

The WORD**Read John 1.1-18****INTRODUCTION**

1 / **As you know, there are four Gospel accounts.** Four presentations of Jesus Christ: who He is, how He came into our world, what He did while He was here, what He said during His earthly life and ministry – and most importantly, how we should know, understand, interpret, and respond to Him.

2 / **John’s Gospel is different that the other three ‘synoptic’ Gospels.** Synoptic means: to see the same way. The other three Synoptic Gospels focus more on the earthly acts of Jesus. They told of His genealogy, His birth, His miracles, His interactions with others, the parables He taught – and then conclude with His death by crucifixion and His resurrection. This is the story of His Gospel.

3 / **John is different in that:** he doesn’t begin with Jesus’ birth ... John begins instead with Jesus as the Word of God who had no beginning – who was already existing from eternity when everything else began. In truth, Jesus Christ as the Word of God is the One who created and began everything else besides Himself. John does not record Jesus’ baptism nor His temptations. He tells us nothing about the Last Supper, Gethsemane, or the ascension. There are no accounts of the healing of people possessed by demons and evil spirits. John records none of Jesus’ parables, but he does include numerous much longer sermons Jesus preached and taught ... many of them to interpret the meaning and significance of the miracles He performed as they declare and manifest who He is.

4 / **What John does record is a series of Jesus’ miracles or ‘signs’ that He performed, all of which will demonstrate His Glory, meaning His Deity or Godhood [see ch 2.11].** And just as His disciples saw who He truly is and ‘believed in Him,’ so John writes everything he writes here so that we, too, may know who Jesus Christ is, see His Glory and God-ness, and believe and trust in Him for our salvation from sin and eternal life.

5 / **John will tell us when he gets to the end of his Gospel account why he wrote everything he wrote: “Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; ³¹ but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His Name.” [ch 20.30-31].**

6 / **This author, John, is the apostle John, the brother of James. He is one of the original twelve disciples of Jesus, and is often mentioned along with Peter and his brother James as one of the three who formed the closest and most trusted inner circle of Jesus’ disciples.** Also, although John never identifies himself by name as the author of this Gospel, he is most certainly referring to himself as the one who ‘has borne witness’ to all these things [see ch 19.35 & 21.24]. He himself is also the one he refers to as “**One of His disciples, whom Jesus loved...**” in ch 13.23. John’s authorship is also testified to by numerous early writers who knew him and this Gospel account.

7 / **John was an old man when he wrote this Gospel account. He was probably around 90+ years old.** He had migrated by this time from Jerusalem to Ephesus where he pastored in his later years. He wrote this Gospel during the last decade of the first century, 90-100 AD. Matthew, Mark, and Luke had already been written and were in circulation. So John wanted to write this distinctive account of Jesus’ ministry to establish these truths about who Jesus was – and the Heavenly, spiritual significances of His Person, ministry, works, and messages.

8 / **So John begins with this opening section which is often called The Prologue to his Gospel account.** THIS is who Jesus Christ was...and is – and how and why He came into our world!

9 / **DISCLAIMER:** There is so much to fill in here in terms of explaining these words, why John chose these particular words, how these words and truths related to the culture in which John first delivered them, and how these spiritual descriptors of Jesus Christ are related to one another, the Gospel, and the purpose of this book. So all I can do here is give you the headings of the truths, and we’ll flesh them out more in our comments during the lesson...

I / vv 1-2 / JESUS CHRIST IS ETERNAL AND DEITY**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.****²He was in the beginning with God.**

1 / Jesus Christ is not named by His Name until v 17. Throughout this opening message, He is called The Word [Logos]. This word 'Logos' means 'word' as in 'message.' The 'logos' was the message that was being delivered. It was a common word in the Greek-culture world in which John lived and ministered. To the Greek-culture world, Logos referred to the oracles and messages their 'gods' delivered to them. Or it referred to the 'wisdom' and the 'reason' by which the world existed and was sustained and maintained. In other words, in the Greeks' way of thinking, the 'Logos' was how the world came into being and how everything in the world is ordered. Watch how John now takes 'Logos' and preaches the Gospel in Jesus Christ!

2 / It was also a very prominent truth among the Jews. It goes back to what kind of God Yahweh is: He is a God of infinite and superior intelligence, knowledge, and wisdom; He is a God of language and communication... He is a 'speaking God'; and His word is always spoken with omnipotent and invincible power. In other words, the 'Logos' of God is His Word by which everything in the world has been created [**Psalm 33.6-9**], and by which everything runs, works, and is sustained and maintained [**Hebrews 1.3**].

3 / So with this statement, John declares to the whole world that Jesus Christ whom he will name later in this message is 'The Logos.' John makes three statements about Jesus Christ: [1] He already existed when everything else began (John is placing Jesus Christ before and at **Genesis 1.1**); [2] He was 'with God' when everything else began (this is not making Him separate from God, but taking His place 'with' God); [3] He was God – in nature, character, existence, Being. Whoever God is, Jesus Christ was and is. Verse 2 is just a summary/mirror restatement of verse 1...

II / v 3 / JESUS CHRIST IS THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS**All things were made through Him,****and without Him was not any thing made that was made.**

1 / In **verses 1-2**, when John refers to '**in the beginning**,' he is referring to the creation of all things. All things were created by God, who is Himself uncreated. Again John uses mirror phrases to restate the same truth: that The Word was the One who created every single other atom, molecule, element, body, and being that is in the created universe ... other than Himself.

2 / And that Creator was the Word – and Jesus Christ is that Word. **See Colossians 1.15-16.**

III / vv 4-5 / JESUS CHRIST IS THE LIFE AND LIGHT OF THE WORLD**In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.****⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.**

1 / John will introduce two more words that will become threads that run all throughout this book and serve as the themes he wants to proclaim about Jesus Christ ... so we can know Him and believe in Him. The two word-themes are '**life**' and '**light**.' Both life and light will be highlighted, demonstrated, and preached on by Christ throughout this book. But for the purposes of brief introduction here: '**life**' is the very life of God which He will share with us by the new birth. '**Light**' is knowing God and having a grace relationship with Him in the Truth of who He is.

2 / Light is contrasted with '**darkness**' which is another theme-word that John will weave throughout this book. Darkness is to be without God, Christless. Darkness is being separated from God who is Light. Darkness is the domain of sin, death, and Satan. Jesus comes as The Word and victoriously conquers the darkness by His very Presence and by His Word.

IV / vv 6-8 & 15 / JESUS CHRIST WAS ANNOUNCED, INTRODUCED, AND PROCLAIMED BY A HUMAN WITNESS

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸ He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

v 15 / (John bore witness about Him, and cried out, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because He was before me.’”)

1 / This is obviously another ‘John,’ John the Baptist [Baptizer]. John is introduced here because He was chosen by God and sent by God to announce the Christ was coming on the scene. John the Baptist came as a ‘witness,’ another key theme-word just like the apostle John is writing this book as a witness to Christ. And the purpose of the ‘witness’ to The Word, Jesus Christ, is that everybody who hears the message The Word will bring will believe on Him – trust Him and Him only as God’s appointed and sent Savior of the world.

2 / As we go through this book, we will note that every time John the Baptist is mentioned, he is always presented as ‘lesser than’ Jesus Christ. That’s because by the time John wrote this book, there were already sects that had arisen to idolize and promote John the Baptist to the ranks of being the most superior figure in the kingdom of God. Jesus Christ will honor John the Baptist and give him his rightful recognition and appreciation, but never to the eclipsing of the Glory that belongs to Jesus Christ and Him only. **See ch 1.8; 1.20; 3.25-30; 4.1; 10.41.**

V / vv 9-11 / JESUS CHRIST WAS NOT RECOGNIZED, RESPECTED, OR RECEIVED IN THE WORLD HE HAD CREATED – AND AMONG HIS OWN ETHNIC PEOPLE

The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world did not know Him. ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him.

1 / After proclaiming The Word, Jesus Christ, as being the Creator of all things [including the first light], and after declaring that Jesus Christ is the True Light of God [by being God Himself & by revealing God in Himself], John then declares Jesus Christ as the Light-Giver to the world. And the ‘world’ into which Christ, The Word, came was the world of lost humanity, the lost nations and peoples of the world. He is the only Light of Truth, Life, and salvation.

2 / But when He came into His world that He Himself had created and sustained, they did not recognize or confess Him as their Creator and Light – they did not acknowledge Him for the God He is. **See Romans 1.18-32.** He even came to His own nation, the Jews, who had the Old Testament Scriptures announcing His coming, promising His coming – but they did not receive Him.

VI / vv 12-13 / JESUS CHRIST IS THE WAY THROUGH WHOM BELIEVERS BECOME THE CHILDREN OF GOD

But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

1 / But some did receive Him. They did recognize Him. They did acknowledge that He is God. They trusted in Christ and Christ only for their acceptance with God. They knew they were in the darkness of ignorance, sin, estrangement from God the Light, and death. They saw Christ for who He is: The Word of salvation that God had sent in His Son. They believed and trusted Christ to make them good enough for God.

2 / Who gets the credit for their faith? NOT their ethnicity or heritage or tradition or bloodline; NOT the will, choice, or decision of their own reasoning or moral assessment; NOT the will or choice some other person made for them and imposed it upon them or by proxy; BUT OF GOD! In other words, God Himself is the One who is the Giver of their very faith, choice, and decision to see the Glory of Jesus Christ and receive Him as the Word of God’s salvation from sin. **See 1 Thessalonians 2.13 & 2 Thessalonians 2.13-14.**

VII / v 14 / JESUS CHRIST, THE ETERNAL GOD-WORD, BECAME FLESH AND WAS INCARNATED TO TABERNACLE [TENT] AMONG US

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.

1 / NOW we come to the pith, crux, core, climax of John's declaration of The Word. HERE is a Gospel truth that is contained in NO OTHER false deity mythology: that the very God who commanded and demanded that we be saved from our sins would come Himself to save us.

2 / The Word, Jesus Christ, would not save us from afar. He would not save us merely by sovereign fiat. He couldn't because He is Holy God. As Holy God, He requires the same holiness and righteousness from us that He is if we are to be in covenant relationship with Him. There is only one way we can be saved from our sins and made to be good enough for God. God Himself must come, become like one of us, and do in our place and stead what He commands us to do...except we cannot. God must become like one of us in order to make us like Him as His children [see v 12].

3 / So this eternal, Deity The Word, Jesus Christ, was born into our world as one of us. **See Romans 8.3-4; Galatians 4.4-7.** God could not command us to be like Him...because we cannot. God must come and become like one of us...and then raise us up by His Grace to be like Him. But only through the substitution of Jesus Christ and the vicarious merits of His grace and truth being imputed to us can we be saved from our sins.

VIII / vv 16-17 / JESUS CHRIST IS THE FULLNESS OF GOD'S GRACE AND TRUTH – AND GIVES THAT FULLNESS TO HIS PEOPLE

For from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

1 / Draw connections between v 14, Jesus' 'full of grace and truth,' and v 16, 'from His fullness we have all received.' Also between all the thread of 'believe' and 'receive' in vv 7, 11, 12, 16. Also between all the references to 'grace' in vv 14, 16 17. ALL grace and ALL truth is in Jesus Christ!

2 / And now that Jesus Christ has finally been named, draw connections between 'Word' in v 1, 'God' in v 1, 'became flesh' in v 14, and 'Jesus Christ' in verse 17. WORD = GOD = FLESH = JESUS CHRIST. Jesus Christ is The Word who is God who has become flesh. The Word who is God has incarnated [in-fleshed] Himself in a human Person and has 'pitched tent' among us. That's what the word 'dwelt' means: tented/tabernacled. It refers to the Tabernacle Yahweh instructed Moses to build in the wilderness so His Glory could dwell among them – so God could be with them where they were.

IX / v 18 / JESUS CHRIST IS THE ONLY BEING WHO HAS EVER SEEN GOD ... AND MADE HIM FULLY KNOWN TO US

No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known.

1 / Now that John has declared to the best of his ability who Jesus Christ is in His human Person, how he makes another summary statement about WHY Jesus Christ came in our flesh ... why He chose to come and live among us as one of us – but without sin.

2 / **It was so that we could know, not only who God is, but also know God personally in a loving grace relationship.** Jesus Christ is the ONLY One who has seen God – because He is God. He was 'with God' when everything else had its beginning through His creation.

3 / But now He has come to us so He can live among us as God, having been sent from the Father, **and make Him known to us!** And THAT is what the rest of this book will be about. THAT is the story that will be told in the rest of this book: **And THIS is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent! / John 17.4**

May we all testify as we study these lessons together: "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world!" / John 4.42