

JEREMIAH  
BIBLE STUDY SERIES



# JOHN

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST

DR. DAVID JEREMIAH

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DR. DAVID JEREMIAH

*Prepared by Hudson Bible*



THOMAS NELSON  
*Since 1798*

JOHN  
JEREMIAH BIBLE STUDY SERIES

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The quote by Clement in the Introduction is from Eusebius, *History of the Church*, 6:14. The quote by Irenaeus is from *Against Heresies*, 3:1.

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# INTRODUCTION TO

## *The Gospel of John*

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*“Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw . . . Simon called Peter . . . [and] two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother . . . He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him”* (Matthew 4:18, 21–22). The Gospels state that Jesus called twelve men to be His disciples, but these three fishermen—Peter, James, and John—shared a special relationship with Him. They were given unique access to events such as the raising of Jairus’s daughter (see Luke 8:49–51), the transfiguration (see Matthew 17:1–2), and Jesus’ agony in the Garden of Gethsemane (see Mark 14:32–34). It is perhaps due to this special access that John’s Gospel includes stories not found in the other Gospels, such as Jesus turning water into wine (see 2:1–12), His encounter with a Samaritan woman (see 4:1–42), and His raising of Lazarus from the dead (see 11:1–44). John’s account thus gives us a unique glimpse from one of Jesus’ closest disciples into the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Christ.

## AUTHOR AND DATE

The author of the Gospel of John only identifies himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” However, based on internal evidence within the manuscript, it is likely this disciple was a member of Jesus’ inner circle—either Peter, James, or John. Since Peter makes reference to this beloved disciple (see 21:20), and because James was martyred early in the history of the church, the most likely candidate for the authorship falls to John. The early church fathers concurred with this assessment. Clement, who lived

c. AD 35–99, wrote, “John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the Gospel, being urged by his friends, and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel.” Irenaeus (c. AD 130–202) noted, “John, the disciple of the Lord . . . did himself publish a Gospel.” It is likely that John was the last of the four Gospels to be written, sometime between AD 80–90, from the city of Ephesus in Asia Minor.

## BACKGROUND AND SETTING

The witness of the early church was that John was aware of the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John thus wrote his narrative of Jesus’ life to complement those Gospels and supply additional information to help readers understand the events depicted in those accounts. It is also possible that John, as he neared the end of his life, felt the need to record his personal recollections of Jesus’ life and ministry in order to combat some of the false teachings that were beginning to circulate in the early church. But above all, John’s intent was simply to lead people to find salvation in Christ. This is apparent from a statement he makes near the end of his account, where he states, “But these [words] are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (20:31).

## KEY THEMES

Several key themes are prominent in John’s Gospel. The first is that *Jesus was divine and existed before the creation of the world*. John begins his Gospel by stating, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (1:1). John also repeatedly uses the phrase “Son of God” and “only begotten Son” throughout his Gospel to emphasize Jesus’ divinity, and he records seven statements of Jesus that begin with “I am” (see 6:35; 8:12; 10:7–9; 10:11–14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1–5). John’s readers would have associated this identification with God’s proclamation to Moses, when He said, “I AM WHO I AM” (Exodus 3:14).

A second theme is that *Jesus came to bring salvation to the world*. Early in John's Gospel, he records a conversation that Jesus had with a Pharisee named Nicodemus. At one point in the discussion, Jesus states that God sent Him into the world so "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (3:16). John captures many other instances of Jesus using the word *life* in His teaching, offering those who believe in Him the bread of life, water of life, abundant life, and the way to life (see 6:33; 7:37–38; 10:10; 14:6).

A third theme is that *Jesus demonstrated the arrival of God's kingdom through signs*. John constructed his account of Jesus' ministry around seven key miracles to reveal how Jesus, as the Son of God, had the power to turn water into wine (2:1–11), heal an official's son (4:46–54), heal a sick man at Bethesda (5:1–15), feed more than 5,000 people (6:5–13), walk on water (6:16–21), heal a blind man (9:1–7), and even raise Lazarus from the dead (11:1–44). John also uses terms such as *life* and *death*, *light* and *darkness*, and *love* and *hate* to contrast His life-giving ministry against the works of Satan, who only seeks "to kill, and to destroy" (10:10).

A fourth theme is that *Jesus called His followers to continue His mission*. John relates a story at the end of his Gospel in which the resurrected Jesus miraculously appeared to His disciples as they were gathered together in a home. Jesus greeted them, showed them His pierced hands and side, and then said, "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (20:21). Jesus' commission to His disciples still applies to His followers today. Just as the Father sent Jesus to share the gospel with the world, so the Father sends us into the world to do the same.

## KEY APPLICATIONS

John reveals how Jesus came to provide "living water" to quench our deep *spiritual thirst* for the things of God (7:38). He shows how Jesus is the "bread of life" who satisfies our deep *spiritual hunger* (6:35). And he reveals how Jesus is the *only way* we can obtain that living water and bread of life, for "no one comes to the Father" except through Him (14:6).

*John 1:1–2:25*

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.



## SETTING THE STAGE

The apostle John used *Word* as a synonym for Jesus Christ. The word, translated from the Greek word *logos*, was used to define what Greek philosophers called the fundamental principle behind the way the universe functioned. John knew his readers would be familiar with *logos*, so he chose that word to communicate who Jesus Christ is. Not only is He the fundamental principle of the universe, but He is also the communication of God to man.

Jesus is the idea, the expression, and the manifestation of God to the whole world. He is God's Word to humankind. God in heaven, wanting to best communicate in a way we could understand, decided that He would come to earth in a human body to live among humans. Thus the God-man, Jesus Christ, was the Word of God to us.

Certainly, an idea can be cold and passionless, without any meaning. But it is different when that idea reaches out and takes hold of your hand. It's different when that idea walks, talks, breathes, and speaks among you. It's different when you can watch Him, feel Him, touch Him, hear Him, and be a part of His life. When that happens, an idea explodes into meaning so you can understand what the idea is all about.

We could not have known God as we do today had it not been for His Word. That Word, Jesus Christ, was—and is—God's Word to us.

## EXPLORING THE TEXT

### *The Eternal Word (John 1:1–18)*

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- <sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. <sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup> And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

<sup>6</sup>There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. <sup>8</sup> He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. <sup>9</sup> That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

<sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. <sup>11</sup> He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup> But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup> John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' "

<sup>16</sup>And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

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**1.** Read Genesis 1:1 and John 1:1. What similarities do you note between the verses? What do you think is the first point John wanted his readers to understand?

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**2.** Although the entire nation of Israel did not accept Jesus as the Messiah, there were some who did receive Him. What does John say these people received (see verses 12–13)?

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### *The First Disciples (John 1:35–51)*

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<sup>35</sup> Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. <sup>36</sup> And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, “Behold the Lamb of God!”

<sup>37</sup> The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.

<sup>38</sup> Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, “What do you seek?”

They said to Him, “Rabbi” (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), “where are You staying?”

<sup>39</sup> He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour).

<sup>40</sup> One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. <sup>41</sup> He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). <sup>42</sup> And he brought him to Jesus.

Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, A Stone).

<sup>43</sup> The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.” <sup>44</sup> Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup> Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

<sup>46</sup> And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?”

Philip said to him, "Come and see."

<sup>47</sup> Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

<sup>48</sup> Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?"

Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

<sup>49</sup> Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"

<sup>50</sup> Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." <sup>51</sup> And He said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

**3.** What compelled Andrew to begin following Christ? How did he convince his brother, Simon (known as Peter), to also become one of Jesus' disciples (see verses 35–42)?

**4.** Nathanael was skeptical that the promised Messiah could come from Nazareth. After all, the town was never mentioned once in the Old Testament, and it was best known for housing Roman soldiers. How did Philip respond to Nathanael's skepticism? How did Jesus show Nathanael that something good *could* come from Nazareth (see verses 46–49)?

*Jesus Changes Water into Wine (John 2:1–10)*

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<sup>1</sup> On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. <sup>2</sup> Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. <sup>3</sup> And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine."

<sup>4</sup> Jesus said to her, "Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come."

<sup>5</sup> His mother said to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

<sup>6</sup> Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. <sup>7</sup> Jesus said to them, "Fill the waterpots with water." And they filled them up to the brim. <sup>8</sup> And He said to them, "Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast." And they took it. <sup>9</sup> When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. <sup>10</sup> And he said to him, "Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!"

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**5.** As far as we know, Jesus had not yet performed a public miracle . . . and His reply to His mother seems to suggest that He wasn't ready to start. Why then do you think Mary told the servants to do whatever Jesus said to them (see verses 3–5)?

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**6.** Hospitality was extremely important in ancient Israel. To run out of wine in the middle of a wedding feast would have been humiliating for the host. How did Jesus' miracle help the bridegroom to not be embarrassed in front of his guests (see verses 6–10)?

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### *Jesus Clears the Temple Courts (John 2:13–25)*

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<sup>13</sup> Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. <sup>14</sup> And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. <sup>15</sup> When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. <sup>16</sup> And He said to those who sold doves, "Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!" <sup>17</sup> Then His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up."

<sup>18</sup> So the Jews answered and said to Him, "What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?"

<sup>19</sup> Jesus answered and said to them, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

<sup>20</sup> Then the Jews said, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?"

<sup>21</sup> But He was speaking of the temple of His body. <sup>22</sup> Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said.

<sup>23</sup> Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. <sup>24</sup> But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, <sup>25</sup> and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

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**7.** Read Psalm 69:8–9. How did Jesus show “zeal” for His Father’s house (see John 2:13–17)?

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**8.** How did Jesus respond when the religious leaders asked for a “sign” to prove His authority? What significance did Jesus’ words have later for the disciples (see verses 18–22)?

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## REVIEWING THE STORY

The apostle John begins his Gospel by revealing the truth about Jesus' divine nature and then introduces John the Baptist, the prophesied forerunner who would bear witness to the coming of the Messiah. John the Baptist pointed two of his own disciples, Andrew and John, to Jesus. These men, in turn, introduced their brothers, Simon (Peter) and James, to Jesus. Philip recruited Nathanael, and the band of disciples began to grow. Jesus revealed Himself as the Messiah in a relatively private way by turning water to wine at a wedding feast in Cana, and then in a very public way by driving merchants from the temple.

**9.** How does John describe the coming of Jesus into the world (see John 1:14)?

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**10.** What “greater things” did Jesus tell Nathanael that he would see (see John 1:50–51)?

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**11.** How did Jesus reply when His mother, Mary, told Him the wine had run out at the wedding they were attending in Cana (see John 2:3–4)? What did He mean by this statement?

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**12.** How did Jesus react to the people who believed in Him only because of the miracles He performed (see John 2:24–25)?

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## APPLYING THE MESSAGE

**13.** Nathanael almost rejected Jesus because He was from the town of Nazareth. What are some reasons why people reject Jesus today?

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**14.** Jesus was bold and zealous for the sanctity of God’s house. How do you show zeal and boldness for the things of God?

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## REFLECTING ON THE MEANING

Philip brought extraordinary news to his friend Nathanael: “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” Nathanael, for his part, was less than impressed. “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” he replied (John 1:45–46).

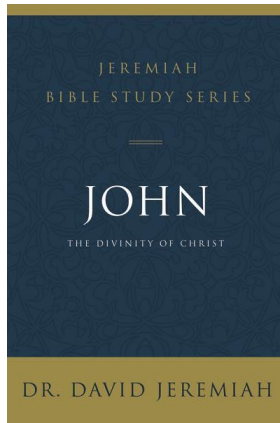
Philip could have responded to Nathanael’s skepticism and reluctance in any number of ways. He could have argued with him. He could have reasoned with him. He could have countered Nathanael’s sarcasm with sarcasm of his own. Instead, he offered a simple, yet profound, three-word invitation: “Come and see” (verse 46).

What is it we do as Christians when we witness to people . . . whether it’s through personal testimony, preaching, or some other action? We simply point them to Jesus. We say to them, “Come and see. Come to church with me, and you will see. Come to my Bible study, and you will see. Come to our prayer meeting, and you will see. Just come and see.”

Sometimes, when we study God’s Word and the theological principles it contains, we’re tempted to take a more intellectual approach to our faith. We fool ourselves into thinking that if we can just find the right answers to all the questions that unbelievers have about faith in Jesus, we can somehow convince them to become Christians. Unfortunately, that is not the case at all. You cannot reason somebody to heaven.

What is keeping you from saying “come and see” to someone you know?

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