

# United Prayer Ministry

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Evelyn teaches the power of prayer  
at Grace Church Roseville in Roseville, Minnesota.  
Photo by: Barry Howell

## IN THE BEGINNING? By Evelyn Christenson

The man who was the closest human friend to Jesus here on earth started his book in the Bible about Jesus with six stark words.

I had been asking God to direct me to which Biblical account He wanted to use to prepare my heart during my annual birth-of-Jesus devotional reading. As God kept urging “The Gospel of John,” I secretly kept hoping for something more of a deep manger-angels-Mary-Joseph-shepherds-wise men blessing. But finally I obeyed, arose while it was still dark, turned on the Christmas tree lights, settled in with my Bible, and turned to John, chapter one.

Immediately I was stopped – surprisingly, powerfully gripped with just the first six words:

**“In the beginning was the Word”**

My mind started to whirl. Questions started to tumble through my brain. When? Where? Who? What? Why? The same questions ancient sages and gurus have pondered through the centuries – and modern philosophers still are wrestling to solve. Still struggling to find their own answers to life’s basic questions of where did it all start? How? With what? Or whom?

WHEN was the “*in the beginning*” that John was talking about? Immediately my mind brushed aside the human explanations – a slimy pool as the perfect breeding place for the first things, whatever they were. I dismissed the two dust particles finding each other in the vastness of outer space. Inwardly scoffed at the mathematical possibility of stuff randomly coming together through eons of light years and billions of miles, creating such a complex creation as us. All of these, and multiple other theories, take for granted that there was something there before that particular event occurred. So none of these could possibly be *the beginning*.

“*The beginning*” means before everything that was produced or created. And John was authoritatively declaring that **in the absolute, very beginning there was something – the Word.**

**WHO, OR WHAT, IS THE WORD?** Without bothering to answer the question about when the beginning might have been, John just declared there was a beginning, and in it was something called “*The Word*.”

John continued his opening sentence with even more shocking words:

**“And the Word was with God,”**

So there was something, or someone, “in the beginning” with Jesus the Word! Before anything was – there was a Godhead! Could this mean it was just another one of the pagan religions of the world that believe in plural gods?

But even more incredible was the rest of John’s sentence one. It answered that question of many gods immediately:

**“And the Word was God.”**

Not polytheism with multiple gods, but a triune Godhead – one God!

**CAME INTO BEING?** In verse 3 John’s pronoun “He” referring to “The Word” is literally translated “This One.” John then goes on to shock us further – complicating the mystery about “this One”:

**“All things came into being by Him, And apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”**

Wow! So there was something before anything was created. The Word was in the beginning when there was nothing made yet. Before the universe, before earth, before heaven, before hell. Before everything!

**SO WHERE WAS “THE BEGINNING”?** Wherever the Godhead was before there was anything. Where there was nowhere for the triune Godhead to put their feet – except they didn’t have any feet! Just the triune Godhead. Spirits only.

This wasn’t just the Christmas story. It was the pre-Christmas story of the only pre-existent being to be born on Planet Earth. Answering the question of who this babe of Bethlehem’s manger really was. Where He really did come from.

No human mind ever has been able to comprehend what John knew and said so simply and succinctly in three verses in the Bible.

**WHY?** The most puzzling part of this mystery of the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us is: **Why did Jesus, the very Son of God, during His from-the-beginning lifeline break into Planet Earth’s timeline for a little blip in earth’s history?** John also answered that question in his book’s first chapter – with the incredible words from Jesus’ forerunner, John the Baptist:

**“The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, ‘Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.’”** John 1:29, 34.

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**WHO WROTE SUCH PREPOSTEROUS IDEAS?** What human had the audacity to say such unheard-of claims about a friend? How did he qualify to speak so authoritatively? How did he know? Check out these five reasons:

**1. How did John know?** John, the author of the Bible's Gospel of John, was one of Jesus' twelve selected disciples as they watched Jesus raise the dead, make the blind to see, multiply two loaves and fishes to feed 5,000 and innumerable other miracles. They listened as Jesus privately explained His reasons for these things to them.

The twelve always were there in the crowd as Jesus taught, and then told them in private the things He hid from the general population and even from His own religion's leaders. They heard Jesus Himself declare His pre-existence with *"Before Abraham was, I am"* (John 8:58). They listened in awe as Jesus Himself said to some Jews: *"If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come of my own initiative, but He sent Me"* (John 8:42).

When the people insisted Jesus tell them plainly if He was the Christ, the twelve heard Jesus' startling pronouncement: *"I and the Father are one"* (John 10:30). This literally meant "We are One essence." Those seven words solved polytheism's accusation of Jesus being one of many gods.

After Jesus died on the cross, the twelve talked and ate with Him for 40 days in His risen-from-the-dead body. Then they watched Jesus in that body ascend back to His Father in heaven in the clouds while hearing an angel announce that Jesus would return to earth just as they were seeing Him go.

**2. How did John know?** John was not only one of Jesus' select 12 disciples, he was one of the three in Jesus' inner circle – Peter, James and John. One of three to be closest to Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane when He took upon Himself God's will to pay for the sins of the whole world.

Only the three were eyewitnesses to an incredible supernatural event. Jesus took them to the Mount of Transfiguration where Moses and Elijah joined them from heaven, and they saw the face and garments of Jesus glow with supernatural glory. And then they actually heard the voice of God say to them, *"This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Hear ye Him."* (See Matthew 17:1-9.)

It was John who could honestly say in his Gospel's first chapter: *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father"* (John 1:14).

It was John who later could honestly start his first letter in the Bible of I John to Jesus' followers with these words:

*"What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life – and the life was manifested, and we have seen and bear witness and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us – what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also..."* I John 1:1-3a.

So it was John who knew from Jesus Himself about the words He wrote: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

**3. How did John know?** He exclusively was *the one* of the inner three who leaned on Jesus' breast in the upper room at the Last Supper, celebrated as the Eucharist and Communion in our

churches. John was *the one* who humbly called himself in his book *"the disciple Jesus loved"* rather than to name himself.

**4. How did John know?** John personally stood by watching the agony of his friend and Lord dying on the cross depicted so powerfully in Mel Gibson's film, "The Passion of the Christ." He recoiled at the hammer's sound driving the spikes into Jesus' hands and feet. Horrified, he felt the ground shake at the thud of the cross being dropped into its gaping hole. Faithfully he stayed, watching while Jesus died in indescribable agony.

John was *the only human* to whom Jesus, from the cross, entrusted His grieving mother Mary – the Virgin who had given Jesus human birth. The Virgin who was the only human ever genetically and physically connected to this pre-existent Son of God the Father.

**Today there would be no court of law that could dispute such an impeccable first-person witness account.**

But, most of all, Christians by faith believe our Bible is God's word when it says that all of our *"scripture was given by inspiration of God"* (II Timothy 3:16). Given by Him to those especially picked and anointed to record it. *"By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible."* Hebrews 11:3.

**5. How did John know?** At the end of his life while in exile on the Isle of Patmos, John was *the one* to whom Jesus personally appeared (again with shining face and garments) giving him the final book of the Bible for us – The Revelation. **The book of the Bible that astoundingly reveals the future of the whole universe, of Planet Earth and of all mankind!**

**WHY?** The reason God inspired John to open his Gospel of John naming Jesus "The Word" was because, according to Revelation 19:13, Jesus is going to return to earth with that same name:

*"His name is called the Word of God."*

Because we should keep the book of Revelation Person oriented, not event oriented – and because Revelation 19:16 describes Jesus, the Word, reigning forever:

*"On His robe and on His thigh He has a name written, KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS."*

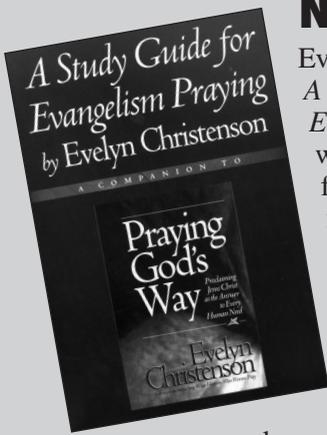
This time Jesus will return, not to suffer and die to save sinners, but to wage war and to judge (19:11). Judge those who would not believe in Him as their Savior and Lord. John also recorded in Revelation 20:15 what he heard Jesus say:

*"If anyone's name was not written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire."* Eternally.

But most importantly, because John had heard Jesus, the Word, say to Nicodemus and all humans on earth what he recorded in John 3:16-17:

*"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life...For God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him."*

Yes, John was anxious to identify "The Word" as "Jesus" in the opening of his first book. Why? Because this Jesus, who was before everything, will reign forever and ever. Will reign with those whose sins have been forgiven and believe in Him as their Lord and Savior – while they are here on earth. ✨



## NEW AND UPDATED!

Evelyn Christenson's book, *A Study Guide for Evangelism Praying*, written in simple outline form, presents the steps for starting the powerful Triplet prayer program being used around the world. It will give you the biblical understanding and motivation to help you become a vibrant witness in sharing the gospel of Jesus.

The enlarged recently revised narrative of the *Study Guide's* outlined points is the book *Praying God's Way* (formerly titled *A Time to Pray God's Way*).

To order: see back page.

## AROUND THE WORLD SPANISH RADIO BROADCASTS

Would you, a friend or co-worker enjoy listening to Evelyn's material in the Spanish language on the radio? Trans World Radio is broadcasting her *A Study Guide for Evangelism Praying* from both Bonaire and Uruguay.

If you are able to access Spanish broadcasts from Bonaire, turn the radio dial to 800 AM on Saturdays at 5:00 a.m. and 12:00 noon.

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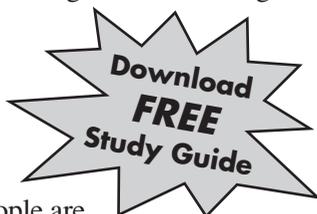
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## WEBSITE UPDATE

[www.unitedprayerministry.org](http://www.unitedprayerministry.org)

Evelyn's book *A Study Guide for Evangelism Praying* is available now for FREE downloading in the following languages:

Arabic	Korean
English	Spanish
French	Vietnamese
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We already are hearing that people are downloading the Study Guide and teaching it in Bible studies, prayer groups and churches. MORE languages on this website are in process daily – keep watching!

**Evelyn's Study Guide for Evangelism Praying has been printed in book form in these languages. For more information, please write to Study Guide, P.O. Box 677, Elk River, MN 55330-9998.**

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### Dear Praying Friends,

Thanks for praying! Here are a few current requests.

✳️ AFRICA: Praise God, we are sending our first teacher of the *Study Guide* through International Christian Missions this month. Pray much! Continue to pray for the six national leaders already trying out the *Study Guide*, and for our additional teachers going this fall. *Pray about if God wants you to assist financially with materials and expenses. Please designate for United Prayer Ministry Africa Fund.*

✳️ SPANISH: Please pray for those finding the Spanish *Study Guide* on our website and Trans World Radio broadcasts that they will accept Jesus and/or share Him.

✳️ WEBSITE: Pray for those downloading the *Study Guide* from our web as they teach it to others still needing Jesus.

*With deep gratitude,*  
*Evelyn*

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