

## JOHN CHAPTER 1

### GOD IS HERE!

The theme of John's Gospel is that Jesus is the Son of God (20:30–31), and in this first chapter, John proves his claim. As we read, we cannot help but see that Christ is God's Son based upon the names and titles He bears, the works He performs, and the witnesses who knew Him personally and declare who He is.

*<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. <sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. <sup>5</sup> And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it. <sup>6</sup> There was a man having been sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness, to bear witness about the Light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He was not the Light, but he came to bear witness about the Light. <sup>9</sup> There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens everyone. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. <sup>11</sup> He came to what was His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup> John bore witness about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has been ahead of me, for He existed before me.'" <sup>16</sup> For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. <sup>19</sup> And this is the witness of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" <sup>20</sup> And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." <sup>21</sup> And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." <sup>22</sup> Therefore, they said to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?" <sup>23</sup> He said, "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as Isaiah the prophet said." <sup>24</sup> Now they had been sent from the*

*Pharisees. <sup>25</sup> And they asked him, and said to him, "Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" <sup>26</sup> John answered them, saying, "I baptize with water, but among you stands One whom you do not know. <sup>27</sup> "This One is He who comes after me, of whom I am not worthy to untie the strap of His sandal." <sup>28</sup> These things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.*

*<sup>29</sup> On the next day, he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! <sup>30</sup> "This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who has been ahead of me, for He existed before me.' <sup>31</sup> "I did not know Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing with water." <sup>32</sup>*

*And John bore witness saying, "I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He abided on Him. <sup>33</sup> And I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'The One upon whom you see the Spirit descending and abiding on Him, this is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' <sup>34</sup> And I myself have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."*

*<sup>35</sup> On the next day, John again was standing with two of his disciples, <sup>36</sup> and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" <sup>37</sup> And the two disciples heard him speak and followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup> And when Jesus turned and noticed them following, He said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?" <sup>39</sup> He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So, they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day. It was about the tenth hour. <sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ). <sup>42</sup> He brought him to Jesus. When Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter). <sup>43</sup> On the next day, He desired to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me." <sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." <sup>46</sup> And Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." <sup>47</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said about him, "Behold, truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" <sup>48</sup> Nathanael said to Him, "From where do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." <sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel." <sup>50</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you*

*that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.”*<sup>51</sup> *And He said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”*<sup>1</sup>

## I. **Christ’s Names Prove He Is God’s Son**

**A. *He is the Word (1:1–3, 14).*** Just as our words reveal our mind and heart, so Christ reveals the mind and heart of God to men. *“He who has seen Me has seen the Father”* (John 14:9).

A word is composed of letters, and Christ is the Alpha and Omega (first and last letters of the Greek alphabet (cf. Revelation 22:13) which spells out God’s love to us. In Genesis 1, God created everything through His Word, and Colossians 1:16 and 2 Peter 3:5 indicate that this Word was Christ. While God can be known in part through nature and history, He is only known in full through His Son (Hebrews 1:1–2). Christ as the Word brings grace and truth (1:14 and 17), but if men do not receive Him, this same Word will come in wrath and judgment (Revelation 19:13). The Bible is the written Word of God, and Christ is the living, incarnate Word of God.

**B. *He is the Light (1:4–13).*** God’s first creative act in Genesis 1 was producing light, for life comes from light. Jesus is the true light, that is, the original light from which all light has its source.

In John’s Gospel, you find a conflict between light (God, eternal life) and darkness (Satan, eternal death). This is indicated in 1:5—*“And the light shines [present tense] in the darkness, and the darkness has not been able to put it out or lay hold of it”* (literal translation)—note: 3:19–21, 8:12, and 12:46. Second Corinthians 4:3–6 pictures salvation as the entrance of light into the dark heart of the sinner (see also Genesis 1:1–3).

**C. *He is the Son of God (1:15–18, 30–34, 49).*** It was this claim that aroused the Jews to persecute Christ (10:30–36). Note the seven persons in John’s Gospel who called Christ the Son of God:

- John the Baptist (1:34)
- Nathanael (1:49)
- Peter (6:69)

---

<sup>1</sup> [Legacy Standard Bible](#) (Jn 1:1–Jn 2). (2022). Three Sixteen Publishing.

- The healed blind man (9:35–38)
- Martha (11:27)
- Thomas (20:28), and
- The Apostle John (20:30–31).

The sinner who will not believe that Jesus is God's Son cannot be saved (8:24).

**D. He is the Christ (1:19–28, 35–42).** "Christ" means the Messiah, the Anointed One. The Jews were expecting their Messiah to appear, which is why they questioned John. Even the Samaritans were looking for Him (4:25, 42). Any Jew who said that Jesus was the Christ was thrown out of the synagogue (9:22).

**E. He is the Lamb of God (1:29, 35–36).** John's announcement is the answer to Isaac's question, "Where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" (Genesis 22:7). The Passover lamb in Exodus 12 and the sacrificial lamb in Isaiah 53 both point to Christ. There were many lambs slain in Old Testament history, but Christ is the Lamb of God, the unique one. The blood of lambs slain in the tabernacle or temple merely covered sin (Hebrews 10:1–4), but Christ's blood takes away sin. The lambs offered in the Old Testament days were for Israel alone, but Christ died for the sins of the whole world.

**F. He is the King of Israel (1:43–49).** Israel's people were tired of Roman rule and wanted a king to free them. Because Christ fed them, they wanted to make Him King (6:15), but He left the crowd. He offered Himself as their King (recorded in 12:12–19), but the chief priests said, "We have no king but Caesar!" (19:15)

**G. He is the Son of Man (1:50–51).** This title comes from Daniel 7:13–14, and every Jew knew it described God. (Note the Jews' question in John 12:34: "Who is this Son of Man?") Christ alludes in 1:51 to "Jacob's ladder" in Genesis 28:10–17. Christ is "God's ladder" between earth and heaven, revealing God to men and taking men to God.

## II. Christ's Works Prove He Is God's Son

**A. He created the world (1:1–4).** He was in the beginning with God and was the divine Agent through whom the world was created.

**B. He gives men salvation (1:9–13).** He came to His own world, and His own people (the Jews) received Him not. Salvation is a free gift that the sinner receives when he trusts Christ. "Believing" and "receiving" are the same thing. A new birth

then takes place—not from human blood, or by the flesh, or by the will of men, but from God.

**C. He reveals God (1:15–18).** Christ reveals God’s grace and God’s truth. Moses gave the Law that reveals sin and condemns. But Christ reveals the truth that redeems. The Law prepared the way for Him.

**D. He baptizes with the Spirit (1:33).** We see the Trinity in this chapter: the Father (1:14, 18); the Son (1:14, 18); and the Spirit (1:32–34). The descent of the Spirit identified Christ to John; and we cannot truly see Christ today unless the Spirit opens our eyes.

**E. He has intimate knowledge of men (1:42, 47–48).** He knew Peter and Nathanael better than they knew themselves (see 2:23–25). Only God can see the hearts of people.

**F. He forgives sin (1:29).** Nobody on earth can take away a person’s sin!

**G. He opens the way to heaven (1:50–51) and is the way to heaven.** Like Jacob in Genesis 28:10–17, sinners are away from home and in the night of sin. But Christ reveals the glory of heaven and opens it for us to enter in. Christ is God’s “staircase to glory.”

### III. Witnesses Prove That Christ Is God’s Son

John uses the word “witness” often in his Gospel (1:7–8, 15; 3:26, 28; 5:31–37; 8:18; 15:27; 18:23). The witnesses of the Bible can be trusted because they had a personal contact with Christ, and they gained nothing from men by witnessing for Christ. (In fact, they suffered for it.) There is no evidence that they lied; their witness would stand in court today. These witnesses are:

**A. John the Baptist (1:7, 15, 29; see also 5:35).**

**B. John the Apostle (1:14, “we beheld His glory ...”)**

**C. The Old Testament prophets (1:30, 45).** It is likely that Nathanael was reading in the Books of Moses when Philip found him.

**D. The Holy Spirit (1:33–34).**

**E. Andrew (1:41).** He was a soul-winner, and he started at home.

**F. Philip (1:45).** Philip backed up his testimony with the Word of God, a wise policy for all witnesses.

**G. Nathanael (1:49).** John and Andrew were saved through a preacher, John the Baptist. Peter found Christ because of Andrew's personal work. Philip was called by Christ personally, and Nathanael found Christ through the Word and Philip's testimony. God uses different people and circumstances to bring people to His Son. He is a God of infinite variety.<sup>2</sup>

### **Conclusion**

1. Jesus is the Son of God, the eternal God in flesh, One with God His heavenly Father! As the Son of Man, Jesus left heaven to come to the earth. Jesus used the term "*Son of Man*" of Himself more than 80 times, which speaks of His humanity, His suffering and His work as "*the ideal Man*."
2. How does His identity impact your life?

### **Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion<sup>3</sup>**

1. How does the world portray Jesus today?
2. What does each of these names and titles that John used to describe Jesus tell us about Him: Word, Light, Son of God, Lamb of God, Messiah, King of Israel, Son of Man?
3. Choose one of these names or titles and describe how it is important for you personally.
4. Why was the Word made flesh?

---

<sup>2</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1992). [\*Wiersbe's expository outlines on the New Testament\*](#) (pp. 211–214). Victor Books.

<sup>3</sup> Wiersbe, Warren W. *Be Alive (John 1-12): Get to Know the Living Savior (The BE Series Commentary)* (p. 33). David C Cook. Kindle Edition.