

## John 1:1-18

**What is the “Word” that John referred to three times (v. 1)?** In the Old Testament, the ancient Greek word for “Word” (*logos*), to which John referred, was a title for God. Here, in the Gospel of John, the “Word” refers to Jesus.

**How do we know that?** Verse 14 explains: “*The Word (God) became flesh and made His dwelling among us.*” The miracle of God becoming man, in the form of Jesus, is referred to as the Incarnation. He had always existed as the Son of God with the Father in heaven, but now He came into the world in a human body.<sup>1</sup>

**How is the Incarnation unique to Christianity?** In some false religions, men are promised that they will become gods, but never that God would take on human form and become one of them. All other 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 out/coming down to man, offering a relationship of grace and forgiveness.

**What do vv. 1 & 2 tell us about Jesus?** He (the Word) 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 within the triune Godhead. They have differing roles yet they are the same in essence. Jesus existed from the beginning. He did not come into existence. He always existed. He was *with* God in the beginning, and He *was* God at the same time. Both Father and Son are God, yet they are not two Gods.

**What work is attributed to Jesus (v. 3)?** His role in creation.....He was God’s agent as He created everything that has come into existence (cf. 1 Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews. 1:2). If a thing was made, He made it (Colossians 1:16). In doing so, He acted under the authority of God the Father, not independently from the Father. The God who created the universe is the One who was found lying in a Bethlehem manger.

**What does it mean that “in Him was life” (v. 4)?** Not that He merely possessed life but He is the source of life which includes both physical life and spiritual life. He is the Author of life. Therefore He could impart life to the things that He created. When we were born, we received physical life. When we were born again, we received spiritual life. Both come from Him. He is the Giver of life.

**How is Christ the true light of every man (vv. 4, 9)?**

- He provides guidance and direction. He provides light for the pathway of our lives.
- True light shines on all people regardless of race, nationality, culture, etc.
- Christ reveals man as he really is - with sin and moral deficiencies.
- He reveals the righteousness of God to us.
- He reveals the way to eternal life/heaven (John 14:6).

**What is the function of the Light (v. 5)?** To overcome the darkness - a figure for Satan's kingdom. (3:19-20; 8:12). The entrance of sin brought darkness to the minds of men. They neither knew God nor wanted to know God. Into this darkness Jesus came. As light “shines” in the darkness, so Jesus brought the revelation and salvation of God to humanity in its fallen and lost condition. Men did not realize who He really was or why He had come. But the darkness could not overcome the light. When light and darkness mix, light always wins, light always shines through the darkness. Darkness does not prevent the light from shining.

**Who was the man who was sent from God (vv. 6, 15)?** John the Baptist, not the apostle John who wrote this Gospel.

**What was John the Baptist’s purpose (vv. 7-8)?** To be a witness to the Light, i.e. Jesus (John 8:12). His mission was to announce the coming of the Savior and tell the people to get ready for Him. His ultimate purpose was bringing people to faith in Jesus, the same as John’s purpose in writing this Gospel (John 20:30-31).

**How did the world react to the true light (vv. 9-10)?** The True Light of the world, i.e. Jesus, came into the world and shines on all people, without regard to nationality, race, or color. But mankind did not recognize its Maker. By His coming into the world as the perfect Man, He has shown how imperfect other men are. When a room is in darkness, you do not see the dust on the furniture. But when the light goes on, the room is seen as it actually is. In that same sense, the shining of the true Light reveals man as he actually is.<sup>2</sup>

**Who did Jesus come to (v. 11)?** He came to “His own.” **Who were His own?** The Jewish nation. The chosen people. **How did His own react to Him?** They did not receive Him with open arms.

**The Jews had been waiting for hundreds of years for the Messiah to come. Why did they not recognize or receive Him (vv. 10-11)?** Because of ignorance and spiritual blindness caused by sin. Their hearts were hard....not right with God. Their expectations were invalid. They were expecting a political, conquering-hero type of Messiah who would overthrow their Roman oppressors and establish a political kingdom rather than One who would arrive on a donkey to establish a spiritual kingdom. **Why don't people accept Jesus today?**

**What happened to those who did receive Him and believed in His name (v. 12)?** They became children of God.

NOTE: It is not by good works, church membership, or by being better than our neighbor that we become children of God. Rather it is by receiving Him, by believing in His name. “In His name” means trusting in all that He is and has done. Believing in His name involves relying on Him for salvation rather than on self. This includes, in a practical sense, repenting, asking for forgiveness and placing your faith in His finished work on the cross....surrendering your will and trusting in His will. Faith may be thought of as trusting in, relying on and clinging to Jesus Christ.

**What does John the apostle mean by “born of God” (v. 13)?** A spiritual/supernatural birth. It does not originate from human effort. It is a mysterious work of the Holy Spirit. People are born of God the moment they place their faith in Christ for forgiveness and eternal life. It is a spiritual awakening brought about by God's grace and our faith (Ephesians 2:8-9).

**What are the three ways we are NOT born of God (v. 13)?**

- Not of natural descent – by having Christian parents
- Not of a human decision – by power in our own flesh
- Not of a husband's will – by the desire of another person

**What does v. 14 tell us about the nature of Jesus?**

- He *became* a man—He did not just *appear* as a man. In order to die as a substitute for us, He had to actually become one of us.
- Jesus is identified as the source of grace and truth.
- Human nature was added to His God nature at the Incarnation. He is 100% God and 100% man. A very important truth of Christianity.

**How/When did the disciples see the “glory of Jesus?”** By His miracles, His death and Resurrection. At the Mount of Transfiguration. They also saw His *moral* glory, i.e. the radiance of His perfect life and character. There was no flaw or blemish in Him. He was perfect in all His ways.<sup>3</sup>

**How did John the Baptist testify to who Jesus was (vv. 15, 18)?** John the Baptist explained that Jesus existed (in heaven) before he was born on earth. It's as if John was saying, “No one has ever seen God but if you want to see God, look at this man.” John always pointed the people to Jesus.

**What comparison does John the apostle make (v. 17)?** God gave His Law to His people through Moses, but Jesus Christ is the One through whom He has given abundant “grace and truth.” John's statement shows the superiority of grace over law. The law expresses God's moral standards, but grace provides help so we can do His will/obey His commands.

**What is the message (v. 18)?** God sent His unique and only Son from His own most intimate presence to reveal God to humankind. No one could actually see God, but Jesus has explained (revealed) Him now to everyone.

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<sup>1</sup> William MacDonald, Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1468.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 1467.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1468