

# JESUS THE LIVING WORD: THE FIRST WITNESS OF JOHN THE APOSTLE JOHN 01:01–05

## *Introduction*

This passage is one of the summits of Scripture. In fact, it probably reaches the height of human thought. What is the thought that reaches the height of human concepts? It is this: Jesus Christ, the Son of God. is...

- the Word of God
- the Creator of Life
- the Very Being and Essence of Life

These three truths have to be deeply thought about to understand their meaning. A quick reading of this passage leaves a person disinterested, not even close to understanding what is being said. However, the importance of the truths lie at the very foundation of life. They cannot be overstated, for they determine a man's destiny. If Jesus Christ is the Word of God, then men must hear and understand that Word or else be lost forever in ignorance of God Himself.

I. Christ is eternal (vv. 1-2).

II. Christ is the Creator (v. 3).

III. Christ is life (vv. 4-5).

## JOHN 01:01–05 THE WORD, JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD

The *Word* (*logos*) is Jesus Christ. John faced a serious problem in writing to the Gentiles, that is, the non-Jewish world. Most Gentiles had never heard of the Messiah or Saviour who was expected by the Jews. The idea was foreign to them. However, the Messiah was the very centre of Christianity. How was John going to present Christ so that a Gentile could understand?

The answer lay in the idea of the *Word*, for the *Word* was understood by both Gentile and Jew.

1. The Jews saw a word as something more than a mere sound. A word was something active and existing. It was power — it possessed the power to express something, to do something. This is seen in the many Old Testament references where *The Word of God* was seen as the creative power of God, the power that made the world and gave light and life to every man (Gen 1:3, 6, 11; Psa 33:6; 107:20; 147:15; Isa 55:11).
2. The Gentiles or Greeks saw the *Word* more philosophically.

- a. When they looked at the world of nature, they saw that things were not chaotic, but orderly. Everything had its place and moved or grew in an orderly fashion, including the stars above and the vegetation below. Therefore, the Greeks said that behind the world was a mind, a reason, a power that made and kept things in their proper place. This creative and sustaining mind, this supreme reason, this unlimited power was said to be the *Word*.
  - b. The *Word* was also seen as the power that enabled men to think and reason. It was the power that brought light and understanding to man's mind, enabling him to express his confused thoughts in an orderly fashion.
  - c. More importantly, the *Word* was the power by which men came into contact with God and expressed their feelings to God.
3. John utilized this common idea of the Jews and Gentiles to proclaim that Jesus Christ was the *Word*. John saw that a word is the expression of an idea, a thought, an image in the mind of a person. He saw that a word describes what is in the mind of a person. Thus, he proclaimed that in the life of Jesus Christ, God was speaking to the world, speaking and demonstrating just what He wanted to say to man. John said three things.
- a. God has given us much more than mere words in the Holy Scriptures. God has given us Jesus Christ, The Word. As The Word, Jesus Christ was the picture, the expression, the pattern, the very image of what God wished to say to man. The very image within God's mind of the Ideal Man was demonstrated in the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was the perfect expression of all that God wishes man to be. Jesus Christ was God's utterance, God's speech, God's Word to man. Jesus Christ was the Word of God who came down to earth in human flesh to bring man into a face-to-face relationship with God (vv. 1-2). Jesus was the *Word of God who came to earth to live out the written Word of God*.
  - b. Jesus Christ is the Mind, the Reason, the Power that both made and keeps things in their proper order. He is the creative and sustaining Mind, the Supreme Reason, the unlimited Power (v. 3).
  - c. Jesus Christ is the Light, the Illumination, the Power that penetrates the darkness of the world. He, the Life and Light of the world, is what makes sense of the world and enables men to understand the world (vv. 4-5). □

### ***I. John 01:01–02 Jesus Christ, Son of God is Eternal, Pre-existent***

Christ is eternal. Note three profound statements made about Christ, the Word.

1. Christ was pre-existent. This means He was there before creation. He has always existed.

- a. “In the beginning [en archei]” does not mean *from* the beginning. Jesus Christ was already there. He did not *become*; He was not created; He never had a beginning. He “was with God in the beginning” (John 17:5; 8:58).
- b. The word *was* (en) is the Greek imperfect tense of *eimi* which is the word so often used for deity. It means *to be* or *I am*. To be means continuous existence, without beginning or origin. (See “*It is I*”, John 6:20.)

**Psa 90:2** *Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

**Prov 8:23** *I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began.*

**John 17:5** *“And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”*

**Phil 2:6** *Who, being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God, something to be grasped.*

**Phil 2:7** *But made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

**Phil 2:8** *And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross!*

The testimony of John was that Jesus Christ was the *Word*, the One who has always existed. He is the Son of the living God. (Phil 2:5-8.)

2. Christ was coexistent. He was and is face-to-face with God forever. The word *with* (pros) has the idea of both *being with* and *acting toward*. Jesus Christ (the Word) was both with God and acting with God. He was “with God”: by God’s side, acting, living, and moving in the closest of relationships. Christ had the ideal and perfect relationship *with* God the Father. Their life together — their relationship, communion, fellowship and connection — was a perfect eternal bond. This is exactly what is said: “*He was with God in the beginning*” (v. 2).

**1 John 1:1** *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched — this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.*

**1 John 1:2** *The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.*

The testimony of John was that Jesus Christ was the *Word*, the One who has always coexisted with God. Jesus Christ is the Son of the living God.

3. John did not say that “the Word” was *the God* (ho Theos). He says “the Word” was *God* (Theos). He omits the definite article. John was saying that “the Word,” Jesus Christ...
  - is of the very nature and character of God the Father, but He is not the identical person of God the Father.

- is a distinct person from God the Father, but He is of the very being and essence (perfection) of God the Father.

When a man sees Christ, he sees a *distinct person*, but he sees a person who is of the *very substance and character* of God in all of His perfect being.

**Heb 1:3** *The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.*

**John 14:9** *Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

**Rom 9:5** *Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*

**Col 1:15** *He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born over all creation.*

**Col 2:9** *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*

**1 Tim 3:16** *Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: He appeared in a body, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.*

**1 Tim 6:15** *Which God will bring about in his own time — God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords.*

**1 Tim 6:16** *Who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen.*

**Rev 19:16** *On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.*

The testimony of John was that Jesus Christ was the *Word*, self-existent and eternal, the Supreme Majesty of the universe who owes His existence to no one. Jesus Christ was the Son of the living God.

**Thought 1.** Jesus Christ is eternal. This says several critical things about Christ.

- 1) Christ reveals the most important Person in all the universe: God. He reveals all that God is and wants to say to man. Therefore, Christ must be diligently studied, and all that He is and says must be heeded to the utmost (John 5:24).
- 2) Christ reveals God perfectly. He is just like God, identical to God; therefore, when a person looks at Christ he sees God (See *Jesus the Way, Jesus the Truth, and Jesus the Life*, John 14:6. See John 14:9.)
- 3) Christ reveals that God is the most wonderful Person who ever lived. God is far, far beyond anyone we could have ever dreamt. He is loving and caring, full of goodness and truth; and He will not tolerate injustices: murder and stealing, lying

and cheating of husband, wife, child, neighbour, brother, sister or stranger. God loves and is working and moving toward a perfect universe that will be filled with people who choose to love and worship and live and work for Him (John 5:24-29).

**Thought 2.** The very nature of Christ is...

- to exist eternally
- to exist in a perfect state of being, knowing nothing but eternal perfection
- to exist in perfect communion and fellowship eternally (1 John 1:3).

Note: it is the very nature of Christ that shall be imparted to believers: therefore, all three things will become our experience.

**John 14:20** *“On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”*

**Rom 8:29** *For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brothers.*

**2 Cor 3:18** *And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

**Phil 3:21** *Who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.*

**2 Pet 1:4** *Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.*

**1 John 3:2** *Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.*

### JOHN 06:20 “IT IS I” (EIMI)

*But he said to them, “It is I; don’t be afraid.” **John 06:20***

This is one word in the Greek, *eimi*, which is simply “I AM” (John 18:6). Jesus was saying, “I AM” has come — fear not. He was reminding the disciples who He was: — the Son of God Himself. He possessed all power; therefore, there was no need to fear. This was the same message that God gave to Moses at the burning bush, “I AM WHO I AM” (Exo 3:13-15, esp. 14). It was the same message that Jesus used as a defence against the religionists, “Before Abraham was born, I am” (John 8:58). It is the same message that Col 1:15-17 claims for Him; and it is the same message that is proclaimed by the book of *Revelation*, He “who is and was and is to come” (Rev 1:4, 8; 11:17; 16:5).

There are several “I AM’s” claimed by Christ.

- => I Am the Messiah (John 4:26).
- => I Am (It is I); don’t be afraid (John 6:20).
- => I Am the Bread of Life (John 6:35).
- => I Am from Above (John 8:23).
- => I Am the Light of the World (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46).
- => I Am before Abraham was born, I am (eternal) (John 8:58).
- => I Am the Gate or Door (John 10:7).
- => I Am the Good Shepherd (John 10:14).
- => I Am God’s Son (John 10:36).
- => I Am the Resurrection and Life (John 11:25).
- => I Am the Lord and Teacher (John 13:13).
- => I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6).
- => I Am the True Vine (John 15:1).
- => I Am the Alpha and the Omega (Rev 1:8).
- => I Am the First and the Last (Rev 1:17). □

## II. *John 01:03 Jesus Christ, the Creator*

Christ is the Creator. Note several things.

1. *All things* (panta) means every detail of creation — not creation as a whole, but every single detail. Each element and thing, each being and person — whether material or spiritual, angelic or human — has come into being by Christ.

*Col 1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.*

2. The words *were made* (egeneto) mean *came into being or became*. Note what this is saying. Nothing was existing — no substance, no matter whatsoever. Matter is not eternal. God did not take something outside of Himself, ....something less than perfect (evil) and create the world. Christ, the Word, took nothing but His will and power; and He spoke *the Word* and created every single thing *out of nothing* (ex nihilo).
3. Christ was the One who created all things — one by one. Among the Godhead, He was the active Agent, the Person who made all things. Creation was His function and work (Col 1:16).

*1 Cor 8:6 Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.*

**Heb 1:2** *But in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe.*

4. Note that two statements of fact are made.

=> The positive statement of fact: “*Through Him all things were made.*”

=> The absolute statement of fact: “*Without Him nothing was made that has been made.*”

a. Christ was actively involved in the creation of every single thing: “Without Him nothing was made that has been made.”

b. The word “nothing” (oude hen) means not even *one* thing, not a single thing, not even a detail was made apart from Him.

**Thought 1.** Note a critical point for man. The world is God’s; He made it, every element of it, one by one. This means several things.

- 1) God is not off in some distant place far removed from the world, unconcerned and disinterested in what happens to the world. God cares about the world. He cares deeply, even about the most minute detail and smallest person. He cares about everything and every person in the world.
- 2) The problems of the world are not due to God and His attitude. The problems of the world are due to sin, the attitude and evil of man’s heart.
- 3) The answer to the world’s problems is not men and their technical skills. The answer is Christ: for men to turn to Christ, surrendering and giving their lives to know Christ in the most personal and intimate way possible. Then, and only then, can men set their lives and world in order as God intends.

#### **IV. *John 01:04–05 Jesus Christ, the Life of the World***

Christ is life (See *Life in Jesus Christ*, John 1:4).

1. Christ is the source of light. Note the statement: “That life [Christ] was the light of men.” From the very beginning man was to know *that life*, to know God personally and intimately. The knowledge of the life of Christ was to be the light of men, the beam that was to...

- give real life to man, both abundant and eternal life.
- infuse energy and motivation into man so that he might walk and live as he should.

There is another way to say this. From the very beginning, that life (Christ) was to be the light of man’s...

- quality of being
- essence of being
- power of being
- force of being
- energy of being
- principle of being

That life (Christ) was to be the light of man's purpose, meaning and significance upon earth.

**John 10:10** *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

**John 11:25** *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."*

2. Christ is the answer to darkness.

a. Christ's life did shine in the darkness (See *Darkness*, John 8:12). Very simply, since man had brought darkness into the world (by sin), the life of Christ was the light of man, the *beam* that showed man the way, the truth and the life (See *Light and Darkness*, John 1:5; See *Darkness*, John 8:12; See *Jesus the Way, Jesus the Truth, and Jesus the Life*, John 14:6).

=> Christ showed man the way God intended him to live.

=> Christ showed man the *truth* of life, that is, the truth about God and man and the truth about the world of man.

=> Christ showed man the *life*, that is, how to save his life and avoid the things that can cause him to stumble and lose his life.

**John 8:12** *When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

**John 12:35** *Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going."*

**John 12:46** *I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.*

**2 Cor 4:6** *For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*

**Eph 1:18-19** *I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength. (see Eph.5:14)*

**1 Pet 2:9** *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

**1 Pet 2:10** *Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

**1 John 2:8** *Yet I am writing you a new command; its truth is seen in him and you, because the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining.*



*Acts 20:18* When they arrived, he said to them: “You know how I lived the whole time I was with you, from the first day I came into the province of Asia.

- b. Christ’s life (the Light) cannot be overcome (See *Light*, John 1:5). ■

### JOHN 01:04 “IN CHRIST WAS LIFE”

*“In Him was life, and that life was the light of men.” John 01:04*

The simple statement “in Christ was life” means at least three things.

1. Life is the quality and essence, the energy and power, the force and principle of being. Christ is life; He is...

- the very quality of life
- the very energy of life
- the very force of life
- the very essence of life
- the very power of life
- the very principle of life

Without Christ, there would be no life whatsoever. Life is in Him, within His very being. All things exist and have their being (life) in Him.

2. Life is purpose, meaning and significance of being. Christ is life; He is...

- the very purpose of life.
- the very meaning of life.
- the very significance of life.

3. Life is perfection. Life is all that a man must be and possess in order to live perfectly. This is what is meant by life. Life is completeness of being, absolute satisfaction, the fullness of all good, and the possession of all good things. Life is perfect love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness and self-control (Gal 5:22-23).

Whatever life is and all that life is, is all in Jesus Christ. Even the legitimate cravings of man that are sometimes entangled with evil — such as power, fame and wealth — are all included in the life given by Jesus Christ. Those who partake of His life shall reign forever as kings and priests (Luke 16:10-12). This is the very thing that is distinctive about life — it is eternal. It lasts forever and it is rewarding. It will eventually exalt the believer to the highest life and place and position. (Rev 21:1f.)

Jesus Christ is the source of life: He is the way to life, and He is the truth of life. He is the very substance of life, its very being and energy (John 5:26; 1 John 1:2). □

### JOHN 01:05 LIGHT

*The Light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*  
**John 01:05**

Light reveals, strips away (John 3:19-20), routs the chaos (Gen 1:2-3), and guides (John 12:36, 46). It shows the way, the truth and the life (John 14:6). □

## JOHN 01:05 DARKNESS

Darkness does not understand the light, does not overcome the light, does not extinguish the light (John 8:12). □

## JOHN 08:12 JESUS THE LIGHT

*When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." **John 08:12***

Jesus is said to be the *Light of men* (John 1:4) and the *Light of the world* (John 8:12; 9:5; 12:46). It is possible for the Light, Jesus Himself, to be *in men* (John 11:10; see Col 1:27) and for men to become children of Light (John 12:34-36).

Apparently, Jesus used the word *light* often. John uses the word twenty-four times. What is meant by calling Jesus the Light?

1. Jesus, the Light, is light by nature. Light is what He is within Himself, within His being. His nature, His essence, His character. Scripture says...
  - that "God is Light" (1 John 1:5);
  - that Jesus is "the image of the invisible God" (Col 1:15);
  - therefore, "Jesus is Light." He is "the Light of the world."
2. Jesus, the Light, tells us that He is holy, righteous and pure. Light is the symbol of purity and holiness. Light means the absence of darkness and blindness; it has no spots of darkness or blackness, nor of sin and shame.
3. Jesus, the Light, reveals. His light shows clearly the nature, the meaning, and the destiny of all things. His light shines in, spots, opens up, identifies, illuminates and shows things as they really are. The light of Jesus Christ shows the truth about the world and man and God. The light of Jesus Christ reveals that He loves and cares for man and wants man to love and care for Him.
4. Jesus, the Light, guides. His light allows a man to walk out of darkness. Man no longer has to grope, grasp, and stumble about trying to find his way through life. The path of life can now be clearly seen.
5. Jesus, the Light, does away with darkness and with chaos. His light routs, wipes out, strips away, and erases the darkness. The empty chaos of creation was routed by the light given by God (Gen 1:3). Jesus Christ is the Light that can save man from chaos (John 14:1, 17; 12:46; 16:33).

Jesus proclaimed Himself to be the Light of the world at the great Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:2). The very first ceremony of the Feast holds great

significance for Jesus' claim. It was called "The Illumination of the Temple" and was held in the Court of the Women. The centre of the Court was surrounded by large sections of stadium-like seats. In the open space of the Court sat four huge candelabra. When darkness fell the candelabra were lit, and the elders danced and led the people in singing psalms before the Lord all night. The brilliance and glow from the burning flames of the huge candelabra were said to be so bright that the light could be seen throughout the whole city. It was against this background that Jesus cried out, "I am the Light of the world." □

### JOHN 08:12 DARKNESS (SKOTOS, SKOTIA)

The word is used in Scripture to describe both the state and the works of man. Darkness is very real in Scripture.

1. The darkness refers to the world of the natural man who does not know Jesus Christ (John 8:12). The natural man walks in ignorance...
  - of Jesus Christ
  - of God as revealed by Jesus Christ
  - of the real purpose and destiny of life as shown by Jesus Christ

The natural man stumbles and gropes about in this world. He knows nothing other than the things of this world as he sees them. His only hope is the hope of living a long life before death overtakes him. He walks in darkness, ignorant of real life now and hereafter (see John 12:35, 46).

2. The darkness symbolizes unpreparedness and unwatchfulness. It symbolizes the time when evil occurs (1 Th 5:4-8).
3. The darkness is loved by men. Sinful men do their evil deeds under the cover of darkness. Men therefore hate the light because the light uncovers their evil behaviour (John 3:19-20).
4. The darkness is hostile to light. □

### JOHN 14:06 JESUS THE TRUTH

*Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." **John 14:06***

There is a difference between telling someone about the truth and living the truth before them. The one who lives the truth literally becomes the truth.

1. Jesus Christ is the *Embodiment* of truth (John 14:6). He is the picture of truth. God not only talks to man about Himself, God shows man what He is like in the

person of Jesus Christ. Man can look at Jesus Christ and see a perfect picture of the truth of God.

**John 10:30** *“I and the Father are one.”*

**John 10:37-38** *“Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father.”*

**John 14:10** *“Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.”*

**John 17:11** *I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name — the name you gave me — so that they may be one as we are one.*

2. Jesus Christ is the *Communicator* of truth. He Himself — His Person and His Life — makes things perfectly clear. He reveals the ultimate source and meaning and end of all things. He reveals the truth of man himself and of the world surrounding man. He shows man the right way to the truth, and He enables man to choose the right way to the truth.

**John 3:11** *“I tell you the truth, we speak of what we know, and we testify to what we have seen, but still you people do not accept our testimony.”*

**John 3:23** *Now John also was baptising at Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water, and people were constantly coming to be baptised.*

**John 3:34** *For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit.*

**John 5:24** *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”*

**John 6:63** *“The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.”*

**John 6:68** *Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.”*

**John 8:14** *Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going.”*

**John 14:24** *“He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.”*

**John 17:8** “For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.”

**John 17:14** “I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world.”

**John 18:37** “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

**Rev 1:5** And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the first-born from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood.

3. Jesus Christ is the *Liberator* of truth (John 8:32; 15:3). He sets men free from the great gulf (estrangement) which exists between man and God, between man and his world, and between man and man. He sets man free from the frustrations which he constantly experiences. He frees man from the fears and weaknesses and defects that plague him. Jesus Christ is the only lasting Liberator on earth. (See *Truth*, John 8:32).

**John 8:32** “Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

**John 15:3** “You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.” □

## JOHN 08:32 TRUTH

“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” **John 08:32**

Moral truth, saving truth, working truth, living truth. It is not simply something to be *known*; it is something to be *done* (John 8:31). It is the knowledge and the experience of true reality as opposed to false reality. It is truth in “the inner parts” (see Psa 51:6; Eph 5:9). It is diametrically opposed to sham and hypocrisy. It permits no compromise with evil. It even abstains from the appearance of evil (1 Th 5:22). It is a regard for truth in every respect: believing it, reverencing it, speaking it, acting it, hoping in it, and rejoicing in it. Such truthful behaviour frees a person from all the bondages and impediments of life. (See *Truth*, John 1:9.)

**John 7:16-17** Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God’s will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.”

**John 8:31-32** To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, “If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

**Phil 3:10** I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death.

**Col 1:10** *And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.*

**Hosea 6:3** *“Let us acknowledge the Lord; let us press on to acknowledge him. As surely as the sun rises, he will appear; he will come to us like the winter rains, like the spring rains that water the earth.”*

God’s Word is said to be the Truth (John 17:17), and Jesus Christ Himself claimed to be the Truth (John 14:6). To distinguish between the two, God’s Word is sometimes said to be the *Written Truth*, and Jesus Christ is sometimes said to be the *Living Truth*.

1. The truth sets men free from the shadow of doubt and despair. Man no longer has to grasp and grope about to know the truth, whether it be the truth of God or of his own world. Jesus Christ has revealed the truth: the nature, the meaning, and the destiny of all things.

**John 1:9, 14** *The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

**2 Cor 3:17** *Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.*

2. The truth sets men free from the bondage of sin. Man no longer has to grasp after the power to overcome; nor does he have to struggle against the weight of guilt. The search for deliverance and for the power to conquer, to overcome, to attain, and to live is now over. It is all found in Jesus Christ. (See Rom 6:1f; 8:28-39)

**John 1:12** *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*

**John 14:6** *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

**Rom 7:23-25** *But I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God — through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in the sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.*

**Rom 8:6, 15** *The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.”*

3. The truth sets men free from the bondage of death. Man no longer has to be subjected to the fear of death. Jesus Christ — by His death and resurrection — has now conquered death (Heb 2:14-15). In His death and resurrection man now has the most glorious of hopes: he can now live eternally.

**John 5:24-29** *“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. And he has given him authority to judge because he is the Son of Man. Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out — those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned.”*

**Rom 8:2** *Because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.*

**Heb 2:14-15** *Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death — that is, the devil — and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.*

4. The truth sets men free from the bondage of judgment and hell. The darkness of an unknown future and the apprehension of an impending judgment constantly faces man. At best, man can only hope for annihilation, and he shudders at the thought. At worst, he can expect torture by the gods that be, and he trembles at the possibility. But Jesus Christ has revealed the truth. He Himself has borne the judgment and the punishment of judgment for man.

**John 3:16** *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”*

**Rom 5:6, 8-9** *You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God’s wrath through him!*

**1 Pet 2:24** *He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.*

**1 Pet 3:18** *For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit.*

5. The truth sets men free to be saved to the uttermost. Existence, love, joy, peace, satisfaction, pleasure, hope — nothing has to be incomplete any longer. No good

thing ever again has to be denied man. Jesus Christ, the Truth, is able to save man to the uttermost — completely, perfectly, finally, and eternally. All a person has to do is to come to Christ for salvation, for Christ lives forever to intercede for every man.

**Heb 7:25** *Therefore he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.*

**Gal 5:22-23** *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

**Col 2:9-10** *For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. □*



# JESUS THE LIGHT OF MEN THE SECOND WITNESS OF JOHN THE APOSTLE JOHN 01:09–13

## *Introduction*

The world is in desperate straits. It is full of darkness — the darkness of sin and despair, of sickness and death, of corruption and hell. The darkness looms over the whole world. This is the problem dealt with in the present passage. There is hope in Jesus Christ, for Christ is the *true Light*, and light dispels darkness.

- I. Christ was the Light (v. 9).
- II. Christ was tragically rejected (vv. 10-11).
- III. Christ was wonderfully received by some (vv. 12-13).

## **I. *John 01:09 Jesus Christ, the True Light***

Christ was “the true Light”. Other men may claim to be *lights*; they may claim that they can lead men to the truth. Some may claim they can...

- reveal God to men
- show the nature, meaning, and destiny of the future and other things
- guide a man out of the darkness of sin, shame, doubt, despair and the fear of death and hell
- do away with and eliminate the darkness entirely

However, such men are *false* lights. Their claims are only ideas in their minds, fictitious ideas, and counterfeit claims. Their thoughts and positions are defective, frail and uncertain — just as imperfect as any other man-made position dealing with the truth. Note two glorious truths.

1. The true Light is Jesus Christ (See *Truth*, John 1:9). What does this mean? It means that Jesus Christ was what other men are not. Others may claim to be the light of men, but they are only human. They are both deceived and deceptive in their thinking. Christ alone was the true Light. Christ is to man what light is to man, and Christ did for man what light does for man.

=> Light is clear and pure: it is clean and good. So is Christ (Eph 5:8).

=> Light penetrates: it cuts through and eliminates darkness. So does Christ.

=> Light enlightens: it enlarges one’s vision and knowledge. So does Christ.

=> Light reveals: it opens up the truth of an area, a whole new world and life. It clears up the way to the truth and life. So does Christ (John 14:6).

=> Light exposes and strips away darkness. So does Christ (John 3:19-20).

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- => Light guides: it keeps one from groping and grappling about in the dark trying to find one's way. It directs the way to go, leads along the right path. So does Christ (John 12:36, 46).
  - => Light routs the chaos. So does Christ (Gen 1:2-3).
  - => Light discriminates between the right way and the wrong way. So does Christ (See Eph 5:8-10.)
  - => Light warns: it warns of dangers that lie ahead in one's path. So does Christ.
  - => Light protects: it keeps one from tripping, stumbling, falling, and injuring oneself and losing one's life. So does Christ.
2. The mission of Christ is to give light to all men. Note that He gives light to every man. How?
- => Christ gives light to men through natural revelation, the creation and order of the universe.

***Psa 19:1** The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.*

***Psa 97:6** The heavens proclaim his righteousness, and all the peoples see his glory.*

***Rom 1:20** For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities — his eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.*

***Rom 2:14-15** Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.*

***Acts 14:17** Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.”*

- => Christ gives light to men by giving good gifts to men. Every “good and perfect gift” which man receives is said to come from the Father of lights.

***James 1:17** Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.*

But there is much more light given to men since Christ has “come into the world.”

- a. There is the *light of Christ Himself*: He is the Saviour who now stands before the world as “the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world” (John 11:27). Every man can now see the truth. They may reject it, but they can see it.

***Deu 18:18** I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their brothers; I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him.*

***John 8:26** “I have much to say in judgment of you. But he who sent me is reliable, and what I have heard from him I tell the world.”*

**John 12:49** “For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it.”

**John 14:9-10** Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work.”

**John 17:8** “For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me.”

- b. There is the *light of the gospel*: Christ has now “come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in [Christ] should stay in darkness” (John 12:46). The truth is that every man can now be delivered from the darkness of sin, despair, death and hell.

**John 8:12** When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

**Eph 5:14** For it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: “Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

- c. There is the *light of the Spirit*: both the guiding and the convicting power of the Spirit.

**John 16:13** But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

**John 16:8-11** When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment; in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

**John 3:19** This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but men loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

Note that all the light existing in the world is due to Christ, both the light from nature and from heaven, from the physical world and from the spiritual world. Christ is “the true Light [the Life] that gives light to every man...was coming into the world” (v. 9).

## II. **John 01:10–11** *Jesus Christ, Rejected by the World*

Christ was tragically rejected by the world.

1. Christ (the Word and the Light) was in the world. He had made the world, and He loved and cared deeply for the world; therefore, He was actively working to help the world and its people from the very beginning of creation.

- a. Christ gave the *light of order and purpose and beauty* to the universe as a whole. The universe is lovingly supplied to take care of man's needs, and the world shows the glorious power and deity of God (Rom 1:19-20).
- b. Christ gave the *glorious light [privilege] of living* in such a beautiful world to man. He gave man a soul, the very light of life by which he could learn and reason, love and care, work and serve — all for the purpose of building a better world, both for God and for himself.
- c. Christ gave a spirit to man, the *light of knowing and worshipping* God and living forever in the life of God.
- d. Christ gave messengers to men, *prophetic lights* to proclaim the truth and to encourage men to follow God and to be diligent in their work and service to the world.

But note what happened and still happens. "The world did not recognize Him" (auton ouk egno). Men rejected Christ; they closed their eyes and failed to see Him. (Rom 1:19-32 for the tragic indictment against man's rejection of God's activity in the world.)

2. Christ (the Word and the Light) came to His own people, but they too rejected Him. The words "that which was His own" (eis ta idia) mean literally to His own home, to His own people. There are two meanings here.
  - a. The world is His home, and all the people are His by creation. He came to all the people of the world, but they did not receive Him. They rejected Him.
  - b. The nation of Israel was His peculiar home, the people whom He had chosen to be the messengers of God to the world. They, of all people, should have known better because of the special privileges, but they too rejected Him. (See *Israel, God's Special People*, John 4:22.)

**Mat 8:34** *Then the whole town went out to meet Jesus. And when they saw him, they pleaded with him to leave their region.*

**Mark 6:3** *Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" And they took offense at him.*

**Luke 4:28** *All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this.*

**Luke 4:29** *They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff.*

**Luke 23:18** *With one voice they cried out, "Away with this man! Release Barabbas to us!"*

**John 5:43** *I have come in my Father's name, and you do not accept me; but if someone else comes in his own name, you will accept him.*

**John 1:11** *He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.*

**John 12:48** *"There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day."*

## JOHN 01:09 TRUTH

*“The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.”*  
**John 01:09**

The words true, truth and real are taken from two Greek words very much alike. But each has a different shade of meaning.

1. “Alethes” means true, the opposite of false.
2. “Alethinos” means the true, the genuine, the real. It is the opposite of the unreal, the fictitious, the counterfeit, the imaginary. It is also the opposite of the imperfect, defective, frail, uncertain.

Jesus Christ is seen as the true, the real, the genuine life which has come to give light to every man. □

## JOHN 01:10 REVELATION

This verse gives the raw outline and supreme tragedy of revelation. (1) The supreme fact of history: “He was in the world.” (2) The supreme truth about the world: “The world was made through Him.” (3) The supreme tragedy of humanity: “The world did not recognize Him.” □

### III. *John 01:12–13 Jesus Christ, Accepted by People – Salvation*

Christ was wonderfully received by some persons. Not everyone rejected Christ — most did, but a few received Him. Note three points.

1. How men receive Christ. They “believe in His name.” (See *Believe*, John 2:24.)
2. The results of receiving Christ. A person is given the power, the right, to become a child of God.

⇒ The word *right* (exousian) means both power and authority.

⇒ The word *children* (tekna Theou) means sons and daughters of God.

⇒ The words to *become* (genesthai) mean to become something a person is not.

When a person receives Christ into his life (as Lord), Christ gives that person the power and right to become something he is not — a child of God.

**2 Cor 6:17-18** *“Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”; “I will be a Father to you, and you will be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”*

**Rom 8:15-16** *For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God’s children.*

*Gal 4:4-6 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father."*

3. The source of becoming a child of God is a new birth.

a. The new birth is not of man.

=> It is not by natural descent. The idea is that heritage — being born of a particular family, race, nation or people — is of no value in becoming a child of God. Natural descent is not what causes the new birth.

=> It is not of human decision (ek thelematos sarkos): sexual desire. The idea is that a person is not spiritually born again by wanting and willing to become a child of God as a person wills to have an earthly child.

=> It is not by a husband's will (ek thelematos andros, husband). The idea is that even man (the husband, the stronger member, the one who is usually the leader) cannot bring about the spiritual birth of others. No man, no matter who he is — husband or world leader — can cause or make a person a child of God.

b. The new birth is of God. (See *New Birth*, John 3:1-15.) ■

### JOHN 3:01–15

#### NEW BIRTH, BORN AGAIN, NEW CREATION, REGENERATION

A spiritual birth, a rebirth of one's spirit, a new life, a renewed soul, a regenerated spirit. It is the regeneration and renewal of one's spirit and behaviour (2 Cor 5:17).

It is the provision or infusion of a new life, of a godly nature (2 Pet 1:4). The new birth is so radical a change in a person's life that it can be described only as being *born again*. Something so wonderful happens to the soul that it is just like a *new birth*. It is a spiritual birth, a birth beyond the grasp of man's hands and efforts. It is so radical, so life changing, and so wonderful that it can be wrought only by the love and power of God Himself.

The New Testament teaching on the new birth is rich and full.

1. The new birth is a necessity. A person will never see (John 3:3) nor ever enter (John 3:5) the Kingdom of God unless he is born again (John 3:7).
2. The new birth is a spiritual birth, the birth of a new power and spirit in life. It is not reformation of the old nature (Rom 6:6). It is the actual creation of a new birth within — spiritually (John 3:5-6; see John 1:12-13; 2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:10; 4:24). (See *New Person*, Eph 4:24.)

A person is spiritually born again:

- a. By water, even the Spirit (See *Water and Spirit*, John 3:5).
  - b. By the choice (will) of God (Jas 1:18).
  - c. By imperishable or incorruptible seed, even by the Word of God (1 Pet 1:23).
  - d. By God from above (1 Pet 1:3). The word *again* (ana) in the phrase “born again” also means *above*, (John 1:12-13.)
  - e. By Christ, who gives both the *power and right* to be born again (John 1:12-13).
3. The new birth is a definite experience, a real experience. A person experiences the new birth:
- a. By believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God (1 John 5:1; John 3:14-15).
  - b. By the gospel as it is shared by believers (1 Cor 4:15; Phile 10).
  - c. By the Word of God (1 Pet 1:23) or by the Word of Truth (Jas 1:18).
4. The new birth is a changed life, a totally new life. A person proves that he is born again:
- a. By doing righteous acts (1 John 2:29; see Eph 2:10; 4:24).
  - b. By not practicing sin (1 John 3:9; 5:18).
  - c. By loving other believers (1 John 4:7).
  - d. By overcoming the world (1 John 5:4).
  - e. By keeping himself without sin (1 John 5:18).
  - f. By possessing the divine seed or nature (1 John 3:9; 1 Pet 1:23; 2 Pet 1:4; Col 1:27). □