

Lesson 1
John 1: 1 - 52
God is here!

Memory verse: “No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.” John 1:18 (NIV)

The writer of this Gospel did not identify himself as such in the text. This is true of all the Gospel evangelists. Nevertheless there is evidence within this Gospel, as well as in the writings of the church fathers, that the writer was the Apostle John.

But will God indeed dwell on the earth?” asked Solomon as he dedicated the temple (1 Kings 8:27). A good question, indeed! God’s glory had dwelt in the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34), and in the temple (1 Kings 8:10–11), but that glory had departed from disobedient Israel (Ezek. 9:3; 10:4, 18; 11:22–23).

Then a marvellous thing happened: the glory of God came to His people again, in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ. The writers of the four gospels have given us “snapshots” of our Lord’s life on earth, for no complete biography could ever be written (John 21:25). Matthew wrote with his fellow Jews in mind and emphasized that Jesus of Nazareth had fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies. Mark wrote for the busy Romans. Whereas Matthew emphasized the King, Mark presented the Servant, ministering to needy people. Luke wrote his gospel for the Greeks and introduced them to the sympathetic Son of Man.

But it was given to John, the beloved disciple, to write a book for both Jews and Gentiles, presenting Jesus as the Son of God. We know that John had Gentiles in mind as well as Jews, because he often “interpreted” Jewish words or customs for his readers (John 1:38, 41–42; 5:2; 9:7; 19:13, 17; 20:16). His emphasis to the Jews was that Jesus not only fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies, but He also fulfilled the types. Jesus is the Lamb of God (John 1:29) and the Ladder from heaven to earth (John 1:51; and see Gen. 28). He is the New Temple (John 2:19–21), and He gives a new birth (John 3:4ff.). He is the serpent lifted up (John 3:14) and the Bread of God that came down from heaven (John 6:35ff.).

Whereas the first three Gospels major on describing events in the life of Christ, John emphasized the meaning of these events. For example, all four gospels record the feeding of the five thousand, but only John records Jesus’ sermon on “The Bread of Life,” which followed that miracle when He interpreted it for the people.

But there is one major theme that runs throughout John’s gospel: Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and if you commit yourself to Him, He will give you eternal life names and titles of Jesus that identify Him as eternal God. (John 20:31). In this first chapter, John recorded seven names and titles of Jesus that identify Him as eternal God. The names and titles of Jesus are: The Word, The Light, The Son of God, The Lamb of God, The Messiah, The King of Israel and The Son of Man.

The emphasis in the Gospel of John is more strongly on Jesus’ full deity. This emphasis runs from the beginning, with the Word becoming flesh (1:1, 14), to the end, where Thomas confessed Jesus as his Lord and “God” (20:28). John’s purpose statement (20:30–31) explains why he stressed Jesus’ deity. John’s gospel to unbelievers is that they might obtain eternal life and for believers is that they might experience abundant eternal life (10:10).

Scripture Reading: John:1-18.

To learn in this lesson: 1) Jesus is the Word and the Light 2) Jesus, the Lamb of God, The Son of God and The Messiah 3) Jesus is the King of Israel and The Son of Man.

Discussion Questions:

1) Discuss Jesus who is introduced by John as The Word (John 1:1–3, 14) and The Light (John 1:4–13).

2) What is John telling us when Jesus is called The Son of God (John 1:15–28, 49), The Lamb of God (John 1:29–34) and The Messiah (John 1:35–42)?

3) Why is Jesus also known as The King of Israel (1:43–49) and The Son of Man (1:50–51) and how can we conclude in this passage that God is here?