

The Book of John - 3

Introduction: As we continue slowly through **John chapter 1**, we come to **verse 4**. The Bible says, *“In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”*

In this opening prologue, John is using the term, **the Word** to declare truth to us concerning the Lord Jesus Christ before He became incarnate.

“In using the term “Word” (*logos*), John was using a term familiar to both Jews and Greeks, though each attributed a different meaning to the term. For the Greek mind, the “Word” referred to the rational principle that supervised or governed the universe. To the Jew, “Word” was a reference to God.”¹

Expressive titles for the Lord Jesus Christ in John 1:

- The Word (**1:1, 1:4**)
- The Light (**1:9**)
- The Christ (**1:20**)
- The Lamb of God (**1:29**)
- The Son of God (**1:34**)
- The Master (**1:38**)
- The King of Israel (**1:49**)
- The Son of Man (**1:51**)

We have so far seen the:

I. Prologue - The _____ of the Word 1:1-14

A. The Word vs. 1-5, 9-14

1. The **eternality** of the Word. vs. 1a
2. The **co-existence** of the Word. vs. 1b-2
3. The **deity** of the Word. vs. 1c
4. The **Creator God**: the Word. v3

Let us now consider verses 4-9:

5. The Word is _____ and **the** _____. v4-9

God is first revealed to us in the vastness of eternity. Then we have the Word revealed as part of the Trinity of God. Next, He is expressed as God. And then as the Creator and the giver of life. This is the declaration of the Gospel that God came to save us! The Bible tells us two things, *“In him was life; and the life was the light of men.”*

¹ James Emery White, “John,” in Holman Concise Bible Commentary, ed. David S. Dockery (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1998), 466.

We discover that inherent **to the Word is life**. The life that the Word possesses is “*in Him...*”

The Word possesses divine life because He is God. Not by any communication or derivative as John Gill states, “*but originally, and independently, and from all eternity...*”

In other Words, the Word is the I AM.

Merrill C. Tenney had this to say concerning this usage of the word life in **verse 4**, “*Life as a noun occurs no less than thirty-six times in this Gospel and eleven of these are in conjunction with the adjective eternal. Its connotation is not merely that of conscious existence, but of the life of God as a principle, expressed in human experience.*”²

God is always the source of **light and life**. Christ the Son, the Creator, provides life and light to humanity. Because of this He is later described as the only true Light. (**verse 9**)

You see, this Gospel record tells us **that man’s need can only be met in the Lord Jesus Christ.**

The Bible describes what will be before us in this Gospel record, namely, “*And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*”

The Bible says in **II Corinthians 4:5-6** “*5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake. 6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, **hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.***”

This true Light, the Lord Jesus Christ, **reveals our sinfulness** and our need for Him as our Savior. The darkness here refers to fallen man. Every man that enters this world is in spiritual darkness. His life, recorded for us in such vivid display, gives light to men. He showed His light first to the Jews.

The Bible says, “*He came unto His own and His own received Him not.*” (**vs.11**)
But this “true Light” is the light, “*which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*” (v9.)

In other words, **the light of Christ is for all men**. We are reminded of the beautiful hymn, The Light of the World is Jesus,

² Merrill C. Tenney, John: The Gospel of Belief, The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976), 66.

The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin,
The Light of the world is Jesus!
Like sunshine at noonday, His glory shone in;
The Light of the world is Jesus!

Refrain:

Come to the light, 'tis shining for thee;
Sweetly the light has dawned upon me;
Once I was blind, but now I can see:
The Light of the world is Jesus!

Before our Savior entered into this world, the Bible tells us of God's messenger who was sent to be a witness and prepare the way of the Lord.

Notice in **verses 6-8** *"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light."*

John the Baptist did bear light; the Lord Jesus Christ referred to this in **John chapter 5** as a **burning and shining light**.

John 5:35 *"35 He [John the Baptist] was a **burning and a shining light**: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."*

John's job was to point others to the True Light. Our purpose is bound up in this today as Christians carry on John's ministry from a different perspective. We, too are to **"bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe."**

You and I look backward at His life, His death, His burial, and His resurrection. We herald this to a lost world; We declare that the Light of the World is Jesus. **All that men need is seen by looking at the Lord Jesus Christ.**

John was a witness; the Bible tells us.

The word used for witness in verse 7 is where we get the word martyr. It is the word μαρτυρία (martyria). There is a sense where someone attests to the facts is a witness. When the word is used in this way, it as a noun, because **they have witnessed, they can be a witness (verb).**

In **John 1:33**, John declares to us, *"33 And I knew him not: but **he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me**, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost."*

God dealt with John in a special way to reveal to Him the Christ, the Lamb of God. We can only surmise by bits and pieces all that God spoke to John the Baptist about in his younger preparatory days in the wilderness. You and I, like John are to be witness because we are witnesses.

We attest to the truth of God's Word and our Lord Jesus Christ, because we have been with Him.

John's purpose, like ours, is expressly given. There was no question in John's mind about what he was to be doing.

And so, the Bible tells us *"The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe."* (vs.7)

God became man without ceasing to be God (Fully God and Fully man). This was by necessity because of man's need for a Savior. He dwelt among us, the Creator and Sustainer of all the world. He became sin for us who knew no sin...He is the Lamb, slain to set us free. He is the only true Light. He is the Light which every man needs. And of all the world, He had selected John to be a witness to this marvelous, enormous truth!

In **verse 8**, we see the great disclaimer of John's work.

The Bible says, *"8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light."*

All eyes upon Jesus Christ is the proclamation heralded down through the centuries. John Gill said this concerning this verse, "He was a light [speaking of John the Baptist]; he was the forerunner of the sun of righteousness, the "phosphorus" of the Gospel day; he had great light in him; he knew that the Messiah was ready to come, and declared it; and upon his baptism he knew him personally, and signified him to others:"

Robertson in His word pictures said this, "The light was shining and men with blinded eyes were not seeing the light (John 1:26), blinded by the god of this world still (2 Cor. 4:4). John had his own eyes opened so that he saw and told what he saw. That is the mission of every preacher of Christ. But he must first have his own eyes opened."³

These words, life and light are easy to understand in contrast with death and darkness. And yet, there is a great depth to the life and ministry of Christ being fully-God and fully-man who gave His life a ransom for us.

³." A.T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Jn 1:7.
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