

JOHN

John: The Gospel of Gospels

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John 1:1

Lesson 1a: Who is Jesus & A Dangerous Distortion

Most scholars agree that John the apostle was the author of the Gospel that bore his name. The Gospel of John is like no other. It is the only Gospel that systematically point by point, blow by blow, answered the question, “Who is Jesus.”

It is the only Gospel that presents unsurmountable evidence proving that Jesus is God.

It is the only Gospel that unfolds its proof until the reader is compelled, beyond a shadow of a doubt, to acknowledge that Jesus is indeed God’s Son.

This Gospel is straightforward and easy to read. It contrasts between light and darkness, truth and falsehood, good and evil, life and death, God and Satan.

The Supreme Question

The supreme question regarding faith is: “Who is Jesus?” Man’s salvation depends entirely on answering this question accurately and then wholeheartedly believing in the unique person revealed by the answer.

The Apostle John provides us with enough information to answer the question, “Who is Jesus?”

- **Who is Jesus?**

1. He is the Word of God in the flesh (John 1:1, 14).
2. He is the Lamb of God (v. 29).
3. He is the Messiah (v. 41).

4. He is the Son of God (v. 49).
5. He is the King of Israel (v. 49).
6. He is the Savior of the world (4:42).
7. He is the Lord and God (20:28).

- **Who is Jesus?**

He is God (1:1)

John carefully selected *seven unique miraculous signs* in his gospel to demonstrate that Jesus is none other than God Himself.

1. The sign of turning water into wine (2:1-11).
2. The cure of the nobleman's son (4:46-54).
3. The cure of the paralytic (5:1-18).
4. The feeding of the multitude (6:6-13).
5. Walking on the water (6:16-21).
6. Restoring sight to the blind (9:1-7).
7. The raising of Lazarus (11:1-45).

- **Who is Jesus?**

He is the Great I am.

What is more, in his gospel John also records the seven "I am" sayings of Jesus:

1. "I am the bread of life" (6:35).
2. "I am the light of the world" (8:12).
3. "I am the door of the sheep" (10:7).
4. "I am the good shepherd" (10:11).
5. "I am the resurrection and the life" (11:25).
6. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (14:6).
7. "I am the true vine" (15:1).

During his dissertation, John employs all these wonderful tools to make his case that Jesus is indeed God's Son. In 20:30-31, he declares, "Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."

We are now ready for the second part of our exposition of the Gospel of John as we seek to answer the most important question: "Who is Jesus?"

Distortion of John 1:1

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

No other gospel has been so distorted in the hands of false teachers like the Gospel of John, especially John 1:1. One wonders why?

Satan, the skillful deceiver, is fully aware that man's salvation from eternal damnation lies solely on one's understanding of and wholehearted acceptance of the truth of John 1:1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

To understand John 1:1 is to understand the narrative of the whole Bible, for the entire Bible is about Jesus Christ. Jesus affirms this truth when He told his disciples that all Scripture, Moses, the prophets, and Psalms point to Me (Luke 24:27, 44). "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me" (John 5:46).

No doubt about it! Jesus Christ is the focus of all of Scripture. Our failure to understand His deity, will ultimately lead to our lack of understanding of the narrative of the Bible. The whole purpose of John's gospel, is to reveal Jesus as the fulfillment of all of Scripture.

As C. K. Barret, one of the authorities on the Gospel of John put it, "John intended that the whole of his gospel shall be read in light of [John 1:1]." He goes on to say, "The deeds and the words of Jesus are the deeds and the words of God [the Father]; if this is not true, the book is blasphemous."¹

The task of this section is to cast light on the distortions of John 1:1 in the hands of some religious groups, especially the Jehovah's Witnesses.

¹ C. K. Barret, According to Saint John

This is not an attack on the wonderful men and women of this organization. Mind you, many of them are the most sincere, dedicated, zealous, honest, passionate, and caring human beings on the planet earth. We question their theology, not their character.

When two of their members came to our house we looked at the Scripture together but they could not provide answers to many questions that I raised. They told me that they would bring their superiors the following day to answer my questions. Sure, enough they showed up but they too were trapped by the Scripture. Their superiors asked if I would like for them to bring their superintendents? I said “sure, bring them.”

The next evening, I had six people in our house and together we combed through the Scriptures. They too were trapped by the truth of God’s Word. I thought that they would concede and accept the truth. They did not; they left without accepting the truth of whom Jesus Christ claimed to be—God’s Son, the very God equal with the Father in every respect.

My encounter with them reminded me of the Apostle Paul’s encounter with the religious Jews of his day in Romans 10:1-4,

Brothers and sisters, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved. ² For I can testify about them that they are zealous for God, but their zeal is not based on knowledge. ³ Since they did not know the righteousness of God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. ⁴ Christ is the culmination of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes. (NIV).

The Inescapable Question Then Is, Who is Jesus?

The Apostle John answered the question in John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Jesus is God.

Painfully and heartbreakingly, my Jehovah’s Witnesses friends fumbled the ball at the goal line of answering the question “Who is Jesus?”

They say that Jesus is a small god. Oh, they come so close to putting the ball across the goal line for a grand score, but instead tripped on the ball. They failed to score. In their Bible, the *New World Translation*, they translated John’s statement this way, “The Word was a god.” They teach that Christ was a spirit creature, Michael,

the archangel who was created by God and became Messiah at His baptism.² Oh, how they come so close and failed to score. Their argument is that there was no definite article on “the word is God” in John 1:1. They were right. John left it out purposely, which will explain as our study continues.

The Implication of Making Jesus A Created Being Or A Lesser God

We must declare truth forcefully with the aim of saving some from eternal damnation and sheltering others from falsehood. One may ask, “What are the implications of making Jesus a lesser god?”

There are two implications.

1. Making Jesus a lesser god means there are two separate gods, supreme and minor. (Accepting the New World Translation of John 1:1 makes one a polytheist). The truth of the matter is that no created being is ever said to be the radiance of the invisible God or the exact image of God’s representation as the author of Hebrews claims in chapter 1, v. 3. No created being is said to have the fullness of God indwelling in him as Paul affirms in Col. 2:9. What is more, no created being ever makes a sovereign claim, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God” as Jesus made in Rev. 1:8. He calls Himself, “the Lord God.”
2. Another implication is that having a separate god beside the supreme God makes that god an idol.

Let us filter the notion of two separate gods through Scripture.

- a. The Bible vehemently rejects the idea of having any other god beside the true God. Ex. 20:3 “You are to have no other gods besides me.” (ISV). God goes on to command in verse 23, “You are not to make any gods to rival Me; you are not to make for yourselves gods of silver or gold.” How can God, who gave this commandment, suddenly turn around and make a god other than Himself?
- b. Worship of a god other than the supreme God is idolatry. Consequently, accepting the idea that Jesus was a being created by God, is to make Jesus an idol.

² Roy B. Zuck, *An Open Letter To A Jehovah’s Witness* (Chicago: Moody Press, 2000)

Worship and It's Significance

1. Worship is an honor reserved *only* for God. Scripture tells us in Det. 6:13, quoted by the Lord in Matt. 4:10, "For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM **ONLY**.'" Satan had tempted the Lord to worship him; the Lord replied that worship is reserved for God alone. Bury this truth into your mind.
2. It is important to note that Jesus Christ accepted worship. He accepted worship from the man whose sight He restored (John 9:35-38); He accepted worship from His disciples (Matt. 14:33; 28:9); and He accepted worship from the angels (Heb. 1:6, 8). By accepting worship, reserved only for God, Jesus claimed that He is fully God and not a created being.
3. Angels do not accept worship. The Apostle John made the mistake of worshiping one as he records in Rev. 19:10, "So I fell at his feet to worship him. But he [the angel] told me, 'Do not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who rely on the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.'"

