

# BEFORE THE BEGINNING

The Eternal Word and  
Humanity's Search for Truth

AN EXPOSITORY STUDY  
THROUGH JOHN 1:1-5

By Steve Weiler

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## About the Author

Steve Weiler is a Bible teacher, musician, and technology professional living in Middle Tennessee. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Christian Ministry and a Master's degree in Theology, with a strong passion for expository teaching, Biblical theology, and helping believers think deeply about Scripture in an increasingly confused culture.

Drawing from both theological study and practical ministry experience, Steve seeks to connect timeless Biblical truth to the questions and challenges facing modern society. His teaching emphasizes the authority of Scripture, the centrality of Jesus Christ, and the importance of understanding truth through a Biblical worldview.

*Before the Beginning* was written to help believers better understand the profound theological depth of John 1:1–5 and the eternal significance of Jesus Christ as the Word made flesh.



## Introduction

The opening verses of John's Gospel are among the most profound and majestic passages in all of Scripture. In only five verses, the apostle John introduces themes so deep and expansive that believers have studied them for nearly two thousand years and still continue to uncover new treasures within them.

John introduces us to the eternal nature of Christ, the deity of Christ, creation itself, the power of God's Word, the Trinitarian nature of God, spiritual life, divine truth, light and darkness, and the victory of Christ over evil.

Unlike Matthew, Mark, and Luke, John does not begin with a genealogy, the birth of Christ, or the beginning of Jesus' earthly ministry.

John begins before Bethlehem.

Before Abraham.

Before Genesis.

Before time itself.

He begins with eternity.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." — John 1:1 (ESV)

These verses are not merely poetic introductions. They are theological foundations. Everything John teaches throughout the rest of his Gospel rests upon the truths introduced here in the opening verses.

This study is designed to help us understand why John chose the title "The Word" — in Greek, Logos — how both Jews and Greeks would have understood this concept, the eternal and divine nature of Christ, the relationship between Christ as the Logos and Christ as Truth, why Jesus alone is the source of eternal life and light, and why these truths matter so deeply in our own age of confusion.

As we study this passage, we must remember that John is not merely giving information. He is calling us to worship. John wants his readers to see Jesus rightly, because everything else in the Christian life depends upon who Jesus truly is.

John does not introduce Jesus as merely a teacher, prophet, reformer, or religious example. He introduces Him as the eternal Word who was with God, who was God, through whom all things were made, and in whom alone are life and light.

That means John 1:1–5 is not a minor opening paragraph. It is one of the great theological gateways into the Christian faith.

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## John 1:1–5 (ESV)

*“<sup>1</sup>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. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”*

These verses function almost like the theological overture to John’s entire Gospel. The themes introduced here continue throughout the rest of the book: life, light, truth, belief, rejection, glory, eternal existence, creation, and the deity of Christ.

John carefully introduces these themes immediately because he wants readers to understand who Jesus truly is before they encounter His miracles, teachings, death, and resurrection.

Before Jesus turns water into wine, John tells us He is the eternal Word. Before Jesus speaks with Nicodemus about the new birth, John tells us that in Him was life. Before Jesus says, “I am the light of the world,” John tells us that the life was the light of men. Before Jesus stands before Pilate and hears the question, “What is truth?” John has already shown us that truth is embodied in Christ Himself.

John’s Gospel is not merely a biography. It is a theological testimony intended to bring people to faith. Near the end of the Gospel, John states his purpose clearly:

“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.” — John 20:31

Everything begins here, in John 1:1–5.

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## Historical Background of John's Gospel

John's Gospel was likely written between 85–95 A.D., making it probably the last Gospel account written. This historical setting is important because the world had changed dramatically since the death and resurrection of Christ.

By the time John wrote, Jerusalem had already been destroyed by Rome in 70 A.D. The temple no longer stood. Most of the apostles had died. Christianity was spreading throughout the Roman Empire. False teachings concerning Christ were emerging. Greek philosophy strongly influenced the culture. Christians increasingly faced pressure and persecution.

John was now an elderly apostle and likely the last surviving member of the original twelve apostles. He had walked with Jesus, heard His teaching, seen His miracles, stood near the cross, witnessed the empty tomb, and helped shepherd the early church through some of its most formative decades.

Church history places John in Ephesus during the latter years of his life. Ephesus was one of the great cities of the Roman world. It was a center of commerce, religion, pagan worship, Roman influence, and Greek intellectual thought. It was home to the famous temple of Artemis and was deeply shaped by the philosophical and religious atmosphere of the Greco-Roman world.

Because of this, John was writing not only to Jewish readers familiar with the Old Testament, but also into a world shaped by Greek philosophy and abstract thinking. This becomes extremely important when John introduces Jesus as “the Word” — the Logos.

John's opening would have immediately captured the attention of both Jews and Greeks, but for different reasons. For the Jew, “the Word” connected to the God of Genesis, the God who spoke creation into existence, the God who revealed Himself through the prophets, and the God whose Word never returns void. For the Greek, Logos connected to the philosophical search for meaning, reason, order, and ultimate reality behind the universe.

John masterfully brings both worlds together and declares that the answer to both is found in Jesus Christ.

The Jews had long known that God creates and reveals through His Word. The Greeks had long searched for the rational principle behind reality. John now proclaims that the eternal Word is not merely a spoken command, nor an abstract principle, nor a philosophical force, but a Person — Jesus Christ Himself.

## Words, Revelation, and the Eternal Word

Words are powerful. Scripture never treats words as meaningless or trivial.

Human words can encourage or destroy, heal or wound, reveal truth or spread lies, unite or divide, strengthen faith or deceive multitudes, comfort the broken or deepen despair. Entire nations have been moved by words alone. Wars have begun because of words. Revivals have spread because of words. False religions have deceived millions through words. The Gospel itself is proclaimed through words.

Proverbs 18:21 says:

“Death and life are in the power of the tongue.”

Jesus Himself taught:

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” — Matthew 12:34

Words reveal the inner person. What comes from our mouths often exposes what truly exists in our hearts. Words are not merely sounds. They are expressions of thought, desire, conviction, belief, love, anger, pride, humility, truth, or deception. Words take the intangible thoughts of man and make them tangible.

But Scripture goes even further. God created through words.

### Creation Through the Word

Genesis 1 repeatedly says:

“And God said...”

God spoke, and light appeared. God spoke, and the heavens were formed. God spoke, and dry land emerged. God spoke, and life came into existence.

Psalms 33:6 declares:

“By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and by the breath of his mouth all their host.”

God’s Word is not merely informative. It is authoritative, creative, powerful, and effective. When God speaks, reality responds.

This gives incredible weight to John’s opening statement. When John calls Jesus “the Word,” he is connecting Christ directly to the creative, authoritative, self-revealing power of God Himself.

**In human experience, words can influence reality. In God's case, His Word creates reality.** Human words may persuade. God's Word brings worlds into existence. Human words may reveal thoughts. God's Word reveals the eternal character and will of God.

This is why John's use of "Word" is so profound. Jesus is not simply one who speaks for God. He is the eternal self-expression of God. He is God revealed, God made known, God come near.

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## Why Did John Use the Title "The Word"?

John could have introduced Jesus with many different titles: Messiah, King, Savior, Son of David, Son of Abraham, Son of Man. Each of those titles is true and significant. Yet John begins with something even more foundational:

### **"The Word"**

Why?

Because a word reveals thought, meaning, reason, truth, wisdom, and the inner nature of a person. Without words, thoughts remain hidden. Words are the outward expression of inward reality.

In the same way, God is invisible and transcendent. Humanity cannot discover God through human wisdom alone. We cannot climb high enough intellectually, morally, or spiritually to uncover the fullness of who God is. God must reveal Himself.

Jesus is that revelation.

John 1:18 says:

"No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."

Hebrews 1:3 says:

"He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature..."

Jesus is not merely a messenger from God. He is the perfect revelation of God. To see Christ is to see the character of God displayed perfectly. This is why Jesus later said in John 14:9:

"Whoever has seen me has seen the Father."

A human word reveals something about the person who speaks. Christ, the eternal Word, perfectly reveals God. He reveals God's holiness, compassion, truth, righteousness, mercy, authority, glory, and love.

This is why Christianity cannot reduce Jesus to a moral teacher. A moral teacher may explain ethical principles. A prophet may speak on behalf of God. A philosopher may search for meaning. But Jesus is more than all of these. He is the Word who was with God and was God.

John's language is deliberate. He wants us to understand that God has not remained hidden. He has spoken finally, fully, and personally in His Son.

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## The Jewish Understanding of "The Word"

John's Jewish readers would immediately connect his opening words to Genesis 1:1:

"In the beginning..."

This is intentional. John is connecting Jesus directly to the God of creation.

Throughout the Old Testament, God creates through His Word, reveals Himself through His Word, governs through His Word, judges through His Word, and saves through His Word.

The prophets repeatedly declared:

"Thus says the LORD..."

For the Jewish mind, God and His Word were inseparably connected. God's Word carried His authority, His power, His will, His truth, and His covenant promises.

Isaiah 55:11 says:

"So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty..."

God's Word always accomplishes His purposes.

The Jewish reader would also remember that God's Word is connected with wisdom, revelation, covenant, and creation. The God of Israel is not silent. He speaks. He reveals. He commands. He promises. He judges. He comforts. He saves.

When John says, "In the beginning was the Word," he is not introducing a foreign idea to Jewish readers. He is showing them that the God who spoke in Genesis, the God who spoke through Moses, the God who spoke through the prophets, has now revealed Himself personally and climactically in Jesus Christ.

This helps explain why John's opening is so breathtaking. He is not merely saying Jesus is important. He is placing Jesus within the very identity and activity of God Himself.

The Word through whom creation came into being has entered history.

The God who spoke light into darkness has come as Light into a dark world.

The God who revealed Himself through His Word has now revealed Himself through the incarnate Word.

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## The Greek Understanding of Logos

The Greeks also had a concept of Logos. Greek philosophers used the term to describe reason, wisdom, cosmic order, the rational principle behind the universe, and the source of harmony and meaning.

The Greek world deeply valued philosophy and intellectual searching. They constantly pursued questions such as:

- What is ultimate reality?
- What holds the universe together?
- What gives life meaning?
- Is there purpose behind existence?
- Is there an underlying order behind the chaos of life?

Heraclitus wrote:

“Listening not to me but to the logos, it is wise to agree that all things are one.”

Another fragment says:

“Although the logos is common, most people live as if they had their own private understanding.”

The Stoics later viewed the logos almost as the soul of the universe, the rational order behind reality, or a divine organizing force.

But for the Greeks, logos was generally understood as impersonal.

This is where John radically transforms the idea. John says the Logos is not merely a principle. The Logos is not merely reason. The Logos is not merely the structure of reality. The Logos is not a vague divine force.

The Logos is personal.

The Logos is eternal.

The Logos is God.

The Logos created all things.

The Logos gives life and light.

This would have been astonishing to Greek readers. John is saying that the rational order behind the universe is not ultimately an idea to be studied, but a Person to be known.

Ancient philosophy could ask profound questions, *but it could not provide the full answer*. John declares that the answer is Christ.

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## Heraclitus, Ephesus, and the Logos

An especially fascinating historical connection emerges when we remember that the Greek philosopher Heraclitus was a native and citizen of Ephesus. This is significant because church history also places the apostle John in Ephesus during the latter years of his ministry. In a remarkable sense, John was writing the true answer to the kinds of questions Heraclitus had raised centuries earlier, in the very city where Heraclitus had lived.

Heraclitus lived around 500 B.C., nearly six centuries before John wrote his Gospel, and he became one of the earliest Greek philosophers associated with the concept of logos.

Heraclitus believed that although life constantly changes and flows, there is nevertheless an underlying rational principle that gives order and meaning to reality. One of his famous ideas was that “everything flows.” Yet behind this continual change, Heraclitus believed there existed a logos — a unifying rational principle holding reality together.

This becomes incredibly interesting when John opens his Gospel with:

“In the beginning was the Word (Logos)...”

Since Ephesus was heavily influenced by Greek thought, many scholars believe John intentionally used the term Logos to capture the attention of both Jewish and Greek audiences.

However, John was not borrowing Greek philosophy as truth. Rather, he was taking a familiar concept and filling it with Biblical revelation.

The Greeks searched for meaning, order, and ultimate reality. John declares that the answer to that search is Jesus Christ.

Heraclitus viewed logos as impersonal, abstract, philosophical, and an ordering principle. John reveals the Logos as personal, divine, eternal, Creator, Savior, and the very revelation of God Himself.

This is similar to what the apostle Paul did in Athens in Acts 17. When Paul spoke to the Greek philosophers at the Areopagus, he used familiar cultural references as bridges into Biblical truth. Paul pointed to their altar “to the unknown god” and then proclaimed the true God revealed in Scripture.

Likewise, John appears to use the familiar Greek idea of logos and then reveals that the true Logos is not merely a force, philosophy, or abstract principle — but Jesus Christ Himself.

This demonstrates the remarkable wisdom and inspiration behind John’s Gospel. John speaks into his culture without surrendering to it. He uses familiar language, but he fills that language with divine truth.

That is an important lesson for Christians today. We can recognize the questions culture is asking without accepting the answers culture gives. We can use cultural bridges, but the destination must always be Christ.

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## The Hollywood Connection

Modern films and stories often explore themes such as reality versus illusion, truth and deception, identity, sacrifice, transcendence, redemption, awakening, and the battle between light and darkness.

This should not surprise believers. Scripture teaches in Ecclesiastes 3:11 that God: “has put eternity into man’s heart...”

Human beings cannot escape the longing for meaning, purpose, truth, and transcendence because mankind was created in the image of God. Even in an increasingly secular culture, humanity continues searching for answers to life's deepest questions.

Ancient Greeks searched through philosophy. Modern culture often searches through storytelling, entertainment, psychology, technology, spirituality, and self-discovery. Yet beneath all these searches lies the same restless longing ultimately answered only in Jesus Christ, the eternal Word.

The early church theologian Augustine of Hippo famously wrote:

“You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in You.”  
(*Confessions*, 1.1.1)

Augustine recognized that the human soul was created for God and therefore remains spiritually restless apart from Him.

Centuries later, the French philosopher and mathematician Blaise Pascal similarly observed that there is a God-shaped emptiness within man that cannot be filled by created things, but only by God Himself (Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, VII, 425). The exact wording often quoted today is a paraphrase, but the idea reflects Pascal's argument that fallen humanity tries to fill its emptiness with countless substitutes while avoiding the God for whom it was made.

This gives us a helpful way to understand why many stories resonate so deeply. Hollywood often asks the right questions, even when it does not provide the true answer. Movies often awaken longing, provoke thought, explore transcendence, and wrestle with questions of truth, identity, and redemption.

But many films remain spiritually vague. They may invite people to think, but they rarely call people to repent. They may explore truth, but they seldom identify truth as Christ. They may stir longing, but they do not usually lead people to surrender before the holy God of Scripture.

This is not simply a Hollywood problem. It is a human problem.

Humanity often wants meaning without repentance, spirituality without authority, transcendence without holiness, enlightenment without transformation, and peace without surrender.

That is why John's Gospel is so powerful. John does not leave the search vague. He does not present truth as an abstraction. He identifies the source of life, light, truth, and meaning as Jesus Christ. Two modern examples help illustrate this connection.

## The Star Wars Analogy

In some ways, the Greek understanding of logos resembles the modern idea of “the Force” in Star Wars. The Force is presented as unseen, powerful, permeating the universe, holding reality together, and existing beyond the material world.

This makes the analogy useful in helping modern readers understand how many Greeks thought about ultimate reality. The Force is mysterious, transcendent, and spiritual, but it is not personal in the Biblical sense. It is not holy. It is not Creator. It is not covenantal. It does not command repentance. It does not reveal moral truth in the way the God of Scripture does.

John radically transforms this kind of concept.

The Logos is not a force.

*The Logos is a Person.*

Not merely an abstract principle, cosmic energy, impersonal reason, or philosophical order, but eternal, divine, personal, holy, Creator, relational, and worthy of worship.

John reveals the Logos as Jesus Christ Himself.

This would have shocked many Greek readers, and it remains shocking today. People are often comfortable with vague spirituality. They may accept the idea of a “higher power,” universal energy, spiritual consciousness, or cosmic balance. But the Biblical claim is far more specific and far more demanding.

John does not say there is merely a spiritual power behind the universe. He says the eternal Word was with God and was God, and that all things were made through Him.

A force can be imagined, shaped, or manipulated. A personal God must be worshiped, trusted, obeyed, and loved.

That is a major difference.

## The Matrix and the Search for Reality

The movie *The Matrix* provides another helpful example. The story explores illusion versus reality, hidden truth, awakening, bondage, liberation, and the painful process of seeing things as they truly are. These themes resonate because human beings instinctively sense that something is wrong with both the world and themselves.

*The Matrix* asks, “What is real?” John’s Gospel answers, “Christ is ultimate reality.”

*The Matrix* presents awakening through knowledge. John presents new life through Christ.

*The Matrix* portrays people trapped in illusion. John describes humanity walking in darkness until the Light shines.

The point is not to condemn every work of art or dismiss every film. Rather, the goal is to discern the deeper longing beneath the story. Human creativity often reveals the hunger of the human heart. Even secular stories can expose the questions people are asking.

But Christians must not stop with the questions. We must point people to the answer. We must do as Paul did in Acts 17, take the unknown that lies in the shadows, and make it known by His light (John 1:4).

John declares that the answer is not an impersonal force, hidden knowledge, self-discovery, or human enlightenment.

The answer is Jesus Christ, the eternal Word made flesh.

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## Reflection Questions

1. Why do you think people are often more comfortable with the idea of an impersonal spiritual force than a personal God?
  2. What changes when God is personal instead of merely a force?
  3. Why does modern culture often prefer spirituality without submission to God?
  4. Why are people often interested in spirituality but resistant to Biblical authority?
  5. What does it mean personally that the Creator of the universe is relational?
  6. Why do you think stories about awakening, light, truth, sacrifice, and redemption resonate so deeply with people?
  7. How can Christians use cultural examples wisely without allowing culture to reshape the Gospel?
-

# Three Great Truths About the Word

John 1:1–3 gives us three great truths about the Word. These are not small theological details. They form the foundation for understanding who Jesus is.

## 1. The Word is Pre-Existent

John 1:1 says:

“In the beginning was the Word...”

Notice carefully: the Word already existed in the beginning. John does not say, “In the beginning the Word came into existence.” The Word already was.

Anything existing before creation itself must be eternal. Jesus did not begin in Bethlehem. Bethlehem was His incarnation, not His origin.

He existed before time.

Cross references include:

- Colossians 1:17 — “He is before all things...”
- John 17:5 — Jesus speaks of the glory He had with the Father before the world existed
- Micah 5:2 — the Messiah’s coming forth is “from of old, from ancient days”
- Hebrews 13:8 — “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever”

This means Christ is outside the realm of created time. He is eternal, uncreated, and self-existent.

This is crucial. If Jesus were merely a created being, He could not be the eternal Savior. A created being cannot bear the full weight of divine worship. A created being cannot be the source of eternal life. A created being cannot reveal God perfectly. John begins by removing all such possibilities.

The Word already was.

## 2. The Word is Co-Existent

John says:

“The Word was with God...”

This indicates distinction of persons. Then John says:

“The Word was God.”

This indicates equality of essence.

John is introducing the Trinitarian nature of God. There is distinction: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Yet there is unity of divine essence.

Genesis 1:26 says:

“Let us make man in our image...”

Genesis 1:2 speaks of:

“the Spirit of God...”

Hebrews 1:3 says Christ is:

“the exact imprint of his nature.”

Jesus is fully God. Not partially God. Not god-like. Not merely divine in a lesser sense. Fully God.

This is one of the clearest declarations of Christ’s deity in all of Scripture. John guards us from two errors at once. He does not allow us to collapse the Son into the Father as though there is no personal distinction. But he also does not allow us to separate the Son from God as though He is less than divine.

The Word was with God.

The Word was God.

Both truths must be held together.

### 3. The Word is Self-Existent

John 1:3 says:

“All things were made through him...”

John strengthens this further:

“and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

John leaves no exceptions. If all created things came through Christ, then Christ Himself cannot be created. He is Creator, not creation.

This directly opposes ancient and modern false teachings that claim Jesus is merely a prophet, an angel, a created being, or a lesser god.

Colossians 1:16 says:

“For by him all things *were* (past tense) created...and *are* (present tense) held together”  
(v17 – notes mine)

Hebrews 1:2 says God created the world through the Son. Hebrews 1:3 also says Christ:  
“upholds the universe by the word of his power.”

Christ not only created the universe. He presently sustains it.

This should deepen our worship. The One who took on flesh, walked dusty roads, touched lepers, wept at Lazarus’s tomb, and died on the cross is the One through whom all things were made.

The Creator entered His own creation to redeem sinners.

That is the glory of John’s Gospel.

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## Life and Light

John 1:4 says:

“In him was life...”

The Greek language uses different words for life. *Bios* can refer to physical life. *Zoe* refers to spiritual and eternal life. John uses *Zoe*.

Jesus is the source of eternal life. Physical life eventually ends. But the life Christ gives is eternal.

John also introduces another major theme:

### Light

Psalm 36:9 says:

“For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.”

John 8:12 says:

“I am the light of the world.”

Light in Scripture often represents truth, holiness, righteousness, revelation, purity, and salvation. Darkness represents sin, deception, rebellion, spiritual blindness, and ignorance of God.

Isaiah 9:2 prophesied:

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.”

John is presenting Jesus as the fulfillment of these Old Testament promises.

This connection between life and light is important. Spiritual life produces spiritual sight. Apart from Christ, people are not merely uninformed; they are spiritually blind. They do not simply need better information. They need life.

That is why the Gospel is more than education. It is resurrection. It is illumination. It is God shining light into the heart.

Paul echoes this in 2 Corinthians 4:6:

“For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts...”

The same God who spoke light into physical darkness in Genesis speaks light into spiritual darkness through Christ.

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## The Light Overcomes the Darkness

John 1:5 says:

“The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

Darkness cannot defeat light. Even a small candle changes a dark room. Likewise, Christ shines into a fallen world.

This explains why the Gospel often makes people uncomfortable. Light exposes darkness. People naturally resist exposure.

Jesus said in John 3:19:

“people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.”

But John assures believers that darkness will not ultimately prevail.

1 John 4:4 says:

“Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

No matter how dark culture becomes, the light of Christ continues shining. The Gospel remains powerful. Truth remains truth. Christ remains King.

This is deeply encouraging for believers living in confusing times. We may feel surrounded by moral darkness, cultural confusion, spiritual deception, and hostility to truth. But John reminds us that darkness does not have the final word.

The Light shines.

The darkness has not overcome it.

This does not mean the darkness is passive. Darkness resists the light. It hides from the light. It hates the light. But it cannot conquer the light.

The Christian's confidence is not in cultural strength, political influence, or personal ability. Our confidence is in Christ, the Light that darkness cannot overcome.

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## The Word Became Flesh

### The Glory of the Incarnation

John's prologue reaches its breathtaking climax in 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.”***

After establishing that the Logos is eternal, divine, Creator, Life, and Light, John now declares something astonishing:

### The Eternal Word Entered Human History

The Creator entered creation.

The One who spoke galaxies into existence took on human flesh.

This is one of the most profound truths in all of Christianity:

God became man.

John does not merely say that the Word appeared human, resembled humanity, or temporarily visited mankind. He says:

“The Word became flesh.”

The eternal Son of God truly entered the human condition.

He experienced:

- hunger
- fatigue
- sorrow
- temptation
- rejection
- suffering

Yet without sin.

This is why the incarnation is so central to Christianity. Without the incarnation:

- there is no atoning sacrifice
- no substitutionary death
- no bodily resurrection
- no reconciliation between God and man

The incarnation reveals both:

- the holiness of God
- and the love of God

God did not remain distant from humanity’s brokenness. The Word came near.

“Dwelt Among Us”

John’s wording is deeply significant.

The phrase:

“dwelt among us”

literally carries the idea of:

## “Tabernacled Among Us”

This would immediately remind Jewish readers of the Old Testament tabernacle where God’s presence dwelt among His people in the wilderness.

Exodus 40:34 says:

“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”

In the Old Testament, God’s glory dwelt in the tabernacle and later in the temple.

Now John declares that the glory of God has been revealed fully in Jesus Christ.

The presence of God is no longer centered in a building of stone or fabric, but in the incarnate Son Himself.

Jesus becomes the true meeting place between God and humanity.

This is why John says:

“We have seen his glory...”

The disciples did not merely hear abstract teachings about God. They lived with Christ, walked beside Him, heard His voice, witnessed His miracles, and beheld the glory of God revealed through Him.

## Full of Grace and Truth

John describes Jesus as:

“full of grace and truth.”

This is a beautiful combination.

Truth without grace crushes people.

Grace without truth deceives people.

But in Christ, grace and truth exist perfectly together.

Jesus never compromised truth, yet He welcomed sinners.

He confronted sin, yet offered mercy.

He exposed darkness, yet brought salvation.

This perfectly fits the themes already introduced earlier in John’s prologue:

- light
- life
- truth
- revelation

The incarnation demonstrates that God's truth is not cold abstraction. Truth was revealed personally in Christ.

### Why the Incarnation Matters Today

Modern culture often wants spirituality without incarnation.

People may accept:

- vague spirituality
- mystical experiences
- cosmic consciousness
- philosophical truth
- impersonal transcendence

But Christianity makes a far more specific claim:

### God Entered History

The eternal Logos became flesh.

This is why Christianity cannot simply be reduced to philosophy, ethics, or inspiration.

Christianity is rooted in a historical Person:

#### **Jesus Christ.**

The Incarnation also reveals humanity's value. God did not take on the nature of angels. He took on human flesh.

Hebrews 2:14 says:

“Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things...”

Christ entered our condition in order to redeem us from within it.

The eternal Word stepped into human suffering so that sinners might be reconciled to God.

## Reflection

John's Gospel begins before creation itself, yet it ultimately leads us to the astonishing reality that the eternal Creator entered His own creation.

The Word did not remain distant from humanity's darkness.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

And through Him, fallen sinners may behold the glory of God, receive eternal life, walk in the light, and know the Father personally through the Son.

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## Conclusion

### Why John's Gospel Matters Today

John's Gospel speaks powerfully into the modern world because humanity continues asking the same foundational questions:

- What is truth?
- What is reality?
- Why are we here?
- Why does evil exist?
- Is there meaning behind the universe?
- Can mankind truly know God?
- Where can lasting peace be found?

Ancient Greeks searched for these answers through philosophy.

Modern culture searches through:

- entertainment
- politics
- psychology
- technology
- self-help

- spirituality
- artificial intelligence
- personal identity

Yet beneath all these pursuits lies the same restless longing.

John declares that the answer is ultimately found not in philosophy, culture, technology, or self-discovery — but in Jesus Christ.

The opening verses of John’s Gospel remain among the clearest and most profound declarations ever written concerning:

- who Christ is
- why mankind remains restless
- where truth, life, and light are ultimately found

John 1 does not merely answer theological questions.

It answers human questions.

The longing for truth, meaning, purpose, identity, peace, forgiveness, and eternal life ultimately finds its fulfillment in Christ.

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## Final Application

John begins his Gospel by showing us that Jesus is not merely:

- a prophet
- a philosopher
- a moral teacher
- a spiritual guide
- a religious reformer

He is:

- the eternal Logos
- Creator of all things
- Truth embodied

- the source of eternal life
- the Light that overcomes darkness
- the perfect revelation of God

Ancient Greeks searched for logos through philosophy.

Modern culture searches through entertainment, technology, psychology, spirituality, politics, and self-discovery.

Yet humanity's deepest search remains the same.

People long for:

- truth
- meaning
- identity
- peace
- forgiveness
- purpose
- eternal life

John declares that what humanity ultimately seeks is found only in Jesus Christ.

The opening verses of John's Gospel force every reader to answer one unavoidable question:

## Who is Jesus Christ?

Everything in Christianity rests upon the answer.

If Jesus is merely a teacher, Christianity collapses.

If Jesus is merely a prophet, Christianity collapses.

If Jesus is merely a created being, Christianity collapses.

But if Jesus truly is the eternal Word who was with God and was God, then He alone deserves our worship, obedience, faith, and surrender.

John calls us not merely to admire Christ intellectually, but to believe in Him personally.

The eternal Word became flesh so that sinners might know God, receive eternal life, walk in the light, and be reconciled to their Creator.

That is the glory of John 1.

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## Questions for Group Discussion

1. Why do you think John begins his Gospel with eternity instead of Christ's earthly birth?
  2. Why is the title "The Word" such a powerful description of Jesus?
  3. How would Jewish readers have understood the idea of God's Word differently than Greek philosophers?
  4. Why do you think John used the term Logos instead of another title for Jesus?
  5. How does modern culture resemble the Greek search for meaning and transcendence?
  6. Why are people often comfortable with vague spirituality but uncomfortable with Biblical truth?
  7. What does it mean practically that Jesus is Truth embodied?
  8. Why is objective truth so important to Christianity?
  9. How does understanding Christ as Creator deepen our worship?
  10. What kinds of darkness are most visible in modern culture today?
  11. Why do stories involving sacrifice, redemption, truth, and awakening resonate so deeply with people?
  12. How should believers shine the light of Christ in a culture increasingly hostile to truth?
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## Closing Prayer

Lord, thank You for revealing the glory of Jesus Christ as the eternal Word.

Thank You that before creation, before time, and before the world began, the Word was with God and the Word was God.

Help us to behold Christ rightly — not merely as a teacher, prophet, or example, but as the eternal Son through whom all things were made.

Thank You that Your plan of redemption did not begin in time, but in eternity past. Your Word tells us that You chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before You, and that in love You predestined us for adoption as Your children through Jesus Christ.

Thank You that in Him is life, and that His life is the light of men.

Shine the light of Christ into our hearts. Expose what is dark, strengthen what is weak, and draw us closer to the One who gives eternal life.

Help us to walk faithfully in the light of Your truth, with confidence that the darkness has not overcome and will never overcome the light of Christ.

Deepen our worship, strengthen our faith, and help us leave this study with a greater view of Jesus, the eternal Word.

In His name,  
Amen.