

Book of John – Prologue

The Person and Work of Jesus, the Christ

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word,¹ and the Word was with² God, and the Word was³ God. **1:2** He was in the beginning with God. **1:3** All things were made⁴ through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. **1:4** In him was life, and the life was the light of men. **1:5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome⁵ it. (*ESV translation*)

1. Why do you think John begins with “the Word”, rather than identifying Jesus directly with God?
2. What if Jesus was not infinite, or not God? What difference would it make?⁶
3. What do you learn about God from verse 3? (see v. 10 as well). What does the Word do?
4. How does the contrast of light and darkness in verses 4 and 5 affect your gospel witnessing?⁷

John 1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. **1:7** He came as a witness⁸, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe⁹ through him. **1:8** He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. **1:9** The true¹⁰ light, which enlightens everyone, was¹¹ coming into the world.

1. What exactly did John bear witness to? What did he mean by it?¹²
2. What did John know about the light, and why was his testimony important?¹³
3. Look at verse 9. Name some *false* lights. What effect do you think they have on everyone?

¹ Gr. *logos* – teaching, words, cause, or reason. This does not refer to the written word of God, but to the second person of the godhead. “He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God,” Rev 19:13. In Greek philosophy, the *Logos* is the cohesive force, causative impetus, or underlying intelligence (‘rational principle’) of the universe.

² Gr. *pros* – facing toward or before.

³ Gr. imperfect tense indicating ongoing activity (-ing)

⁴ Gr. *ginomai* – to come into being, arise, to be made or wrought

⁵ Gr. *katalambano* – to overtake or catch; to comprehend, understand or perceive; to lay hold of for one’s own, obtain, seize, take possession of

⁶ See Jn 14:9; 17:6

⁷ Consider 9:5; 12:36; Ps 105:39

⁸ Gr. *marturia* – testifier (from which we get ‘martyr’)

⁹ Gr. *pisteuo* – to be persuaded of the truth, to place confidence in

¹⁰ Gr. *alethinos* – not only the name and resemblance, but the real nature corresponding to the name; genuine; not counterfeit or imaginary.

¹¹ Gr. present participle (“is coming”) – what would this suggest about the nature of the light in today’s world?

¹² Jn 1:29, 36; Isa 53:6;

¹³ Jn 1:23, 25; Isa 40:3; Isa 49:6; Lk 2:32

4. As believers, how do we carry this light?¹⁴

John 1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know¹⁵ him. **1:11** He came to his own, and his own *people*¹⁶ did not receive¹⁷ him. **1:12** But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right¹⁸ to become children of God, **1:13** who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.¹⁹

1. What is the irony in verse 10? See footnote for verse 5 (double-meaning).
2. How do we “receive” Christ, completely? What does it look like as a practical matter?
3. What does it mean to believe in someone’s name?²⁰ What does the name “Jesus Christ” mean?²¹
4. Verses 12 and 13 create a paradox. How does it impact the way you present the gospel?²²

John 1:14 And the Word became²³ 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. **1:15** (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks²⁴ before me, because he was before me.'") **1:16** And from his fullness²⁵ we have all received, grace upon grace.²⁶ **1:17** For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. **1:18** No one has ever seen²⁷ God; the only God, who is at the Father's side,²⁸ he has made him known.²⁹

1. What is the importance of the Word becoming flesh to dwell among us?³⁰

¹⁴ Consider Mt 5:14; Jn 9:5

¹⁵ Gr. *ginosko* – come to know or understand (learn)

¹⁶ Word is absent in the Greek

¹⁷ Gr. *paralambano* – *para* means alongside, *lambano* means to lay hold of, to possess for oneself; to claim

¹⁸ Gr. *exousia* – the liberty to do as one pleases, leave or permission, physical or mental power, authority or privilege (right)

¹⁹ Compare 3:3; 1Pet 1:23

²⁰ Think about what it means to sign a check, or a contract. What does your name on it indicate?

²¹ Jn 1:41; Mt 1:22; Mt 16:16; Lk 2:11; Dan 9:25

²² Consider the authority required to grant us the *right* to become children of God. See Jn 8:28; 12:49; 16:13; 17:2; Mt 28:18-20

²³ Gr. *ginomai* – see *fn..4*

²⁴ “Rank” is absent in the Greek but literally it reads “the one coming here after me becomes ahead of me because he was before me.”

²⁵ Jn 3:34; Eph 3:19; Col 2:9

²⁶ Or “and grace for grace”

²⁷ Gr. *horao* – to see with the eyes 2) to see with the mind, to perceive, know 3) to see, i.e. become acquainted with by experience.

²⁸ Other translations: “the only-begotten Son” (monogenes huios) “who is in the bosom of the Father”

²⁹ Literally, “he has declared” or “unfolded”

³⁰ See Ex 40:34-35; **Lev 9:6-7**; Jer 24:7; Jer 31:33-34; Ezek 36:25-27; **Ezek 37:26-28**

2. What is the “glory” of the Son?³¹

3. What is John trying to explain in verse 17?

4. Look at verse 18. How can *you* make the Triune God known to the world?

Just as the Prologue sets the stage for the revelation of Jesus as the Christ, **JOHN’S TESTIMONY** before those who are sent by the Pharisees sets the stage for those who will be called to follow Jesus. These men are asking John the Baptist who he is. But it is Jesus who asks each of us, “Who do *you* say I am?”³²

John 1:19 And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who are you?" 1:20 He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ." 1:21 And they asked him, "What then? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." 1:22 So they said to him, "Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?" 1:23 He said, "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said."³³ 1:24 (Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) 1:25 They asked him, "Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" 1:26 John answered them, "I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, 1:27 even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie." 1:28 These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

John 1:29 **The next day** he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! 1:30 This is he of whom I said, 'After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.' 1:31 I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel." 1:32 And John bore witness: "I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. 1:33 I myself did not know³⁴ him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' 1:34 And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

John 1:35 **The next day** again John was standing with two of his disciples, 1:36 and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" 1:37 The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 1:38 Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 1:39 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, for it was about the tenth hour. 1:40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 1:41 He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ). 1:42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "So you are Simon the son of John? You shall be called Cephas" (which means Peter).

³¹ Consider Jn 16:14-15; 17:4-5.

³² Asked in Mt 16:15; Mk 8:29; Lk 9:20, but not in John – perhaps because John’s declared intent is to prove Jesus’ identity as the Christ.

³³ Isa 40:3

³⁴ Gr. *eido*, to see or perceive, whether with the eye or the mind; to know of; it is pluperfect: “I had not seen (or known of) him” referring to who it would be that the Spirit would descend on, and who would baptize with the Spirit. John is Jesus’ cousin, and knew of him in that regard.

John 1:43 **The next day** Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." 1:44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 1:45 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." 1:46 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." 1:47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" 1:48 Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." 1:49 Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" 1:50 Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these."

1:51 And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." [*and on the third day he rose again, and ascended...*]