

**WHO IS JESUS?**  
**John 1:1-18**  
**By Andy Manning**

**I. INTRODUCTION**

1. Who is Jesus? That's the topic of this sermon, and the topic of this new study through the Gospel of John. This is the most important question, because Jesus is the most important person, your knowledge of Christ is the most important knowledge you have, and your relationship to Jesus is the most important thing in your life.
2. No one has impacted history like Jesus. No one has done more good for the world than Jesus. No one is loved more than Jesus. No one is hated more than Jesus. No one has been more misunderstood than Jesus. No one has done more to reveal Himself than Jesus. No one wants to be known as much as Jesus.
3. The Gospel of John was written by the apostle John, one of Jesus' twelve apostles. He was in Jesus' inner circle – Peter, James, and John. He was Jesus' best friend. Throughout the book John refers to himself as "the disciple Jesus loved." When Jesus was dying on the cross, He asked John to take care of Mary, his mother. John is one of the primary authors of the New Testament. He wrote the Gospel of John, three epistles – 1, 2, and 3 John, and the book of Revelation.
4. The Gospel of John is one of the four Gospels. The New Testament begins with four narratives of the life of Jesus, each written by a different author. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. John is often called the Fourth Gospel.
5. Mark and Luke were not eye-witnesses of Christ, but Matthew and John were, so John's gospel is written by an eye-witness of Jesus Christ.
6. The early church associated the four gospels with the four living creatures around the throne of God in the book of Ezekiel and the Book of Revelation. Matthew was identified with the man, Mark with the lion, Luke with the Ox, and John with the eagle. **Saint Augustine of Hippo** wrote that John's "spiritual understanding compared to the eagle, has elevated his preaching higher, and far more sublimely, than the other three."
7. John's gospel is unique. Matthew, Mark, and Luke are called the synoptic gospels because they are very similar. But John is different. It is sometimes called the spiritual gospel. John does much more than tell the story about Jesus, he interprets the story. He doesn't just tell us what Jesus did, but why. He tells us exactly who Jesus is, and then He tells us the purpose that he wrote the book. **John 20:31** "But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."
8. **World's Bible Handbook** "The first three gospel accounts are called the "Synoptic" gospels, because they are written according to a similar pattern. John's account is different. Matthew, Mark, and Luke recorded; John interprets. The Synoptic gospels give attention to the historical –to Christ's ministry in Galilee; John majors on the doctrinal and spiritual aspects of Christ's witness and teachings in Jerusalem and Judea."

9. The first eighteen verses of John's gospel are called the prologue, or the introduction. They summarize the entire book of John for us. They tell us what the book is about, and what the book means. The goal of the entire book is to get us to believe the first eighteen verses.

## II. TEXT

1. **John 1:1-18** 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 All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. 9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, he gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in his name, 13 who were born, not of natural descent, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God. 14 The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 (John testified concerning him and exclaimed, "This was the one of whom I said, 'The one coming after me ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.'") 16 Indeed, we have all received grace upon grace from his fullness, 17 for the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father's side—he has revealed him.

## III. SEVEN TRUTHS ABOUT JESUS

### 1. Jesus is eternal.

- i. **John 1:1** "In the beginning was the Word"
- ii. The beginning echoes Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."
- iii. "Beginning" refers to the creation of the universe.
- iv. It doesn't say that the Word had a beginning, but that in the beginning He already was.
- v. When God created the universe, Jesus already existed.
- vi. He is co-eternal with God the Father.
- vii. The Christian religion has always taught the eternity of Jesus Christ. But through the years many cults have attacked this doctrine.
  1. Mormons believe that Jesus was created. He is the spirit-child of God the Father and a heavenly wife. He was created by God the Father, and is the firstborn spirit child of God. He is temporal. He had a beginning.

2. Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Jesus is not eternal; He is Jehovah's first creation.
- viii. What does the rest of Scripture say? Let's just stay in this chapter.
1. **John 1:1** "In the beginning was the Word"
  2. "Was" (Gk eimi) is in the imperfect tense, which means continuing action in the past.
  3. In describing Jesus, John used "was" (Gk eimi) instead of "became" (Gk ginomai); ginomai refers to things that come into existence. For example, John 1:6 describes John the Baptist like this: "There was a man sent from God." The Greek word for "was" here is ginomai, which literally means "came on the scene." John came into existence, whereas Jesus always existed.
  4. **John 1:2** "He was with God in the beginning."
  5. **John 1:3** "All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created." For this to be, Jesus has to be eternal, everything that was created was created through him.
  6. **John 1:15** "John testified concerning him and exclaimed, 'This was the one of whom I said, 'The one coming after me ranks ahead of me, because he existed before me.'" John was born six months before Jesus (they were cousins), yet he acknowledges that Jesus existed before him.

## 2. Jesus is the Word.

- i. **John 1:1** "In the beginning was the Word"
- ii. The Greek word for "word" is *logos*.
- iii. What do our words do? We use our words to reveal ourselves. Our words reveal our hearts and minds to others. In the same way, Jesus is the Word of God because He reveals God to mankind.
- iv. Jesus is God's final and fullest self-revelation. He shows us what God is like. More than that, Jesus shows us clearly who God is, who we are, what we must do to be reconciled to God, and who God wants us to be.
- v. **John 1:18** "No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father's side—he has revealed him."
- vi. **Hebrews 1:1-2** "1 Long ago God spoke to our ancestors by the prophets at different times and in different ways. 2 In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son."
- vii. John often refers to Jesus as the light, referring to Jesus' mission to reveal God to us.
  1. **John 1:4-5** "In him was life, and that life was the light of men. That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it."
  2. **John 8:12** Jesus spoke to them again: "I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life."

- viii. Jesus made it clear that it was His mission to reveal God to us:
  1. To know Him was to know the Father. Jn 8:19
  2. To see Him was to see the Father. Jn 14:7

### 3. Jesus is with God.

- i. **John 1:1** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God”
- ii. He is God, but He is with God.
- iii. How is that possible? Only through an understanding of the doctrine of the trinity.
- iv. This passage clearly teaches both truths – He is God, but He is with God.
- v. **John 1:1-2** “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.”
- vi. **W. Robert Cook**, in his commentary on John, explains the Greek text. It “gives the picture of two personal beings facing one another and engaging in intelligent discourse”
- vii. **John MacArthur** “From all eternity Jesus, as the second person on the trinity, was with the Father in deep, intimate fellowship.” He goes on to write that the Greek might best be rendered “face to face.”
- viii. Many of the Christian cults like Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Apostolics, and Oneness Pentecostals deny the Trinity.
  1. Mormons teach that Jesus and the Father are two different gods, and that you can become a god too.
  2. Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that Jesus is not God; He is a created angelic being.
  3. Oneness Pentecostals and Apostolics believe that God is one, and not three in one. They believe in a heresy called modalism, which is that the three persons of the trinity are not actually three, coequal, coexisting persons, but that they represent three modes or aspects of God. At one time God revealed Himself as the Father, then as the Son, and then as the Holy Spirit.
- ix. The Bible teaches that God is three in one. Tri-unity. God exists in three coequal, coeternal persons. There is only one God, and there are three persons in the one Godhead – God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. There is one God, but the Father is not the Son; the Son is not the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is not the Father.
- x. This is how Jesus is both with God, and God at the same time. He is God, but within the Godhead He is the Son of God.
- xi. We get a picture of the Trinity in the baptism of Jesus. **Mark 1:10-11** “10 As soon as he came up out of the water, he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. 11 And a voice came from heaven: “You are my beloved Son; with you I am well-pleased.”
  1. God the Son was in the water.
  2. God the Spirit was descending on him like a dove.
  3. God the Father was speaking from heaven.

### 4. Jesus is God.

- i. **John 1:1-2** “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.”
  - ii. **John 1:18** “No one has ever seen God. The one and only Son, who is himself God and is at the Father’s side—he has revealed him.”
  - iii. The entire New Testament teaches that Jesus is God.
    - 1. **John 8:58** Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am.” “I am” in Greek is ego eimi. In the Old Testament, God revealed Himself to Moses as “I am who I am.” When the Jews translated the Old Testament into Greek (the LXX, or Septuagint), they translated that verse ego eimi. The Greek Old Testament was the Bible that Jesus and the first century Jews used.
    - 2. **John 10:30** “I and the Father are one.”
    - 3. **John 14:7** “If you know me, you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”
  - iv. One of the best evidences for the deity of Christ is the He is given the same titles as God in the Old Testament. Both Jesus and God are called...
    - 1. Shepherd. Ps 23:1; Jn 10:14
    - 2. Judge. Gen 18:25; 2 Tim 4:1, 8
    - 3. Holy One. Is 10:20; Ps 16:10; Acts 2:27; 3:14
    - 4. First and Last. Is 44:6; 48:12; Rev 1:17; 22:13
    - 5. Light. Ps 27:1; Jn 8:12
    - 6. Lord of the Sabbath. Ex 16:23, 29; Lev 19:3; Mt 12:8
    - 7. Savior. Is 43:11; Acts 4:12; Titus 2:13
    - 8. Pierced One. Zech 12:10; Jn 19:37
    - 9. Mighty God. Is 10:21; Is 9:6
    - 10. Lord of lords. Deut 10:17; Rev 17:14
    - 11. Alpha and Omega. Rev 1:8; Rev 22:13
    - 12. Lord of Glory. Ps 24:10; 1 Cor 2:8
    - 13. Redeemer. Is 41:14; 48:17; 63:16; Eph 1:7; Heb 9:12
  - v. The New Testament explicitly teaches that Christ is God:
    - 1. **Colossians 1:15** “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.”
    - 2. **Colossians 2:9** “For the entire fullness of God’s nature dwells bodily in Christ.”
    - 3. **Philippians 2:5-6** “Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited.”
    - 4. **Hebrews 1:3** “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact expression of his nature”
- 5. Jesus is the Creator.**
- i. **John 1:3** “All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.”

- ii. This is affirmed elsewhere in Scripture:
  1. **Colossians 1:16** “For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created through him and for him.”
  2. **Hebrews 1:2** “In these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son. God has appointed him heir of all things and made the universe through him.”
- iii. This gives us two further proofs that Christ is God:
  1. If He is the creator of all things, then He must be uncreated. Only God is uncreated.
  2. If He is the creator of all things, then He is God, because the OT identifies God as the creator (Gen 1:1).

#### **6. Jesus is the source and sustainer of life.**

- i. **John 1:4** “In him was life, and that life was the light of men.”
- ii. “In Him was life” points first to Jesus’ self-existence. This is called aseity. Everything in the universe that is alive receives its life from Jesus. But Jesus receives life from Himself. He is self-existent.
- iii. “Life” (Gk Zoe) refers not to physical life (Gk bios), but to spiritual life. This verse is referring to Christ as the source and sustainer of eternal life.
- iv. **John 10:27-29** “27 My sheep hear my voice, I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”
- v. Christ gives eternal life. And Christ sustains eternal life.
- vi. There are two possible destinations after you die – heaven or hell. We deserve hell because of our sins, but Christ came to earth and died for us so that we could be forgiven and receive eternal life. But the only way you can receive life is through Jesus Christ.
- vii. **John 14:6** Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

#### **7. Jesus seeks believers.**

- i. **John 1:4** “In him was life, and that life was the light of men.”
- ii. Jesus is the light of men. In the Bible light usually refers to truth or holiness, and darkness refers to falsehood or sin. This reference to light means that Jesus reveals spiritual truth to men. Jesus seeks believers for Himself. He is on a mission to make believers out of unbelievers; followers out of sinners.
- iii. **John 1:5** “That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it.”
  1. Darkness refers to sin and spiritual ignorance. Jesus reveals the truth about God to those who are in sin and ignorance.
  2. “and the darkness did not overcome it.” Even though some unbelievers tried to stop Jesus, they could not prevent Jesus from revealing the truth to many, many people.

- iv. Jesus is not just the light. He is everything we need for life. What are the essentials for human life?
  - 1. Light. Without the sun we would die. Jesus is our light. **John 8:12** Jesus spoke to them again: “I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.”
  - 2. Air. The Greek word for Spirit (Gk *pneuma*) also means wind, air in motion, or breath. Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit. **John 20:22** After saying this, he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”
  - 3. Water. Without water we couldn’t survive. **John 4:14** “But whoever drinks from the water that I will give him will never get thirsty again. In fact, the water I will give him will become a well of water springing up in him for eternal life.”
  - 4. Food. **John 6:35** “I am the bread of life,” Jesus told them. “No one who comes to me will ever be hungry, and no one who believes in me will ever be thirsty again.”
- v. Jesus sought out believers in two ways:
  - 1. He sent witnesses, the first of which is John.
    - a. **John 1:6-8** “6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.”
    - b. John the Baptist was Jesus’ cousin, and he was sent by God to tell the Jews to repent of their sins and prepare for the coming Messiah.
    - c. Notice the words “witness” and “testify.” They both come from the Greek word *marturia*, which John uses 47 times in this gospel.
    - d. John writes about seven witnesses that point people to believe in Christ.
      - i. John the Baptist. **John 1:7** “He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him.” John was sent to be the agent of belief, and Jesus is the object of belief. John’s mission was to get people to believe in Jesus through His preaching.
      - ii. God the Father. **John 5:37** “The Father who sent me has himself testified about me.”
      - iii. Jesus’ own words. **John 8:18** “I am the one who testifies about myself, and the Father who sent me testifies about me.”
      - iv. Jesus’ works. **John 5:36** “But I have a greater testimony than John’s because of the works that the Father has given me to accomplish. These very works I

am doing testify about me that the Father has sent me.”

- v. The OT Scriptures. **John 5:39** “You pore over the Scriptures because you think you have eternal life in them, and yet they testify about me.”
- vi. The disciples. **John 15:27** “You also will testify, because you have been with me from the beginning.”
- vii. The Holy Spirit. **John 15:26** “When the Counselor comes, the one I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me.”

2. The incarnation.

- a. **John 1:9** “The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.”
- b. Jesus sought out witnesses by coming into the world. He came to earth and taught, performed miracles so that people could see him with their own eyes, touch him with their own hands, and hear him with their own ears.
- c. What does it mean that Jesus gives light to everyone? It does not mean that Jesus saves everyone, because salvation is conditional upon faith. Rather, it means that Christ offers to save everyone. It is the same as saying that McDonalds gives free hamburgers to everyone. Everyone doesn’t get a burger from McDonalds; only those who go to McDonalds and ask for a burger. Jesus gives light to everyone who wants it.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

- 1. Why does Jesus seek believers for Himself? Because it is only through believing in Jesus that we can be forgiven of our sins, and reconciled to God, and receive eternal life.
- 2. **John 3:16** “For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”