

1 John 1

The Plan

- A. A Man Named John
- B. The Word of Life
- C. John the Baptist's Message
- D. The First Disciples of Jesus

The Goals

1. Identify the author of John's Gospel.
2. Identify who is the Word of Life.
3. Summarize the message of John the Baptist.
4. Name Jesus' first followers.

A. A MAN NAMED JOHN

Goal 1. Identify the author of John's Gospel.

John Learns the Good News

More than 2,000 years ago, a young fisherman named John left his boats and nets to follow Jesus. For three and a half years, he and eleven other men went with Jesus from town to town in the country of Palestine. John and these other disciples or students of Jesus learned well the lessons Jesus taught about God and His love for all people. Later, John became Jesus' closest friend.

John and the other disciples learned from Jesus the good news or gospel. *Gospel* means "good news." They learned that Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus had come to earth to save all humanity from their sins and to give them eternal life. This was to be a spiritual message to impact all people, everywhere. Before Jesus went back to heaven, He told the disciples to share this good news with everyone.

Jesus also promised the disciples that the Holy Spirit would help them to remember all the things He had taught them. The Holy Spirit would help them to share the good news with others.

Application

In the following exercises, circle the letter in front of the correct answer.

- 1** Who was John, the follower of Jesus?
 - a)** John the Baptist
 - b)** A fisherman who became Jesus' closest friend
 - c)** A carpenter from Galilee

- 2** How long did John stay with Jesus and hear His teaching?
 - a)** Three and a half weeks
 - b)** Three and a half months
 - c)** Three and a half years

3 What does gospel mean?

- a)** Good news
- b)** Singing
- c)** Life of Christ

Check your answers with those at the end of this lesson.

John Shares the Good News

John spent his life telling people the good news that he had learned from Jesus, and later, God told him to record the good news. He could not know then that copies would be made of his writings for generations of people worldwide.

God's Holy Spirit reminded John of the words Jesus had said and the deeds Jesus performed. John carefully recorded the important truths Jesus had taught him. These were later written in the New Testament and is referred to as the Gospel of John.

In the same way, the Holy Spirit inspired John to write four other books. Three of them were letters: 1 John, 2 John, and 3 John. The other was a revelation of what would happen in the future. That is the last book in the Bible, the book of Revelation. All five books that John wrote are part of the New Testament.

The Gospel of John is written in the Greek language, a language that the people of his time would understand. Since most of us do not understand Greek, the Bible has been translated into our language: English. There are many translations of the Bible into English.

Application

Circle the letter in front of the correct answer.

4 Where did John learn the good news that he was to share with everyone?

- a)** From Jesus
- b)** From the newspaper
- c)** From his parents

- 5** When did John write his book about the life of Jesus?
- a)** When he was a young man traveling with Jesus
 - b)** After he had told many people about Jesus
 - c)** Before he knew Jesus
- 6** How did John know what to write in his five books?
- a)** The Holy Spirit of God put in his mind what he was to write.
 - b)** He was inspired by reading other books about Jesus.
 - c)** A committee planned it.
-

B. THE WORD OF LIFE

Goal 2. Identify who is the Word of Life.

Read John 1:1–18. These verses are very important because they tell us who Jesus is and why He came to this earth. They are the introduction John wrote for his book. The rest of John’s Gospel explains the truths that we have in these first verses.

The Eternal Word

God has let us know what He thinks through His written Word, the Bible, and through His Son Jesus who came to earth to testify of God. Jesus is God’s living Word. John writes that Jesus, the living Word, became a human being (v. 14).

From John 1:1–3 we learn that Jesus was with God from the beginning. Jesus is God. This does not mean that there are two Gods. There is only one God, but He is three Persons in one—the Trinity. God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each of the three has a special work to do and has always worked together.

God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit are eternal, without beginning or ending. Jesus was born on earth and is called the Son of God, but He had always existed in heaven before that. John 1:3 says that all things were made by Jesus. Colossians 1:16 also notes, “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth.” Jesus Christ gave life to all things. Jesus gives eternal life to those who repent of their

sins and believe in Him as their personal Savior. Therefore, “who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life” (1 John 5:12).

Application

Circle the letter in front of the correct answer.

7 Jesus is called “the Word” because

- a)** God speaks to us through Him.
- b)** He preached the gospel.
- c)** we read about Him in a book.

8 When did Jesus’ life begin?

- a)** When He was born as a baby in Bethlehem
- b)** His life never had a beginning; He is eternal.
- c)** He was created by God when God created the earth.

9 What kind of life does Jesus give?

- a)** He gives only natural life to things in the world.
 - b)** He gives only eternal life to those who trust in Him.
 - c)** He gives both natural life and eternal life; He made the world and saves those who believe in Him.
-

Light and Life

John 1:4 tells us that the life of Jesus brought light to all humanity. Just as the light lets us see where to walk, Jesus shows us how to live. He shows us the way to heaven.

Many people do not want to accept Jesus and would rather walk in the darkness of their own ways. But those who do believe in Jesus as their personal Savior are given the right to become God’s children.

Although we were created by God, this did not make us His children. We have all sinned, and our sins separate us from God. But when we believe in Jesus as our Savior and Lord, He takes away our sin and gives us a new nature. He changes us so that we will not continue doing wrong. We call this great

change new birth. Through it, God becomes our Father, and we become His children.

We become the children of God, not through anything that we do for ourselves, but through being born of God. We are not the children of God by natural birth. You might say, “I was born a Christian. My father and mother were Christians.” However, your parents’ being Christians does not make you a Christian. You are a Christian only when you are born of God. That takes place when you believe in Jesus and He becomes your Savior.

Application

Circle the letter in front of the correct answer.

10 Jesus is called “the Light” because

- a)** He carried a lamp to show us where to walk on the path.
- b)** He teaches us how to live and shows us the way to heaven.

11 Who have the right to be called the children of God?

- a)** Only those who believe in Jesus as their personal Savior
- b)** All people, because all are created by God

12 How do we become children of God?

- a)** By being born of Christian parents who are serving God
- b)** By being born in a Christian nation where there are many churches
- c)** By being born of God when we believe in Jesus as our Savior



The Word Becomes Man

Review John 1:14–18. God became a man! This is the greatest thing in the history of the world. God loved us so much that He came to take our punishment, to die for our sins so that we could live eternally with Him. But to die, Jesus had to have a human body. So He was born as a baby in Bethlehem. The Son of God became a man, so He could make us the children of God.

God gave the law through Moses, but we could not keep the laws of God. This failure of humanity confirmed our desperate need for the Savior, Jesus. In Him we receive God's grace: God's pardon for our sins and a wonderful new life of blessings.

Application

13 Jesus' purpose in becoming a man was to

- a)** die to save us from our sins.
 - b)** only teach us.
 - c)** know us.
-

C. JOHN THE BAPTIST'S MESSAGE

Goal 3. Summarize the message of John the Baptist.

John 1:6–10 and 15 tell about John the Baptist, God's messenger. This is not the John who later wrote the five biblical books that we referred to earlier. Great crowds went to hear John the Baptist preach. Some people thought that he might be the Messiah or Christ, the Savior that God had promised. But John declared that he was only God's messenger, sent to prepare people to receive the Messiah. He told them to repent and be baptized.

When a great king traveled in Bible times, he sent an emissary to let people know he was coming. John's proclamation of Jesus did essentially that: prepare the people for Jesus.

Application

14 What did John the Baptist do?

- a)** He wrote a Gospel.
 - b)** He told the people that the Messiah was coming.
 - c)** He said he was the Messiah.
-

The Lamb of God

Read John 1:29–34. The mothers of John the Baptist and Jesus were cousins. Yet John did not know who Jesus really was until God revealed it to him. It seems that they had not seen each other for a long time. God showed John that Jesus was the Messiah: the sacrifice for sinners, the One who would baptize with the Holy Spirit, the Son of God.

Jesus was called the Lamb of God because lambs were used as sacrifices for sin. People who had sinned and deserved to die could ask God to accept the death of a lamb in their place. Jesus is the Lamb that God sent to die in our place.

Application

15 In what way was Jesus the Lamb of God?

- a) He was as gentle as a lamb.
 - b) He was a sacrifice for sin.
-

D. THE FIRST DISCIPLES OF JESUS

Goal 4. Name Jesus' first followers.

Read John 1:35–42. Two of those who were disciples or followers of John the Baptist went with Jesus. One was Andrew; the other is not named. He may have been John, the writer of the Gospel you are studying.

Andrew then got his brother Simon, who was also called Peter. Andrew believed Jesus was the Messiah. The term Messiah means “Christ” or “Anointed One.”

Application

- 16** Jesus' first disciples were
- a)** Matthew, Mark, Luke, John.
 - b)** Mary, Joseph, Nathanael.
 - c)** Andrew, Peter, and probably John.
-

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

Read John 1:43–51. Philip told Nathanael about Jesus. At first, Nathanael would not believe that Jesus was the Messiah. So, Philip urged him to see for himself.

Upon meeting Jesus, Nathanael was convinced that Jesus was the Son of God. His encounter with Jesus teaches that anyone who seeks Jesus with a sincere heart can know the truth about who He is. Jesus will reveal himself through the Holy Spirit. This is His promise (John 14:21, 23).

In John 1:51 Jesus calls himself the Son of Man. This name is used thirteen times in John's Gospel. It reminds us that the Son of God left His throne in heaven and became a human. As a man, Jesus was tempted but did not sin. He always did the will of God. As Son of Man, Jesus showed us what perfect humanity can be like by the help of God. As Son of Man, He represented all humanity before God and died as a substitute for the human race.

John begins his Gospel by telling us who Jesus is. In this first chapter he presents these names of Jesus: the Word, Jesus, Lamb of God, Messiah, Christ, Teacher, Son of God, King of Israel, and Son of Man.

Application

17 In the first chapter of the Gospel of John, several different names are used for Jesus. See how many you can find.

18 Memorize the verse that you like best in this chapter.

19 Thank Jesus for coming to die for your sins. Ask Him to speak to you and let you know Him better.

20 Pray that others who are studying this course may know Jesus better.



Check Your Answers

The answers to your study questions are not given in the usual order, so that you will not easily see the answer to your next question ahead of time. Look for the number you need, and try not to look ahead.

- 9 c)** He gives both natural life and eternal life; He made the world and saves those who believe in Him.
- 1 b)** A fisherman who became Jesus' closest friend
- 10 b)** He teaches us how to live and shows us the way to heaven.
- 2 c)** Three and a half years
- 11 a)** Only those who believe in Jesus as their personal Savior
- 3 a)** Good news
- 12 c)** By being born of God when we believe in Jesus as our Savior
- 4 a)** From Jesus
- 13 a)** die to save us from our sins.
- 5 b)** After he had told many people about Jesus
- 14 b)** He told the people that the Messiah was coming.
- 6 a)** The Holy Spirit of God put in his mind what he was to write.
- 15 b)** He was a sacrifice for sin.
- 7 a)** God speaks to us through Him.
- 16 c)** Andrew, Peter, and probably John.
- 8 b)** His life never had a beginning; He is eternal.

