

John 1:1-18

The Word Became Flesh

The most important question that we will ever have to answer is, “What are you going to do with Jesus Christ?” Our eternal destiny depends upon our answer. If Jesus Christ was only a man, then you can safely forget Him. If He is God, that’s a totally different story. John is going to show us and explain to us exactly who Jesus is—in John 1:1-2. He is God.

What do we know about the book of John?

- It is one of the four Gospels.
- John stands alone among the Gospels. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are the Synoptic Gospels (means “seeing together”). They are very much alike in language, material they cover, and order of events. Much of what is contained in one is contained in the others. The synoptics emphasize what Jesus did and where He went. John is different. John emphasizes who Jesus is—the deity of Christ. He is God, the second person of the Trinity.
- There are significant events in the ministry of Jesus that Matthew, Mark, and Luke include that John leaves out, including Jesus’ birth, baptism, temptation in the wilderness, the Last Supper, the agony in Gethsemane, and the Ascension.
- There are no parables in the Gospel of John.
- Only seven miracles are included in John—of the 40 total miracles recorded.

What do we know about John (the author)?

- One of the 12 apostles.
- One of the Sons of Thunder (other son was his brother James).
- He referred to himself as “the disciple Jesus loved.”
- He reclined next to Jesus at the Last Supper.

John also wrote which other books of the Bible? 1 John, 2 John, 3 John, and Revelation

Who else wrote five or more books of the Bible? Moses and Paul

How many apostles wrote Gospels? Two—Matthew and John

What was John’s purpose? What was he trying to accomplish in writing this Gospel?

- John 20:30-31 is the “signature” verse in the book of John. “Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.”
- The key word in the book of John is the verb “believe” (Greek: *pisteuo*), which appears 98 times.
- The noun form of the word (Greek: *pistis* “faith”) does not occur at all. This phenomenon shows that John wanted to stress the importance of active, vital trust in Jesus. We are exhorted to believe. It is an action verb.

What is “the Word” referred to three times in John 1:1? Jesus

How do you know? Verse 14 explains. When John uses the Greek word *logos* (which is translated Word) it had rich associations for the Jews. To a Jew, *logos* was the word by which God spoke the world into existence, by which He guided the prophets, by which He delivered His people. John’s use of that word would catch their attention. In the mind of the ancient Jews, the phrase “the word of God” was used to refer to God Himself. To them it was the same as saying, “God became flesh and made His dwelling among us.”

Where else do we read “in the beginning”? Genesis 1

Is John 1:1 referring to the same “beginning”? Yes

What do verses 1 & 2 tell us about the nature of Jesus? He was in the beginning *with* God makes the point that the Father is distinct from the Son, and the Son distinct from the Father. They are equally God, yet they are separate persons. They have differing roles yet they are the same. Jesus existed from the beginning, He was *with* God in the beginning, and He *was* God.

What does verse 14 tell us about the nature of Jesus?

- He *became* a man—He did not just *appear* as a man. He was one of us.
- Humanity was added to His deity. He is 100% God and 100% man. This is a basic but very important truth of Christianity.
- Verses 1-2 portray Jesus’ deity—“the Word was God.”
- Verse 14 portrays Jesus’ humanity—He became flesh. He was a man.

What work does verse 3 attribute to Jesus? His role in creation. He is creator of all things (verses 3 & 10). The God who created the universe is the One who was found lying in a Bethlehem manger. In Genesis 1:1 where it says “God created” the Hebrew word for God is Elohim which is the plural form of the noun for God which allows for the existence of the triune God. Both father and Son *are* God, yet there are not two Gods.

How is Christ the true light of every man (verses 4 & 9)?

- Light shines on all people regardless of race, nationality, etc.
- When a room is dark, you don’t see the dust on the furniture. When the light comes on you see it as it really is.
- Christ reveals man as he actually is—with sin, moral deficiencies, etc. He also reveals the righteousness of God.

Application: How/in what ways is Jesus your light? What does that mean? He provides guidance and direction. He dispels the darkness so we can see. Shows us how to live, the true purpose of life, and the way to heaven.

Verse 11 says Jesus came to His own. What group of people was He referring to? The Jews

The Jews had been waiting for hundreds of years for the Messiah to come. Why did they not recognize Jesus? Ignorance and blindness caused by sin. Their hearts were hard/not right with God. They were not open to the unexpected.

Application: Why don’t people recognize Jesus today? For the same reason—ignorance and blindness caused by sin. Hardness of heart. We are not open to the unexpected. People don’t recognize/care who Jesus is. They are not interested. Jesus polarizes people.

Note: In spite of not being recognized/received, Jesus doesn’t give up. Rejection of “the true Light” does not thwart God’s purposes.

What do we see about rejection in verse 12? Not everyone rejected Jesus. Many received Him and became children of God.

How does one receive Jesus? By *believing* in Him/on His name. (John 20:30-31) By placing your faith in His finished work on the cross. Accept by faith who He is and what He’s done. Believe in Him as your personal savior.

Note: You don’t get to be a child of God by being physically born as a Jew (or into a Christian family).

What are the two types of births referred to in verse 13?

- Natural birth from sexual union of parents.
- Born of God.

What does John mean by “born of God”? Spiritual/supernatural birth. Our spiritual birth does not originate from, or through, human intent or endeavor. It is a work of God. Becoming a child of God involves being born of God.

How is this unique to Christianity? In some false religions, men are promised that they will become gods, but never that God would take on humanity. Jesus became one of us as John describes here. All others religions are a picture of man reaching up to God, trying to earn God’s favor, trying to please God by doing good. Christianity is a picture of God reaching down to man, offering grace.

A man named John is mentioned in verses 6 and 15. Who is he? John the Baptist

What is his purpose? To be a witness (verses 7 & 8). In verses 15-18 John testifies to who Jesus is. It’s as if John’s saying, “No one has ever seen God but if you want to see God, look at this man.” John points the people to Jesus. He prepares the way for Jesus. (The next lesson will cover much more on John and his ministry.)

Note: Foremost among the teachings of Gospel of John’s prologue is the doctrine of the incarnation of our Lord. The incarnation means that God added unfallen humanity to undiminished deity. It does not in any way mean that our Lord’s deity was diminished or set aside. It does mean that certain manifestations of His glory were veiled, and that the use of some of His powers was voluntarily restrained. It does not mean that our Lord was created in Bethlehem, but only that He came down to the earth at His incarnation. It does mean that the baby in the manger was God manifested in human flesh.

MEMORIZE: John 1:12