

JESUS CHRIST, THE ETERNAL WORD

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Primary Text: John 1:1–4, 14

Pastor Daren Mehl

MAIN IDEA

Jesus Christ did not begin to exist when He was born in Bethlehem. He is the eternal Son of God, fully God and personally distinct from the Father. He created all things, is the source of life and light, and became truly human to reveal God and save sinners. Because of this, we must know, trust, worship, and follow the true Jesus revealed in Scripture.

WHAT THIS STUDY WILL TEACH

This study will help us understand:

- why people need more than outward religious reform;
- who the apostle John was and why he wrote about Jesus;
- why correct doctrine about Jesus matters;
- what John means when he calls Jesus “the Word”;
- how Jesus can be with God and also be God;
- what Christians mean by the Trinity;
- why the eternal Son became human;
- and how knowing the true Christ should change the way we live and speak.

1 WE NEED MORE THAN OUTWARD REFORM

Key Scriptures

Nehemiah 13; Jeremiah 31:31–34; John 1:14–17

Nehemiah helped God's people rebuild Jerusalem. He also called them to worship God rightly and obey His commands. Yet by the end of Nehemiah, many of the same sins were returning.

The problem was not that God's Law was bad. God's Law is good. The deeper problem was the sinful human heart.

Rules can show us what is right. Discipline can restrain wrong behavior. Good leaders can call people back to obedience. But none of those things can, by themselves, give a sinner a new heart.

God promised that He would do something greater. Jeremiah spoke about a new covenant in which God would write His law upon His people's hearts and forgive their sins.

John introduces us to the One through whom God fulfills His saving plan: Jesus Christ.

REMEMBER

A rebuilt wall cannot rebuild the human heart. We need God to save and change us.

Why are rules and outward changes not enough to solve the deepest problem of sin?

2 MEET JOHN: A DISCIPLE JESUS CHANGED

Key Scriptures

Mark 3:17; Luke 9:51–56; Mark 10:35–45; John 20:30–31

John was the brother of James and one of Jesus' twelve apostles. Jesus called James and John "Sons of Thunder."

John had strong zeal. At one point, he and James wanted judgment to fall on a Samaritan village that rejected Jesus. At another time, they wanted positions of honor in Christ's kingdom.

Jesus corrected them.

He taught them that greatness in His kingdom is not about having the highest position. It is about serving others.

John's life reminds us that Jesus does not have to erase a strong personality. He changes us so that our strength can be used in holy ways.

John later wrote about truth, love, obedience, and fellowship with Christ. His Gospel was written so that people would know who Jesus really is and believe in Him.

REMEMBER

Jesus can turn selfish ambition into service and uncontrolled zeal into faithful love.

What strength in your personality could become harmful if it is not shaped by Jesus?

How could Christ teach you to use that strength well?

3 WHY DOCTRINE MATTERS

Key Scriptures

John 20:30–31; 2 Corinthians 11:4; Galatians 1:6–9; 1 John 2:22–23

Doctrine means teaching about what is true.

Doctrine is not the enemy of having a relationship with Jesus. Good doctrine helps us know whether the Jesus we believe in is the Jesus revealed in Scripture.

People can use the name “Jesus” while believing very different things about Him.

Someone may say Jesus was only a good teacher.

Someone else may call Him a prophet but deny that He is God.

Another person may believe that Jesus was a created spiritual being.

But John does not allow us to invent our own Jesus. He tells us who Jesus is.

The apostles even warned about believing in “another Jesus” or a different gospel.

REMEMBER

Saving faith must rest in the real Jesus revealed in God's Word.

Why is saying, "I believe in Jesus," not enough if a person means a completely different Jesus than the One Scripture reveals?

4 JOHN 1:1–4 — MEET THE ETERNAL WORD

Key Scriptures

John 1:1–4; Genesis 1:1; Colossians 1:15–17; Hebrews 1:1–3

John begins:

"In the beginning was the Word..."

John intentionally takes our minds back to Genesis 1.

But notice something important.

When creation begins, the Word is already there.

Jesus did not begin to exist in Bethlehem.

"In the beginning was the Word"

The Son already existed when the universe began.

Jesus is eternal.

"The Word was with God"

The Son is personally distinct from the Father.

Jesus is not the Father.

There has eternally been real fellowship between the Father and the Son.

"The Word was God"

Jesus is not partly God.

He is not almost God.

He is not simply like God.

The Son possesses the one divine nature fully.

This is the deity of Christ.

“All things came into being through Him”

Everything that began to exist was created through the Son.

That means Jesus cannot Himself be one of the created things.

He is the uncreated Creator.

“In Him was life”

Jesus does not merely know where life can be found.

Life is in Him.

Throughout John's Gospel, Jesus gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.

REMEMBER

Creation had a beginning. Christ did not.

From John 1:1–4, write at least four truths about Jesus.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5 ONE GOD, THREE PERSONS

Key Scriptures

Deuteronomy 6:4; John 1:1–2; Matthew 28:19; John 17:5; 2 Corinthians 13:14

Christians believe in one God.

Christians also believe that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God.

The Father is not the Son.

The Son is not the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not the Father.

This biblical teaching is called the Trinity.

The Trinity does not mean there are three gods.

It also does not mean that God is one Person who changes costumes or switches between being Father, Son, and Spirit.

There is one God who eternally exists as three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

REMEMBER

The Son is distinct from the Father, yet the Son is fully God.

How can Jesus be “with God” and also “be God”?

6 THE ETERNAL WORD BECAME FLESH

Key Scriptures

John 1:14; Philippians 2:5–8; Hebrews 2:14–17; John 1:12–13; John 14:6

John later tells us: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us...”

The eternal Son truly became human. This is called the incarnation.

Jesus did not stop being God when He became human.

He is truly God and truly man.

One Person. Two natures.

Jesus knew hunger, tiredness, pain, sorrow, and physical death according to His human nature. Yet He remained the holy and eternal Son of God.

Why did He come?

Humanity's problem could not be solved by another wall, another rule, or another human leader.

We needed a Savior.

Jesus came to reveal the Father, obey in perfect righteousness, die for sinners, rise bodily from the dead, and give eternal life to those who believe.

John says those who receive Christ and believe in His name are given the right to become children of God.

REMEMBER

The eternal Creator entered His creation to save sinners.

What does the fact that Jesus is both truly God and truly man show you about how seriously God takes our need for salvation?

7 KNOWING CHRIST CHANGES HOW WE LIVE

Key Scriptures

Luke 9:51–56; Mark 10:42–45; Romans 1:16; Romans 10:17; Ephesians 6:10–17; John 13:34–35

Knowing correct facts about Jesus is important, but those truths should also change us.

John himself needed Jesus to shape his zeal.

Christ teaches His disciples to join:

- truth with love;
- courage with humility;
- conviction with patience;
- strength with service.

Christians should not be ashamed of God's Word or of the gospel. Scripture calls God's Word “the sword of the Spirit.” God uses His truth to bring conviction, faith, encouragement, correction, and spiritual growth.

But Bible verses are not magic words.

We do not control spiritual results by saying the right phrase. Jesus already possesses all authority. We faithfully speak His truth, pray, obey Him, resist temptation, trust God, and leave the results to Him.

REMEMBER

We speak God's Word because it is true and Christ is Lord—not because Bible words are a magic formula.

What is the difference between faithfully proclaiming Scripture and treating Bible words like a magic formula?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Nehemiah shows us that outward reform cannot cure the sinful heart.

John introduces us to the Savior we need.

Jesus is:

- eternal;
- personally distinct from the Father;
- fully God;
- the Creator;
- the source of life and light;
- truly human through the incarnation;
- and the only Savior of sinners.

John wants us to know the real Jesus so that we will believe in Him and have life in His name.

Final Takeaway

**Know the true Jesus.
Trust the true Jesus.
Worship the true Jesus.
Follow the true Jesus.
Speak about the true Jesus.**

Final Response

If a friend gave you one minute to explain what John 1 teaches about Jesus, what would you say?

IMPORTANT CHRISTIAN TERMS

- 1. Apostle:** A person specially chosen and sent by Jesus as an authorized witness and messenger.
- 2. Doctrine:** Teaching about what is true. Christian doctrine explains what Scripture teaches about God, Jesus, salvation, the church, and Christian living.
- 3. Eternal:** Having no beginning and no end.
- 4. Deity:** The truth that someone possesses the nature of God. The deity of Christ means Jesus is truly and fully God.
- 5. Trinity:** The biblical teaching that there is one God who eternally exists as three distinct Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Each Person is fully God.
- 6. Incarnation:** The eternal Son of God taking a true human nature without ceasing to be God.
- 7. Revelation:** God making truth known. Scripture is God's inspired written revelation.
- 8. Illumination:** The Holy Spirit helping people understand and receive what God has already revealed in Scripture. Illumination is not new Scripture or new inspired revelation.
- 9. Sanctification:** God's continuing work in believers, by His Word and Spirit, making them grow in holiness and become more like Jesus.
- 10. Gospel:** The good news that God saves sinners through Jesus Christ—His righteous life, sacrificial death, bodily resurrection, and lordship.

PERSONAL REVIEW

One truth I learned about Jesus:

One Scripture I want to remember:

One wrong or incomplete belief that Scripture corrected:

One way I should respond to God in faith or obedience:

One truth I could explain to another person this week:

PRAYER GUIDE

Use what you learned to pray.

Praise: Praise Jesus as eternal God, Creator, Life, and Light.

Confession: Confess any false idea about Jesus, pride, unbelief, fear, or unwillingness to obey Him.

Thanksgiving: Thank the Father for sending the Son and for giving us Scripture so that we can know the true Christ.

Faith: Tell God that your hope is in Jesus Christ rather than your own goodness or religious effort.

Application: Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand Scripture, become more like Christ, use your strengths in holy ways, and speak about Jesus with courage, humility, and love.

Finish by thanking Jesus that the eternal Word became flesh to save sinners.