



Lesson 1 (John 1:1–18)

BEGINNINGS

DAY ONE—START BY READING!

The best way to begin study of a book is to read it! Whether you've read the gospel of John multiple times or never, give yourself this day to a rather quick read-through of chapters 1–10. Jot down initial thoughts and observations on the facing page.

DAY TWO—READ ON!

Continue encountering this gospel in full, as you complete a quick read-through of chapters 11–21. Again, jot down initial thoughts and observations on the facing page.

DAY THREE—WHAT AND WHO?

1. This is one book whose main idea we don't have to guess. Toward the end, the author clearly states his aim. Read John 20:30–31. Memorize verse 31, and

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then write it out by memory. Underline words that stand out as key.

The gospel itself will open the meanings of these key words as we study. John's aim in writing will be continually evident, as he draws his reader to believe in who Jesus is and so find life in his name. For now, stop to say and pray again the words of John 20:31, asking that its aim will be accomplished in you and in others who read these Spirit-inspired words.

For reflection: Consider this not as an aim accomplished in a moment, but rather as an aim whose accomplishment begins and then continues through a lifetime into eternity.

2. In general, what aspects of this gospel did you notice in your initial reading that seem to reflect the purpose statement found in John 20:31?

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How would you describe John's method of introducing Jesus in this gospel? What is the general effect?

2. The prologue presents first and foremost the *Word* (Greek *logos*—which has many connotations, including the most basic one of expressing oneself through speech).
 - a. Write down everything you can learn about this Word from John 1:1–5.

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- b. What connections might you note between John 1:1–5 and Genesis 1:1–5?
- c. What understanding of the Word does the Old Testament bring to the New? Besides Genesis 1, see also Psalm 33:4, 6 and Psalm 107:17–20.
- d. Considering the previous parts of this question, write down some thoughts on what it means that Jesus is the Word (as is finally clarified in John 1:14ff).

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image show us, and how does it reveal Jesus to us? How, too, might this light take us back to Genesis 1?

5. Let us recall John 20:31 at this point, which tells us that this gospel is written so that the readers will *believe in who Jesus is* and so find *life in his name*. In light of these key elements of John's theme, examine John 1:1–13.
 - a. How do the elements of John's theme emerge right from the start?

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positive statements with negative ones. For example, how do the negatives help clarify the positives in John 1:3, 5, 7–8?

2. The prologue tells what happened when this Word came into the world. How does John 1:9–10 make vivid both his coming and the response to his coming? How does John 1:11 make the tragedy of the response even more vivid?

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- b. In John 1:14, 18, what kind of seeing is going on, and how does it depend completely on who Jesus is? *Note: The phrase “the only Son from the Father” implies not a created being (recall vv. 1–3), but a unique member of the Godhead. See the same “only” in verse 18 as well.*
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5. Not only what we see but also what we *receive* through Jesus is crucial—and is also the completion of a process this God worked from the beginning, through the Old Testament, finally culminating in his Son. Read John 1:14, 16–17.
 - a. What words repeatedly let us know the riches of what we receive through Christ? What do these words mean, and how are they exemplified in God’s revelation of himself to us in Christ?

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- b. For background read Exodus 33:18–34:9. In what ways was the time of Moses and the law different from the time of Jesus' appearing, and in what ways was it the same?

6. Conclude by rereading John 1:1–18, stopping often to meditate on and thank God for his amazing plan of salvation, accomplished fully in his Son, the Word made flesh.

Notes for Lesson 1

