

Jesus Christ, the Word of God

John 1:1-18

I. THE IDENTITY OF THE WORD (1:1-5)

A. Seven References to Christ as the Word

1. In the beginning was the Word (John 1:1).
2. The Word was with God (John 1:1).
3. The Word was God (John 1:1).
4. The Word was made flesh (John 1:14).
5. The disciples saw Him who is the Word of life (1John 1:1-2).
6. The Word is three in one with the Father and the Holy Ghost (1John 5:7).
7. He who returns to earth in power is called The Word of God (Revelation 19:13).
8. NOTES:
 - a. All references to Christ as the Word are in the writings of John.
 - b. These references to Christ as the Word are in all three types of New Testament writings: history, teaching, and prophecy.
 - c. 1John 5:7 is a much disputed verse. Notice that if it were removed, there would no longer be seven references to Christ as the Word, but only six.

B. The Fourfold Work of the Word

1. Thought
 - a. A word is the most basic unit of language that expresses thought. By doing so, it declares the hidden thought of the speaker.
 - b. Christ, as the Word, expresses the hidden thoughts of God. The Word declared the unseen God (John 1:18).
2. Revelation
 - a. A word opens a window to the understanding of the one speaking. It reveals his true character, personality, and intellect.
 - b. Christ, as the Word, revealed the true nature of God to man. The only way for man to know the Father is for the Son to reveal Him (Matthew 11:27). In seeing the Son, we see the Father (John 14:6-9). The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is seen in the face of Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:6).

3. Communication
 - a. A word imparts knowledge and truth to the listener. Through words, we understand what someone is saying to us.
 - b. Christ, as the Word, makes us to understand the Father and His truth for us. The words Christ spoke were not of Himself, but of the Father (John 3:34; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10; 17:8). The Father speaks to us through the Son (Hebrews 1:1-2).
4. Transformation
 - a. The active listener understands the word spoken to him and is changed by the experience. He may increase his knowledge or understanding. He may change his opinion or beliefs. But, in some way, he is changed.
 - b. Christ, as the Word, transforms those who listen to Him. He may be rejected (John 1:10-11) or received (John 1:12). To receive Him as the Word is to be empowered to become the sons of God. The believer who beholds the Word will be changed into the same image they behold (2 Corinthians 3:18).

C. Seven Truths Concerning the Word (John 1:1-5)

1. The eternity of the Word (v.1a)
 - a. In the beginning
 - (1) The beginning of creation (Genesis 1:1; Hebrews 1:10)
 - (2) The beginning of God's way (Proverbs 8:22-23)
 - (3) The beginning of beginnings (John 17:5, 24)
 - b. The Word already was; that is, He already existed (Micah 5:2; John 8:58).
 - c. Therefore, He is co-eternal with the Father (Psalm 90:2).
2. The personality of the Word (v.1b)
 - a. This refers to His identity as separate from the Father. He is "with God." That is, He is the companion of the Father, alongside the Father.
 - b. Doctrinally, the Word, though equal to and in union with the Father, is distinct from the Father in His person. This allows Him to fellowship with the Father (John 17:24).
 - c. This establishes the plurality of the Godhead (Genesis 1:26; 11:6-7; Isaiah 6:8; 1 John 5:7).
3. The deity of the Word (v.1c)
 - a. The "Word was God." He is one with the Father and the Spirit (John 10:30; 1 John 5:7).
 - b. This establishes the deity of Jesus Christ.

- c. This establishes the unity of the Godhead. Notice Isaiah 6:8, which asks, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” The “I” of God is equal to the “us” of the Godhead.
 4. The immutability of the Word (v.2)
 - a. Immutability refers to the unchanging nature of God.
 - b. The “same was in the beginning with God.” The same Word who “was God” and “was with God” is now made flesh (John 1:14). Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever (Hebrews 13:8).
 - c. This refutes the Mormon doctrine: “As we are, so he once was; as he is, so we may become.”
 5. The creativity of the Word (v.3, 10)
 - a. Jesus Christ, as the Word, is the person of the Godhead who directly created all things. See Ephesians 3:9; Colossians 1:15-16; Hebrews 1:2; 2:9-10.
 - b. Jesus Christ created all things by His word (Genesis 1:3; Psalm 33:6, 9; Hebrews 11:3).
 - c. This verse (John 1:3) refutes the doctrine that makes Christ a created being.
 6. The vitality of the Word (v.4)
 - a. The Word is life (John 11:25; 14:6).
 - b. The Word has life in Himself (John 5:26; 10:18).
 - c. The Word gives life to man (John 3:16; 10:10).
 7. The luminosity of the Word (v.4-5)
 - a. A light to men (v.4b; 8:12; 12:46)
 - b. A light to shine in darkness (v.5a; 12:35-36)
 - c. A light rejected by darkness (v.5b; 3:19-20)
- D. Both Christ and Scripture as the Word of God
1. Both are called the word of God.
 - a. Christ (John 1:1-2, 14; Revelation 19:13)
 - b. Scripture (1 Thessalonians 2:11-13; Ephesians 6:17)
 2. Both are called wonderful.
 - a. Christ (Isaiah 9:6)
 - b. Scripture (Psalm 119:129)
 3. Both are called truth.
 - a. Christ (John 14:6)
 - b. Scripture (John 17:17)

4. Both are called the light.
 - a. Christ (John 1:6-9)
 - b. Scripture (Psalm 119:105, 130)
5. Both are called the life.
 - a. Christ (John 11:25; 14:6)
 - b. Scripture (Philippians 2:14-16)
6. Both have been tried.
 - a. Christ (Isaiah 28:16)
 - b. Scripture (Psalm 12:6; 18:30)
7. Both are a stone of stumbling.
 - a. Christ (1 Peter 2:6-8)
 - b. Scripture (1 Peter 2:7-8)
8. Both are called precious.
 - a. Christ (1 Peter 2:6-7)
 - b. Scripture (2 Peter 1:4)
9. Both are essential to the new birth.
 - a. Christ (1 John 5:1)
 - b. Scripture (1 Peter 1:23, 25)
10. Both are eternal.
 - a. Christ (John 1:1)
 - b. Scripture (Psalm 119:89; Isaiah 40:6-8)
11. Notes:
 - a. The living Word and the written word are inseparable.
 - b. No one can reject the scriptures without rejecting Christ.
 - c. Christ as the Word can be known only through scripture as the word of God.

E. John Proves the Son to be Equal with the Father.

1. Equal in creation (John 1:3; Genesis 1:1)
2. Equal in His work (John 5:16-18)
3. Equal in life (John 5:26)
4. Equal in eternal existence (John 8:56-59; Exodus 3:14)
5. Equal in power (John 10:27-33)
6. Equal in glory (John 17:5)
7. Equal in receiving worship (John 20:27-29)

II. THE INTRODUCTION OF THE WORD BY JOHN THE BAPTIST (1:6-9)

A. He Was Sent from God (1:6-7).

1. The Man – John (v.6) “There was a man.”
 - a. God uses men.
 - (1) He seeks for a man (Jeremiah 5:1; Ezekiel 22:30).

- (2) Opening words of *Power Through Prayer* by E. M. Bounds:
“We are constantly on a stretch, if not on a strain, to devise new methods, new plans, new organizations to advance the Church and secure enlargement and efficiency for the gospel. This trend of the day has a tendency to lose sight of the man or sink the man in the plan of organization. God’s plan is to make much of the man, far more of him than of anything else. Men are God’s method. The Church is looking for better methods; God is looking for better men. ‘There was a man sent from God whose name was John.’”
 - b. God takes note of certain men.
 - (1) Job (Job 1:1, 8)
 - (2) Simeon (Luke 2:25)
 - c. God gave a special calling to John (Luke 1:13-17; Matthew 11:7-11).
 2. His Master – God (v.6) “sent from God”
 - a. He is called the prophet of the Highest (Luke 1:76).
 - b. He received the word of God (Luke 3:1-2).
 - c. Our highest calling is to please God (2 Timothy 2:4).
 3. His Mission – to Witness (v.7) “came for a witness”
 - a. The prophecies concerning John (Isaiah 40:3; Malachi 3:1)
 - b. The practice of his work (John 1:15, 29; 5:32-35)
 4. His Message – to Believe on the Light (v.7) “might believe”
- B. He Pointed to the Light (1:8-9).
1. He was not that Light (v.8).
 - a. He separated himself from the Light (John 1:19-20).
 - b. He exalted the Light above himself (John 1:26-27, 30).
 - c. He receded to the background in the presence of the Light (John 3:26-30).
 2. He bore witness to that Light (v.8, 29).
 3. He bore record of that Light (v.9).
 - a. As the true Light
 - b. As the universal Light – “which lighteth every man”
 - (1) Lighting every man that came into the world (Psalm 98:2; Titus 2:11)
 - a) Through the crucifixion (John 12:32; Romans 1:16-17)
 - b) Through the circumstances of history (Romans 1:18)

- c) Through the conscience (Romans 1:19)
- d) Through creation (Romans 1:20)
- (2) This refutes the Calvinistic doctrines of unconditional election and irresistible grace.

III. THE IMPACT OF THE WORD (1:10-13)

A. He Was Refused by the World (v.10; Acts 4:26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:6-8; 2 Corinthians 4:3-4; 1John 3:1).

- 1. Despite His presence in the world (John 18:19-21)
- 2. Despite His creation of the world (v.3)

B. He Was Rejected by His Own (v.11).

- 1. They were the object of His coming (Matthew 10:5-6; 15:24; Romans 15:8).
- 2. He was the object of their scorn (John 11:47-53; 19:14-15; Acts 3:13-15).

C. He Was Received by the Few (v.12-13).

- 1. Their belief (v.12)
 - a. They believed on His name (John 3:18; Acts 4:12).
 - b. They received Him as their Saviour (Colossians 2:6).
 - c. They were enabled to become the sons of God (Galatians 3:26; 1John 3:1-2).
 - (1) Notice that the power to become is given to those who believe and receive; they are not given power so that they can believe and receive.
 - (2) This, as the teaching of universal enlightenment in verse nine, refutes Calvinism. Christ draws all men to Him (John 12:32) and thereby enables them to trust in Him (John 6:44). But He only enables those who believe and receive to become the sons of God. This is how He can be the Saviour of all men, but “specially of those that believe” (1 Timothy 4:10).
- 2. Their birth (v.13)
 - a. Not by family association – “not of blood” (John 8:33-44)
 - b. Not by fleshly motions – “nor of the will of the flesh” (Romans 7:5)
 - c. Not by forceful decision – “nor of the will of man” (Romans 7:18)
- 3. Note: Four ways by which men can be the sons of God:
 - a. By creation (Luke 3:38)

- b. By redemption (Exodus 34:20); to redeem is to buy back – God bought us back from sin by the death of His Son on the cross.
 - c. By regeneration (1John 5:1) – We are born into the family of God (John 3:5-7).
 - d. By adoption (Galatians 4:5)
4. The seven “I am’s” of Christ in the Gospel of John (John 8:58; 18:5-6)
- a. The bread of life (John 6:35, 48, 51)
 - b. The light of the world (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46)
 - c. The door of the sheep (John 10:7, 9)
 - d. The good shepherd (John 10:11, 14)
 - e. The resurrection and the life (John 11:25)
 - f. The way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6)
 - g. The true vine (John 15:1, 5)

IV. THE INCARNATION OF THE WORD (1:14-18)

A. The Word Was Made Flesh (1:14).

- 1. The Word was God (v.1). The same Word (v.2) became man (v.14).
- 2. Accomplished by the Holy Ghost and the power of the Highest (Luke 1:35) – the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23)
- 3. Called the mystery of godliness (1 Timothy 3:16); as opposed to the mystery of iniquity (2 Thessalonians 2:7)
- 4. Made of a woman (Galatians 4:4); as the seed of the woman (Genesis 3:15)
- 5. Made of the seed of David (Romans 1:3) – Jesus is called the “son of David” 14 times, all in Matthew, Mark, and Luke (Matthew 1:1; 9:27; 21:9).
- 6. Made like unto his brethren (Hebrews 2:16-17)
- 7. Made in the likeness of sinful flesh (Romans 8:3)
 - a. He had the limitations of sinful flesh.
 - (1) He hungered (Luke 4:2; Matthew 21:18).
 - (2) He thirsted (John 19:28).
 - (3) He needed sleep (Mark 4:38).
 - (4) He suffered pain (Acts 1:3; 3:18).
 - b. He did not have the corruption of sinful flesh (Hebrews 7:26).
 - (1) He did no sin (1 Peter 2:22).
 - (2) He was without sin (Hebrews 4:15).
 - (3) He had no sin in Him (1John 3:5).
 - (4) He knew no sin (1 Corinthians 5:21).
 - (5) No man convinced Him of sin (John 8:46).

B. The Word Dwelt among Us (1:14).

1. The child is born but the Son is given (Isaiah 9:6); this reveals His pre-existence.
2. Doctrinal Issue: How much did the Son give up when He came to earth?
 - a. What He gave up
 - (1) He gave up His heavenly glory (John 17:5, 24); this refers to the outward appearance of His brilliance and majesty (Matthew 16:27; 24:30; Revelation 21:23).
 - (2) He gave up His heavenly reputation (Philippians 2:5-7).
 - (3) He gave up His heavenly riches (2 Corinthians 8:9).
 - (4) He limited His earthly knowledge (Mark 13:32).
 - b. What He did not give up
 - (1) He did not give up His deity (Matthew 1:23; 1 Timothy 3:16).
 - (2) He did not give up His omnipresence (John 3:13).
 - (3) He did not give up His omniscience (John 2:25); He only limited Himself in some areas.
 - (4) He did not give up His omnipotence (Matthew 8:26-27; John 2:9; 6:11-14, 19).
 - (5) He did not give up His holiness – “in him is no sin” (1 John 3:5).
 - (6) He did not give up His spiritual authority (Mark 1:27; Luke 5:20-24).

C. The Purpose of the Incarnation

1. To do the Father’s will (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38)
2. To give His life a ransom (Matthew 20:28; John 12:27)
3. To be touched with our infirmities (Hebrews 2:18; 4:14-16)
4. To leave us an example to follow (John 13:15; 1 Peter 2:21; 1 John 2:6)

D. They Beheld His Glory (1:14; Hebrews 1:3; 2 Corinthians 4:6).

1. The glory of His birth (Luke 2:8-14)
2. The glory of His baptism (Matthew 3:16-17)
3. The glory of His miracles (John 2:11; 11:4, 40)
4. The glory of His transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-5; 2 Peter 1:16-18)
5. The glory of the Father’s third testimony (John 12:27-28)
6. The glory of His resurrection (John 12:16; Philippians 3:21)
7. The glory of His ascension (Acts 1:9-11; Hebrews 2:9)

- E. The Witness of John (1:15)
 - 1. He cometh after me (John 1:27).
 - 2. He is preferred before me (John 1:27).
 - 3. He was before me (John 8:58).

- F. Having Received His Fullness (1:16)
 - 1. The fullness of the Son
 - a. He is full of grace and truth (1:14).
 - b. All fullness dwells in Him (Colossians 1:19).
 - c. In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9).
 - 2. The filling of the saints
 - a. We are complete in Him (Colossians 2:10).
 - b. We are to be filled with all the fullness of God (Ephesians 3:19).
 - c. We are to grow unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ (Ephesians 4:13).

- G. Having Received Grace for Grace (1:16)
 - 1. Grace in the place of grace; new grace to replace old grace
 - a. This is the doctrinal or dispensational meaning.
 - b. Old Testament Grace
 - (1) The emphasis is on grace being found.
 - a) There are 28 references to grace being found in the Old Testament.
 - b) There is only one reference to grace being found in the New Testament (Hebrews 4:16).
 - c) The picture is that of grace being found by those who seek it.
 - (2) Examples of grace being found
 - a) Noah (Genesis 6:8)
 - b) Moses (Exodus 33:13, 17)
 - c) Gideon (Judges 6:16-17)
 - c. New Testament Grace
 - (1) The emphasis is on grace being given.
 - a) There are 14 New Testament references to grace being given.
 - b) There are only two Old Testament references to grace being given (Psalm 84:11; Proverbs 3:34, which is quoted in the New Testament).
 - (2) Examples: Romans 12:3, 6; 15:15; 1 Corinthians 1:4; 3:10; Galatians 2:9; Ephesians 3:2, 7-8; 4:7; 2 Timothy 1:9; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5)

2. Grace on top of grace; continual gifts of grace according to the need
 - a. This is the practical or spiritual meaning.
 - b. Salvation is by grace (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:7).
 - c. Daily living for Christ is by grace.
 - (1) By the grace of God we are and we labor (1 Corinthians 15:10).
 - (2) By the grace of God we abound to every good work (2 Corinthians 9:8).
 - (3) By the sufficiency of God's grace, His strength is made perfect in our weakness (2 Corinthians 12:9).
 - a) "My grace is sufficient for thee."
 - b) "Our sufficiency is of God" (2 Corinthians 3:5).
 - (4) At the throne of grace, we can find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:16).

H. Interpretation of John 1:17

1. The key comparison is between the law and Christ.
 - a. Both came from God.
 - (1) Law (Deuteronomy 30:10)
 - (2) Christ (John 8:42)
 - b. Both were sent down to earth.
 - (1) Law (Deuteronomy 29:29)
 - (2) Christ (John 1:10)
 - c. Both were empowered or written by the finger of God.
 - (1) Law (Exodus 31:18)
 - (2) Christ (Luke 11:20)
 - (3) The identity of the finger of God (cp. Luke 11:20 with Matthew 12:28) is the Spirit of God.
 - (4) Applied to Christ (John 3:34)
 - d. Both are called the truth.
 - (1) Law (Psalm 119:142)
 - (2) Christ (John 14:6)
 - e. Both are called light.
 - (1) Law (Proverbs 6:23)
 - (2) Christ (John 8:12)
 - f. Both are called bread.
 - (1) Law (Deuteronomy 8:3)
 - (2) Christ (John 6:48, 51)
 - g. Both were broken by the sins of the people.
 - (1) Law (Exodus 32:19)
 - (2) Christ (Luke 22:19)
 - h. Both were resurrected by the power of God.
 - (1) Law (Exodus 34:1)
 - (2) Christ (Acts 2:23-24)

- i. As the two tables of stone represented one law, so Jesus Christ, being both God and man, is one person.
- j. As the two tables of stone were written within and without (Exodus 32:15), so Christ was totally pure within and without.
2. God, even in the Old Testament, is both truth and grace (Exodus 34:5-7).
3. The law that God sent down was truth (Psalm 119:142), but instead of being grace, it was full of judgment (Exodus 24:3).
4. But Christ contained within Himself all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). He could not show only a part of the nature of God, but must reveal the fullness of the nature of God (John 14:9). Therefore, in Christ, we see both truth and grace together in their fullest sense.
5. In addition, the Old Testament has numerous references to truth and mercy (Psalm 25:10; 57:3; 61:7; 85:10; 89:14; Proverbs 3:3; 16:6).
6. But it is in the New Testament in Christ Jesus that grace and truth are fully joined on earth (John 1:14, 17).
7. Colossians 1:5-6 brings the two concepts together:
 - a. Our hope is based on “the word of the truth of the gospel” (v.5).
 - b. By this gospel we “knew the grace of God in truth” (v.6); this explains how Jesus Christ is full of grace and truth.

I. No Man Hath Seen God (1:18)

1. No man has seen God in His full glory while in the flesh (Exodus 33:20; John 6:46; 1 Timothy 6:16; 1 John 4:12).
2. God has at times appeared in a veiled glory (Exodus 33:20-23; 1 Kings 8:12).
3. But we can see the Father in the face of Jesus Christ (Matthew 11:27; 2 Corinthians 4:6).

J. The Only Begotten Son (1:18)

1. The Biblical use of “only begotten”
 - a. Once refers to Isaac (Hebrews 11:17)
 - b. Five times refers to Christ (John 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9)
 - c. Indicates a unique relationship
2. The different ways in which Jesus is the Son of God
 - a. He is the Son of God by merit of His eternal relationship with the Father (John 17:24).
 - (1) Nature of the eternal Sonship of Christ. It shows the mysterious (not physical) nature of this relationship; it does not mean that Christ had a beginning or birth. As with Isaac (Hebrews 11:17;

see Genesis 22:12), it refers to His special relationship more than to His origin.

- (2) Proofs of the eternal Sonship of Christ
 - a) He was God's Son before He was born as a baby in the manger.
 - i) He was given (Isaiah 9:6; John 3:16).
 - ii) He was sent (1 John 4:9).
 - b) He is "as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14); the word *as* shows that this title deals with His relationship to the Father and not with His origin.
 - c) How could Christ be born more than once? If you are saved, you have been born twice.
 - d) How could Christ exist as the Son before He was born as the Son?
 - i) This can also be answered by referring to believers. If you are saved, you have been born two times, but you existed before either of those births.
 - ii) In like manner, Christ was the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world (Revelation 13:8). In this sense, He was slain before He was even born.
- b. He is the Son of God by merit of His rule over all creation (Colossians 1:15; compare Revelation 3:14); in this, He is declared to be the firstborn of every creature as Israel is declared to be the firstborn of God (Exodus 4:22); it is simply an exalted position.
- c. He is the Son of God by merit of the virgin birth (Luke 1:35).
- d. He is the Son of God by merit of His resurrection from the dead (Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:33; Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5; Romans 1:3-4; Hebrews 5:5).
 - (1) Psalm 2 is a kingdom psalm. It refers to the glorious reign of Christ. The context refers to His coming to power over all the earth. The begetting of verse 7 does not refer to His virgin birth in a manger. It refers to His exaltation on a high throne. It matches the victory of Colossians 2:15.
 - (2) Acts 13:33 interprets the begetting as referring to the resurrection.
 - (3) Christ is identified as the "firstborn from the dead" (Colossians 1:18) and the "first begotten of the dead" (Revelation 1:5). These verses refer to His resurrection.
 - (4) In Romans 1:3-4, Christ is declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. That matches, "Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee."
 - (5) In Hebrews 5:5, the glorification of Christ is connected with the fulfillment of Psalm 2:7.