SMITH FOR CHRIST

TEACHING THE WORD · WATCHING THE TIMES



DEEP DIVE

John

Chapter One, Verses 1–51

The Word Became Flesh — from the eternal Word in the beginning to the opened heavens over the Son of Man

NASB 1995 | VERSE BY VERSE | FOUR VOICES | WITH DIAGRAMS

John opens before Genesis — "In the beginning was the Word" — and within one chapter that Word has become flesh, been named the Lamb of God, and gathered five men who will never be the same. Read through four teachers — **David Guzik**, **R.C. Sproul**, **C.H. Spurgeon** and **Matthew Henry** — with the Greek behind John's key words.

THE PASSAGE

John 1:1–51

Word · witness · flesh · voice · Lamb · come and see

THE METHOD

Verse by Verse

Color-coded by teacher

WHAT'S INSIDE

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Six movements from the eternal Word to the first disciples

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"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." — John 1:1

SECTION I · THE PASSAGE

John 1:1–51

The Word Became Flesh — The eternal Word made flesh, the Lamb of God pointed out, and the first men who came and saw

† How to Read This Study

This study walks John 1 in 6 movements, in John's own order. Each movement opens with the full NASB 1995 text of those verses, marked with the Berean colors and shapes; then the Greek behind the key words; then the teachers, each in his own color — **David Guzik**, the pastor who walks the text verse by verse; **R.C. Sproul**, the theologian who presses every word for its doctrine; **C.H. Spurgeon**, the preacher who turns the doctrine into a call to the heart; and **Matthew Henry**, the Puritan commentator who gathers it into plain, practical counsel. The figures draw the passage so you can see where John is going. Read the Scripture first; then let each voice add its angle.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word — R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's
C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle — MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

HOW THIS STUDY IS MARKED — God — His character & actions; Command / instruction; Key repeated word; Sin / warning; Promise / blessing; Time / place / contrast

KEY VERSE · JOHN 1:14

"And △the Word became flesh, and △dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, ☆full of grace and truth."

† Before the Passage

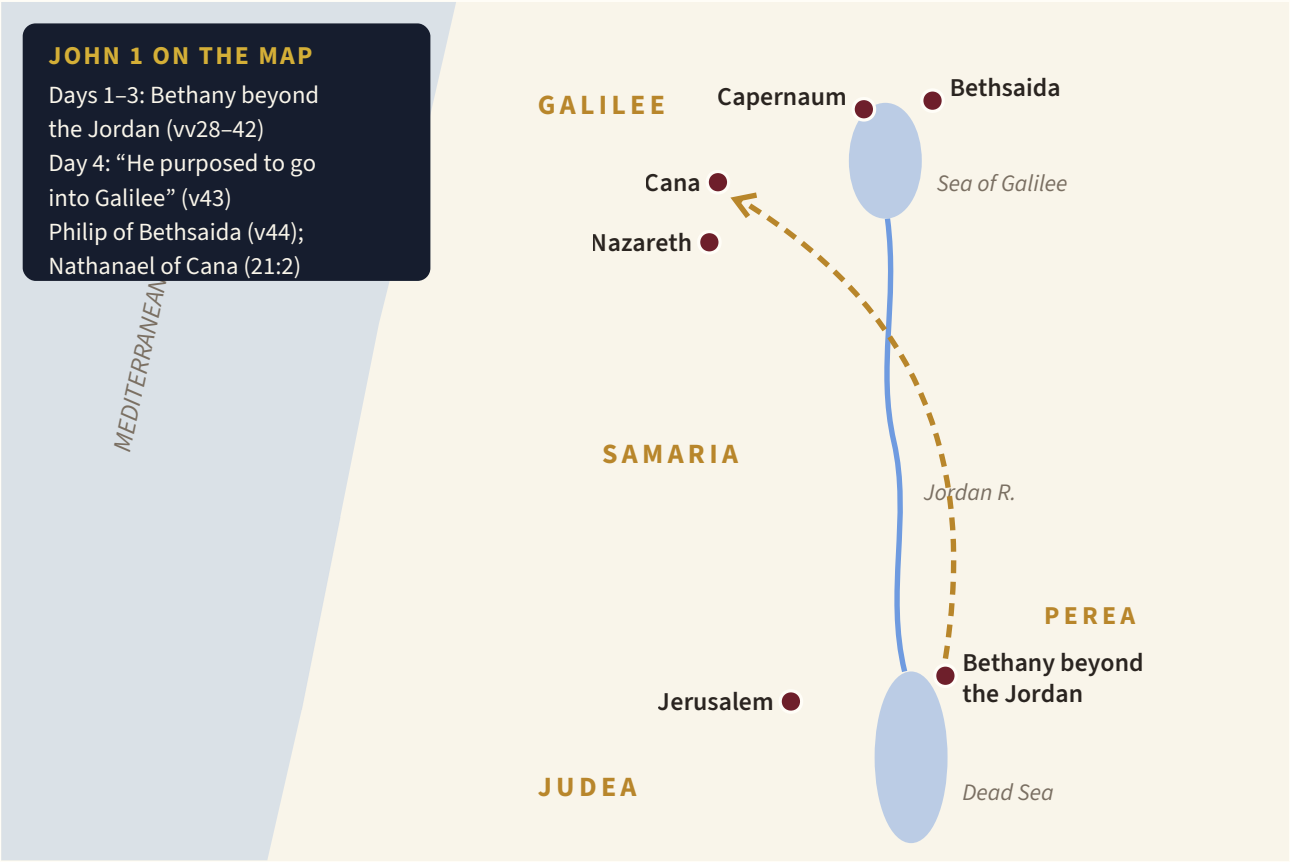
Matthew opens with a genealogy back to Abraham, Luke with a priest in the temple, Mark with John in the wilderness. John goes further back than any of them — back before Bethlehem, before Abraham, before the first day of creation: "In the beginning was the Word." He tells us at the end why he wrote: "so 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). Chapter 1 sets out every one of those words — believe, Christ, Son of God, life, name — before the story has properly begun.

The chapter has two halves. Verses 1–18, the prologue, are a hymn-like overture: the Word who was God, the Creator, the Light, rejected by His own, received by some, and finally made flesh. Verses 19–51 come down to the riverbank and the calendar — "the next day" (vv. 29, 35, 43) — as John the Baptist testifies and the first disciples follow. The overture states the themes; the days that follow show them happening to real men with names: Andrew, Simon, Philip, Nathanael, and an unnamed disciple most readers take to be John himself.

The Old Testament runs under every line. “In the beginning” is Genesis 1:1. “Dwelt” is tabernacle language from Exodus, where the glory of the LORD filled the tent. The Baptist answers his questioners with Isaiah 40:3; the titles they test him by — the Christ, Elijah, the Prophet — come from Malachi 4:5 and Deuteronomy 18:15. “The Lamb of God” reaches back to Abraham on Moriah, the Passover, and Isaiah 53. And the chapter closes with Jacob’s ladder (Genesis 28:12) and Daniel’s Son of Man.

The geography is short and real. John baptizes at “Bethany beyond the Jordan” (v. 28) — east of the river, not the Bethany near Jerusalem (the KJV, following other manuscripts, reads “Bethabara”). On the fourth day Jesus sets out for Galilee (v. 43), where Philip’s town of Bethsaida sits on the north shore of the lake and Nathanael is from Cana (21:2). Watch the titles pile up as the days go by: Word, Light, Lamb, Son of God, Rabbi, Messiah, King of Israel, Son of Man. John wants you to finish the chapter knowing who this is.

FIGURE · WHERE JOHN 1 HAPPENS



John baptizes east of the Jordan; on the fourth day Jesus heads north into Galilee, home country of Philip (Bethsaida) and Nathanael (Cana). Site of Bethany beyond the Jordan shown at its traditional location near Jericho.

I
MOVEMENT

JOHN 1:1–5

In the Beginning Was the Word

Eternal, personal, divine — the Creator, the Life, the Light the darkness cannot master

> [1] *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and* △ *the Word was God*. [2] *He was in the beginning with God.* [3] △ *All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.* [4] ☆ *In Him was life, and the life was the* ⟳ *Light of men.* [5] *The* ⟳ *Light shines in the darkness, and* ⚠ *the darkness did not comprehend it*.
>
> JOHN 1:1–5

> *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."*
>
> GENESIS 1:1

λόγος

LOGOS · "WORD" · G3056

The ordinary word for a spoken word, a saying, a reason or account — and the word both of John's audiences already had ready. To a Jew, "the word of the LORD" was God Himself speaking and acting: "by the word of the LORD the heavens were made." To a Greek, *logos* was the reason that holds the universe together. John takes the word and fills it with a Person. Verse 1 says three things in three clauses: the Word already *was* (*ēn*, continuous) when the beginning began; He was *pros ton theon*, "with God," face toward God; and *theos ēn ho logos*, "the Word was God." With no article, *theos* describes what the Word is — God in nature — without making Him the whole Godhead (the Father). That is why the NASB rightly reads "the Word was God," not "a god."

κατέλαβεν

KATELABEN · "COMPREHEND / OVERCOME" · G2638

From *katalambanō*, "to lay hold of, seize, grasp" — with the hand or with the mind. The KJV and NASB read "comprehended" (grasped with the mind); many modern versions read "overcome" (seized and mastered). John uses the same verb at 12:35, "walk while you have the Light, so that darkness will not overtake you." Both senses are true of the dark: it neither understood the Light nor put it out. The verb *phainei*, "shines," is present tense — the Light is still shining while John writes, and while you read.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik explains that John chose a word both of his audiences knew: Jews spoke of God's self-expression as "the word of God," and Greeks used *logos* for the reason that orders the universe; John speaks to both in their own terms. He calls verse 1 "one of the most basic foundations of our faith – the Trinity": the Father and the Son "are equally God, yet distinct in their Person." He answers the Jehovah's Witness rendering "a god" with Greek scholars and calls it "a wrong and misleading translation." The Word who made all things is uncreated. "Life" here is life itself, not mere biology — and "The light cannot lose against the darkness; the darkness will never overcome it."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul opened his series on John at St. Andrew's (April 2002) with the prologue as a preview of the whole Gospel — "His is the most theological of the four Gospels." "In the beginning" deliberately echoes Genesis 1:1, and the Word who is both with God and is God is the ground of the church's doctrine of the Trinity: "That sentence alone was enough to keep the theologians busy for three hundred years." The Word is the Creator and the source of the life that is the light of men: "Conversely, outside of Him there is no life." Elsewhere he draws the line between Greek and biblical thought: the philosophers' *logos* was an abstract principle, but "In Hebrew thought, the Logos is personal."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

In his notes on John, Spurgeon hears Genesis in the first words: "Even then "the Word" was; he existed before all time, even from everlasting." "I know not how the Deity of Christ can be more plainly declared than in his eternal duration." On verse 3 he joins the cradle and the cross to creation: "He who hung upon the cross was the Maker of all worlds." "How low he stooped! How high he must have been that he could stoop so low!" And verse 5 is still true in every age: "Christ is still not understood, Jesus is still not known. How should darkness understand light?"

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry explains "the Word" by the way a man's thought becomes speech: Christ is God's mind made known to us. He traces each clause — the Word's eternity ("The Word had a being before the world had a beginning"), His being with God, His deity, and His work as the One by whom all things were made, the fountain of life and of the light of reason in men. Fallen man, he writes, still has a light in conscience, and the Old Testament carried hints of the Messiah — but "Light is self-evidencing, and will make itself known"; the fault was in the darkness of sin, not in the Light.

II
MOVEMENT

JOHN 1:6-13

Not Received, Yet Received

A man sent to testify; the world that did not know Him; the children born of God

6 *There came 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 *There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.* 10 *He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.* 11 *He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.* 12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,* 13 *who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

JOHN 1:6-13

μαρτυρέω

MARTYREŌ · "TESTIFY" · G3140

To bear witness, give evidence in court; its noun is *martyria*, "testimony" (v. 19). It is one of John's great words — testify, testified, testimony and witness come seven times in this chapter alone (vv. 7, 7, 8, 15, 19, 32, 34). A witness does not invent the case; he tells what he has seen. That is why the Baptist's testimony ends with "I myself have seen, and have testified" (v. 34). In time the word came to mean one who sealed his witness with his life — our "martyr."

ἐξουσία

EXOUSIA · "RIGHT, AUTHORITY" · G1849

Not native power (*dynamis*) but granted standing — the legal right to be something. "As many as received [*elabon*, G2983] Him, to them He gave the right to become children [*tekna*, G5043] of God." *Tekna* is a born-child word (from *tiktō*, to bear), which is why verse 13 goes on to birth: not of blood (descent), nor of the will of the flesh (desire), nor of the will of man (decision), but of God. "Receive" and "believe in His name" are set side by side as the same act seen two ways.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that "It was important for John the Gospel writer to make it clear that John the Baptist was not that Light" — the Baptist's work had been widely received, and some may have overvalued him. Witness, he says, is serious: it establishes truth and gives ground for faith. Then the tragedy: "God came to the same world He created, to the creatures made in His image, and yet the world did not know Him" — a sign of how deeply fallen human nature rejects God. But he quotes Leon Morris: "The end of the story is not the tragedy of rejection, but the grace of acceptance." Receiving Him is believing in His name, and "Those who received Him are born of God, but not of human effort or achievement."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul reads verses 6–8 simply: John "wasn't the light, but he was witness to the light." Verses 10–11 are a sober judgment — the world did not know its Maker, and His own people did not receive Him. He recalls talking through John 3:16–19 with James Montgomery Boice and presses the point that condemnation is not waiting in the future for people who have never heard: "The world is already exposed to the condemnation of God because we prefer the darkness to the light." He closed the sermon praying that his hearers would be like those who did receive Him, "To them God gave the authority to be called His children."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's notes feel the pain of verse 11: "That favored circle, the Jewish nation, where revelation had been given, even there, there was no place for him." He reads verses 12–13 together and puts the new birth first: "To receive Christ, a man must be born of God." Opening the door looks "the simplest thing in all the world," "but no man lets Christ into his heart until first God has made him to be born again, born from above." Yet he loved to picture faith as plain receiving: "It is the empty cup placed under the flowing stream; the penniless hand held out for the heavenly alms."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry says John came as a witness not because Christ needed it but because we did: “Christ’s light needs not man’s testimony, but the world’s darkness does.” On verse 11 he looks past Israel to every nominal believer: “Many who in profession are Christ’s own, yet do not receive him, because they will not part with their sins.” “Though his own received him not, yet there were those that received him,” and they are born again — a birth from God, not from blood or the will of man.

III
MOVEMENT

JOHN 1:14–18

The Word Became Flesh

God pitches His tent among us — glory, grace and truth, and the Father made known

14 *And* △ *the Word became flesh*, *and* △ *dwelt among us*, *and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father,* ☆ *full of grace and truth*. 15 *John* ⟲ *testified about Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.’”* 16 *For of His fullness we have all received, and* ☆ *grace upon grace*. 17 *For* ◷ *the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.* 18 *No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father,* △ *He has explained Him*.

JOHN 1:14–18

“Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.”

EXODUS 40:34

ἐσκήνωσεν

ESKĒNŌSEN · “DWELT” · G4637

From *skēnoō*, “to pitch a tent, tabernacle” (*skēnē* is the word the Greek Old Testament uses for the tabernacle). Literally, “the Word became flesh and *tented* among us.” John uses the verb only here and four times in Revelation (7:15; 12:12; 13:6; 21:3 — “the tabernacle of God is among men”). Put it beside the next words, “we saw His glory,” and Exodus 40:34 comes into view: the glory that once filled the tent now lived in a body. *Sarx egeneto* — “became flesh” — is blunt on purpose: not appeared as, but became.

μονογενής

MONOGENĒS · “ONLY BEGOTTEN, UNIQUE” · G3439

“One of a kind” — the only child of a parent (Luke 7:12; 8:42; 9:38), Isaac as Abraham’s unique son of promise (Hebrews 11:17), and five times of Christ in John’s writings (1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). In verse 18 the oldest manuscripts, followed by the NASB and SBLGNT, read *monogenēs theos*, “the only begotten God”; the KJV follows later manuscripts, “the only begotten Son.” Either way, the One who is God and “in the bosom of the Father” has *exēgēsato* (G1834) — “explained,” led Him out into view. Our word *exegesis* comes from it: Jesus is God’s exegesis.

χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος

CHARIN ANTI CHARITOS · "GRACE UPON GRACE" · G5485

Literally "grace in place of grace" — wave after wave, each new grace taking the place of the last before it is spent. Some read it as the grace of the new covenant replacing the grace given through Moses (v. 17). *Charis* appears four times in verses 14–17 and never again in John's Gospel; from verse 18 on, John shows grace instead of naming it.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik calls verse 14 "John's most startling statement so far" — to Greeks, who could not imagine God taking a body, and to Jews, who could not imagine Him coming so near. "Dwelt" is tabernacle language, and the tabernacle was many things Jesus is among His people. "Beheld" means eyewitness sight: "God has come close to you in Jesus Christ." The order Jesus brought is different from Moses': "This new order has an inexhaustible supply of grace." And verse 18 settles the question of what God is like: "Jesus, the Word, is the perfect declaration of the unseen God." "We don't have to wonder about the nature and personality of God."

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

For Sproul the prologue's claim that the Word became flesh is the point where the eternal meets the temporal: "The cosmic Christ enters our humanity." In the opening sermon of his John series he puts the glory of verse 14 in the strongest terms: "We saw His glory, the glory of the monogenēs, the only begotten God Himself." Weeks later, preaching on the temple in chapter 2, he reached back to this verse: "John already introduced Him as the tabernacle, as you recall, in the prologue at the beginning of this gospel."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "The Glory of Christ — Beheld!" (No. 414, October 1861) reads verse 14 as the Word "tabernacling" — Christ's humanity is the tent where God and man now meet. But the comparison has a turn: "The Jewish tabernacle was full of law rather than full of grace." "Christ is full of grace — not a little of it, but abundance of it is treasured up in him"; "he is not the picture, but the reality; he is not the shadow, but the substance." How do we behold Him now? "Why, faith sees it." He ends with his own testimony: "He is divine to me, if he is human to all the world besides."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry marvels at the condescension: "Wonder at this, that the eternal Word should be made flesh, when flesh was come into such an ill name." "He dwelt here as in a tent, not as at home." From His fulness believers receive grace for grace, and he notes several senses the phrase can bear: "Note, All true believers receive from Christ's fulness; the best and greatest saints cannot live without him." The law came through Moses with terror; grace and truth through Christ. The Son in the Father's bosom is uniquely fit to reveal Him: "He that runs may now read the will of God and the way of salvation."

IV
MOVEMENT

JOHN 1:19–28

A Voice in the Wilderness

Jerusalem asks "Who are you?" — not the Christ, not Elijah, not the Prophet, only a voice

19 *This is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent to him priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, "Who*
are you?" 20 *And he confessed and did not deny, but confessed, "I am not the Christ."* 21 *They asked him,*
"What then? Are you Elijah?" And he said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" And he answered, "No." 22 *Then*
they said to him, "Who are you, so that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about
yourself?" 23 *He said, "I am* A VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS,
*'*MAKE STRAIGHT THE WAY OF THE LORD*,' as Isaiah the prophet said."* 24 *Now they had been sent from the*
Pharisees. 25 *They asked him, and said to him, "Why then are you baptizing, if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah,*
nor the Prophet?" 26 *John answered them saying, "I baptize in water, but among you stands One whom you do*
not know. 27 *"It is He who comes after me, the thong of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie."* 28 *These*
things took place in Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

JOHN 1:19–28

"A voice is calling, "Clear the way for the LORD in the wilderness; Make smooth in the desert a highway for our God.""

ISAIAH 40:3

φωνή

PHŌNĒ · "VOICE" · G5456

A sound, a voice — not the message itself but the carrier of it. John answers three titles with three denials, each shorter than the last ("I am not the Christ" … "I am not" … "No"), and then defines himself by Isaiah 40:3: *Egō phōnē boōntos en tē erēmō*, "I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness." The Word (v. 1) is Christ; the voice is John. His command is *euthynate* (G2116), "make straight" — level the road for a coming king. The NASB prints the quotation in small caps because it is Old Testament text.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik sees the priests and Levites as the religious establishment sent to examine a man outside it. John made no attempt to draw attention to himself: he denied being the Christ, Elijah (Malachi 4:5) or the Prophet like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15). He was the voice of Isaiah 40, and his baptism prepared people for a King: "Get cleaned up, get ready for a royal visit." That was startling, because a cleansing rite meant for Gentile converts was being applied to Jews. With Leon Morris he sums up the man: "John's real function was not to teach ethics, but to point men to Jesus." Even untying a sandal, John said, was above him.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul (May 2002) sets the scene: "For four hundred years, there was not a peep out of God," and then a prophet comes out of the desert. He explains proselyte baptism — Gentiles washed to enter Israel — and so the leaders' alarm: "Who does this man think he is, calling us, the children of Abraham, to a cleansing rite?" John's "I am not the Christ" is as emphatic as Luther at Worms. He was not Elijah in person, though Jesus said he came in Elijah's spirit and power. His job was simple — "Build the King's highway" — and his message about himself simpler still: "Don't look to me. Look to Him." Untying the sandal was slave's work: "I'm lower than a disciple."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's notes catch the Baptist's tone: "With indignation he must have repelled the idea that he was the Messiah." "Humbly he reduces himself to a voice; but he was not "a voice and nothing more." There was much that was mighty and wise in that voice." "How John hides himself behind his Master!" A truly great man, he "counted himself unworthy of the most menial service for Christ," and Spurgeon draws the lesson for every servant: "It is better to be the slave of Christ than to rule vast empires; he who truly serves him is glorified thereby."

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry is not impressed with the delegation. Their questions came from curiosity, pride and a wish to keep John under control, and they never troubled to look for the Christ he announced: "Secular learning, honour, and power, seldom dispose men's minds to the reception of divine light." John, by contrast, gives the plainest possible answers and calls himself only a voice. His humility makes his testimony stronger, because it points away from himself to the One already standing, unrecognized, among them — a lesson Henry draws for every preacher: "Ministers must not set up for masters."

V
MOVEMENT

JOHN 1:29-34

Behold, the Lamb of God

The sacrifice for the sin of the world, marked out by the Spirit who remained on Him

29 The next day he saw Jesus coming to him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of
the world! 30 "This is He on behalf of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who has a higher rank than I, for He
existed before me.' 31 "I did not recognize Him, but so that He might be manifested to Israel, I came baptizing in
water." 32 John testified saying, "I have seen the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained
upon Him. 33 "I did not recognize Him, but He who sent me to baptize in water said to me, 'He upon whom you
see the Spirit descending and remaining upon Him, this is the One who baptizes in the Holy Spirit.' 34 "I myself
have seen, and have testified that this is the Son of God."

JOHN 1:29-34

"Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb for the burnt offering, my son." So the two of them walked on together."

GENESIS 22:8

> *"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He did not open His mouth; Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, And like a sheep that is silent before its shearers, So He did not open His mouth."*
>
> ISAIAH 53:7

FIGURE · WHO IS HE? TEN NAMES IN ONE CHAPTER

TEN NAMES IN ONE CHAPTER · JOHN 1

- **THE WORD** — vv1, 14 · John the writer
- **THE LIGHT** — vv4–9 · John the writer
- **THE ONLY BEGOTTEN GOD** — v18 · John the writer
- **JESUS CHRIST** — v17 · grace and truth
- **HIM OF WHOM MOSES WROTE** — v45 · Philip
- **THE LAMB OF GOD** — vv29, 36 · the Baptist
- **THE SON OF GOD** — v34 the Baptist · v49 Nathanael
- **RABBI — TEACHER** — v38 two disciples · v49 Nathanael
- **THE MESSIAH** — v41 · Andrew to Simon
- **THE KING OF ISRAEL** — v49 · Nathanael

AND THE NAME HE GIVES HIMSELF: "THE SON OF MAN" (v51)
the ladder between heaven and earth (Genesis 28:12; Daniel 7:13)

Read the names in order and notice who speaks them — the writer, the Baptist, the new disciples — and that Jesus' own name for Himself comes last.

ὁ ἀμνὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ὁ αἴρων

HO AMNOS TOU THEOU HO AIRŌN · "THE LAMB OF GOD WHO TAKES AWAY" · G286, G142

Amnos, a lamb, occurs only four times in the New Testament: John 1:29, 36; Acts 8:32 (quoting Isaiah 53:7); and 1 Peter 1:19, "a lamb unblemished and spotless." Revelation's Lamb uses a different word (*arnion*). "Of God" means God's own provision — the lamb He provides (Genesis 22:8). *Airōn*, present participle of *airō*, is "lifting up and carrying off" — the Lamb who is taking away. And it is "the sin" (singular) "of the world": the whole mass of it, not one nation's.

ἔμεινεν

EMEINEN · "IT REMAINED" · G3306

From *menō*, "to stay, abide, remain" — one of John's favorite words. The Spirit did not light on Jesus and leave, as He came upon judges and prophets for a season; He *remained* (vv. 32, 33). The same verb returns in verses 38–39 ("where are You staying? … they stayed with Him"), and later in "abide in Me" (15:4). The dove is *peristera* (G4058). The One on whom the Spirit remains is the One who baptizes others in Him (v. 33).

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik: "The shadow of the cross was cast over the entire ministry of Jesus." "John didn't present Jesus as a great moral example or a great teacher of holiness and love," but as the answer to sin. He traces the lamb through Scripture — the covering in Eden, Abraham and Isaac, the Passover, the guilt offering, Isaiah 53 — and on the singular "sin" quotes Maclaren, "as if the whole mass of human transgression was bound together, in one black and awful bundle." "The sacrifice of this Lamb of God has all the capacity to forgive every sin and cleanse every sinner." The Spirit's descent was the sign God had promised John, and John testified to what he had seen with his own eyes.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

In "The Lamb of God" (May 2002) Sproul notes that "the most titled person in all of human history is Jesus of Nazareth," yet this title appears only in John's writings. Against critics who call it John's invention, he points to Isaiah 53 and to the substitute God provided Abraham — "God provided a lamb as a substitute for the sacrifice of Abraham's son" — and to the Passover: "Instead of God pouring out His wrath upon our sin, He provides a lamb of His own." The Spirit who rested on Jesus marks Him as "the One who will bring Pentecost, by which He will baptize all His people in the same Holy Spirit." When John later wavered in prison, Jesus' reply amounted to, "You had it right the first time."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Spurgeon's "The Baptist's Message" (No. 169) holds John up as the model for every preacher: he points away from himself to Jesus — plainly, continually and earnestly — and lets his own disciples go. "He rejoices to preach Jesus as one whom he has himself seen and known." "He preaches him as come, and as coming." The message is short: Jesus is sent of God, the true sacrifice, the only remover of guilt, and the One to be looked to. "This is the glory of John the Baptist." Spurgeon adds that simply stating Christ does more than all our vehemence.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry calls Jesus the Lamb because He is the sacrifice — the true daily offering and Passover lamb — who takes away both the guilt and the power of sin: "Christ levelled his force at the main body of sin's army, struck at the root." His work reaches "the sin of the world," not Israel alone. And it was a merciful way: "God could have taken away the sin by taking away the sinner, as he took away the sin of the old world." John's "I did not recognize Him" proves there was no collusion; he knew Him by God's sign. "God reveals himself to his people by degrees."

VI
MOVEMENT

JOHN 1:35–51

Come and See

Two follow, one finds his brother, one is found, and a skeptic meets the One who saw him first

> 35 *Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples,* 36 *and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!"* 37 *The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.* 38 *And Jesus turned and saw them following, and said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?"* 39 *He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they*

came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. 40 *One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother.* 41 *He found first his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which translated means Christ).* 42 *He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).* 43 *The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He found Philip. And Jesus said to him, "Follow Me."* 44 *Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter.* 45 *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."* 46 *Nathanael said to him, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."* 47 *Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!"* 48 *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."* 49 *Nathanael answered Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel."* 50 *Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these."* 51 *And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."*

JOHN 1:35–51

"He had a dream, and behold, a ladder was set on the earth with its top reaching to heaven; and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it."

GENESIS 28:12

FIGURE · JOHN COUNTS THE DAYS

JOHN COUNTS THE DAYS · "THE NEXT DAY" (vv29, 35, 43)

DAY 1 vv19–28	DAY 2 vv29–34	DAY 3 vv35–42	DAY 4 vv43–51	THIRD DAY John 2:1
priests and Levites ask "Who are you?" "I am not the Christ" (v20)	Jesus comes to John "Behold, the Lamb of God!" (v29) the Spirit as a dove	two disciples follow "Come, and you will see" (v39) Simon → Cephas	leaving for Galilee "Follow Me" (v43) Philip finds Nathanael	a wedding in Cana of Galilee — "the beginning of His signs" (2:11)

BETHANY BEYOND THE JORDAN (v28) where John was baptizing

GALILEE (v43; 2:1) Bethsaida, Cana, Capernaum

From the delegation's question to the wedding at Cana, John dates each scene; the witness of one day becomes the following of the next.

Μεσσίας

MESSIAS · "MESSIAH" · G3323

The Hebrew *Mashiach*, "anointed one," brought into Greek letters — and John immediately translates it: "which translated means Christ" (*Christos*, from *chriō*, to anoint). The Hebrew form occurs only twice in the New Testament, both in John (1:41; 4:25, the Samaritan woman). John translates three words in a row for his readers — Rabbi (v. 38), Messiah (v. 41), Cephas (v. 42, Aramaic *kēpha*, "rock," Greek *Petros*). Andrew's "We have found" (*heurēkamen*, G2147) is the verb of the whole section: found … found … found (vv. 41, 43, 45).

δόλος

DOLOS · "DECEIT, GUILE" · G1388

Bait, a trick, cunning — the craft of a fisherman or a cheat. "An Israelite indeed, in whom there is no *dolos*" (v. 47) sounds like a deliberate contrast with Jacob, the first "Israel," of whom Isaac said, "your brother came deceitfully" (Genesis 27:35; the Greek Old Testament uses *dolos*). Then Jesus promises Nathanael Jacob's own vision (Genesis 28:12), with one change: the angels ascend and descend "on the Son of Man." Jesus is Bethel — the house of God and the gate of heaven.

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik notes that the Baptist was content to lose disciples to Jesus — that was his mission. Asked where He stayed, "Jesus directed them to Himself, to live with Him, not to John or anyone else (Come and see)." The unnamed disciple is probably John himself, who remembered the hour. Andrew brings Simon, and Jesus renames him a stone. With Nathanael, "Instead of arguing against Nathanael's prejudice, Phillip simply invited him to meet Jesus for himself." He suggests Nathanael may have been meditating under the fig tree on Jacob's ladder — "Possibly it was the very portion of Scripture Nathaniel meditated on" — and Jesus claims to be that ladder: "the link, between heaven and earth." "Son of Man" comes from Daniel 7.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul's "The Lamb of God" sermon carries through these verses as a gallery of titles: Word, Son of God, Messiah, King of Israel. "In verse 41, Saint Andrew is the first to announce the messianic identity of Jesus." Nathanael confesses, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" But Jesus answers with His own favorite title. In his opening sermon Sproul argued that "Son of Man," drawn from Daniel, points to Jesus' heavenly origin and authority, not to His lowliness — "it is by far Jesus' favorite self-designation," and "These are not statements of humility."

C.H. SPURGEON · Metropolitan Tabernacle

Two Spurgeon sermons meet here. On verse 41: "As soon as a man has found Christ, he begins to find others," and he begins at home — "Let thy religion begin at home." "Andrew has only two talents, but he finds Peter." In "Nathanael and the Fig Tree" (1870) he describes Nathanael as "a childlike, simplehearted man, transparent as glass," prejudiced by Philip's clumsy "of Nazareth, the son of Joseph," yet willing to come and see. The fig tree was likely a place of prayer, and the comfort is for every hidden seeker: "Never true heart seeks Christ without Christ's being well aware of it." The ladder is Christ, the link between heaven and earth.

MATTHEW HENRY · Commentary on the Whole Bible

Henry watches each man come by a different road. The two spend the day with Jesus — "It is good being where Christ is, wherever it be" — and Andrew goes straight for his brother: "Note, True grace hates monopolies, and loves not to eat its morsels alone." With Philip the order is reversed: "Christ sought us, and found us, before we made any enquiries after him." Philip's "son of Joseph" gave Nathanael a stumbling block — "The mistakes of preachers often give rise to the prejudices of hearers" — but Jesus meets the honest doubter warmly: "Christ is very tender of young converts, and will encourage good beginnings, though weak."

VII
THEME

CROSS-REFERENCES

The Passage in the Whole Bible

From the first light of creation to the Son of Man on the clouds — where John 1 reaches back and forward

"The people who walk in darkness Will see a great light; Those who live in a dark land, The light will shine on them."

ISAIAH 9:2

"For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him."

COLOSSIANS 1:16

"But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!""

EXODUS 33:20

"The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your countrymen, you shall listen to him."

DEUTERONOMY 18:15

"Behold, I am going to send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and terrible day of the LORD."

MALACHI 4:5

"but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ."

1 PETER 1:19

"I kept looking in the night visions, And behold, with the clouds of heaven One like a Son of Man was coming, And He came up to the Ancient of Days And was presented before Him."

DANIEL 7:13

> *"What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—"*
>
> 1 JOHN 1:1

DAVID GUZIK · Enduring Word

Guzik ties verse 51 to two Old Testament scenes at once: Jacob's ladder at Bethel (Genesis 28:12), with Jesus as the ladder between heaven and earth, and the Son of Man of Daniel 7, the title Jesus chose for Himself.

R.C. SPROUL · Ligonier · St. Andrew's

Sproul answers the claim that "Lamb of God" is John's novelty by walking back through Isaiah 53, Abraham and Isaac on Moriah, and the Passover — "It is foolish to say that the lamb imagery is a novelty in the gospel according to Saint John."

SECTION II · STUDY HELPS

At a Glance

Four voices, one chapter

Four teachers, one chapter. Guzik walks the text and gathers the commentators; Sproul preached John at St. Andrew's in 2002 and presses the doctrine — the Trinity, the titles, substitution; Spurgeon turns every verse toward the hearer's heart and home; Henry gathers it into Puritan counsel. On verses 12–13 notice that Spurgeon puts the new birth before receiving; many faithful readers see the two as simultaneous.

THE MOVEMENT	GUZIK · the text	SPROUL · the doctrine	SPURGEON · the heart	HENRY · the counsel
I · The Word	Logos for Jew and Greek; the Trinity; "a god" is a wrong translation.	The most theological Gospel; outside Him there is no life; the Logos is personal.	Deity shown by eternity; the Maker of worlds hung on the cross.	The Word had a being before the world had a beginning; light is self-evidencing.
II · Two responses	John was not that Light; the world did not know its Maker; born of God.	Already condemned because we prefer darkness; authority to be called His children.	No man lets Christ in till God has made him born again; faith is an empty cup.	Christ's light needs no testimony — the world's darkness does.
III · Flesh	His most startling statement; God came close; an inexhaustible supply of grace.	The cosmic Christ enters our humanity; the glory of the monogenēs.	Not the shadow but the substance; faith sees His glory.	Made flesh when flesh had an ill name; dwelt as in a tent, not at home.
IV · The voice	No attempt to draw attention; get ready for a royal visit.	Four hundred silent years; build the King's highway; look to Him.	John hides himself behind his Master; better Christ's slave than an emperor.	Honour and power seldom dispose men to divine light.
V · The Lamb	The shadow of the cross; the whole bundle of the world's sin.	God provides His own lamb; the One who will bring Pentecost.	The model preacher points away from himself to the Lamb.	Christ struck at the root of sin's army; God took the sin, spared the sinner.
VI · Come and see	Jesus directs them to Himself; He is the ladder.	Andrew first names the Messiah; Son of Man is a title of glory.	Found Christ, finds others; no true heart seeks Him unseen.	True grace hates monopolies; Christ sought us first.

JOHN 1:1–51 · A COMPARATIVE READING

† Key Insights to Carry

- **John starts before Genesis.** "In the beginning was the Word" — when the beginning began, the Word already *was*. Spurgeon: "I know not how the Deity of Christ can be more plainly declared than in his eternal duration." SPURGEON
- **"The Word was God," not "a god."** *Theos* without the article describes what the Word is in nature while keeping Him distinct from the Father. Guzik calls the alternative "a wrong and misleading translation." THE GREEK
- **The darkness neither grasped nor quenched the Light.** *Katelaben* can mean both "comprehended" and "overcome" — and both are true. The Light "shines" in the present tense. THE GREEK
- **Rejection is not the end of the story.** His own did not receive Him (v. 11) — "but as many as received Him" (v. 12). Morris, quoted by Guzik: "The end of the story is not the tragedy of rejection, but the grace of acceptance." GUZIK
- **The glory moved into a tent of flesh.** *Eskēnōsen* — He "tabernacled" among us. The glory that filled Moses' tent (Exodus 40:34) now lived in a body you could touch (1 John 1:1). THE GREEK
- **Jesus is God's exegesis.** No one has seen God (Exodus 33:20), but the only begotten God "has explained Him" (*exēgēsato*). Guzik: "We don't have to wonder about the nature and personality of God." THE TEXT

- **The greatest man born of women called himself a voice.** "I am not the Christ … I am not … No." Sproul: "Don't look to me. Look to Him." SPROUL
- **God provides His own lamb.** Abraham said, "God will provide for Himself the lamb" (Genesis 22:8). The Baptist points: there He is. Sproul: "Instead of God pouring out His wrath upon our sin, He provides a lamb of His own." SPROUL
- **Every disciple in this chapter came through someone.** John points two men to Jesus; Andrew brings Simon; Philip brings Nathanael. Henry: "True grace hates monopolies, and loves not to eat its morsels alone." HENRY
- **Jesus saw him first.** "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you" (v. 48). Spurgeon: "Never true heart seeks Christ without Christ's being well aware of it." SPURGEON

† Questions for the Table

1 **If Jesus is the eternal Word through whom all things came into being, what part of my life am I still treating as outside His authority?**

Outside of Him there is no life (Sproul); He made all things, and He is not a lesser god.

1:1-4; Col 1:16

2 **Verse 12 says the right to become children of God is given to those who receive Him. What does receiving Him look like for a man who has been rejected by his own family?**

Born not of blood or the will of man, but of God — a new family and a new name.

1:11-13

3 **"The Word became flesh" — He came all the way down. Where do I need to believe that God has come close to me, not just to good people?**

He dwelt as in a tent among us; grace upon grace, not law upon law.

1:14-17

4 **John the Baptist kept saying "I am not." Where am I tempted to make myself the center of a ministry, a family or a recovery story?**

A voice, not the Word; John hides himself behind his Master.

1:19-27

5 **What changes when I stop trying to take away my own sin and look at "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"?**

God provides His own lamb; the Lamb is taking it away — present tense.

1:29; Gen 22:8; Isa 53:7

6 **Who is the one person I could say "Come and see" to this week, the way Andrew went for his brother?**

Found Christ, finds others — and religion begins at home.

1:39-46

John 1 begins before time and ends with heaven opened over a Man standing in Galilee. The Word who made the world came into it, was refused by His own, and still gives the right to become God's children to everyone who receives Him. Behold the Lamb — then come and see, and go find your brother.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

† Sources

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