

Why do we Christians say that Jesus is God?

How does the world respond to this kind of statement?

The Purpose of John's Gospel

Read 1 John 1:1-2

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. 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

What does this introduction tell you about John's experience of Jesus?

John 1:14

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The “fleshliness” of John's gospel.

John's gospel proclaims and explains the fact that God became human flesh in all its frailty and weakness and yet in the person of Jesus remained fully God.

John 20:30-31

³⁰ Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. ³¹ But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The prologue to the gospel of John

Read through John 1:1-18 slowly. Mark and write down what themes and topics seem to be prominent and important to John as he introduces his readers to Jesus Christ.

John 1 NIV	Topics
<p>1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. 6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.</p> <p>9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.</p> <p>14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.</p> <p>15 (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") 16 Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.</p>	

Verses 1 – 2

- John begins in eternity, explains the eternal nature of the WORD
- Word= logos
 - Familiar with Greek readers
 - Rational principal implanted within all creation that gave order to the world.
- Also familiar for Hebrew readers
 - The word of the father that created all things

(Dictionary of Jesus and the gospels)

- A careful reading of John 1:1 yields a wealth of information about the *logos*. The verse is divided into three simple clauses, each of which contains the imperfect of the verb *einai* (“to be”). In each of the clauses the verb has a different meaning. In the first clause it means “to exist.” The *logos* existed in the beginning. The phrase “in the beginning” is an obvious allusion to Genesis 1:1 (¹LXX *en archē*; ²MT *b^e ré·šît*). So John is saying that at the very beginning of creation the *logos* already existed. In the second clause the verb “to be” describes a relationship—the *logos* was with God in the sense of being in his presence. Therefore, the *logos* was distinct from God and at the same time in fellowship with God. In the third clause the verb “to be” is used in a predication in which the character or essence of the *logos* is defined—“The word was God.”
- The choice of words and their order is very significant in this third clause. If John had wanted to say that the word and God are the same being he could have written *ho theos ēn ho logos*. Or if he had wanted to say that the word was a god he could have written *ho logos ēn theos*. Or if he had wanted to say the word was divine he could have written *ho logos ēn theios*. As it stands, *theos ēn ho logos* could mean any of these three statements. But it could also mean the word was God in the sense that the church has explained the nature of Christ since Chalcedon. He is a part of the unity of the triune Godhead. E. C. Colwell has shown that definite predicate nouns preceding the verb do not need the article to show that they are definite. So a reference to the one God of the Bible is entirely possible in this third clause. The church has understood that Christ is deity based on this verse along with others (cf. Phil 2:6 ; Col 1:19 ; 2:9 ; Heb 1:3 , 9). But to say that Christ is the only person in the Godhead is to neglect the second clause of the same verse. In later debates the church has interpreted the NT to say that the *logos*, with the Father and the Spirit, is one of the three eternal and co-equal persons of the God head.
- John 1:3–4 describes the activity of the *logos*. He is the agent of creation (“all things came into being through him”), and he is the source of true life which is the light of all people. Later in the Gospel John expands on this latter activity of the word which gives life (Jn 6:35 , 48 , 51 , 58 ; 11:25) and light (Jn 8:12 ; 9:1–12).

¹LXX Septuagint

²MT Masoretic Text (of the Old Testament)

- John 1:14 describes the Incarnation of the *logos*. Here John uses a different “to be” verb (*ginomai*) which, to this point in the prologue he has reserved for created beings: “The word became flesh.” Note that John does not say the word became a man. He uses “flesh” (*sarx*) to signify the very nature of the Incarnation. Wesley captured the essence of John 1:14 in his great Christmas hymn: “Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the incarnate deity; Pleased as man with men to dwell; Jesus our Immanuel.”
- Finally, after saying that the incarnate *logos*, Jesus Christ, has replaced the Law given through Moses , John identifies him as the *monogenēs theos* (the unique one of God) who reveals the unseen God. This *logos* has a personal relationship with the Father. This theme of sonship continues through the Fourth Gospel and infiltrates the rest of the NT canon (see Son of God).
- **Conclusion.** The meaning of *logos* in the Johannine prologue is clear. The Word is the person of the Godhead through whom the world was created, who took on human nature in history and who is the source of life and light for humanity. But why did John use *logos* to describe this person? If John was thinking of any of the particular background discussed earlier in this article, it is not yet clear which one he had in mind. But his use of *logos* in the rest of the Gospel (which is the only evidence we have of his intentions) seems to imply that the word he is speaking of is that prophetic word which goes forth from God’s mouth to accomplish creation, judgment, redemption and renewal. John uses *logos* because it is the natural word for expressing the meaning of the Hebrew word *dāḇār* when that word was used in the context of God’s revelation. Beginning with its first sentences the Gospel asserts that Jesus is God’s final Revelator (cf. Heb 1:1–2). This assertion corresponds to the evangelistic purpose of the Gospel (Carson) and fits well with recent hypotheses that the original historical context of the Fourth Gospel was a debate with first-century Judaism over the locus of revelation (cf. Carter, 47 n. 82).³

Verses 3-5

- All things
- Life – John 3:16, 5:26, 6:35, 6:63, 20:31 (+many more)
- Light – John 3:19-21, 5:35, 8:12, 9:5
- Darkness. John 11:9-10, 13:30

³Green, Joel B., Scot McKnight, and I. Howard Marshall. *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1992.

Verses 6-8

- Testimony / Witness – John 1:32, 2:25, 5:30-36, 8:13-20, 19:35
- Believe – John 1:50, 3:16, 4:42, 6:69, 16:31, 20:31 (+many more)

Verses 9-13

- True light V false light – John 11:9, 12:46
- The world – John 3:16, 7:7, 8:23
- Israel / his own – See “The Jews”
- Rejection – John 3:36, 12:48
- Acceptance/receive – John 5:43,44, 6:60, 12:48, 14:17

Verses 14-17

- Word became flesh
 - Who would this be offensive to?
- Made his dwelling
 - Tabernacled
 - Exodus 33:7-11
- Greater than the greatest (J The B)
- Grace upon grace
 - Law from Moses
 - Grace from Jesus Christ
- God the one and only Son
 - John 14:9

Who is Jesus?

- Essential being as Word
- Incarnation as flesh
- Purpose and mission

Can you sum up these three in a sentence based on what we have learned from the prologue?

Introducing Jesus

1:19-28 (Day 1)

Compare with Mark 1:2-8

Who John is not.

- Messianic expectations (Dictionary of Jesus and the gospels)
 - Much more than the other Evangelists, John uses Jewish messianic speculations as a foil for the presentation of Jesus. In 1:19–28 he introduces us to Jewish speculations, where Jewish authorities interrogate the Baptist as to whether he claims to be “the Christ,” Elijah or “the prophet”—and to each he answers negatively. The Baptist acclaims Jesus as “the Lamb of God ” (1:29 , 35) and “the Son of God” (1:34), but these titles must be read in connection with 3:25–30 , where the Baptist again denies that he himself is “the Christ” and applies the title to Jesus. The author presents the Baptist as a true witness to Jesus, and the Baptist’s acclamations refer both to Jesus’ divine sonship and his messianic status.
 - The implied messianism in the Baptist’s acclamation of Jesus is confirmed in the narratives reporting the responses to Jesus by, among others, the followers of the Baptist. In 1:41 Andrew refers to Jesus as “the Messiah ” (*messias*), and this transliterated Aramaic term is translated by the author as *christos*. In 1:45 Philip describes Jesus as the one predicted in “the law and also the prophets.” That the Messiah is in mind is confirmed shortly in the guileless Nathaniel’s acclamation of Jesus as “the Son of God ... the King of Israel” (1:49). As Jesus’ response to Nathaniel suggests (1:50–51), these disciples do not realize the fullness of Jesus’ person and status, but John intends us to see that their acclamations of Jesus in messianic categories are correct as far as they go.

Who John points to...

1:29-34. (Day 2)

What words here remind you of the prologue?

“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!

Read:

- Gen 22:8
- Exodus:12:21
- Leviticus 4:22-35
- Isaiah 53:6-7

What does John effectively point to in saying this statement about Jesus?

See also Revelation 5:6-14

John 1:32 Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him.

See Isaiah 11:2, 42:1, 61:1

The big statement / question...

^{NIV 1984} **John 1:34** I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God."

^{NIV 2011} **John 1:34** I have seen and I testify that this is God's Chosen One."

^{ESV} **John 1:34** And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God."

Metzger (Textual Criticism):

Instead of “the Son of God” several witnesses, chiefly Western, read “the chosen one of God” and a few read “the chosen Son of God. On the basis of age and diversity of witnesses a majority of the Committee preferred the reading “Son of God “ which is also in harmony with the theological terminology of the Fourth Evangelist.

1:35-42 (Day 3 & 4)

Where are you dwelling?

The chain of witnesses

John to Israel 1:31

John to Andrew 1:35-40

Andrew to Simon 1:41

1:43-51 (Day 5)

Another link in the witness chain

Nathaniel's stumble over his origins

See John 7:42,52, 9:29

Come and see

1:14

1:35

1 John 1:1-5

True Israelites, Fig trees, and the new messianic age

True Israelite

^{NIV} **Genesis 27:36** Esau said, "Isn't he rightly named Jacob? He has deceived me these two times

Genesis 32:28 ²⁸ Then the man said, "Your name will no longer be Jacob, but Israel, because you have struggled with God and with men and have overcome."

Seeking a right understanding of Jesus

Fig trees

1 Kings 4:25 ²⁵ During Solomon's lifetime Judah and Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, lived in safety, each man under his own vine and fig tree.

Micah 4:4 ⁴ Every man will sit under his own vine and under his own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid, for the LORD Almighty has spoken. (see 1-3)

Zechariah 3:10 ¹⁰ "'In that day each of you will invite his neighbor to sit under his vine and fig tree,' declares the LORD Almighty."

The new messianic age

John 1:51 ⁵¹ He then added, "I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

Genesis 28:10-12 ¹⁰ ¶ Jacob left Beersheba and set out for Haran. ¹¹ When he reached a certain place, he stopped for the night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones there, he put it under his head and lay down to sleep. ¹² He had a dream in which he saw a stairway resting on the earth, with its top reaching to heaven, and the angels of God were ascending and descending on it.

How would you describe the overall scope and purpose of John 1? Why?