

The Word

John 1:1-18, 19-51



The Word

1. Read John 1:1-18. What does John¹ say about “the Word?”² How is “the Word” described in verses 1-4, 9 and 14? Make a list.³ What do these descriptions mean?⁴

📖 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (*Genesis 1:1*).

- ❑ The Word is the unique Son of God – Jesus Christ (*John 1:14-17*).
2. To whom did the Word come, and what were the different responses? (*John 1:9-12*)
What happens to those who receive him (i.e., believe in him)? (*John 1:12-13, 16*)

The Light

- ❑ The Word is called “the true light” (*John 1:9*). John is a witness to testify concerning the light (*John 1:6-8; 15*). (The “John” in verses 6-8 is not the John who wrote the Gospel.)
3. In what way is Jesus Christ “the light?”⁵



📖 *Jesus said*, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (*John 8:12; cf. 9:5, 12:46*).

¹ The author of the Gospel of John is the apostle John, one of Jesus’ twelve disciples.

² ‘Word’ (*logos*) has a wide range of meaning. In the Old Testament, ‘the word’ refers to God’s ‘powerful self-expression in creation, revelation and salvation.’ (D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* [Grand Rapids: InterVarsity Press, 1991], 116). ‘By the word of the LORD the heavens were made’ (*Psa. 33:6a; Gen. 1*). The word reveals God’s message (*Jer. 1:4*), brings deliverance (*Psa. 107:20*), and accomplishes God’s purpose (*Isa. 55:11*). The Greeks used the term *logos* to refer to the rational principle of the universe. While continuous with the Old Testament use of term, John gives it new meaning.

³ Descriptions concerning ‘the Word:’ 1) was *in the beginning*; 2) was *with* God; 3) *was* God; 4) *all* things were made through him; 5) in him was *life* and *light*; 6) *became* flesh; 7) dwelt among people on earth; 8) ‘one and only Son, who came from the Father;’ 9) full of grace and truth.

⁴ Meaning of descriptions: 1) existed before creation (*Genesis 1:1*); 2) close relation to God, but distinct from God; 3) equal to God (called ‘God’ in v. 18); 4) agent of all creation (*Colossians 1:16*); 5) *see question 3*; 6) took on human nature; 7) lived among us (literally, ‘pitched his tabernacle’) – association with tabernacle where God’s glory was made visible; 8) unique relationship with God the Father; 9) divine reality, loving-kindness and faithfulness.

⁵ Light symbolizes God’s revelation, truth, and purity. Jesus is God’s revelation of himself. He reveals truth. He exposes evil. He reveals the way of salvation. He reveals the way of life. As the light, he gives light for us. We can walk in the light and find life, or we can run from the light and walk in darkness, which leads to condemnation.

The One Who Makes God Known

4. Read John 1:18. In what ways does Jesus “make God known?” Considering this, how can we grow in our knowledge of God?⁶

📖 Jesus said, “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (*John 14:9, NIV*).

📖 “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being” (*Hebrews 1:3, NIV*). “The Son is the image of the invisible God” (*Colossians 1:15*).

- ❑ Jesus Christ is the unique Son of God (*John 1:14, 18, 34*), or God the Son (*1:1, 18*).⁷ At a particular time in history, the eternal Son took on human flesh and entered into humanity (*1:14; Philippians 2:5-11*). He entered into humanity in order to save us (*John 3:16-17*) and provide the way into a relationship with God (*14:6*).

The Messiah & Lamb of God

- ❑ John (the Baptist) was sent to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah⁸ (*John 1:19-28*). His message was, “Repent,⁹ for the kingdom of heaven has come near” (*Matthew 3:2, NIV*). John baptized people (i.e., immersed people in water) as a symbol of their repentance.
- ❑ John testified that Jesus is the Son of God (*John 1:30-34*).¹⁰ He also testified that Jesus is “the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (*1:29, 36*).¹¹



The One Who Calls

- ❑ Jesus called people to follow him, starting with those who would be part of the twelve disciples (*1:35-51*). Jesus is still calling people to follow him. Are *you* following him?

The Light & You

- The Word (*or* true Light) has come into the world (*John 1:10*). Have you recognized him? Have you believed in and received him? John wrote his Gospel so that we would believe (*20:31*). Continue in this study and seek to grow in your knowledge of Jesus (the true Light).
- If you are a Christian, you are a child of God (*John 1:12*) and a witness concerning the Light (*Matthew 5:14-16*). Spend time reflecting on Jesus as the Light (*1:4-5; 3:19-21; 8:12*) and commit to testify to the Light through your life and words, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

⁶ True knowledge of God is not merely intellectual but relational and spiritual.

⁷ Of course, this raises questions. How can God become a man? Actually, God did not change into a man, but rather took on human flesh to enter into humanity. This is called ‘the Incarnation.’ The Son was still fully God, though he laid aside his divine prerogatives (*Philippians 2:6-7*). He is more accurately called the God-man – fully God and fully man. This is still a difficult teaching. If the Father is God, and the Son is God (and the Holy Spirit is God), how can Christians say there is only one God? This leads us to the teaching of ‘the Trinity’ (tri-unity), another difficult teaching. If you have questions or objections concerning the Incarnation or Trinity, ask Jay for more information.

⁸ ‘Messiah’ means ‘anointed one.’ The Old Testament prophecies said *the* Messiah (a great king) would deliver God’s people and establish God’s rule (kingdom). The Greek word for Messiah is *Christos*, translated ‘Christ.’

⁹ ‘repent’ – change of mind and direction. The people were to repent from their sin and turn to God.

¹⁰ Verse 31 does not mean John did not know Jesus at all, but he did not know him as the Son of God. When he baptized him (sometime earlier), God confirmed that Jesus was His Son (*Matthew 3:13-17*).

¹¹ The Bible says, ‘all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God’ (*Rom. 3:23*), and ‘the wages of sin is death’ (*6:23*). Because of our sin we are ‘separated from the life of God’ (*Ephesians 4:18*). However, God has provided the way for us to be restored to him. Jesus Christ, the ‘Lamb of God,’ died in our place, so that we could be forgiven of our sins and restored to a relationship with God (*1 Cor. 5:7; 2 Cor. 5:20-21; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 1 John 2:1-2*).