

Bible Study

Lesson 1

The book of John



The Living Word

The first four books of the New Testament are named *Gospels*. The word *gospel* means *good news*. These four books of the New Testament tell about the good news of Jesus when He walked on earth.

Notice the first chapter of each Gospel. Matthew, Mark, and Luke all begin their message with the story of the birth of Jesus. John begins his writing differently than the other three writers. Why? Because John saw Christ differently than any other disciple. John begins his writing by telling about Jesus *before* he was born on earth.

John called Jesus the “Living Word of God.” Why did John call Jesus the *Word*? What does that mean? Study this lesson and you will learn an exciting answer to that question.

John was a close friend of Jesus here on earth. The great theme of the Gospel of St. John is *Life of Christ Jesus*. John shows us that Jesus came to earth to give life to all people who would believe on Him.

Search the Scriptures: John 1:1-51; 2:1-25. Jesus came to bring life and blessing to all who believe.

Interpretation

I. THE LIVING WORD

John 1:1, 10-12, 14. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave his power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

A. The Word with God

The great question that people were asking when John lived was, “Who is this Jesus which is called the Christ?” The Gospel of John shows us that if we want to understand who Jesus is, we must go back to the before Genesis 1:1. Long before the first star was put in the sky Jesus was with God. Jesus was the same as God. Jesus and God are One together.

Why is Jesus given the name **Word**? Jesus is called the *Word* because Jesus expresses (explains) who God is.

If you never said any words to anybody, no one would be able to understand about you. But when you say words, your words explain who you are, how you feel, and what you think about.

Jesus is called the *Word* because Jesus explains God is, how God feels, and what God thinks about.

When John wrote his Gospel, some people were saying that Jesus was a created (made) person. But John shows that Jesus always was alive in God. Jesus is the expression of God. Jesus always was with God.

B. The Word with Men

At the right time in history, the Living Word (Jesus) came into the world. God spoke to this world through His Son Jesus. Jesus showed us more about who God is. When Jesus came to earth people did not know who He was because their hearts were full of sin.

Jesus is also called **The Light** who would come to save men from their sins. Jesus was like a bright light that came into the dark world of sin. The Light (Jesus) shined in all the earth, and the darkness of sin could not put out that Light. Some people rejected Jesus. But whoever received Him, Jesus gave them the privilege of becoming sons of God. Read John 1:12. When we accept Jesus into our hearts, we become a part of the family of God. We become born into God’s family.

All Jews are not children of God. All people are not children of God. People become children of God when they are born into God’s family by accepting Jesus into their hearts.

Through a divine miracle, the *Word* (Jesus) became flesh (man). He lived on earth. When people saw Jesus they were looking at the greatest glory that had ever come to earth, but they did not know it. John the Baptist was the first person to know who Jesus really was. John became humble in the presence of Christ. John turned many people to Christ.

The Jews worshiped Old Testament men like Moses and Abraham because they were close to God. But Jesus showed himself to be greater than Moses and Abraham. These men saw only a small part of the glory of God. But Jesus was full of **God's glory**, because He was God in the flesh. Jesus showed us grace. Jesus showed us who God is, because Jesus is the Living Word of God.

II. THE FIRST WITNESS

John 1:29-34. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world! This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me (much better than me); for he was before me: And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record (wrote) saying, I saw the Spirit descending (coming down) like a dove, and it abode (stayed) upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize him with water, the same said unto me, Upon who thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

A high Jewish government council (the **Sanhedrin**) sent a committee to ask John the Baptist some questions. John the Baptist was a well-known **prophet**. Some people were saying that he must be the Messiah (Christ). John said, "No I am not the Christ." They asked him if he was Elijah come back from the grave. (See Malachi 4:5.) Again he said, "No."

The Jewish committee really did not want to know about John the Baptist. They only wanted to hear him say something that they could blame him for and make him stop preaching.

The Jews asked John the Baptist, "Who gave you the right to baptize in water?" John said that he received his orders from One who was greater than he was (God).



Word Power

1. **WORD**—An expression or spoken thought. Jesus was the living expression of God here on earth. See John 1:14. Jesus explained to the world all about God.
2. **THE LIGHT**—Another name for Jesus that helps us to know about God. Are you afraid of the dark at nighttime? Sin is like that darkness. Jesus is the light. When the light is on, the darkness is gone. Jesus is the True Light.
3. **GOD'S GLORY**—Shining brightness of God. Jesus was full of the shining brightness of God.
4. **SANHEDRIN**—Jewish government council (discussion group).
5. **PROPHET**—Speaker for God. John the Baptist was a speaker for God. He spoke God's message to the people.
6. **DESCENDING**—Coming down. John saw the Holy Spirit coming down on Jesus.
7. **REPENT**—To change from doing sin (wrong, bad) and begin to live for Jesus and do right.

The Living Bible tells the story this way: *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the world's sin!*

"He is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Soon a man far greater than I am is coming, who existed (lived) long before me!'

"I didn't know He was the one, but I am here baptizing with water (to show Him) to the nation of Israel."

Then John told about seeing the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove descending (coming down) from heaven and resting upon Jesus.

*"I didn't know He was the one," John said again, "but at the time God sent me to baptize He told me, 'When you see the Holy Spirit **descending** and resting upon someone-He is the one you are looking for. He is the one who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.'*

"I saw it happen to this man, and I therefore testify that He is the Son of God."

Why did John call Jesus the *Lamb* of God? The reason is because the lamb was a special animal to the Jewish people. In the Old Testament God spoke to a man named Abraham and told him to kill his son Isaac as a sacrifice. When Abraham was ready to offer his son to the Lord on an altar, God stopped him. God then gave Abraham a lamb (ram) to kill instead of his son Isaac. See Genesis 22.

When the people of Israel were slaves in Egypt, God told each family to sprinkle the blood of a lamb over the door of their house. Every family that obeyed God would be safe. But every family that did not obey received judgment. That night in every family that did not obey, the oldest son died. The Jews have remembered this day every year. It is called the Passover. This means that every year the Jews remember that judgment *passed over* them because of the blood of a lamb on each door.

John the Baptist told people that they must repent of their sins. People who did repent were baptized in water as a symbol to other people that they had repented. This was one way of telling the world that each person being baptized had turned away from his sins to become a Christ-follower.

John could not take away their sins. Only the Lamb of God could do that. John could not give them power to live a right life for God. Only the Holy Spirit could do that.

When God sent John to baptize people in water, God told him to look for the One Man who the Holy Spirit would come down upon and stay. This is why the Holy Spirit came down on Jesus. John knew for sure that He was the real Christ. The word *Christ* means *Anointed One*. Jesus Christ is the *Anointed One*. He is the one who baptizes His followers (not in water) in the Holy Spirit.

The first chapter in the Gospel of John shows us five names that are given to Jesus. Jesus is called the *Word*, the *Light*, the *Lamb of God*, the *Messiah*, and the *Christ*. With each of these names we have a little more understanding about who God is.

Yes, Jesus came to give life and blessing to all who would believe. Many people in the world do not believe. But John says that whoever will receive Jesus will become a part of the family of God. Are you a part of God's family?



??THINK??

Multiple Choice

1. The word *Gospel* means:

- A. Four books in the New Testament.
- B. Good News.
- C. Jesus.

2. The great theme of the Gospel of John is:

- A. Life in Christ Jesus.
- B. Believe in John the disciple.
- C. The wages of sin is death.

3. Jesus is called the *Word* because:

- A. Jesus explains who God is.
- B. Jesus spoke the Jewish language.
- C. Jesus is eternal with God.

4. Jesus is also called:

- A. The Window.
- B. The Light.
- C. The Wind.

5. A high Jewish government council was called:

- A. The Pharisees.
- B. The Roman Empire.
- C. The Sanhedrin.

For correct answers

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