

introducing Jesus in his own words

John 1

Before the world began, the Word was there. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was there with God in the beginning. Everything was made through him, and nothing was made without him. In him there was life, and that life was a light for the people of the world. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not defeated it.

There was a man named John,* who was sent by God. He came to tell people about the light. Through him all people could hear about the light and believe. John was not the light. But he came to tell people about the light. The true light was coming into the world. This is the true light that gives light to all people.

The Word was already in the world. The world was made through him, but the world did not know him. He came to the world that was his own. And his own people did not accept him. But some people did accept him. They believed in him, and he gave them the right to become children of God. They became God's children, but not in the way babies are usually born. It was not because of any human desire or plan. They were born from God himself.

The Word became a man and lived among us. We saw his divine greatness—the greatness that belongs to the only Son of the Father. The Word was full of grace and truth.

* John the baptist

This booklet looks at statements that Jesus made about himself, in order to help you to understand who he is, from his own words.

These statements were recorded by John, one of the closest eye-witnesses of Jesus' words, actions and explanations. John's book was written in the first century, after Jesus' death and resurrection.

In the Bible you will find John's Gospel (good news) in the New Testament. Or you can download a free Gospel of John from [here](#).

We have printed the first 14 verses on the left of this page, from the Easy-To-Read Version to help you get started.

Who is Jesus Christ ?

The life of Jesus is described by four different people in the Bible: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each account is called a 'gospel' - a word that means good news. The life and teaching of Jesus represents good news for all people.

So what was the bad news? People were overwhelmed by the religious teaching of the day. People who were spiritually minded and who wanted to live a harmonious life in God's creation found that they were being stifled by a kind of religious box-ticking exercise. The joy of living with God was choked by a self-righteous, nitpicking mentality. We still sometimes see this attitude today.

In contrast, Jesus cut through the complexities of the letter of the law to show people how to live by the spirit of the law - loving God and loving each other.

Jesus Christ has a unique place in world history. Some people only think of him as a great teacher, others say he was a great prophet, speaking the words of God. But the Bible goes much further than this.

John declares that Jesus was - uniquely - the Word of God, the expression of God himself, and that he came to earth to rescue us - to give us the right to be adopted into God's family and to live for ever, as he does.

Jesus came from a poor carpenter's home in an oppressed state in the Middle East, small and without influence in the politics of the day. Yet his life has divided all history into the time before him - BC (before Christ) and the time afterwards - AD. (Anno Domini, Latin for 'the year of the Lord').

Jesus' life was lived in simplicity but with many extraordinary signs and wonders.

He was the Son of God yet allowed himself to be arrested, tortured and killed. But something highly unusual happened after Jesus' public execution. Overwhelming evidence supports the claim that he came to life again after his death.

The four gospels are just some of the documents that tell us about the women, men and young people who encountered Jesus personally. Meeting Jesus was a special experience - he transformed their world, and their lives, giving them a deep sense of acceptance, joy and purpose.

Down the centuries ever since, people who never met Jesus in his human lifetime have somehow got to know him through personal faith and experience - they have 'met' him in a way which has changed their lives - bringing peace, joy and freedom.

This short booklet goes through Jesus' teaching as recorded in John's book to see what Jesus said about himself.

The books in the Bible are divided into chapters and each chapter has numbered verses. You can navigate to a particular verse by chapter and verse, like this: John 3:16 means the book of John, chapter 3 and verse 16.

Let's start at the beginning ...

John's Gospel begins with an introduction that gives the flavour of his report. His opening words echo the opening words of Genesis, the very first book of the Bible,

'In the beginning ...'

John then calls Jesus 'the Word', signifying that Jesus was not merely a prophet, speaking the words of God, but actually was the living Word of God, that is, he is God's message to the world. Further, John goes on to state that 'the Word was with God and the Word was God.'

John wrote his Gospel so that 'you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.'

Note: In chapter 1 verse 6 the 'John' who is referred to is not the writer of the Gospel, but John the Baptist, a cousin of Jesus, who was executed shortly after Jesus began travelling and teaching.

Use these verses from the book of John to answer the following questions

1 In John 3:16-17 Jesus said, 'God so loved the world that He gave'

Who? _____

And why? _____

2 How did Jesus describe himself in the following verses?

Note carefully the words which follow in each case

8:12 I am _____

14:6 I am _____

6:35 I am _____

11:25 I am _____

10:11 I am _____

3 How did Jesus describe where he was from?

6:38 I came _____

8:42 I came _____

16:28 I came _____

10:36 I came _____

4 How did Jesus describe the work he had come to do?

12:47 _____

5 What did Jesus mean when he said 'The Father and I are one? (10:30)
What did the authorities understand by it

10:33 _____

Do you believe Jesus' claim to be divine (from God) or is he just an ordinary man?

The Light of the World

Most of us are looking for reality. Some of us despair of ever finding it, or say reality doesn't exist. Christians find reality in Jesus, who came to tell us the truth about God and about ourselves.

The Bible says that all human problems - international, social, racial, family or personal - have the same single starting point: peoples' deceitful and selfish hearts.

In contrast, Jesus did everything God's way, openly and honestly and lived his life for the good of others.

Jesus called himself 'the light' and he shines into the dark parts of our inner selves, showing us what we are really like and what we look like to God.

This is what finding reality means - and we just have to face reality if we intend to get inner peace and true satisfaction.

There is a great gulf between Jesus' life and our way of life. The Bible calls this gap 'sin' - and Jesus came to bridge it.

Because he was perfect in every way, Jesus had no need to endure death which, the Bible says, is 'the wages of sin' (Romans 6:23). Yet he willingly died so that the wages of our sin could be paid. And therefore we can now be free, and can have eternal life in God's company.

The word **SIN** is not the same as the word **SINS**.

1. **SIN** refers to our real, deep-down, inner nature, the real 'me', my human nature which rebels against God and disobeys what he wants. People have been like this ever since the start of history, the first person ever - Adam. 'Sin came into the world through one man, and his sin brought death with it' (Romans 5:12)
2. **SINS** are the products of this selfish nature, like the diseased fruits on a diseased tree. We naturally think of dreadful things like murder and rape as serious sins, and we are right; but God views many things that ordinary people make light of, or even excuse, as sins too: lies, disrespect, anger, hatred, lust. Pride is rightly called the deadliest sin, because it creeps in when we think we are doing good.

SIN is the root of the problem:

SINS are the fruit of the problem.

Human nature is not all bad: people often do admirable and good things, but the problem is like a beautiful cake made with an egg that is rotten: it may have a good appearance, but it is not fit for purpose.

Sin in our life is like a bad smell in the house - like overcooked cabbage or fish that's gone bad. After a while we don't notice it any more. But other people who come into the house can detect it.

The Kingdom of God is where nothing is 'off', soiled, tinged with guilt or negativity. No sin is allowed to bring a bad smell in, even if it is on the clothes of a person who has done some good things.

If you are serious about finding peace, you have to come to terms with the fact that sin affects your own life too.

When you realise that no matter how hard you try, you keep on doing sins, you realise that you need a different solution - from outside of your own natural will power. That's when you understand God's way as the only way out of the problem.

Jesus' first followers ('disciples') began to tell others about their great discovery. They said: 'We have found Christ' (the word means Chosen One) and 'We have found Jesus' (the name means saviour) - see John 1:41 & 45.

What did Jesus say about sin, sins and forgiveness?

1. What does Jesus say about why he was sent into the world?

3:17 _____

2. Why do 'men love darkness rather than light'?

3:20 _____

3. Why was no one able to stone the guilty woman?

8:1-9 _____

4. What truth did Jesus tell them in 8:34?

5. How can we get really free from this slavery?

8:31 _____

8:36 _____

6. Do you feel any need for this freedom from sin? Do you want it?

7. What will happen to those who follow Jesus?

8:12 _____

prayer - 'God, help me to understand my true condition before You',

I am the way

Jesus once said: 'I am the way, the truth and the life. The only way to the Father is through me' (see John 14:6).

We all, by nature, live selfish and deceitful lives which are inevitably sinful. The Bible puts it like this: 'All of us were like sheep that were lost, each of us going his own way' (Isaiah 53:6). So to find the way back to God, we must turn away from our own selfish way of doing things. We need a new start, to go God's way.

The vital key to the teaching of Jesus is: [start again](#). He meant it to be a real and totally new beginning - he said it was like being born again.

There are times when we look back with regret and, given a chance, a fresh start would be welcome.

The Bible calls this decision to go a new way 'repentance'. To repent means to turn around, towards God, and learn how to live his way. God himself is on our side, helping us along: 'God is kind because he is trying to lead you to repentance.' (Romans 2:4)

A new start and forgiveness are at the heart of the Christian faith. Millions of people have found this is what God offers, and have taken hold of it.

Why repent?

'Repenting' is a positive action and means that we want to change our minds and hearts, but it's a change which involves someone else. It means having a new attitude towards a person, building a new relationship with them.

If we hurt or insult a friend, we have to acknowledge our offence if we want to be real friends again, and not keep repeating the words, attitude or behaviour which damaged the relationship in the first place. It's just the same with God.

True repentance is 'toward God' and it involves:-

(1) A change of mind.

We think over the past and admit that we have left God out of our lives. We own up to our deceitful nature and accept God's point of view - he says that we are self-centred and we respond: 'Yes, that's right'.

(2) A change of heart.

We realise how God, who is perfectly sin-free, hates sin but does not hate us (the sinner) - that he loves me despite my sin and wants to help me be free of it.

(3) A change of direction.

We reach out to grasp a new purpose in life, and a new attitude to God as well. With his help, we put aside the sin which constantly gets in our way and trips us up - we learn how to live in agreement with God as Jesus did.

Jesus explained his role in helping us overcome our sinful nature by using a gardening metaphor (John 15:1-4). He invites us to stop tending the diseased tree that is our human nature and efforts, and be joined to him, like a branch grafted into a vine, so that what is produced in our life will be pleasing to God.

Jesus said, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch of mine that does not produce fruit. He also trims every branch that produces fruit to prepare it to produce even more. You have already been prepared to produce more fruit by the teaching I have given you. Stay joined to me and I will stay joined to you. No branch can produce fruit alone. It must stay connected to the vine."

The kind of fruit that God would like to see produced in our lives is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control.

Do you value these things? Are these qualities that you would like to have?

The following questions are about a new beginning

1. What changes take place in those who believe?

3:7 You must be _____

9:25 'I was _____ but now _____

5:24 ...they have already _____

2. What does Jesus give us that no-one else can?

5:21 _____

14:17 the helper that will be in us is _____

14:26 the helper will _____

3. What two things are stated of the person who rejects the Son by not believing in him?

3:36 (1) _____

(2) _____

4. Why can we hide nothing from God?

2:25 _____

16:30 _____

*Do you feel the need for a new beginning in your life, and why?
What things would you like to be free from?*

I am the bread of life

Bread is probably the only food that is eaten - and enjoyed - in every part of the world.

Jesus declared himself to be 'the bread of life' after having fed 5,000 hungry men (and more if you include the women and children who were probably in the crowd) with 5 small loaves and 2 fish. After this tremendous miracle crowds of people followed him around the country.

Jesus talked to the people about the difference between food that builds up the body and food for the spirit that builds up a person for eternal life.

He later explained that he himself - and the teaching that he brought on God's authority - was that spiritual bread.

He said that he would give his body so that the people of the world could have life in his name.

Perhaps because he was speaking figuratively, only some of the people who met Jesus understood and believed his message. A great argument broke out among those who heard him say, 'the bread I shall give is my flesh.'

2000 years later, in the 21st century, how do we understand Jesus and this aspect of his message?

What do you feed your spirit on?

The following questions are about spiritual food.

1. 6:27 What did Jesus say about the food that lasts for eternal life? Who authorised it?

2. 6:33 How do we know that the food Jesus gives is for eternal life?

3. 6:47, 48 How did Jesus explain what eating this spiritual bread really meant?

4. and again in verse 29

5. 14:6 Where else can spiritual food (the way to God) be found?

6. 6:53 Describe the condition of those who cannot take in Jesus' teaching?

7. 6:57 Jesus describes the relationship between God, himself and those who believe him. 'So everyone eats me will.....

Can you take in what Jesus teaches?

What is faith?

As we have seen, not everyone that Jesus met, healed or spoke with believed in him. Some put their faith in him and some turned away.

We still have to make that choice today - to accept that he was telling us the truth about our situation and his ability to transform us - or to reject his offer of life to the full.

To have faith in Jesus means to receive what God gives through him - forgiveness, a new start and hope for the future that can never be taken away from us.

Some people who reject Jesus do so because they value the things of this world more than the things that are eternal. Some reject Jesus out of ignorance - they are not sure about what he said and do not understand what he is offering.

Do you feel you know Jesus better?

Could you say you believe he spoke the truth,

that you believe he was and is the Son of God,

God the Son?

Please answer the following questions about faith: believing

The Bible word 'believe' means literally to 'have faith', to trust.

1. What happens to the person who believes in Jesus the Son of God?

See 3:15 _____

See 3:18 _____

2. What other things are promised to those who trust and follow Jesus?

6:35 _____

8:12 _____

11:26 _____

14:21 _____

14:27 _____

15:11 _____

- 3 Another great gift is promised -

Who is this? 7:39 _____

Give two other names 15:26 _____

- 4 John wrote his Gospel so that we could believe two truths:

What are they?

20:31 (1) _____

(2) _____

Do you feel that Jesus is believable?

How would it change you if you believed in him?

What would you lose - what would you gain?

Use this page to make a note of any questions* you may have about what you have found out about Jesus and the Christian faith

Ask your questions* and find out more online at
www.christianity.org.uk

* questions are answered by a real person, so you can be as specific as you wish.

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