

The Word

one to one

*A guided read through
John's Gospel
Chapter 1*

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Journey through John's Gospel with a friend

The Word One to One helps you get started with the Bible.

How it works

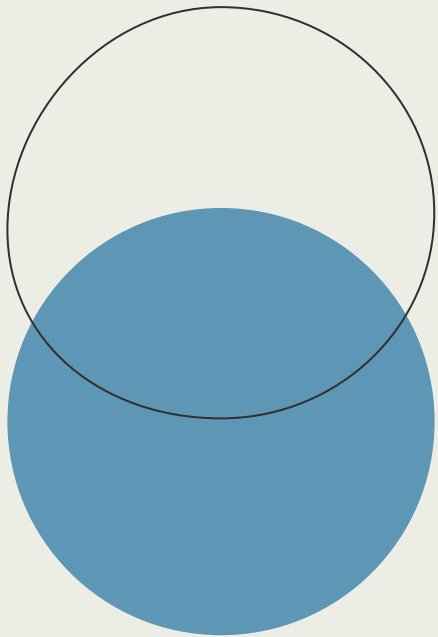
On the left is text from **'John's Gospel' – one of the books of the Bible:**

- John lived with Jesus for three action packed years.
- We'll read the account of what he saw and heard during that time.

On the right are **notes to chat through with a friend:**

- They highlight the main points from John's Gospel and provide background information from the rest of the Bible.
- Many have found that talking these through with a Christian friend – one to one or in a small group – has been a great introduction to the historical person Jesus.

Episode 1



God came to earth

JOHN 1:1-18

*In this episode:
John's eyewitness account
starts with an overview.*

You might find this a surprising start. We don't begin with the baby Jesus and His famous birth.

There is no stable, no angels, no Bethlehem... but rather some massive claims... so don't be surprised if it will need some unpacking.

This is what John wrote – read this first

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was with God in the beginning.

³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

Then use the notes to chat it through

The God who made everything

John introduces us to 'the Word':

- Twice he says the Word was there 'in the beginning'.
- So the Word existed before time, before creation, before the beginning...
- In short... the Word is eternal.

But who or what is the Word?

- The Word is God. (v. 1)
- The Word is a person, see how the sentence starts with 'He' (v. 2)
- The Word, who is God and a person, made absolutely everything, no exceptions. (v. 3)

Already we're being introduced to the Creator!

But John's claims for the Word go even further...

⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

But what difference does the Word make for life?

- As Creator, the Word is the source of physical life. **(v. 4)**
- But as we'll see, He is also the source of eternal life.
- The Word gives understanding for life (light). **(v. 4)**
- The darkness in our world can't stop Him bringing life and light to mankind. **(v. 5)**

For 2,000 years His life-giving message has been going out unchanged.

There are more believers around the world today than ever before.

In fact...

The light of the Word continues to shine today.

⁶ There was a man sent from God whose name was John.

⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe.

⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹ The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

The life He offers

John (the writer) now introduces John the Baptist. We'll see later that he was the sensation of his day – drawing huge crowds to the desert with his preaching.

Just look at his job description:

- God Himself appointed him. **(v. 6)**
- He testifies – like a witness in a court... **(v. 7)**
- ...preparing people for the Word, now called the light... **(v. 8)**
- ...who was soon to come into the world. **(v. 9)**

John the Baptist is the warm-up act. Through him God makes sure that the arrival of the Word is publicly known.

We still haven't been told who the Word is...

¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognise him.

¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

¹² Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God –

What was the response when the 'light' came?

- The world did not recognise its Creator. **(v. 10)**
- Born a Jew, even His own people rejected Him. **(v. 11)**

But look at this mind-blowing gift for those who accepted Him:

- He adopted them into God's own family! **(v. 12)**
- They were given the full privileges of being a child of God for ever! **(v. 12)**

Imagine a helpless orphan adopted into the wealthiest, most influential family on the planet... God's gift is way bigger even than that.

¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.



Who gets this extraordinary gift?

- Not people born into a religious family (natural descent).
- Not people who somehow became religious (human decision).
- But people adopted (born) into God's family.

What is on offer through the Word is a new life. A living relationship with God for ever as a loving Father.

¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, ‘This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”)

God shows Himself on earth

Here is the crucial claim:
God became human and moved into the neighbourhood! (v. 14)

What evidence is given to back this up?

- John (the writer) was one of many who saw the Word first-hand. (v. 14)
- John and his friends saw Him come not in a whirlwind of power and might but full of grace and truth. (v. 14)
- They came to the conclusion that He is God’s Son here on earth! (v. 14)
- We also have the public and powerful witness of John the Baptist who says the person he will introduce is his Creator. (v. 15)

These witnesses are saying that the Creator came to live on earth at a specific time, in a specific place. They are saying that they were there when He came, and they want to tell us about Him.

So it’s God’s Son but what is His name?

Grace: God’s undeserved kindness and love, freely given.

Truth: the answer to all our searching.

¹⁶ Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given.

¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in the closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

Look at what John (the writer) tells us:

- The Son is overflowing with grace. (v. 16)
- God's good law, given through Moses long ago, is now to be fulfilled in Jesus. (v. 17)
- The Word is God's eternal Son – Jesus Christ. (v. 17)
- He makes God known today. (v. 18)

At last John tells us: Jesus Christ is the Word, the Creator, the eternal Son of God, who makes His Father known today.

He does not burden life with rules – instead, He brings grace and truth.

Moses: the greatest Old Testament prophet (around 1300 BC). God gave His law to the Israelites through him.

Summary

What have we seen about Jesus, the Word, so far?

- He was there before the world existed. (v. 1)
- He is God. (v. 1)
- He made everything. (v. 3)
- He has life in Himself and brings light to all people. (v. 4)
- Those who believe in Him become members of God's own family. (v. 12)
- The Word came to earth as a man. (v. 14)
- He doesn't bring rules but grace and truth. (v. 17)
- John claims that we can know God personally through Jesus Christ. (v. 18)

How does this introduction compare with what you had thought of Jesus Christ?

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³ Through him all things were made...

⁴ In him was life and that life was the light of all mankind.

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¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

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John 1:1–18

Why not find a moment to re-read what we've looked at in this episode?

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*What comes next?
We'll see John the Baptist, the warm-up act, before Jesus comes onto the scene.*

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