

THE GOSPEL OF



JOHN

PART 1
CHAPTERS 1-8

WILLIAM MACDONALD



Developed as a study course by Emmanuel Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

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The Gospel of John — Part 1
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COURSE OVERVIEW

John the apostle wrote his gospel many years after Matthew, Mark, and Luke had penned theirs. Already the church was being plagued by error and attacks upon the person and work of God’s beloved Son, so under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John sought to give clear testimony to the deity of Jesus Christ. He concentrates on presenting the miracles and words of Jesus and then interpreting them for his readers. His goal? That you, the reader, “. . . may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31).

This course covers the first 8 chapters of John’s gospel.

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STUDENT INSTRUCTIONS

How to Study

This course has two parts—the lesson content and the exam booklet. Before you begin to study, ask God to open your heart so that you can receive the truths that He wants to teach you from His Word. The study of the Bible brings great discoveries and bears rich fruit in the life of a believer. The following study guidelines will be helpful in order to gain the most from this course.

Read each chapter through at least twice, once to get a general idea of its content and then again, slowly, looking up any Bible references given. It is important that you read the Bible passages referenced as some questions may be based on the Bible text. We suggest that you keep a regular schedule by trying to complete at least one chapter per week.

Exams

At the end of the course there is an exam booklet with one exam for each lesson. (If a Single Page Answer Sheet is also included, **carefully read all instructions** and completely fill it out before mailing it in for grading.) Do not answer the questions by what you think or have always believed. The questions are designed to find out if you understand the material in the course.

At the end of each exam, there is a *What Do You Say?* question. These questions are included for your own reflection. They will not be counted as part of your grade, but instead provide an opportunity for you to personally meditate on the lesson.

Getting Exams Graded

When you have answered all the exam questions, fill in your contact information and mail it back to the instructor, associated ministry, or organization from which you received it. After finishing this course with a passing average, you will be awarded a certificate.

We are excited to be a part of your study of God's Word. May the Lord bless your study of His Word with joy and fruitfulness!

1

JESUS CHRIST IS GOD INCARNATE

JOHN 1:1-18

Introduction to the Book

Charles R. Erdman wrote of John’s gospel, “It has induced more persons to follow Christ, it has inspired more believers to loyal service, it has presented to scholars more difficult problems than any other book that could be named.”

The apostle John expressed his purpose for writing his account of the life of Jesus Christ near the end of the book, in chapter 20 verse 31. Acknowledging the fact that Jesus had performed many miracles that he did not include in his book, John wrote:

“But *these* are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

The seven public miracles—*signs*—that John did include “point” the reader to the fact that Jesus is God and the One sent by God; He was God’s designated Messiah, the Anointed (“Chosen”) One. Those miracles were

1. Turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee (2:9)
2. Healing the nobleman’s son (4:46-54)
3. Healing the crippled man at the pool of Bethesda (5:2-9)
4. Feeding the five thousand (6:1-14)

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The seven public miracles “point” the reader to the fact that Jesus is God and the One sent by God.
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5. Walking on the Sea of Galilee, calming the wind, and bringing the boat immediately to its destination (6:16-21)
6. Healing the man who was blind from birth (9:1-7)
7. Raising Lazarus from the dead (11:1-44)

In addition to these, John recorded an eighth sign-miracle, a post-resurrection one, which only His disciples witnessed: the miraculous catch of fish (21:1-14).

The *authorship* of this gospel has been greatly debated. This is undoubtedly because it gives such clear testimony to the deity of Jesus Christ. The attack has sought to prove that the account was not the work of an eyewitness but of an unknown genius who lived 50 to 100 years later. Thus it is supposed to reflect the church's thinking about Christ and does not comprise a record of what He Himself actually was, said, or did.

The gospel itself is anonymous as to authorship, but there are many good reasons for believing it was written by John the apostle, one of Christ's twelve disciples. For example, the author was a Jew—the style of writing, the vocabulary, the familiarity with Jewish customs and characteristics, and the background of the Old Testament reflected in this gospel all speak strongly of this. He was a Jew who lived in Palestine (1:28; 2:1, 11; 4:46; 11:18, 54; 21:1-2). He knew Jerusalem and the temple intimately (5:2; 9:7; 18:1; 19:13, 17, 20, 41; also see 2:14-16; 8:20; 10:22). He was an eyewitness of what he narrates—details of places, persons, time, manner, etc. (4:46; 5:14; 6:59; 12:21; 13:1; 14:5, 8; 18:6; 19:31). He shows intimate knowledge of the inner circle of the disciples and of Christ Himself (6:19, 60-61; 12:16; 13:22, 28; 16:19). Since the author is precise in naming other disciples yet does not name himself, it is presumed that the unnamed person of 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7, 20 is the apostle John. Three important verses for further consideration of the eyewitness character of the author are 1:14, 19:35, and 21:24.

The *chronology* of our Lord's earthly ministry is gained from this gospel. From the other three gospels, Christ's ministry would appear to have lasted only one year. The references to the annual feasts in John supply us with the duration of approximately three years for His public ministry. Note these references: a first Feast of Passover (2:12-13); "a feast" (5:1), possibly Passover or Purim; a second Feast of Passover (6:4); the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2); the Feast of Dedication (10:22); and the last (third) Feast

of Passover (12:1). John is also precise in his references to time. While the other three writers are generally content with approximate references, such as the third or ninth hours, John mentions the seventh hour (4:52), the third day (2:1), two days (11:6), and six days (12:1).

The *style and vocabulary* of this gospel are unique except for the epistles of John. The sentences are short and simple. Usually, the shorter the sentence is, the weightier the truth. The vocabulary is the most limited of all the gospels, yet the most profound in meaning. Author Leon Morris observed it is like a pool in which a child can wade and in which an elephant can swim. Note these important words and the number of their occurrences: Father (118), believe (100), world (78), love (45), life (37), witness, bear record, etc. (47), light (24), etc.

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In this gospel, the Spirit of God perfects and completes the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

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One marked feature of this gospel is the occurrence of the number seven and its multiples. The ideas of perfection and completion attach to this number throughout Scripture (see Genesis 2:1-3). In this gospel, the Spirit of God perfects and completes the revelation of God in the person of Jesus Christ, so patterns based on the number seven are frequent.

The record of Jesus saying “I am . . .” many times is a feature of this gospel. These are the bread of life (6:35, 41, 48, 51); the light of the world (8:12; 9:5); the door (10:7, 9); the good shepherd (10:11, 14); the resurrection and the life (11:25); the way, the truth, and the life (14:6); and the true vine (15:1, 5). Not so familiar are the seven occurrences of “I am” without a predicate (that is, the simple statement). These are found in 4:26; 6:20; 8:24, 28, 58; 13:19; and 18:5, 8. The last one is a double one.

The Purpose of the Prologue

John 1:1-18 is commonly described as a *prologue* because it introduces John’s subject in the same way that a prologue to a play primes an audience for the upcoming characters and action. In his prologue, John proclaims several facets of the person and work of Jesus Christ which he goes on to give evidence of in the following chapters.

John begins his gospel by speaking about *the Word*—but he does not explain at first who or what the Word is. We may define the term *word* as “a unit of speech by which we express ourselves to others.” But John is not speaking about a unit of speech; he is speaking about a person—the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. John speaks of Him as “the Word” because God has fully expressed Himself to mankind in the person of the Lord Jesus. The Son of God came into the world to reveal to mankind what God is like. And by dying for us on the cross of Calvary, He revealed how much God loves mankind. Thus Christ is God’s living Word to man, the expression of God’s thoughts.

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**By dying for us on
the cross of Calvary,
Jesus revealed how
much God loves
mankind.**
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“The Word was God” (vv. 1-5)

John opens in verse 1 with a statement that Christ existed from all eternity. As far as the human mind can go back, Christ was there. He never was created. He had no beginning. “The Word was with God.” He had a separate and distinct personality. He was a real person who lived with God. He not only dwelt *with* God, but *was* God. The Bible teaches there is one God and that there are three persons in the Godhead—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. All three of these persons are God. In this verse, two of the persons of the Godhead are mentioned: the Father and the Son. It is the first of many clear statements in this gospel that *Jesus Christ is God*. It is not enough to say that He is a god, that He is godlike, or even that He is divine. The Bible teaches that He *is God*.

Verse 2 appears to be a repetition of what has already been said, but actually it is not. This verse teaches that Christ’s personality and deity were without beginning. He did not become a person for the first time when He was born. Nor did He somehow become a god after His resurrection. He is God from all eternity.

He Himself was not a created being; rather, He was the Creator of all things—mankind, the animals, the heavenly planets, the angels—all things visible and invisible. If a thing was made, He made it. As Creator, He is, of course, superior to anything He has created. Actually, according to Scripture, all three persons of the Godhead were involved in the work of

creation: “God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1). “The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters” (Gen. 1:2). “All things were created through Him [Christ] and for Him” (Col. 1:16).

He was (and is) the source of life. The word here in verse 4 includes both physical and spiritual life. When we were born, we received physical life. When we are born again, we receive spiritual life. Both come from Him. He is also the light of men. He provides the guidance and direction we need. It is one thing to exist, but another to know how to live—to know the true purpose of life and the way to heaven. The same One who gave us life is the One who provides us with light for the path we travel in life.

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Notice the seven wonderful titles of our Lord Jesus Christ in this opening chapter. He is called the Word (vv. 1, 14); the Light (vv. 5, 7); the Lamb of God (vv. 29, 36); the Son of God (vv. 34, 49); the Christ (Messiah) (v. 41); the King of Israel (v. 49); and the Son of

Man (v. 51). The first four titles seem to be universal in application. The last three titles had their first application to Israel, God’s ancient people.

The entrance of sin brought darkness to the minds of human beings (v. 5). It plunged the world into darkness in the sense that people in general neither knew God nor wanted to. Into this darkness stepped the Lord Jesus—a light shining in a dark place. “The darkness did not comprehend it,” we read. This may mean that the darkness did not understand the Lord Jesus when He came into the world. People did not realize who He really was or why He had come. Another interpretation is conveyed in other Bible versions: “. . . the darkness did not overcome it.” Here the thought is that man’s rejection and enmity did not prevent the true light from shining.

“There was a man . . . whose name was John” (vv. 6-8)

These verses refer to John the Baptist, who was sent by God as a forerunner of the Lord Jesus. His mission was to announce the coming of Christ and to tell the Jews to get ready to receive Him. He came to testify to the fact that Jesus was truly the Light of the world and thus worthy of

their worship, allegiance, and trust. John did not attract attention to himself, for then he would have been unfaithful to his appointed task. He pointed people to Jesus and not to himself.

“Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ” (vv. 9-18)

Jesus Is the Light

Other persons down through the ages have claimed to be guides and saviors, but the One to whom John witnessed was the genuine Light, the best and the truest Light (v. 9). Another translation of this verse is, “The true Light, which, coming into the world, gives light to every man.” In other words, the expression “coming into the world” describes “the true Light,” not “every man.” This does not mean that every person has received some inward knowledge concerning Christ. Neither does it mean that everyone has heard about the Lord Jesus at one time or another. It means that the Light shines upon all people everywhere, revealing their true character. By His coming into the world as the perfect Man, He has shown how imperfect all other human beings are. When a room is in darkness, you do not see the dust on the furniture. But when the light is switched on, the room is seen as it actually is. In that same sense, the shining of the true Light reveals man as he actually is.

Jesus Is the Creator

From the time of His birth in Bethlehem until the day He went back to heaven, Jesus Christ lived in this world (v. 10). Indeed, He had more right to be here than anyone else. He had brought the whole world into being and was its rightful Owner. Instead of recognizing Him as the Creator, most people thought He was just another man like them. As a result, they treated Him like a stranger and an outcast and rejected Him.

Jesus Is the Savior

“He came to His own [things],” we read in verse 11. He was not trespassing on someone else’s property. He was actually living on a planet He Himself had made! Moreover, “His own [people] did not receive Him.” In a general sense, this might refer to all mankind, and it is true that He was almost universally rejected. But in a special sense, the Jewish nation was

His own;” they were His chosen, earthly people. When He came into the world, He presented Himself to the Jews as their Messiah, but they would not receive Him. Now He offers Himself to all mankind again, and to those who receive Him He gives the right, the authority, to become children of God (v. 12). This verse tells us clearly how we can become children of God. It is not by good works, not by church membership, not by doing one’s best, but by receiving Him, by believing in “His name”—comprehensively embracing His person and His work.

To become a child in a physical sense, one must be born. So to become a child of God, one must have a second birth. This is known as *the new birth* or *conversion*. Verse 13 gives us three ways by which the new birth does *not* take place, and the one way by which it *does*. First, it is “not of blood.” This means that a person does not become a Christian through having Christian parents; salvation

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**We can become
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 work.**
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is not passed down from parent to child through the blood stream. Neither is it “of the will of the flesh.” In other words, a person does not have the power in his own flesh or will to produce the new birth. Nor is new birth accomplished “of the will of man.” No human being can save another human being. A preacher, for instance, may be very anxious to see a certain person born again, but he does not have the power to produce this marvelous birth. How, then, does this birth take place? The answer is found in the words “but of God.” This means simply that the power to produce the new birth does not rest with anything or anyone but God.

Jesus Is the Incarnate One

The “Word became flesh” when Jesus was born as a baby in Bethlehem (v. 14). He had always existed as the Son of God with the Father in heaven, but He now came into the world in a human body. He was never made or created; He Himself was the Creator of all things. But He became flesh in the sense that He came into the world as a man.

He “dwelt among us,” we read. It was not just a short appearance, about which there might be some mistake or misunderstanding. God actually came to this earth and lived here as a man among men. The word “dwelt” means “tabernacled” or “pitched His tent.” His body was the tent in which He dwelt among human beings for thirty-three years.

“And we beheld His glory,” says John. In the Bible, *glory* is the word often used to convey the bright, shining light which was seen when God was present. It also means the perfection and excellence of God. When the Lord Jesus was here on earth, He veiled (covered) His glory in a body of flesh. There were two ways in which His glory did become manifest, however. First, there was His moral glory—the radiance of His perfect life and character. There was no flaw or blemish in Him. He was perfect in all His ways, and it showed. Every virtue was manifested in His life in exquisite balance. Second, there was the visible outshining of His glory which took place on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. 17:1-2). The glory the disciples saw confirmed to them that He was truly the Son of God. Jesus is “the only begotten of the Father,” that is, He is God’s unique Son. God did not have any other Son like Him. In one sense, all true believers are sons of God. But Jesus is the Son of God in a class all by Himself. As the Son of God, He is equal with God.

John describes Jesus as “full of grace and truth.” He treated people with kindness they did not deserve. But He was also completely honest and upright, and He never excused sin or approved evil. To be completely gracious and at the same time completely righteous is something only God can be.

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God can be.**

Jesus Is the Son of God

We read in verse 15 that John the Baptist testified to Jesus being the Son of God. Before Jesus entered upon His public ministry, John had been telling people about Him. When Jesus did arrive upon the scene, John said, in effect, “This is the One I have been describing to you.” Jesus came “*after*” John so far as His birth and ministry were concerned; He was born six months after John and presented Himself to the people of Israel some time after John had been preaching and baptizing. Yet Jesus was “preferred before” John. He was greater than John—worthy of more honor—for the simple reason that He had existed from all eternity as the Son of God.

All who put their faith in the Lord Jesus for the salvation of their souls receive spiritual strength out of His fullness (v. 16). His fullness is so great that He can provide for all Christians in all countries and in all ages. The expression “grace for grace” probably means “grace upon grace,” or

“abundant grace.” Here “grace” means God’s gracious favor, His kindness, which He showers upon His beloved children.

In verse 17 John contrasts the Old Testament period and the New Testament era. The Law given by Moses was not a display of grace. It commanded men and women to obey, and it condemned them if they failed to do so. It told them what was right but did not give them the power to do it. It was given to show them that they were sinners, but it could not save them from their sins. “But grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” He did not come to judge the world but to save those who were unworthy, who could not save themselves, and who were His enemies. That is grace—heaven’s best for earth’s worst.

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**Christ came to save
those who were
unworthy, who could
not save themselves.
That is grace—
heaven’s best for
earth’s worst.**

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Not only did grace come through Jesus Christ, but truth came through Him as well. He said of Himself, “I am . . . the truth.” He did not show grace at the expense of truth. Although He loved sinners, He did not love their sins.

“No man has seen God at any time,” says John in verse 18. God is spirit and therefore is invisible. He does not have a human body. Although He did appear to people in the Old

Testament in visible form as an angel or as a man, these appearances did not reveal what God is really like. They were merely temporary appearances by which He chose to communicate to His people. The Lord Jesus is God’s only begotten Son; He is God’s unique Son; there is no other Son like Him. He ever occupies a place of special nearness to God the Father. Even when He was here on earth, Jesus was still “in the bosom of the Father” in terms of relationship and oneness. He was one with God and equal with God. He has fully revealed to mankind what God is like. When people saw Jesus, they saw God. They heard God speak. They felt God’s love and tenderness. God’s thoughts and attitudes toward mankind have been fully told out by Christ.

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tear out exam pages along perforation.

THE GOSPEL OF

JOHN

PART 1
CHAPTERS 1-8

EXAM BOOKLET
AK '17 (2 UNITS) JOHN1

STUDENT NAME (PLEASE PRINT)

ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP

COURSE GRADE: _____

INSTRUCTOR



Exam developed by Emmaus Correspondence School, founded in 1942.

EXAM BOOKLET

A NOTE ON THE EXAMS

The exams are designed to check your knowledge of the course material and the Scriptures. After you have studied a chapter, review the exam questions for that lesson. If you have difficulty in answering the questions, re-read the material. If questions contain a Scripture reference, you may use your Bible to help you answer them. If your instructor has provided a Single Page Answer Sheet, record your answer on that sheet. This exam contains the following types of questions:

MULTIPLE CHOICE

You will be asked to write in the letter of the correct answer at the space on the right. Here is an example:

The color of grass is

- A. blue. C. yellow.
B. green. D. orange.

 B

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

Questions headed this way are designed to help you express your ideas and feelings. You may freely state your own opinions in answer to such questions.

RETURNING THE EXAM

See the last page of this exam section for instructions on returning your exam for grading.

DO NOT PHOTOCOPY THESE EXAM PAGES

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CHAPTER 1 EXAM

JESUS CHRIST IS GOD INCARNATE

EXAM GRADE

Before starting this exam, write your name and address on the front of this Exam Booklet.

Read each question carefully and write the letter of the correct answer in the blank space on the right. Use the separate answer sheet if provided.

1. The apostle John expressed his purpose for writing this book in
 A. John 1:1. C. John 20:31.
 B. John 3:16. D. John 10:30. _____

2. The miracles performed by Jesus that John included in his gospel point to the fact that
 A. Jesus is God. C. Jesus is compassionate.
 B. Jesus is powerful. D. Jesus is super-human. _____

3. The _____ of Jesus' earthly ministry is gained from this gospel.
 A. extent C. reason
 B. chronology D. political context _____

4. What is conveyed by John's use of the term "the Word" in referring to Jesus?
 A. God has fully expressed Himself to mankind in Jesus Christ.
 B. Jesus spoke many words during His time on earth.
 C. The words that Jesus spoke only came from the Old Testament Scriptures.
 D. The words that Jesus spoke needed to be interpreted in order to be understood. _____

5. The first 5 verses of chapter 1 describe the Word as
 A. Creator. C. God.
 B. Life. D. all the above _____

- 6. The mission of John the Baptist was to
 - A. restore the power of the priesthood.
 - B. promote civil disobedience against the Roman government.
 - C. announce the coming of Christ.
 - D. write the New Testament. _____

- 7. As “the true Light,”
 - A. Jesus gave each man some inward knowledge of God.
 - B. Jesus revealed what man is really like.
 - C. Jesus made sure every Jew was “enlightened” about Him at some time or other.
 - D. Jesus had a soft glow about His person. _____

- 8. When the world’s Creator came to live in this world,
 - A. most people rejected Him.
 - B. everyone rejected Him.
 - C. the Jews gladly received Him.
 - D. the Gentiles gladly received Him. _____

- 9. We can become children of God by
 - A. doing good works.
 - B. joining a church.
 - C. making sure our righteousness exceeds our wrongdoing.
 - D. receiving Jesus Christ, believing in Him. _____

- 10. When “the Word became flesh,”
 - A. He made appearances to certain people.
 - B. He came to live among human beings.
 - C. He ceased to be God.
 - D. He lived in a commune. _____

WHAT DO YOU SAY?

What is your personal response to the multi-faceted description of Jesus Christ given in these verses?
