

# JOHN

## John: The Gospel of Gospels

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### John 1:1

#### Lesson 4: The Deity of Jesus Christ Part 2.

Two thousand years ago, the Lord met a woman at a well in a city of Samaria called Sychar. This divine encounter changed her life. Imagine, in a twinkling of an eye, the Lord turned her hopelessness into everlasting hope. She expressed thirst for natural water, but her real thirst was for living water. He granted her forgiveness of her sins and eternal life. But of interest to our study is what the Lord told her in John 4:22, “You worship what you do not know.”

Those 7 words gripped her: “You worship what you do not know.” As worshippers we all should take note. Truly, the Lord’s indictment ought to cause us to rethink our worship. Listen to His words again: “You worship what you do not know.” Have you ever wondered why there are so many worshipers in the world? We have the inherent urge to worship because that is the way God created us and our worship belongs only to Him. But if we do not worship God our nature still pulls us to engage in worship—any worship so long we are worshipping something. Without knowledge we end up worshipping that which we do not now.

The list of worshippers abounds. Consider the Jews: they worship God and reject Jesus Christ as God’s Son. Moslems worship Allah and reject the Deity of Jesus Christ. Jehovah’s Witnesses worship God, and regard Jesus Christ as a little god. Mormons believe in gods and goddesses and consider Jesus to be one of their brothers. The list goes on, Catholics worship God, and place Mary on a pedestal beside Jesus Christ. Buddhists and Hindus worship multiple gods, and regard Jesus as one of their gods. Clearly confusion abounds.

You say, “Thank God I am not confused like those people!” Not so fast. You sound like the Pharisee who said, “Thank God that I am not like other people.” Mind you, Christians are not immune to confusion. Many worship that which they do not know. Multitudes of Christians have little or no understanding of the Deity of Jesus Christ. Millions of Evangelicals today, can hardly answer the question, “Who is Jesus”? let alone defend the doctrine of the deity of Jesus.

Who is Jesus? Do you really know Him as God intends?

Open your Bible with me and let us begin where the apostle John began.

John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

I want you to share John’s excitement and enthusiasm, as he grabs the phrase “The Word” as if the Word were a hammer. He is eager to hit every nail that proves that *the Word* is fully God and fully man. If we are to understand the deity of Jesus Christ as John intended, we must understand the phrase *ho Logos*, “The Word” in John 1:1. And so we begin our exposition with the phrase, “the Word.”

### **Understanding the Word**

Let us read John 1:1 again and observe three important things in the passage.

- **First observation:**

“*The Word*” was in the beginning. Observe that the Word has always been. One thing which many scholars agree on is that the past tense very ‘*was*’ denotes ‘continuous existence.’ Invariably “The Word” has no beginning, and therefore there never was a time when it did not exist. Let this truth sink in.

- **Second observation:**

Note that “the Word was with God.” The preposition ‘*with*’ denotes a relationship to God. F. F. Bruce said, “The relation which the Word bears to God is a personal relation.”<sup>1</sup> Other scholars translate it this way: “the Word being face-to-face with God.” Between the two, there was, and is, perfect unity and shared glory. The Lord, in His High Priestly prayer, drove this truth home in John 17:5, “And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began” (NIV).

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<sup>1</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 1983), p. 30

We should never lose sight of this truth. The Word was with the Father, way before the foundation of the world, way before anything was created, He was right there in the bosom of the Father and shared in equal proportion the Father's love, joy and glory. Think of it. He who shared glory with the Father is He who relinquished His glory and died a horrible death on the cross, so that you and I could spend eternity with God.

- **Third observation:**

In the third observation the apostle John dramatically announces “**the Word is God!**” By saying this, he shines light on the deity of Jesus Christ. The Word is fully God. Note what John did not say. He did not say that the Word was a god. Rather, that the Word was God, meaning the Word, fully God, possesses all the attributes of God. Or as one scholar said<sup>2</sup>, “What God was, the Word was.” John's intent was to make sure that his present and future audiences distinguish between the Word and the Father. The Word is not the Father but co-existed with Him.

Even more captivating, John never said, “the Word is the God.” That would be a nonsensical claim. You can't be with the God if you are the God? That would make the Word to be the entire Godhead. A renowned scholar, R. V. G. Tasker, said, “the Word does not by Himself make up the entire Godhead; nevertheless, the divinity that belongs to the rest of the Godhead also belongs to Him.”

This truth must be understood if our worship of God is to be meaningful and effectual. Otherwise, we too would be guilty of worshipping “that which we do not know,” as many, without realizing it, do today.

John jumps to v. 14 and further explains to ensure that no one will mistake his claim, that <sup>1</sup>the Word was in the beginning, <sup>2</sup>had harmony with the Father, <sup>3</sup>was Himself God, has now taken up human flesh. Verse 14, “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.” This is amazing!

Aha, John has revealed without a shadow of doubt who the Word in John 1:1 is. What a marvelous and glorious revelation. He has connected the dots of His introduction in John 1:1 and links the deity to the humanity of Jesus Christ in John 1:14. Are you beginning to have a tangible picture of who our Savior is? The Word-God, He who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty God!

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<sup>2</sup> F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 1983), p. 31

Amazingly, the Lord backs every claim the apostle John makes. He claims that the Word was in continuous existence. Jesus Christ backs him in Rev. 22:13, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.” John claims that the Word was with God. Jesus underscores him in John 8:29, “He [God the Father] who sent Me is with Me; He has not left Me alone.” John equally claims that the Word was God. Jesus echoes him in Rev. 1:8, “I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, [Jesus Christ].”

Other passages poured in like rain in support of John 1:14. The apostle Matthew tells us in his gospel “‘Lo, the virgin shall conceive, and she shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel,’ which is, being interpreted ‘With us [he is] God.’” (Matt. 1:23, Young’s Literal Translation.) In the Greek, Emmanuel literally means, “With us is the God.”<sup>3</sup> It has a definite article, which should abolish any doubt that Jesus is truly God in every sense. Prophet Isaiah foreshadowed Matthew in Isaiah 9:6.

The prophet Isaiah recorded God saying, “My thoughts are not your thoughts” (Isa. 55:8). God’s thoughts are divine. They were eternally in His bosom. Interestingly, in Isaiah 55:11, God calls His thoughts “My word.” This is the very Word that John referred to in John 1:1 as “the Word.” God the Father interchangeably uses the word ‘thoughts’ in v. 8 and ‘word’ in v. 11.

As D. A Carson puts it, “God’s Word in the Old Testament is his powerful self-expression in creation, revelation and salvation, and personification of that ‘Word’ makes it suitable for John to apply it as a title to God’s ultimate self-disclose, the person of his own Son.”<sup>4</sup>

Another illustration is appropriate. Keep in mind my imperfect humanity is a handicap to illustrate a Perfect God. Consider God’s eternal ‘thoughts’ or ‘Word’ as one of His kidneys (although God is spirit). This kidney, has been in existence with Him, has all the attributes of deity, and in fact, is itself God. It knows the Father inside-out. In time, the Father-God sends out this kidney to disclose the Father to the world as the Person of His Son Jesus Christ.

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<sup>3</sup> Roy. B. Zuck, *An Open Letter to Jehovah’s Witnesses* (Moody Press: Chicago 2000)

<sup>4</sup> D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, Michigan/ Cambridge, UK: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), p. 116

In John 1:1, John calls the kidney in our illustration, the ‘Word,’ ‘God,’ and human “flesh’ in v. 14. Because He is an Anointed One sent from the Father, the Father calls Him “My Son” in Matt. 3:17, “My Servant” in Acts 3:26 and “My Messenger” in Mal. 3:1. Make no mistake; the eternal Word is truly the Son of God. God Himself—the second member of the Godhead!

Additionally, John provides more passages of Jesus Christ’s claims of deity. In John 10:32, Jesus asked the Jews why they sought to kill Him. They answered in v. 33, “We are not stoning you for any good work,’ ... ‘but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God” (NIV). If that were not enough, Jesus Christ made another bold claim in John 8:58, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am.” Mind you, the title “I am” was His Old Testament name for Jehovah-God. Ex. 3:2, 6, 13-14.

If that were not enough, in John 10:30, Jesus made another claim of Deity, “I and the Father are one.” Stated plainly, “I am equally God just as My Father is. We share equal essence or attributes.” The apostle Paul echoes Him in Colossians 2:9, “For in Him *all* the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.”

Paul further throws more light on the deity of Jesus Christ in Col. 1:19, “For it was by God's own decision that the Son has in himself the full nature of God.” (GNT). Another passage, Philippians 2:5-6, says, “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage” (NIV).

In your leisure time, read Hebrews 1. In this chapter, the author focuses on the deity of Jesus Christ. In verse 2, he points out that Jesus is the custodian of God’s Word “through whom He made the world.” Jesus Christ is the agent of creation. We will expound on this later. He goes on to say in verse 3, that Jesus “is the radiance of [God’s] glory and the exact representation of His nature.” The word *exact* is an interesting one in the Greek. It denotes an imprint of the original. Jesus Christ is not 99.9% an imprint of God. He is 100% the exact representation of God’s nature! The image of the invisible God as Paul calls Him.

The author continues in verses 5 and 6, that Jesus is called God’s Son and is worshipped by angelic beings. Jesus is called God in verses 8 and 9 and is credited with the creation of heaven and earth in verse 10. He is charged with the destruction of the universe in verses 11 and 12. He is confirmed to be immutable in verse 12, “Thou Art the same, Thy years will not come to an end.” Celebrate the deity of Jesus Christ!

As this message nears its end, an important question is raised: “Why must we believe in the Deity of Jesus Christ? The answer is sobering: our eternal life depends entirely on our faith in Jesus and who He claimed to be, and on His efficacious sacrifice on the cross. Jesus said it bluntly in John 8:24, “Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.” Twice He warns, “You will die in your sins.” This is serious and scary. The thought of spending eternity apart from God must consume anyone who has not believed that Jesus is God’s Son, who came in the flesh and paid for our sins on the cross of Calvary.

Salvation is as simple as drinking a cup of water in response to thirst (John 4:14). It requires only faith in God’s Son alone. It is not faith plus anything else. It is faith alone in Christ alone (Acts 16:31).

Jesus Christ underscores the truth in John 11:25-27. Listen carefully to the words of Jesus Christ:

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said to her [Martha], “I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me will live even if he dies, <sup>26</sup> and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die. Do you believe this?”

Before we get to Martha’s answer, let me start with you. Do you believe what Jesus said of Himself? This is a matter of life with God or eternal death separated from God. Note Martha’s answer: “She said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; I have believed that You are the Christ, the Son of God, *even* He who comes into the world.’”

Right now you can tell God the Father that you too believe that Jesus Christ is indeed God’s Son, who paid for your sins on the cross 2,000 years ago.