



# The GOSPEL of JOHN

SO THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

## The Greatness of Christ

### Scripture

*John 1:1–3 (ESV)*

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

*John 1:14 (ESV)*

*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.*

### Sermon Guide

#### An Eyewitness Account

**This portrait of Jesus is written by an eyewitness.** Five times in this Gospel we find the unusual words “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2, 7, 21:20). **This book is John’s divinely inspired witness to the events of Jesus’s life and what they meant for us.**

#### “The Word”: Jesus

*“In the beginning was the Word.” The most important thing to know about this Word is found 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.” The Word refers to Jesus Christ.*

**John knows what he’s about to write in these 21 chapters. He is going to tell us the story of what Jesus Christ did and what he taught. This is a book about the life and work of the man Jesus Christ — the man that John knew and saw and heard and touched with his hands (1 John 1:1). He had flesh and blood.**

#### The Ultimate Things About Jesus

It took John more than three years to figure out the fullness of who Jesus was. But he does not want his readers to take more than three verses to find out what took him so long to know. He wants us to have in our minds, fixed and clear, from the beginning of his Gospel, the eternal majesty and deity and Creator rights of Jesus Christ.

#### Each of the Gospels presents Christ with a distinctive emphasis.

John is unique in his powerful presentation of Jesus as the great Creator-God of the universe. This Gospel’s continuing effect on Christians is equally profound because in John’s account believers find an ongoing source for expanding their concept of the Savior’s greatness.

#### Jesus in His Infinite Majesty

John means for us to read this Gospel worshipfully, humbly, submissively, awestruck that the man at the wedding and at the well and on the mountain is Creator of the universe. This is the way John wrote — the way God meant for him to put it together.

“In the very first words out of the end of John’s pen he means to stun you and blow you away with the identity of this man who became flesh and dwelt among us. So there is no mistaking. John means for us to read every word of this Gospel with the clear, solid, amazed knowledge that Jesus Christ was with God and was God and that the one who laid down his life for us (John 15:13) created the universe.

## Why Word?

Why did John choose to call Jesus “*the Word*?” “*In the beginning was the Word.*” John calls Jesus the Word because he had come to see the words of Jesus as the truth of God and the person of Jesus as the truth of God in such a unified way that Jesus himself — in his coming, and working, and teaching, and dying and rising — was the final and decisive message of God. Or to put it more simply: what God had to say to us was not only or mainly what Jesus said, but who Jesus was and what he did. His words clarified himself and his work. But his self and his work were the main truth God was revealing. “I am the truth,” Jesus said (John 14:6).” —John Piper

### *Eternally Preexistent*

**“In the beginning was the Word.” There never was a time when Christ did not exist because the word “was” is in the Greek imperfect tense, which means “was continuing. Jesus Christ is preexistent. He always was continuing.** (The same thought can be found in 2 Corinthians 8:9, Philippians 2:6ff., and Colossians 1:17.)

### *Eternally in Relationship*

The Father and the Son were continually face to face. The preposition “with” bears the idea of nearness, along with a sense of movement toward God. That is to say, there has always existed the deepest equality and intimacy in the Holy Trinity. The Word, Jesus Christ was with God, and he was God. He is God, and he has a relationship with God. He is God, and he is the image of God, perfectly reflecting all that God is and standing forth from all eternity as the fullness of deity in a distinct Person. There is one divine essence and three persons.

### *Eternally God*

The exact meaning is that the Word was God in essence and character. He was God in every way, though he was a separate person from God the Father. The phrase perfectly preserves Jesus’ separate identity, while also stating that he is God. This was his continuing identity from all eternity. He was God constantly.

### *Eternally Creator*

Jesus is the Creator of the universe. “Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” The fact of Christ’s Creatorship is the consistent witness of the New Testament. Colossians 1:16–17 says: “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.” The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.” Revelation 4:11 states: “You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.”

**We can trust such a God with everything. Because he is Creator, he knows just what his creation, his people, need.**

**He is our Creator. Are you resting in him? Have you entrusted your life to him? Considering the greatness of Christ, nothing else makes any sense at all.**

### *Jesus: God’s Decisive, Final Message*

In [Revelation 19:13](#) (by the same author as the Gospel), he describes Jesus’s glorious return: “He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is *the Word of God.*” Jesus is called *The Word of God*, as he returns to earth.

As John begins his Gospel, he has in view all the revelation, all the truth, all the witness, all the glory, all the light, all the words that come out of Jesus in his living and teaching and dying and rising, and he sums up all that revelation of God with the name: He is “the Word” — the first, final, ultimate, decisive, absolutely true and reliable Word.

### *Conclusion*

John concludes his prologue with the sentence, “*No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known*” (v. 18). Jesus is the explanation (the exegesis) of God the Father.

The greatness of Christ explains the greatness of the Father. The greatness of Christ’s love explains the greatness of the Father’s love. And the greatness of Christ’s grace explains the greatness of the Father’s grace. May we continue to have our concept of God raised!<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Hughes, R. K. (1999). *John: that you may believe* (pp. 15–22). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.