

PM John 1:1-34 All you need to know about Jesus

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[0 : 00] Jesus Christ, who worshiped God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. But who exactly is Jesus? If you were asked that question, how would you answer it?

What is he like? What did he do? We're told in John 12 of a group of Greeks who approached Philip with a request that they would like to see Jesus.

And Philip wasn't sure what to do. These folk, after all, were Greeks, Orthodox Jews, had little time for such Gentiles. And anyway, at this point in his ministry, Jesus was under great pressure with countless demands.

And so Philip, not knowing what to do, took them to Andrew. But Andrew had no hesitation. He took them to Jesus. And the statement of these Greeks is ever relevant, which we find in John 12, 21.

They said, Sir, we would like to see Jesus. We would like to see Jesus. And may God grant each of us the desire to see Jesus more clearly.

[1 : 08] To see him in all his majesty and splendour. And I want to focus on the first chapter of John. Because in truth, all you need to know about Jesus, you find in John chapter 1.

And I'll come to that in a minute. At the end of his gospel, John tells us why he wrote the gospel. John 20 verse 30.

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 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. So John tells us he writes the gospel for three simple reasons. That you might understand two things about Jesus.

His role in coming into the world as the Messiah, the Saviour. And his identity. Who he was as the Son of God.

[2 : 18] So two things about Jesus. His identity and his role. And the third thing is that by believing, you may have life in his name. He writes to encourage people to come to trust in this Messiah.

Who is the Son of God. And put more simply. John writes so that we might see Jesus. We might see who Jesus is.

As a man, yes. As a religious teacher, yes. But of course so much more. That we might see Jesus as the Son of God. Come among us.

And he writes that we might see what Jesus has done. As the Messiah. And his teaching and his miracles. But above all. To see Jesus dying on the cross for us.

And then risen. And glorified. These Greeks said, sir. We would like to see Jesus. And John sets Jesus before us in a wonderful way in this first chapter of his Gospel.

[3 : 23] And what he does is he gathers a collection of the early encounters of Jesus with various folk. And notes how they saw Jesus. And he precedes that with his own introduction.

How he saw Jesus. In one of the great paragraphs of Scripture. And so as you go through this first chapter. You have the testimony of John writing the Gospel.

You have the testimony of John the Baptist. You have the testimony of Nathaniel. Philip and so on. First of all the testimony of John. And quite simple and clear terms.

He begins the Gospel by reminding us of the identity of Jesus. Jesus as God himself. In the beginning was the Word.

And the Word was with God. And the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. And that is simple and emphatic and profound.

[4 : 23] The bottom line being that Jesus is none other than the living God himself. A truth we find emphasized again and again as we go through the Gospel.

Jesus himself claimed to be God. His opponents understood all too clearly that claim. For example in John 10 at verse 31.

There we are told again his Jewish opponents picked up stones to stone him. But Jesus said to them I have shown you many good works from the Father. For which of these do you stone me? We are not stoning you for any good work they replied. But for blasphemy. Because you a mere man claim to be God. They understood with clarity what Jesus was saying. And they were correct in that understanding. Their response was all wrong. But their understanding of what Jesus was claiming was correct. His claim was clear.

[5 : 26] But they could not accept it. To them it was blasphemy. And John goes on. If Jesus is God then of course it follows that he is the creator.

Verse 3. Through him all things were made. And without him nothing was made that has been made. Jesus the creator of the universe.

Made all things. Including you and me. And as the creator he is the source of life. And John spells out how Jesus is the origin and the sustainer of all life.

Verse 4. In him was life. And that life was the light of men. Our very existence. We owe to the upholding grace of Jesus Christ.

If it wasn't for him we would not exist. So having shown us Jesus as God. The creator, the source of life.

[6 : 30] John then tells us that this God has become one of us. The son. One with the father from all eternity.

Became one of us. And John gives us no narrative of the Christmas story. But in majestic terms he sets the wonder of God made man before us.

In verse 14. The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. And we have seen his glory. The glory of the one and only. Who came from the father full of grace.

And truth. God became flesh. Jesus as God the creator. Earlier in my ministry I was leading a bible study.

And I was talking on this theme. And someone who was an elder in the Church of Scotland said. Excuse me. Are you introducing a new doctrine into the Church of Scotland?

[7 : 33] And I said. What are you talking about? The idea that Jesus is God. And I can remember. I probably wouldn't have been able to do this in the free church.

But I remember. Because I'd seen hymn books down the stairs. And I went down and got a handful of hymn books. And brought them up. And we spent the rest of the time looking at the Christmas carols.

That this elder had sung for years. Veiled in flesh the Godhead see. Hail the incarnate deity. Pleased as man with man to dwell. Jesus our Emmanuel. Lo within a manger lies. Who? He who built the starry skies.

God of God. Light of light. Lo he abhors not the virgin's womb. Very God. Begotten. Not created.

[8 : 33] It's a strange feature of the Christmas carols. That it's nearly always verse 2. That points you to the divinity of the Lord Jesus.

Jesus. This then is the testimony of John. As to who Jesus is. None other than God himself. The creator of the universe.

The source of life. Our lives. And this second person of the Godhead. The Godhead. Has become one of us. And then moving on.

And I want to cover the whole of John 1. So we're just sketching in broad terms. We could spend a lot of time. Couldn't we? On these opening verses of the gospel.

But moving on from the testimony of John. To the testimony of John the Baptist. And John is careful to say. You would note that he is not the Christ.

[9 : 36] And now John the gospel writer. Takes us on to this series of meetings. Between Jesus and various folk. And John the Baptist adds a new element.

He acknowledges the divinity of Jesus. The one who comes after me. Was before me. And so on. But he introduces this new dimension.

Pointing us not to the identity. But to the role of Jesus. Verse 29. And it's repeated in verse 36. John saw Jesus coming towards him.

And said. Look. The Lamb of God. Who takes away the sin of the world. The apostle John has already indicated. Who Jesus is.

As God. As God made man. Now he uses John the Baptist. To tell us. Why Jesus came into the world. To take away the sin of the world. To be the Lamb of God.

[10:36] Which perhaps sounds strange. To modern ears. But something of course. That would have resonated with these folk. 2000 years ago. Because all down through the Old Testament. God had taught. That the only way to come to him. Was through the sacrifice of a lamb. Right from the beginning. The story of Cain and Abel. Cain's worship rejected. Because he came his own way. Abel accepted. Because he came through the sacrifice of a lamb. Or we could think of Abraham. Being told by God. To sacrifice his son Isaac. And then. As it were at the last moment. God provides a lamb. To be sacrificed. In place of Isaac. And then later on. In the history. Of the people of God. The Passover lamb. As they were delivered. Out of their slavery. In Egypt.

[11:38] And following on. From that Passover lamb. All the lambs. Sacrificed in the temple. In Jerusalem. Down through the years. Down through the centuries. And John then says. Behold the Lamb of God. Who takes away. The sin of the world. I always find it interesting. People think. That the climactic chorus. Of Handel's Messiah. Is the Hallelujah Chorus. But of course. That's not the climactic chorus. The climactic chorus. That last chorus. Is worthy as the lamb. Who was slain. Worthy as the lamb. A modern hymn. Puts it this way. Come see his hands and his feet. The scars that speak of sacrifice. Hands that flung stars. Into space. To cruel nails. Surrendered. And I like the juxtaposition.

[12:38] There. Of these two ideas. Hands that flung stars. Into space. To cruel nails. Surrendered. And so we're given. The testimony. Of John the Apostle. Then John the Baptist. And then next. Andrew's. Brought. If you want. If you like. Onto the witness box. To give his testimony. Verse 40. Andrew. Simon Peter's brother. Was one of the two. Who heard what John had said. And who had followed Jesus. And the first thing Andrew did. Was to find his brother Simon. And tell him. We have found the Messiah. That is the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. Andrew's immediate response. To meeting Jesus. Was to go and tell his brother. They had found the Messiah. They had found the one God had promised. Who would come to meet all the deepest longings. Of the human heart.

[13:33] They had found the one. Who was the promised saviour. And the term Messiah. Or Christ. Is one which speaks to us. Of his saving work. On the cross. And then. John brings Philip. Onto the witness box. Verse 45. Philip found Nathanael. And told him. We have found the one. Moses wrote about in the law. And about whom. The prophets also wrote. Jesus of Nazareth. The son of Joseph. So Philip. Here acknowledges. That Jesus. Is the one. Who had been promised. Down through the years. In other words. The fulfilment. Of Old Testament. Prophecy. We remember. How through the. Centuries. Covered by the Old Testament. God had promised. That one day. He would send someone. To resolve the problems. Of humanity. And Philip meets Jesus. And acknowledge.

[14:28] That he is the one. In whom. All the promises. Of God. Find their fulfilment. Then Nathanael. Is put in. The witness box. Verse 49. Nathanael. Declared. Rabbi. You are the son of God. You are the king of Israel. And as you read the story. Nathanael. Initially. Seems to have been. A bit of a sceptic. But in this. Interchange with Jesus. He is convinced. Of the divine. Nature of Jesus. And so he. Acknowledges Jesus. As the son of God. One with God. Also acknowledging Jesus. As king. With the right. To rule. In and over. Human hearts. So the testimony. Of John the apostle. The testimony. Of John the baptist. The testimony. Of Andrew. Of Philip. Nathanael. And at the end. Of the first chapter. Of the testimony. Of Jesus.

[15:24] Himself. Verse 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. Son of man. And this title. Son of man. Son of man. Son of man. Son of man. Son of man. Is one which. Indicates Jesus. Is fully human. Just as the term. Son of God. Means that Jesus. Is God. So the term. Son of man. Indicates. The fullness. Of Jesus. Humanity. And so the chapter. Begins with this. Wonderful affirmation. Of Jesus. As God himself.

Moves us through. God made flesh. And ends with this. Affirmation. By. Jesus himself. That he has become. One. Of us.

Become one of us. So that he could. Become. Our saviour. So that he could. Suffer. On the cross. As the lamb of God. And so. He put all these.

[16:21] Different. Descriptions. Of Jesus. Together. We have all. We need to know. About Jesus. And what he has. Done. To us. And the rest.

Of. Of John's gospel. Is really just. An expansion. Of what we already. Find. In this first chapter. As. John. Weaves.

Into the chapter. These various. Titles. And descriptions. Telling us. Exactly. Who Jesus is. Telling us. Why he came. Into the world. And as I say.

Everything. We read. Further on. In the gospel. Is simply. A deeper exploration. If you like. Of what is already. Stated here. Jesus is God. Creator.

Source of life. Question is. Do we. Worship him. As such. Do we. Grasp. Our utter. And absolute. Dependence.

[17:16] For each breath. That we draw. Upon. Jesus Christ. And Jesus. Is man. The word made flesh. God.

Yet one of us. What. C.S. Lewis calls. The grand miracle. The greatest. Of all the miracles. That the infinite God.

Should become. One of us. To give his life. On the cross. For us. Who Jesus is. God. And man. What he did.

The Messiah. The one promised. Through the years. The one written about. In the old testament. John. The baptist. Telling us. He is the lamb of God.

The one who came. To give his life. As a sacrifice. For our sins. And the king. Nathaniel.

Acknowledging Jesus. To be king. To have the right.

[18:10] To reign. Over our lives. To what extent. Does he rule. In our lives. In our hearts. Let's go back.

Just briefly. To. I'm saying going back. But going forward really. To the end of the gospel. Where John tells us. Why he writes. Jesus performed many other signs.

In the presence of his disciples. Which are not recorded. In this book. 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. And we might study. The gospel of John. And go down all sorts of fascinating.

Side roads. Which we find attractive. But really. There are these simple three reasons. For everything in John's gospel.

[19:10] Pointing us to who Jesus is. As the son of God. What he came to do. As the Messiah. The saviour. And the need for us to respond.

To believe in him. And so receive salvation. And life eternal. And are focused on. The role of Jesus. As the saviour. As the lamb of God. And the identity of Jesus. As the son of God. But in this first chapter. We also find. That call.

If you like. To respond. John chapter 1 verse 10. He was in the world. And though the world was made through him. The world did not recognise him.

He came to that. Which was his own. But his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him. To those who believed in his name. He gave the right to become. Children of God.

[20:11] Children born. Not of natural descent. Nor of human decision. Nor a husband's will. But born of God. So John spells out. Two. Possible responses.

To who Jesus is. And what he has done on the cross. Rejection. And many have rejected. Or acceptance.

And the wonder of acceptance. Leading us. Into the family of God. That this one who is God. This one who is the creator. Who comes in to be our saviour.

Will bring us back into a restored relationship. With our heavenly father. So that we see ourselves. As his children. The Greeks.

Asked. So. We would see Jesus. May God grant us the grace. To see Jesus. More clearly. Andrew said.

[21:14] We have found the Messiah. May we. Know. In Christ. Indeed. Our Lord. And saviour. I always find it.

Interesting. Very often. At prayer meetings. We pray for folk. Who are bereaved. Or who are ill. Or some problem. And perhaps.
How little. We pray for people. That they may know Jesus better. But if you think. Of Paul. Writing to the church. At Ephesus. In chapter one.
He says. His prayer. Is that you may. Know. Him. Better. We can all. Know. The Lord. Better. More clearly.
But in one sense. As I've said. All you need to know. Is in John chapter one. Everything else. Is simply. Going into John chapter one.
[22 : 12] In more depth. Let's pray. Our Father. We thank you. For this wonderful. Opening chapter. Of John's gospel. As it points us.
To who. Jesus. Truly is. One with you. With you. Creator of the universe. Yet who. Became. One of us. Leaving. The glory. And the splendor. And the majesty. Of heaven. To humble himself. To humble himself. Taking.
The form. Of a servant. That he might. Take our sin. To himself. And pay the price. Upon the cross. And so we thank you.
For this. And we pray. That each one of us. May know the reality. Of his. Saving work. In our lives. Having received him. And knowing that we are.
[23 : 09] Your children. In Jesus' name. We pray. Amen. Amen. Thank you.