

Commentary on John 1:1-14

International Bible Lessons

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The **[International Bible Lesson](#)** (*Uniform Sunday School Series*) for **Sunday, March 11, 2012**, is from **John 1:1-14**. Five **Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further** follow the verse by verse **[International Bible Lessons Commentary](#)** below. The **Study Hints for Thinking Further**, which are also available on the **[Bible Lesson Forum](#)**, will aid teachers in class preparation and in conducting class discussion. For additional **International Bible Lesson Commentaries**, see the complete and comprehensive **[International Bible Lessons Commentary Index](#)**. The weekly **[International Bible Lesson](#)** is posted each Saturday before the lesson is scheduled to be taught at **<http://InternationalBibleLessons.org>** and in **[The Oklahoman](#)** newspaper.

International Bible Lesson Commentary

John 1:1-14

(John 1:1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John began his gospel in a way similar to Genesis 1 — God created by speaking the Word. “Word” can be translated as “speech, reason, logic, science.” From the classical Greek language, “logos” (word) is used to create words such as “biology” [science of life “bios” = “life” or study of life (“bios” + “logos”)] and “theology” [science of God “God” = “theos” or study of God (“theos” + “logos”)]. A Bible student might think of God having reason, rationality, logic, and scientific thinking when God created. God created with reason and logic. In addition, John declared that the Word was a Person, Who was God and Who was with God; therefore, the early chapters of John teach about the Father and the Son.

(John 1:2) He was in the beginning with God.

Later in his gospel, John identified the Word as Jesus the Messiah. The Person Who was with God the Father in the beginning was the Son of God, Jesus the Messiah, before He was born in human flesh. In the Hebrew language, the title “Messiah” means “Anointed One” or “King” which translated into the Greek language is “Christ.” Jesus the King was God and was with God in the beginning, and when He came to Earth in human flesh, He remained God.

(John 1:3) All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being

God the Father and the Son of God worked together in creating all things. The Father and the Son always worked together in perfect agreement, and the Son

continued to do so when He came to Earth in human flesh. They always had and have unity of thought and purpose. Neither the Father nor the Son created anything independently from the other. Only God can create from nothing into something, and God does so with good reasons, with the Word.

(John 1:4) in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.

The Word of God is alive and active, and the Word of God gives life and light. Nothing can exist or live apart from Jesus Christ, the Word of God, for all things and all beings depend totally on Him for their existence. Jesus Christ gives light, truth, and understanding to all people. All the truth and understanding that anyone possesses originated in Jesus Christ, though some may choose to distort, misinterpret, and misrepresent the truth of God and Jesus Christ that the light of understanding gives them.

(John 1:5) The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

The darkness is the opposite of the light; therefore, darkness is unreasonable, irrational, opposed to true science, and represents the realm of evil lies. No matter how evil and dark a situation, the light of God still shines in that darkness and the people of the light see the light shining into their lives. The evil realm in which the people of the light live cannot overcome the light and truth, the Word of God, the Reason of God, the Truth of God in Jesus Christ.

(John 1:6) There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

John, the writer of this gospel, now draws the reader's attention to a different John, John the Baptist, who was a man sent from God. John was born about six months prior to the birth of Jesus the Messiah. John was filled with the Holy Spirit while in his mother's womb; whereas, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit. John tries to clarify the distinction between John the Baptist and Jesus.

(John 1:7) He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him.

Even after Jesus' death and resurrection, some held John the Baptist in such high esteem that they did not distinguish clearly between John the Baptist and Jesus the Messiah. God sent John for the specific reason of pointing people beyond himself to Jesus. John used the legal terms of "witness" and "testify." What John did was give evidence suitable for a court of law; in the sense that it was good and sufficient evidence for someone to believe in Jesus as the One who was the light.

(John 1:8) He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

John now writes in a negative way what he wrote in a positive way in the previous verse so he can be perfectly clear and avoid misunderstanding. John the Baptist was not “the light of all people,” but he came to point people to the One who was “the light of all people.” John testified with the power of the Holy Spirit, Who indwelt him from the beginning; thus, John convinced and baptized many to prepare them for the coming ministry of Jesus the Messiah, the Word of God.

(John 1:9) The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

Jesus Christ is the One Who gives true enlightenment, logic, understanding, and rationality to people. He is the One Who explains the reason of creation and the plans and purposes of God. Jesus wanted to do this for everyone, and so He came into the world as the “True Light,” as the One Who opposed the artificial or false light that pretended to be the true light. False lights may mislead many, but when anyone comes to Jesus they will become enlightened by the “True Light.”

(John 1:10) He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him.

Before Jesus was born in human flesh, He was in the world as the Son of God spiritually, but the world did not know Him. After He was born in human flesh, and as He grew in wisdom and in favor with God and those around Him, they did not know He was the Son of God and the light of the world. Though the world came into being through Him, the world did not conclude rightly about the nature and character of God.

(John 1:11) He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him.

Jesus was a descendent of Abraham and born of the tribe of Judah; therefore, He was a Jew. He was in the line of David; therefore, He was qualified to serve His people as the foretold Messiah. However, John now looks forward to the ending of his gospel, for the Jewish religious leadership rejected Jesus as the Messiah and the Son of God; for Jesus claimed to be both Messiah and Son of God. They rejected Him because He made himself equal to God.

(John 1:12) But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God,

However, some did receive Him among “His people;” the Jews, and among the Gentiles (Roman officers and Samaritans, for examples). When they received Him as the Son of God, and believed in His name, “Jesus,” which means, “Savior,” He gave them the “power to become children of God,” in the sense of “adopted children,” as Paul described: “He destined us for adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Ephesians 1:5).

(John 1:13) who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

A person receives the power to be a child of God directly from Jesus himself by adoption, by Jesus' choice, even as a human child may be adopted by parents for good reasons known to them. A person does not become a child of God because of their bloodline (because they are Jews or Gentiles or of royal blood). A person does not become a child of God because they do something in the flesh (some great human achievement that earns them the status). A person does not become a child of God because some priest or preacher declares them to be so. Only God gives the power to a person to become a child of God.

(John 1:14) And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.

Here, John refers to the miracle of Jesus' birth (described in greater detail in the gospels of Matthew and Luke and Mark 1:1). Jesus, the Son of God, actually became a human being and did not just appear to be a human being, as an angel might appear to be a human being (Consider the meaning of Hebrews 13:2 – “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it.” John and the other Apostles saw Jesus for Who He was and is, in His ministry, in His signs, and in His death and resurrection. In Jesus, they saw God the Father's only Son. “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life” (John 3:16). They saw merciful love and grace in Jesus' actions and words. They saw how the truth of God expressed itself in word and deed. They saw people transformed and become children of the light.

Five Questions for Discussion and Thinking Further

1. What does John say about the Word?
2. Of what value is light? Compare the Son of God to the sun of our Earth.
3. What important truths does John tell about John the Baptist?
4. What does Jesus do for those who receive Him?
5. Why do you think John insisted “the Word became flesh.”

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