



# God is Incarnate

## John 1:1-18

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*This Bible study takes a closer look at a characteristic of God that is important for us to acknowledge and understand today.*

**Primary Questions:** These are the core questions we will ask in this study of [John 1:1-18](#):

- Who is God?
- What is God like?
- How do we apply these truths to influence the way we think about God and understand our world?
- How will we respond in appropriate worship?

**Background Note:** In [John 1:1-18](#), the use of “the Word” (“the *Logos*”) as a title for Jesus Christ is unique in John’s gospel prologue. The emphasis is on Jesus as the perfect and complete revelation of God. This is different than in Proverbs 8 where Wisdom is personified as a woman calling out in the streets. Here, John claims that all of God’s Wisdom, Reason, and Revelation are embodied in the Son, as a distinct Person in the Godhead. As Eugene Peterson writes in *The Message*, “The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood” (John 1:14).

1. Compare the beginning of [Genesis](#), “*In the beginning, God . . .*” to the opening of John’s Gospel, “*In the beginning was the Word . . .*” What is significant about this parallel? Note also in Genesis 1 that God spoke (the Word) and “it was so.”
2. Look carefully at John 1:1-3. What is the relationship between the “Word” and God, the Father? What was Jesus’ role in the creation of the world? Why is this important?

*Note:* You may have heard a Jehovah’s Witness, with their New World Translation, argue that the phrase, “the Word was God,” should read “the word was a god” because there is no definite article before “god.” However, the claim in this phrase is not that Jesus by himself makes up the entire Godhead (not “the Word was The God”), but that he is a member of the Godhead and is uniquely divine, just as the rest of the Godhead. Literally, it reads, “God is what the Word was.” All the attributes and actions of Deity apply to him, as becomes clear in 1:18 and the rest of John’s Gospel.

3. Another title for Jesus is the Light (vv. 4-9). How is this metaphor important to help us understand Jesus’ role in the world?
  - What is the relationship between Light and Darkness? What does Darkness symbolize?

- Notice that Jesus is said to be the Light “of *all* mankind” (v. 4) and “the Light that gives light to everyone” (v. 9). Theologians sometimes view this as part of the General Revelation of God in the world. How is Jesus a Light for all humanity?
4. What important role does John the Baptist have in relationship to Jesus (vv. 6-8)?
  5. What is the irony in vv. 10-11 regarding who Jesus is and the response he received? Why do you think he was not recognized or received by the world that he made?
  6. Yet some did receive him (vv. 12-13). What is the result for those who receive and believe in Jesus? Jesus continues this teaching on the new birth in [John 3:3](#).
  7. Verse 14 is probably the clearest statement we have of the incarnation (*caro* is Latin for “flesh”)—Jesus, the Word, became flesh. Why do you think John used the word “flesh” instead of “human” or “body?”
    - This doctrine of the incarnation is the central and unique teaching of Christian faith. C.S. Lewis calls it the Grand Miracle, the basis of all miracles. Make a list of the many implications of this truth. You might begin by asking, “What if this had not happened?” This is the Christmas message of “God with us.”
  8. How do verses 15-18 further explain the nature and purpose of the incarnation?

*Offer up prayers of thanksgiving to God for the wonderful gift of his coming to our world through the incarnation of Jesus Christ.*