

The Word (John 1:1–18)

By Pastor Jeff Alexander (4/18/2021)

Introduction

1. The significance of the Gospel of John

The church has always acknowledged four Gospels —Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. John’s Gospel differs from the other three synoptic Gospels in its purpose to demonstrate that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament (John 20:30, 31). The first 18 verses of this Gospel (probably written and added as an introduction by John after he finished the book) introduce the reader to the greatness of Jesus.

The prologue presents some problems that enemies of the gospel have used to confuse and discredit John’s Gospel. Unfortunately, when scholars seek to refute these attacks, in my opinion, they only confuse the matter. Other scholars seek to read more into the text or into John’s thinking than is warranted. John is simply presenting *Jesus* but in a way that is unique and different from the synoptics.

2. Who was this man, Jesus?

John contrasts Jesus with *the Jews*—the religious leaders representing the nation of Israel. Jesus’ continual conflict with the Jews resulted in their hatred and rejection of Him. Their views of Messiah were based on *their definition* of a Davidic king displacing Gentile rule to establish *physical Israel* as the kingdom of God on earth.

Their preconceived notion blinded them to the clear evidence that Jesus was the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. John demonstrates that God’s plan was that they would reject Jesus, which led to God’s rejection of them. If God has opened your heart to the truth, you need to *know* Jesus.

John’s Gospel will tell you exactly who He was and what He is doing. John’s prologue (John 1:1–18) reveals three great truths relating to Jesus: (1) the eternal Word (vv. 1–5); the manifest Light (vv. 6–13); (3) the incarnate glory (vv. 14–18).

The focus of this message is to show how Jesus’ conflict with the Jews brought about God’s purpose to establish the new covenant.

I. The Word Introduced

1. The eternity of John’s *Logos* is stated in verse 1: “*In beginning was the Word.*” There is no definite article, meaning that one may choose any point in the past as a beginning point: the Word was eternally there. Jesus asserted His eternity when He prayed: “*And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed*” (John 17:5, 24).
2. John’s *Logos* was deity. Although “*the Word*” is not specifically identified in the first five verses, His identity is clearly revealed in verse 14: “*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.*” Three things should be noted in this verse as they relate to the ministry of Jesus: (1) John testified that “*we [he, Peter, and James] have seen his glory*” (note Luke 9:32). (2) The glory was that of the only begotten Son of God (Psalm 2:7). (3) The Word was made flesh to bring grace and truth to the world.

3. John's *Logos* identified

- a. Jesus is called the *Word* by John, but *Word* is far more than just a name to identify Jesus. What does the Greek word, *logos*, mean? *Logos* is reasoned speech—wisdom (Proverbs 8:22). This personification of wisdom in Proverbs is clearly Jesus. John personified the *Logos* as Jesus, the divine Wisdom and Plan of God.
- b. This brings us to the *Jews* and their desire for signs. In John 2, the term *logos* is first used in the Gospel, itself reference is to the sentence about His raising the temple up in three days (John 2:19), Jesus' response to the Jews' request for a *sign*—authority—for His cleansing the temple. What Jesus was declaring was that God's plan was to replace the physical dwelling place of God on earth (the one they were desecrating) with Jesus.

II. The Jews and Signs

1. The cleansing of the temple

- a. The conflict initiated at the first cleansing of the temple (John 2:13–22). Jesus announce His death and resurrection. What the Jews could not understand, the spiritually enabled disciples understood (v. 22).
- b. "*His own people did not receive him*" (John 1:11).

For Christ to replace the temple, God needed to end the old covenant economy with Israel's day of *visitation* (judgment). Jesus' conflict with the Jews led to this day via His crucifixion (Luke 19:41–44).

2. The time of Israel's visitation

- a. The Angel of the Lord—"*the Word with God.*" (Exodus 3:2, 6; 32:34). That day came when they rejected Jesus, who informed them, "*You did not know the time of your visitation*" (Luke 19: 44).
- b. The sign of the resurrection, the only sign that Jesus gave the Jews was the sign of His resurrection (Luke 11:29).

3. God is calling out a people who will worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:21–24; 1:11–13).

Lesson

1. Are you a child of God as defined in the text above?
2. Do you understand and believe the Word made flesh?
3. Have you been born again because you believed in His name?