week, if He healed you this week, shout, "Thank You, Jesus!"

Can you Hi-Five, embrace, touch, and just greet the people around you, and say, "I'm happy you're here."

Thank you so much for coming to our church today.

Do we have first-timers right now? People have joined us for the first time? We'd like to acknowledge you. Friends, clap your hands if they're beside you.

Tap them and say, "Welcome Home!"

I want to congratulate the graduates of our Love Life Retreat.

If you're looking for a meaning of Life, you may still sign up for our next batch. This event happening in Tagaytay for two days-- Friday and Saturday.

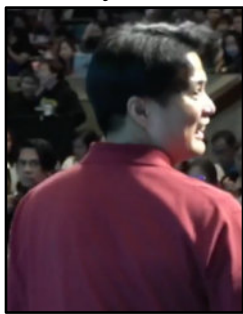


All in the Family

Today, we're starting a new series. We just finished our series on Family.

How many families do we have here? Raise your hands. Thank you so much. We're growing our Family here at The Feast.

One thing I love speaking about families is that whenever we get together we always celebrate something, a special occasion-- for instance, birthdays, anniversaries, or graduations.



I'm thinking of people right now who are celebrating their birthday like today, from *extreme left*:

Mike Maliwanag who comes from Singapore, is celebrating his birthday. He's turning 40 today. And then his dad, Bro. Romeo, is celebrating his 70th next week.

We also have Sis. Malu Improgo, one of our ushers, celebrates her birthday today. As well as one of our leaders, Aben Gaerlan, one of the most radical leaders. He comes from Cagayan de Oro, and he's planting Feasts in that area. He brought seven or eight youths from CDO here in Manila.

One way we want to celebrate our last series is this-- because we learned how to pray as a family and we're encouraged to do that every day-- after the session today, we're going to give each family a gift.

As you go out of this hall, we're going to give you door hangers. There are five designs that you may choose from. At the back of the hanger, there's a family prayer. So, you hang this on the door of your bedroom and then every night, you look at the back of the hanger and pray together.





Book on Hope

BRO. AUDEE: Today, we are so blessed because we have two men of God who celebrated the Holy Mass with us.

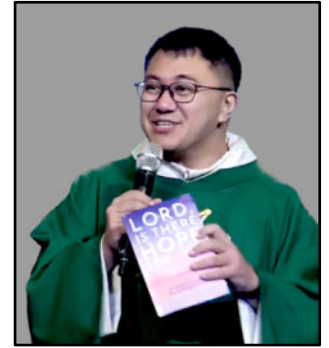
There's another reason they are here. Perfect timing -- because today they are launching their book.

FR. KALI: Good Morning once again, Brothers and Sisters, let us tell you a story-- very quick story.

In 2022, two years ago, the Feast Books wrote to us asking us-- Fr. Regie and me -- if they could make a book out of our homilies. During the Pandemic lockdown, perhaps some of you were watching our online Masses And perhaps Feast Books were also watching our online Masses. And they said to us Father, may we compile some of your homilies and make them into a book because they're sure this book will bless many people.

Unfortunately, in 2022, we did not believe in this project. And we said no to Feast Books. But I think this is the work of the Spirit because the following year, Feast Books wrote again to us and asked us, "Father, when are we going on with our project?"

At first, we did not believe in ourselves. I thought who am I to write a book , but thank you to Feast Books for believing in us and for fulfilling the promise of God for us.



FR. REGIE: That is why we are here today to share with you our book, *Is There Hope for Me?* A question that many of us ask. And we ask the Lord many times, "Lord, do I still have hope?"

And through this book, we are sharing with you our reflections centered on *hope*.

This is a very good preparation for us for next year's Jubilee Year, the theme of which is *Pilgrims of Hope*. So it's good that we share with you hope that comes from the Word of God. And we hope given hope, you will abound in hope, and you will also share hope with others.

FR. KALI: So, we thank again Bro. Audee and Bro. Bo for allowing us to celebrate Mass here with you. And after The Feast session, later, we will have time to sign books for all of you. thank you so much.

BRO. AUDEE: One last point. May we get a shout from the young people right now?

All right. You have to listen to this. I invite onstage one of our youth leaders, Catherine Tan.

SIS.CATH: Thank you, Bro. Audee.

Hello! I am here to report to you that we already finished our Camp Calye -- two batches.

So, shout out to our campers. We were able to send 80 campers, for the two batches, and with that, we want to thank again everyone who supported us. Thank you also, parents, who sent their kids to us at Camp Calye.



CAMP CALYE
BAY AREA

Drop by the Youth Table in
PICC for more details!

BATCH #2
August 23-25, 2024

Golden Arable Farm,
Maragondon, Cavite

PHP 4,000 Camp Fee
exclusive of transpo fee

You already belong.

September 28, Sat
Doors open at 3pm

Acceler8 by Unionspace,
Legazpi Makati

For those who were not able to attend, don't worry, because we have more in store for the youth.

First, our Youth Home will be held on Saturday, September 28, at 3:00-6:00 p.m. at Accelerate Makati in Legaspi.

And other than that, if you can't make it on Saturday, we have our Light Groups. So, if you're interested in sending your child, niece, nephew, grandchild, just approach our Youth table outside.

I'm also a Campus missionary at De la Salle University. So, we want to invite students at DLSU to join us. You may message me on our Facebook page, Feast Youth Bay Area.

WELCOME TO THE
Youth

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Love Offering

SIS. CATH: I'd like to invite you now to our Love Offering.

I really want to thank you for your generosity, for giving, and for sharing your blessings. Because through your giving you make us believe that what we do is changing lives and at the same time you allow us to do what we do-- to share the love of God with everybody, most especially, young people.

Because as Pope Francis said, young people are the *new church*.

So, let's raise our Love Offering envelopes and let me pray with you:



In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dear God, we praise You, we adore You, we glorify You, and we Thank You for all the blessings that You have been giving us.

This is the work of our hands, Lord. We worked hard for this, This is the fruit of our work. And we just want to share it with You, to give it to You, and use it as we build the Kingdom of God here on Earth, Lord.

And Lord, bless all the prayer intentions that we have in our hearts all written on our envelopes, as well as those unwritten.

May you guide us and be with us and hear our hearts, Lord.

All these we ask in Jesus' Mighty Name. Amen.

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Worship!

SIS. VANYA CASTOR:

Good Morning, FEAST! We will worship the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords in this room today.

Shout your praises to Him. Thank You, Jesus.

We're going to sing a new song today by Feast Worship. It's called *Light of the World*.

And We're going to sing this song, knowing full well that there are so many heartbreaking incidents happening recently, so much darkness around us, so much darkness inside of us, in our hearts and in our minds.

Everyone-- even myself-- struggles with bitterness and darkness.

But Thank God there's Light. Thank God that this Light is available to every single person in this room.

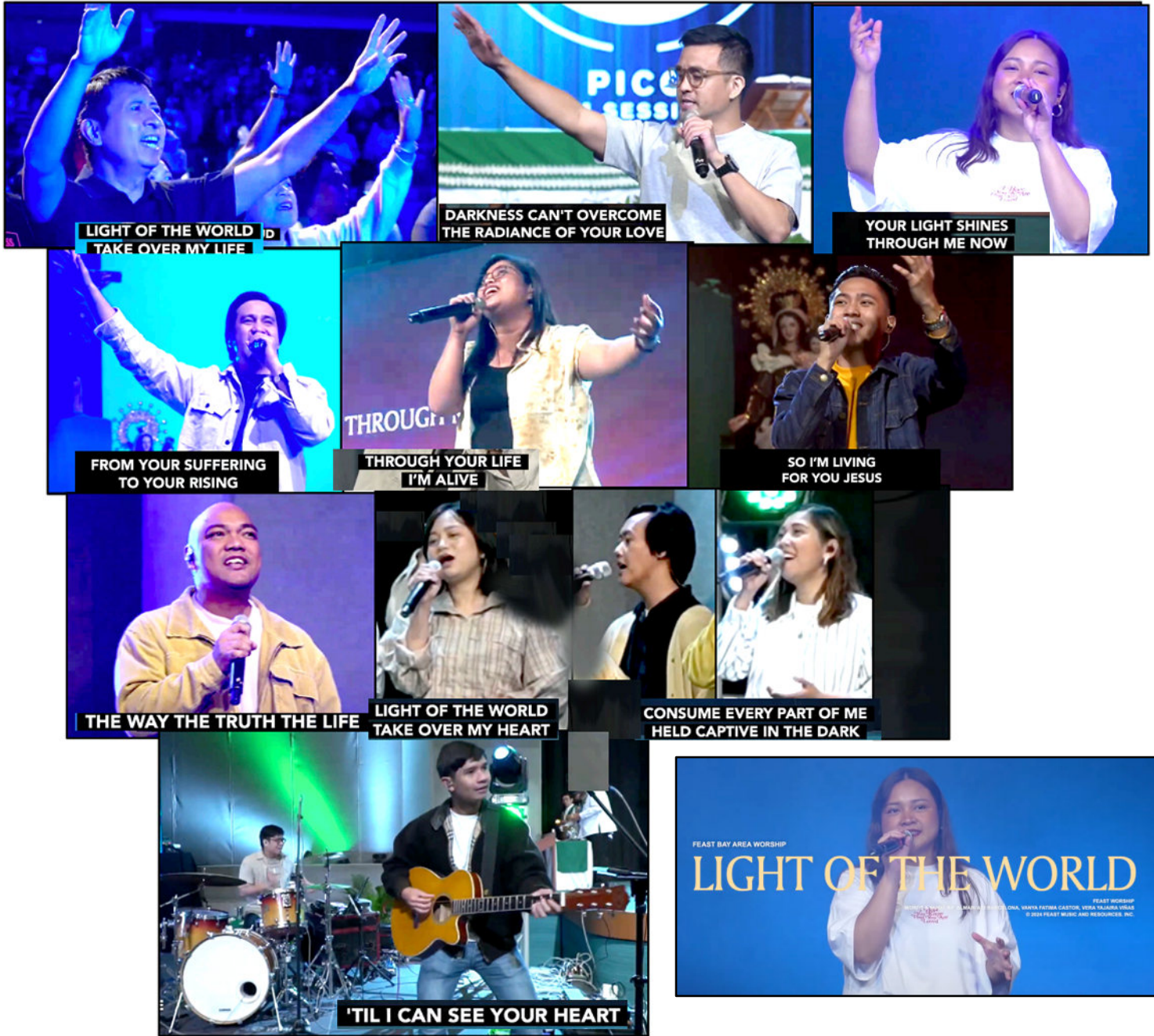
So, today, instead of focusing on the darkness that is happening around us and inside us, I invite you to behold Jesus, the Light not only bigger than darkness-- but has overcome the darkness.

Today, bring all of your burdens to the Light as we call on the Name of Jesus.

Jesus, You've overcome the darkness. You've already won the victory.

So, we have the courage to go wherever You want us to go and do whatever You want us to do. In Your love God, we have courage, in Your love God, we will go.







BRO. BO SANCHEZ:

Father in Heaven, we are so happy that You brought us here again in Your Presence. And we're so happy that You are pulling away the curtain and You're revealing Yourself to us in a much greater way than in the past. We know, Lord God, that every single day that passes, You will reveal more and more of Who You are. Because You're increasing our capacity to receive more of what You want to give to us.

And so, here we are again, saying a bigger YES to You.

From every part of this house, I want every heart to say *Yes* to God.

And let your *Yes* today be bigger than your *Yes* yesterday.

And I pray that your *Yes* tomorrow will be bigger than your *Yes* today.

I want you to just tell God-- He is calling you, He is loving you-- just say *Yes* to God.

Everybody, every prayer, every heart, just say, “*Yes, Lord. Yes to Your revelation. Yes, to Your call. Yes, to Your mission.*”

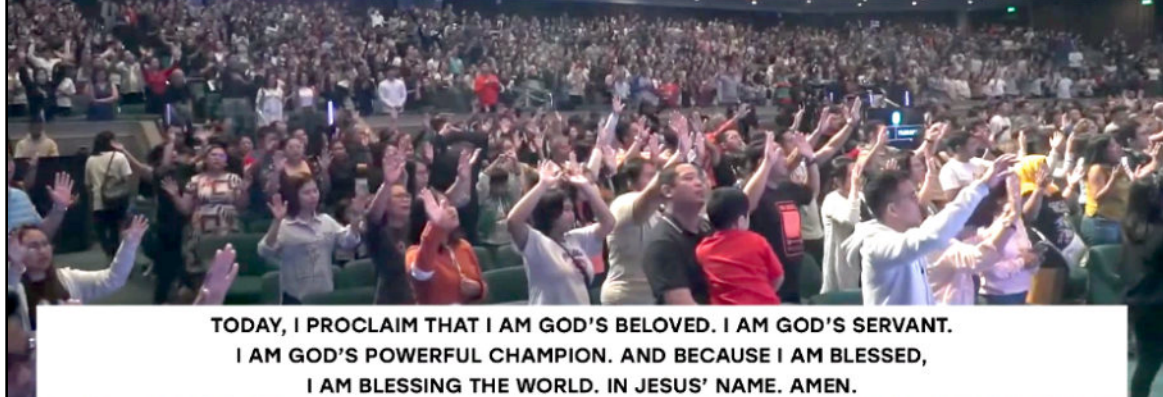
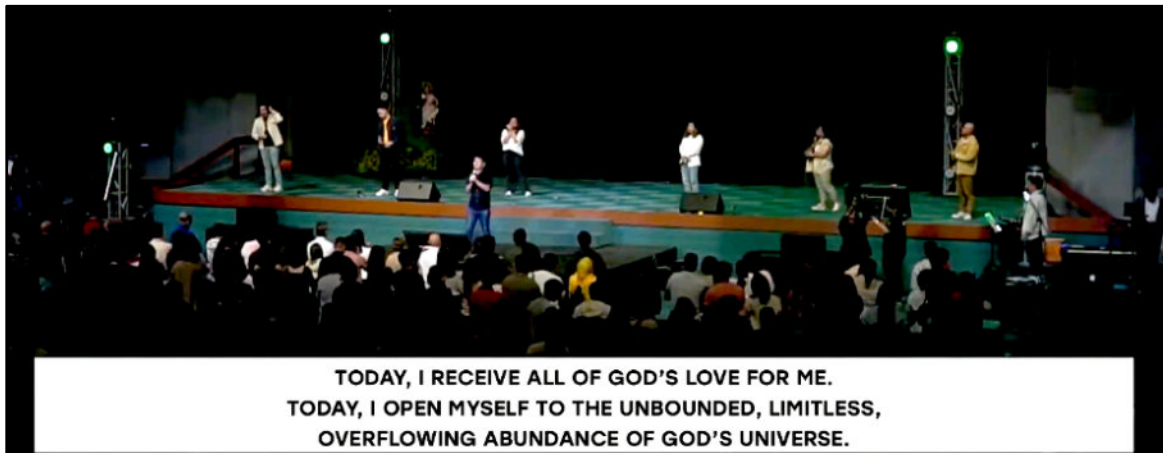
Yes to Your Presence. Yes to Your work. ”



NOVENA TO GOD'S LOVE DECLARATION OF ABUNDANCE

BRO. BO SANCHEZ:

We love You, Lord! Thank You, Father! Thank You, Lord.!





The Message of John's Gospel

If you believe that God is here. And if you believe that God calls you, give Him a big hand and love Him, love Him. God is good.

We need to give a big hand to our Worship Team.

You guys are amazing. Thank you so much

How many of you believe God made you? How many of you believe that God does not make garbage? And how many of you believe that you're beautiful?

Yes! I want you to turn to somebody beside you -- even if that person does not believe-- I want you to tell

that person, "You are beautiful. You are amazing. You are wonderful. "

So, I want you to shake someone beside you. Shake that person and tell that person you better get ready for deep ... This is the theme of the Gospel of John and we're going to discover it...

This is what John was trying to do with his Gospel. He wanted to tell everybody that Jesus is real and He's here.

Do you believe that Jesus is in your life? Do you believe that you can see Him at work? Do you believe that He speaks to your heart? Do you believe that He is there as an experience? We're going to read Scripture.

Two major points:

**JOHN IS DESIGNED AS
MEDITATION
LITERATURE**

1. John is designed as a meditation literature.

You don't read this once. You don't read John a few times and say, "Oh, I know it already."

That's like you going to Baler and swimming by the beach for 20 minutes and then posting on Facebook:

"I swam in the Pacific Ocean."

For crying out loud, you swam in a tiny drop of the Pacific Ocean. The Pacific Ocean is 30% of the Earth's surface, covering 52 countries.

You're going to realize at the end of this talk that John is as deep as the Pacific Ocean and we've just been swimming at the surface. We're going to go really deep.

**JOHN IS DESIGNED
TO LEAD US
TO WORSHIP**

2. John is designed to lead us to worship

This is his whole message and we're going to be reading John 20: 30-31.

*Thy Word is the Lamp unto my feet
and a Light unto my path*



Why John Wrote His Gospel

JOHN 20:30-31 NABRE

"NOW JESUS DID MANY OTHER SIGNS IN THE PRESENCE OF [HIS] DISCIPLES THAT ARE NOT WRITTEN IN THIS BOOK. BUT THESE ARE WRITTEN THAT YOU MAY [COME TO] BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF GOD, AND THAT THROUGH THIS BELIEF YOU MAY HAVE LIFE IN HIS NAME."



This is the purpose. He wrote it at the very end of the book. The purpose of John: to make you believe. Because when you believe, you're going to have life. To make you trust in Jesus. Because when you really trust in Jesus, you're going to have this incredible life with God.

Do you want to receive God's life today? Come and see Jesus and worship Him.

John wrote his Gospel so that after reading it, you won't say, "Ah, I know about Jesus."

After reading John, you put it down and then you say, "I worship you Lord." That's the effect that John wanted when you read his Gospel.

John 1 is called the prologue. I'll read the 18 verses:

JOHN 1:1-18 NABRE

¹IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD. ²HE WAS IN THE BEGINNING WITH GOD. ³ALL THINGS CAME TO BE THROUGH HIM, AND WITHOUT HIM NOTHING CAME TO BE. WHAT CAME TO BE

⁴THROUGH HIM WAS LIFE, AND THIS LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF THE HUMAN RACE; ⁵THE LIGHT SHINES IN THE DARKNESS, AND THE DARKNESS HAS NOT OVERCOME IT.

⁶A MAN NAMED JOHN WAS SENT FROM GOD. ⁷HE CAME FOR TESTIMONY, TO TESTIFY TO THE LIGHT, SO THAT ALL MIGHT BELIEVE THROUGH HIM. ⁸HE WAS NOT THE LIGHT, BUT CAME TO TESTIFY TO THE LIGHT. ⁹THE TRUE LIGHT, WHICH ENLIGHTENS EVERYONE, WAS COMING INTO THE WORLD.

¹⁰HE WAS IN THE WORLD, AND THE WORLD CAME TO BE THROUGH HIM, BUT THE WORLD DID NOT KNOW HIM.

¹¹HE CAME TO WHAT WAS HIS OWN, BUT HIS OWN PEOPLE DID NOT ACCEPT HIM. ¹²BUT TO THOSE WHO DID ACCEPT HIM HE GAVE POWER TO BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD, TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN HIS NAME,

¹³AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH AND MADE HIS DWELLING AMONG US, AND WE SAW HIS GLORY, THE GLORY AS OF THE FATHER'S ONLY SON, FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH.

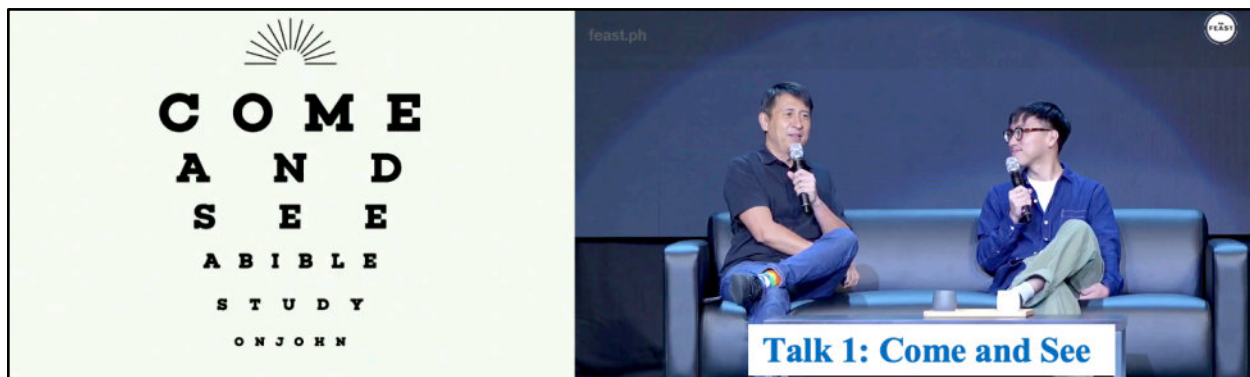
¹⁴JOHN TESTIFIED TO HIM AND CRIED OUT, SAYING, "THIS WAS HE OF WHOM I SAID, 'THE ONE WHO IS COMING AFTER ME RANKS AHEAD OF ME BECAUSE HE EXISTED BEFORE ME.'"

¹⁵FROM HIS FULLNESS WE HAVE ALL RECEIVED, GRACE IN PLACE OF GRACE, ¹⁶BECAUSE WHILE THE LAW WAS GIVEN THROUGH MOSES, GRACE AND TRUTH CAME THROUGH JESUS CHRIST. ¹⁷NO ONE HAS EVER SEEN GOD. THE ONLY SON, GOD, WHO IS AT THE FATHER'S SIDE, HAS REVEALED HIM."



*Ty Word is a Lamp
unto my feet
And a Light unto my path.*

Talk



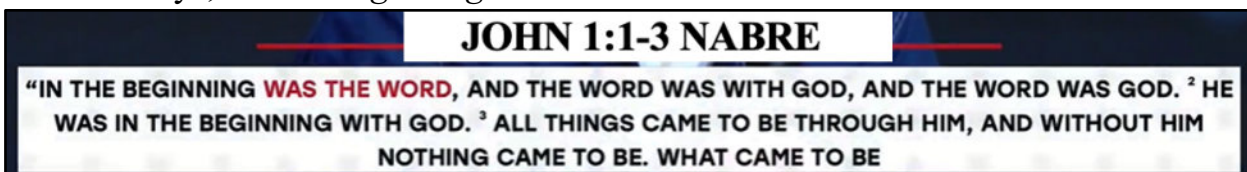
BRO. BO SANCHEZ:

I'd like to call on the guy who will help me preach this. I've known this guy for 24 years. Before he was born, I already knew him.

Please welcome, my son, Bene.

This is the first time we're doing this. This is history. We'll not talk about coffee or dinosaurs. We will talk about John 1. Let's do it. Let's dive in.

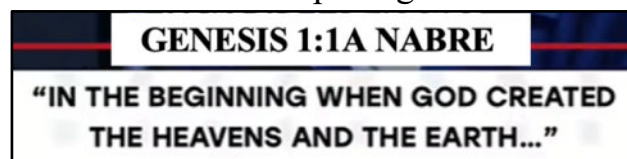
BRO. BENE SANCHEZ: John 1 opens with such a monumental first verse
John 1 says, "*In the beginning...*"



Do you know of any other book in the Bible that has the same opening?

You're right: *Genesis*.

So, what does it mean that John opens with the very same line that the entire Bible opens with?



BRO. BO: This is very bold for him to do that. He was telling everybody that if *Genesis* was about *Creation*, his Gospel was about *New Creation*.

BRO. BENE: That's right. So, whatever John is going to be about, it's going to be as important as the *Book of Genesis*. Whatever the story is going to be about, it's going to be about New Creation.

The FEAST FAMILY September 22, 2024 19

Same Words, Different Perspectives

BRO. BENE: *"In the beginning was the Word..."*

What's the Word? Who's the Word? What's interesting about the Gospel of John is that it opens with the same words as Genesis 1: *"In the beginning, there was God. He created the heavens and the earth."*

But in John's version, it's *"In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God."*

I'm just going to give you a spoiler. John is talking about Jesus. But the way that John likes to tell a story, he wants to draw you in. He's almost written this part of his Gospel like a song where there are verses and chorus.

He's an artist, right? He's drawing us in and he's saving the big reveal that this *Word* there in the beginning is Jesus--at the very end, right?

At first, John sets up the scene: *"In the beginning, there was a Word, who was God, and is God."*

If you're already kind of confused, this is just the first verse. The way to look at it is to imagine you're watching a movie.

Have you seen behind-the-scenes clips of *Avengers*? You find out that the characters are not actually on some other planet. They're in a big sound stage with a green or blue screen. There are lots of people with cameras and various assistants.

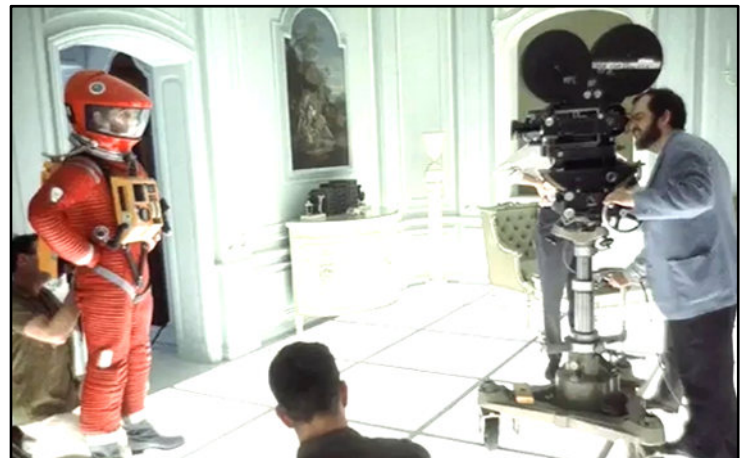
What we see in the movie is the edited version.

But when you search on Google or YouTube, you will see behind-the-scenes clips with the crew and how everything is being set up.

This is what I love about the Gospel of John. It's almost as if retelling Genesis from a behind-the-scenes point of view.

BRO. BO: So, Genesis 1 and John are about the same story.

BRO. BENE: The same story but from a different perspective, from a different camera angle. Isn't that cool?



God's Word

BRO. BO: Genesis 1 only showed God creating the universe. John 1 was about the same thing but the camera now captures God with someone else, a co-worker.

BRO. BENE: Yes. It is the *Word*. John sees a space between God speaking.

When God creates the world, He says, "Let there be light. Let the dry land separate from the waters."

In between what God says and the act of creation, there is the *Word*. That *Word*, that space in between, that's Jesus.



BRO. BO: So, John sees Yahweh, a space, and the Word of Yahweh. He gets that from reflecting on the Old Testament.

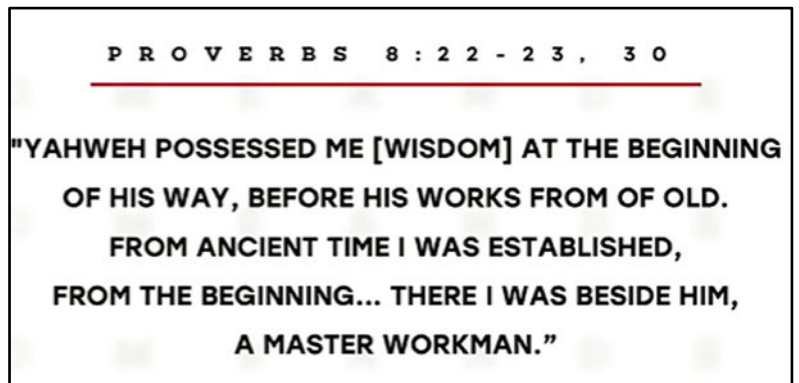
BRO. BENE: That's right. John doesn't come up with this. John is a Bible nerd. He's a grown-up reading the Scriptures. When you read the *Book of Proverbs* and the *Book of Psalms*, you see this picture of God's wisdom helping create the universe.

On the first page of Genesis, Jesus is already there. He is God's wisdom.

He is God's *Word*: "*All things that came to be came to be through Him. Without Him, nothing came to be. What came to be through Him was life. This life was the light. The light of human race. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.*"

What a poet, right?

BRO. BO: We're just in the first verse.



BRO. BENE: We're just in the first two verses and John is like waxing poetry. Maybe it's worth mentioning that not all people here, including myself, don't really read a lot of poetry.

Today, I just see memes on IG (Instagram) reels. But poetry and IG reels are almost the same thing.

If I say, "Wow, that's very cutesy, very demure."

You know what I'm talking about, right?

The way that biblical poetry works is the same thing.

When John says, "In the beginning.." to his audience, they all know that he's talking about Genesis.

Then he starts talking about the *Word* who is God, and with God, and created all he's talking about in Proverbs. Very cutesy, very demure. It's the same thing.

Memes are the modern version of poetry. I hope you're following. This is how we do the talks in Youth Home. We usually have lots of memes on the screen.

The first set of verses about life and light describes what John wants to introduce us to-- which is to see this *Word*.

This *Word* is the Light that is entering into the darkness of our situation or of our world--wherever you might be coming from.

Hey, guess what? The Light is here. He has been here from the beginning.

There is a guy coincidentally named John. It's not the same John who wrote this Gospel.

I guess John thought that this guy had a cool name because they had the same name.



JOHN 1:6-8 NABRE

6 A MAN NAMED JOHN WAS SENT FROM GOD. 7 HE CAME FOR TESTIMONY, TO TESTIFY TO THE LIGHT, SO THAT ALL MIGHT BELIEVE THROUGH HIM.

8 HE WAS NOT THE LIGHT, BUT CAME TO TESTIFY TO THE LIGHT.

BRO. BO: What Bene is trying to do is to give you a pattern. There is a pattern and a prologue. The first few verses were about seeing. This one is about hearing.

BRO. BENE: Exactly. I mentioned this a while ago. John 1 is written like a song. If you're a good songwriter, you'll make the verses about just one thing. A while ago, we read the first verses-- and they were all about light-- about vision.

We're now on the second verse-- about hearing. Because John is going to talk about the Light-- coincidentally the same name as the guy who wrote this book.



Come and See

BRO. BO: I think John The Author talked about John The Baptist. But he was referring to himself also because they had the same mission.

BRO. BENE: Probably.

By the way, Friends, I want to mention this because this might be confusing you. When you're reading

the Gospel of John and he's talking about the beginning, and the Word, then the Light, then about a guy named John. We're noticing the repeated words and the repeated themes because often, once we can identify the repeated themes, we can get what he's talking about.

So, he's already sort of telling you the story of what's going to happen.

In this Gospel, you're going to read about this Light who's going to

come into the world and people are going to experience this Light.

Does everybody welcome the Light? No.

You have the Pharisees and the Sadducees-- the teachers of the law. They don't really agree with what Jesus was talking about.

Interestingly, the people that you would expect would come around to this guy who's claiming to be with him from the beginning-- but they don't.

Is that everyone? No. There's going to be some people who are going to see, who are going to hear, and who are going to experience Jesus. They do so by the power of God-- not because they were born a certain way. Not because they were very smart. Not because they were rich. Not because they were religious.

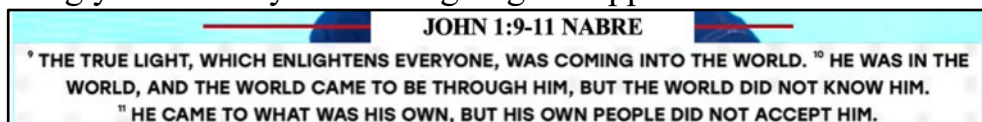
But through the power of God, they were going to become family-- which is super cool because that's what we talked about last Feast series.

We were talking about Family and how God is creating a bigger Family.

John is in on this and he's telling you that if you believe in this Light, He has the power to take you from your broken past, from your mistakes, from wherever and whatever background you might come from. He's bringing you into God's Family. Super cool.

Come and experience Jesus. He's going to restore your family. He's going to welcome you if you're somebody who doesn't have a family. He's going to bring you in into His Family.

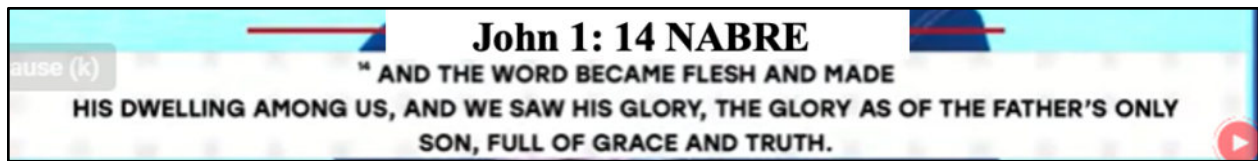
BRO. BO: May we pause a bit and tell somebody beside you, "Come and see Jesus. Come and hear Jesus. Come and experience Jesus."





The New Tabernacle

BRO. BENE: I hope you feel that there's a sort of a rising tension to John's words. He's building up a story. It's like a symphony where the drums are getting a bit louder. The music is increasing. He's sort of stepping up the dial:



The verse says, "*And the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*"

The very word from Verse 1. This Light, this Life of all Humanity. He became human. He became visible. He had a body and He set in a tabernacle.

In the original Greek, the word for *dwelling* is literally the word, *tabernacle*.

Remember when we were going through *Exodus*, we talked about how God came to live with the Israelites in a *tent*. That's the word. Jesus "*tented*."

BRO. BO: *Dwelling* means *tent*. It's the *tabernacle* of God.

So, Jesus is the *New Tabernacle*.

BRO. BENE: Jesus became the living, breathing, walking human tabernacle where people could experience God's Presence and God's Light. Where they could see God's Presence, face to face.

That's why John says, "*And we saw the glory, the glory as of the Father's only son, full of grace and truth.*"

Description of God

BRO. BO: In terms of seeing the glory of Jesus, I think John was referring to the Resurrection and the Transfiguration-- which the Israelites saw. He was kind of introducing these to the people.

BRO. BENE: Absolutely. He's using an interesting word in the original language. He's using the word *kessed*-- which is the descriptor of God.

When the Bible talks about who God is, this is the word that they use to describe God.

BRO. BO: In Hebrew, it's *kessed*. It's very difficult to translate into English. There's no specific word for it.

BRO. BENE: Every time you encounter the word *kessed* in the English Bible, they always use a different word to translate it. Sometimes it's *steadfast love, loyal love, unfailing love*. But it's referring to how God doesn't give up on His people. It comes from Exodus 34.

The word love and faithfulness is the Hebrew word *kessed*.



EXODUS 34: 6 NIV
"THE LORD, THE LORD, THE COMPASSIONATE
AND GRACIOUS GOD, SLOW TO ANGER,
ABOUNDING IN LOVE AND FAITHFULNESS..."

BRO. BO: You were saying that this verse is the most quoted verse.

BRO. BENE: It's the most quoted verse in the Old Testament. It is the most repeated than any other verse in the entire Bible.

BRO. BO: So, biblical writers would always quote *Exodus*.

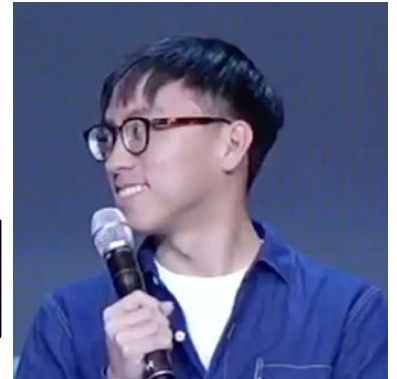
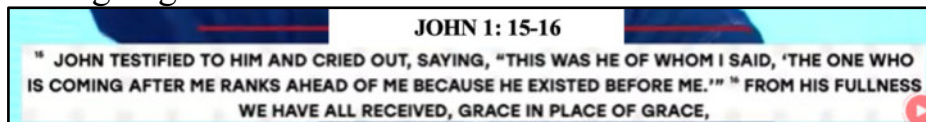
BRO. BENE: This is like our John 3:16 today which almost everybody knows. Among Jews, almost everybody knows Exodus 34:6.

So, John being a Bible nerd, has to include that, and he puts it in a very strategic part. He's talking about Jesus becoming flesh, becoming embodied. Guess what? He's God's *kessed*. He is the fulfillment. He's the epitome of God's loyal love for His people. He is the very character of God.

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Back to John

Let's keep going.
We're going back to John:



If you're reading this straight, you'll note it seems that he keeps on shifting topics. Why is he talking about John again?
There is clearly a pattern here.

BRO. BO: This will be mind-blowing

BRO. BENE: In a few moments, we're going to show you how it all fits together. But take note that John is not just randomly changing topics. He's putting this together for a certain purpose.

I was telling you a while ago there is a pattern to what John is doing. If you notice, John begins with an introduction, *Verse 1: In the beginning was the Word.*

Stanza 1: The light shines in the darkness

Stanza 2: He starts talking about John.

Stanza 3: He starts talking about how Jesus came into the world so that we can experience him.

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John Ch. 1 (Prologue)		
<p>In the beginning was the Word . . . v. 1</p>		
Stanza 1	<p>The light shines in the darkness v. 3-5</p>	Stanza 4
Stanza 2	<p>his name was John, he came for testifying v. 6-8</p>	Stanza 5
Stanza 3	<p>unto his own he came, and his own did not receive him v. 9-13</p>	Stanza 6
<p>no one has seen God, ever. The one and only God, who is in the bosom of the Father, that one has revealed . . . v. 18</p>		

Stanza 1 is about seeing. Stanza 2 is about hearing what John has to say. Stanza 3 is Jesus coming into the world for Him to experience the human condition and for us to experience the true *kessed* that can only come from Jesus.

If we look to the next set of verses, "*And the word came to be flesh.*"

What is this about? Jesus becoming something that we can see. It's about seeing.

In Stanza 5, we return to John where he is testifying. It's one level higher. He's crying out. Have you ever seen this guy like in the jeepney who starts like preaching to you and you're like trying not to look at him?

But here's John testifying and crying about this Light. It's about hearing again. The last couple of verses --16 and 17: "*From his fullness, we all have received. We've experienced.*"

Do you see the pattern?



Seeing (peach) Hearing (green) Experiencing (blue)

It's just an easier way to remember it. Stanza 1 matches with Stanza 4.

Stanza 2 matches with Stanza 5.



So, if you're confused about why he goes back and forth from John, and then he talks about other stuff, and then back to John, it's because the pattern is like this.

Isn't that cool?

BRO. BO: This pattern is exactly the pattern of Genesis 1.

How Gospel Authors Think

BRO. BENE: So, let's pretend that you haven't seen it yet.

So, Genesis opens with an introduction: *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the Earth.*

Then, you have six days of creation, just like the six stanzas in the Gospel of John.

You have God separating light from darkness. You have God separating the waters above and below. You have God separating the dry land from the sea. Those are days 1,2, and 3.

On days 4,5,6, God creates the stars and the moon which also give light. God fills the waters above and the waters below with fish and birds.

On day 6, He creates the animals and the humans to fill the dry land.

So, Day 1 matches with Day 4. Day 2 matches with Day 5. Day 3 matches with Day 6. It's the same pattern.

In Genesis and in John, the stanzas and the days match with one another.

In Genesis, Days 1 to 3 are about creating the spaces.

On days 4 to 6, God is filling the spaces with His creation.

In John, the stanzas are about seeing the light, seeing the word becoming flesh, hearing about this light, being testified by John, and experiencing it as he becomes the fullness of grace and truth revealed.

The second set expands on the first set. It's almost like he's saying that, "As you read my Gospel, I want you to see and hear and experience it on a whole different level."

As you keep reading, it's going to go deeper and deeper. We're going to see, hear, and experience it in a way that the meaning gets multiplied and expanded on. That's the picture.

So, John is not just copying the first line of Genesis. He begins with, *In the beginning.* He copies the entire structure.

What a Bible nerd! John loves Genesis so much that he copies the first page and puts it as the beginning of his Gospel.

That's the reason we've been studying Genesis again and again and again in every Feast series. Because this is how the Gospel authors think.



A Crucial Difference

BRO. BENE: But here's interesting: John makes a crucial difference.

In Genesis, we have a conclusion. On the seventh day, God finishes His work. He rests He dwells with His creation. That's Genesis 1.

In John, the concluding part of his prologue doesn't feel like a conclusion at all. It's kind of weird.

He says, "No one has ever seen God who is at the bosom. A *bosom* is a *chest*. Literally, the heartbeat of God.

The only person who has heard from God is the guy whose ear is planted listening to the heartbeat of God. That one has revealed ... (dot dot dot). That's not a great conclusion-- but for some reason, every Korean drama episode ends to be continued. That's how they make you keep watching the next episode.

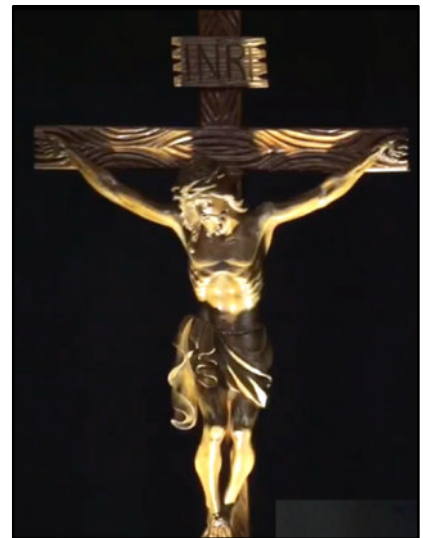
John does this with the prologue. In the ancient text, he ends with what is the Greek equivalent of ending with a dot dot dot

BRO. BO: We don't see this in English. But in Greek, Verse 18, the end of the prologue, is really dot dot dot. It's a cliffhanger. It leaves us wondering when are we going to meet this *Word* and this *Light*?

It continues the 19th chapter of the Gospel of John.

BRO. BENE: We're going to meet Him. When we turn the page and we're in to Jesus, we're going to hear Him doing His miracles and His signs, and He talks to the Samaritan woman and Nicodemus. But we don't read the conclusion of the new creation story. We don't reach the, *It is finished.* until Chapter 19.

BRO. BO: When He is hanging on the Cross and the last words of the Son of God is, "It is finished."



Jesus Says, “I am Here”

BRO. BENE: John is so cool. The Bible is so cool. If John wanted to write a pamphlet with 10 reasons how to believe in God or why you should believe in Jesus, he could have done it. He could have-- but he didn't.

Instead, he wrote, *In the beginning*.

He wants to draw us in to meditate and ponder on the depth and the richness of what it means for the very reason for this universe's existence becoming human.

Not just becoming human but becoming a friend. Becoming Someone who meets us in our darkness and meets us at the worst possible time in the middle of the night, in the heat of the day, when we're hiding, when we don't want anybody else to see us. He comes and He offers us a new kind of life that is so much better than we could ever possibly imagine. That's who the *Word* is and that is the Jesus that John wants us to see, hear, and experience in this Gospel.

BRO. BO: Amen. Let's give a big hand to Bene. I'm excited about unpacking John with you.

How many of you heard something that you didn't know? What you just heard is nothing. We're just swimming on the surface. The Pacific Ocean is 4,000 meters deep. I think we're just floating on the surface and there's so much more to uncover. But there's one thing that John did that I want us to receive in our hearts right now. Genesis 1, darkness and then God creating the universe. John 1, same scene, he says, "There is something you didn't see. I'll show you. Takes another behind-the-scenes camera angle. Jesus has been there from the very get-go, from day zero.

My dear Friends, we all have experienced darkness and chaos in our lives. If you look back, you'll remember that at that time, it seemed that Jesus wasn't there.

But I want you to receive this Word in your heart right now: Light was there. You just didn't see it. There was light in the midst of your darkness. In the darkest parts of your story, when you thought God was not there, and it was pitch-black darkness, Jesus was actually there. You just didn't see Him, hear Him, and experience him.

Today, I want you to open your heart and trust Him that if right now, you are going through that darkness, Jesus is there. He's holding your hand and He's saying, "*I'm here in your life. See me. Hear my voice in your heart. Experience my love for you today.*"





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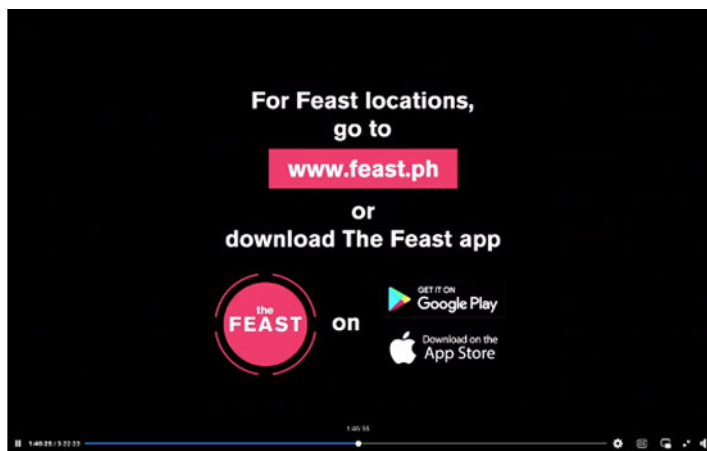
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— Matthew 28:19

