

John 1:1-5

The Word Was in the Beginning and the Word Was God

September 13, 2026

- There have only been a couple times in my life when I disconnected from the world.
 1. During summer in college for 3 months.
 2. During the last 3 weeks.
- Yesterday, I returned to check the headlines from the Wall Street Journal.

You might think darkness is prevailing in the world.

Today we are going to begin the study of John.

- The book of John is often the first book we encourage new Christians to read. It tells us.
 - Who is Jesus?
 - John clearly explains what it means to be born again and how to gain salvation.
 - John teaches us about Jesus through stories of personal encounters with other people. (People like Nicodemus, the Samaritan Woman at the well, Thomas who doubted)
 - He uses memorable pictures of Jesus as “the bread of life, the light of the world, the good shepherd, and the true vine.”

Author: John is the son of Zebedee and brother of James. Jesus named James and John, the sons of Thunder for their fiery and bold personalities.

- All of the earliest manuscripts attribute authorship to John. There are no manuscripts that attribute the authorship to anyone else or to some type of joint letter or committee of authors.
- Statements made by other writers close to the time of the writing also attribute authorship to John, the son of Zebedee.

Date: John is often described as the fourth gospel. It is positioned fourth and is dated after the other gospels and at the end of John's life. It makes sense to me because it is so different from the other gospels. It is like he had read Matthew, Mark and Luke's account and was writing to add depth or color and address the topics that the other gospels did not address.

- John is described as "the disciple whom Jesus loved." The synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) all reference Peter, James and John to be present with Jesus at the healing of Jarius's daughter, the transfiguration and praying with Jesus in the garden on the night He was betrayed. Peter, James and John shared a unique intimacy with Jesus.
- There are four gospels that tell the story. Matthew, Mark, and Luke give us the earthly history. They look at the birth, the life, the experiences, the travels and the calling of Jesus upon His followers. They address His teaching, the parables and the events of His life, including His arrest and His trial and His execution and His resurrection. They are called synoptic gospels, because they're the synopsis of His earthly life.
- John doesn't give us the earthly story. John doesn't give us the historical view of the life of Christ. John gives us the eternal story. He gives us the supernatural view of Christ. And in that way, John is unique.
- Much of what is in John is not in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. There is nothing in John's gospel about the birth of Christ. There is nothing about the early life of Christ. There is nothing about the temptation of Christ. There is nothing about the transfiguration of Christ. There's nothing about His ascension into heaven because John is not focusing on the history of His life. There are no parables. Parables were earthly stories. John gives us a different perspective. John zooms out to give us an eternal perspective.

Purpose of the Letter: The central verse of John's book that tells the purpose of the book is:

John 20:31 but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

Background:

- The gospels were written in Greek, not Hebrew. Likely because of Jesus' command to make disciples of all nations. Greek was the language of the nations. He is writing to both Jews and Greek speaking audiences, that they may **come to believe** that Jesus is the Christ and to those who believe saying, **by believing**, they will grow in their faith to have life in His name.
- It is my hope that if there are any that have not come to faith will believe. And for you who believe, it is my hope that by studying John's writing, your faith will grow and you will experience as John quotes Jesus in chapter 10 saying, I came that you may have life and have it abundantly.
- As a disciple of Jesus, John absorbed and consumed the teachings of Jesus. I think he presents his gospel as a narrative following years of reflection and revelation from the Holy Spirit.
- The Spirit gave John a deep comprehension of the commands, the covenants and the promises of the Hebrew bible (O.T.), and he connects them to Jesus.
- John's gospel presents Jesus as the fulfillment and realization of everything anticipated in the Law and the Prophets.
- We will see John build the Christology of Jesus as the fulfillment of Israel's feast celebrations. John presents...
 - Jesus as the Passover lamb providing deliverance to all men from the bondage of sin.
 - For Sukkot also known as the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus proclaims Himself as the living water and light that is "tabernacling" or dwelling amongst His people.

- As Pentecost or Feast of Weeks celebrates the first fruits of the harvest, we will see John present Jesus as the first fruit of the world-wide gospel harvest.
- We will see these symbols that connect Jesus to the fulfillment of God's promises and lead us to discover deep truths.

I hope you will join us as we walk through John's gospel in your personal study, reflection and contemplation of John's writings. My hope and my prayer for you is that you will know Jesus and experience abundant life by following Him.

- Our text today covers the first 5 verses of John chapter 1. I told you that the other gospels tell of the earthly story of Jesus.

Matthew begins his gospel with the genealogy of Jesus.

Matthew 1:1 The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

Mark begins his gospel with John the Baptist proclaiming a baptism of repentance from sin and as a messenger preparing a way for the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.

Mark 1:1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Luke's gospel is a letter to Theophilus providing an orderly account of Jesus's life and teaching from eyewitnesses so that he may have certainty of the things he had been taught.

Luke 1:1 Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us,

John introduces his gospel with an ASTOUNDING declaration.

The ESV Commentary describes his introduction as a "bomb of meaning that goes off without warning, erupting suddenly, and the sublime and inexpressible, the infinite and unsearchable, the personal and ineffable

reality of God comes exploding onto the consciousness of John's audience."

Listen as we read his introduction of Jesus in the first five verses.

John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Who is Jesus? John starts his gospel establishing THE most important doctrine. Jesus and God are one.

- In establishing who Jesus is, John uses the words that every reader will know. He begins his gospel by taking us all the way back to **Genesis 1:1** "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
- John says, "In the beginning was the Word." The Greek word for Word is "Logos." Logos has a broader meaning than the English word "word." Logos does mean word or speech, but also means message, rational thought or the expression of a person's mind or character.
- Inspired by the Holy Spirit, John presents Jesus as God's personal and complete self-expression. Instead of saying, "in the beginning was God's son" he says, "in the beginning was the "Word" – A person who completely expresses the character and nature of God.
- I can't resist adding the introduction of Jesus by the author of our study of Hebrews.

Hebrews 1:3 He (Jesus) is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the **word** of His power.

- Verse one continues, "In the beginning was the Word and **the Word was with God**. So, John is saying that Jesus was there at creation. Jesus was already existing when all that exists is created. He is not part of the creation. He was already existing before creation.

- Time begins on the first day of creation when He separated day from night and continues on with day two with the separation of the waters, creating heaven, and day three creating land and so on until today. Jesus is outside and before time. He is an eternal being with God.
- This is an EXTREMELY important truth in John's opening statement. Jesus is the eternal pre-existing One called the Word.
- When Moses wanted to know the name of God, God said, "I am that I am." God reveals His name and His nature. He does not derive His existence, His authority or His identity from anyone else. He simple is. Repeatedly in John's gospel, Jesus also identifies Himself as "I am." In John 8:58, He declares "Before Abraham was, I am." We will study the "I am" statements.
- "In the beginning was the Word and the **"Word was with God"** Not only is Jesus an eternal being present at the beginning of creation of time and everything that exists, but He was "WITH God." He is a distinctly separate being from God the Father. Being "WITH" God conveys a close, face-to-face fellowship with God. The Word was with God.
- And then he adds, "the Word was with God and **the Word WAS God.**" The Word fully shares the divine nature of God. He is not a prophet, He is not an angel, and He is not just a good teacher. He is co-equal and "fully God."
- This is really only understood in the Trinity. To be God, but also to be a distinctly separate individual. So, the Word, Jesus, was WITH God the Father in the beginning.
- John makes the connection of the "Word" to Jesus explicit explaining...

John 1:14 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.
- John introduces his gospel by announcing Jesus as the "Word," declaring that Jesus

- **Is eternal** - Jesus pre-existed before creation. He has no beginning.
- **He was with God** at the beginning of time. He is a distinctly separate person who completely expresses the character and nature of God.
- **He is God** - Jesus fully shares the divine nature of God. He is not a prophet, angel or good teacher. He is co-equal and “fully God.”
- For emphasis, John restates what he said in verse one in verse two, **He was in the beginning with God.**
- In the opening two verses, I don’t think more could be said with less words.

John 1:3 All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made.

- John invokes the creation account by starting out quoting Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning.” So, when he continues with “All things were made through Him and without Him was not anything made that was made,”
- John is describing Jesus’ role in creation. **God created by speaking creation into existence and Jesus was the Word through whom God made the world.** The Apostle Paul describes the persons of God the Father and Jesus the Son in this way.

1 Corinthians 8:6 yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist,and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

Paul describes the relationship and roles of God the Father and God the Son.

The Father is “from whom” all things come.

- He is presented as the source and initiator of creation and redemption. We exist “for Him,” meaning He is the ultimate purpose and goal of our lives.

The Son is “through whom” all things come.

- Jesus is the divine agent through whom the Father created the world and through whom we receive salvation and new life.

The Father planned and willed; the Son carried out and accomplished.

- God the Father and Jesus the Son are one. They are co-equal yet distinctly individual persons.

To complete the thought, but only scratching the surface of explaining the Trinity:

- When we read Genesis 1, we also see the third person of the Trinity presented in **Genesis 1:2** ²The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. *And the **Spirit** of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*
- So, we see at creation the Trinity at work.
 - God the Father speaks to initiate creation and
 - Through Jesus the Word, He creates all that exists and
 - The Spirit of God is the divine presence who gives life, order, and power to creation.

Let us continue with verse 4-5.

John 1:4-5 ⁴In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

- “Life, light and darkness” are all key themes in John’s gospel. We will see John use these words and symbols to describe Jesus in many ways.
- **Verse 4 “In Him was life.”** Zoe is the Greek word for life. Zoe means more than biological life. Zoe means life in its fullest sense including physical, spiritual and eternal life that comes from God. The “abundant life.”
- John uses Zoe 36 times in his gospel. Jesus is the creator of all that is made, and the source who gives physical life and spiritual life. Life lives because of Him and He gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.
- **“The life was the light of men.”** - Jesus is life and Jesus is the light.

John 8:12 Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

- Here we see John’s first use of symbolic language to help illustrate truth. Jesus is **life**, Jesus created **life** and He came to give **light** showing us the way we are to live. The “Life” becomes the “light of men.”

Verse 5, ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

“The light shines in the darkness.” - John describes darkness.

John 3:19 the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

- Darkness represents the power of evil.
- The symbols of light and darkness were a common theme in the first-century as they are today and used to contrast good and evil. Jesus came into this sinful and dark world fully human.
- He lived life without sin. His life and teaching were light proclaiming truth and goodness to a dark world.
- **“and the darkness has not overcome it.”** All the forces of Satan tried to prevent Life and to extinguish the Light – but they could not. Nothing can overcome the light and truth proclaimed by Jesus.
- The crucifixion appeared to be a victory for darkness, but the resurrection of Jesus washed over the darkness and triumphed over death. The **light** of truth provides **life** for all men.

John 12:46 Jesus says, I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness.

- Jesus is the source of life and truth. He came into a dark and sinful world. His light cannot be overcome and there is no one or no thing that can extinguish His light.

I started this teaching with headlines that are disheartening and discouraging and would suggest that evil and darkness are prevailing. I end this teaching of the good news of John for you.

- Jesus is the pre-existent co-creator of all things and He is fully God.
- Jesus is the creator of all life
- He gives life to all who believe in Him and He is the light of truth for all men.
- The light of Jesus triumphs over darkness. There is no-one or no-thing can ever extinguish His light.

John encourages us in the midst of living in a sinful and dark world between Christ's resurrection and victory over death and His final judgment quoting Jesus,

John 16:33 I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world.

John, the one whom Jesus loved, had decades to study, reflect and contemplate the life and ministry of Jesus. I am excited to study his gospel with you and to grow to know Jesus and the power of His resurrection. John writes this letter to you saying,

John 20:31 these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.