

Cultural, Historic, and Geographic Significance

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John 1:1-18

Lesson 1

1

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ACTS 17:11 (ESV)

Now these (Berean) Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

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2

Lesson 1 Topics

- Define some key terms
- The deliberate parallel of John 1:1-5 with Genesis 1
- Discuss some different options might be for “his own”, i.e., those who did not receive Jesus (1:11)
- Examine the word translated as “dwelt” in John 1:14
- Examine an unfortunate KJV mistranslation in John 1:17, and discuss how we translate this can color our understanding of John’s Gospel

3

Anachronism/Anachronistic Fallacy - misappropriation of concepts and ideas in time

Presuppositions - our set of beliefs we bring with us as we read the text

Eisegesis - Inserting concepts INTO the Text

Exegesis - Extracting concepts FROM the Text

- John is often taught as a polemic (a written attack) against the inferior and incorrect Judaism of Jesus’ day in favor of the superior and correct new Christian religion. (*Presupposition*).
- With this presupposition, we look for examples in John to support our position (*Eisegesis*).
- Since it had not occurred yet, there is no way John, Paul, or any other 1st Century Biblical author could have had the 2nd-4th century split between Christianity and Judaism in mind as they wrote. (*Anachronistic fallacy; therefore, the premise of the above presupposition is false*).
- **The Gospels are Jewish documents. 1st Century “Christianity” was a Jewish sect. To best understand what John was communicating, we need to view the words through this lens and let the text speak to us (*Exegesis*).**

4

In The Beginning

John 1:1

In the **beginning** was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Genesis 1:1

In the **beginning**, God created the heavens and the earth.

5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God



Evangelist John in Saint Mina Monastery in Mariut, Egypt

1:1

6

John 1:2-6

He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. [4] In him was life, and **the life was the light of men.** [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.

Genesis 1:3-5

And God said, "**Let there be light,**" and there was light. [4] And God saw that the light was good. And **God separated the light from the darkness.** [5] God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

7

There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John

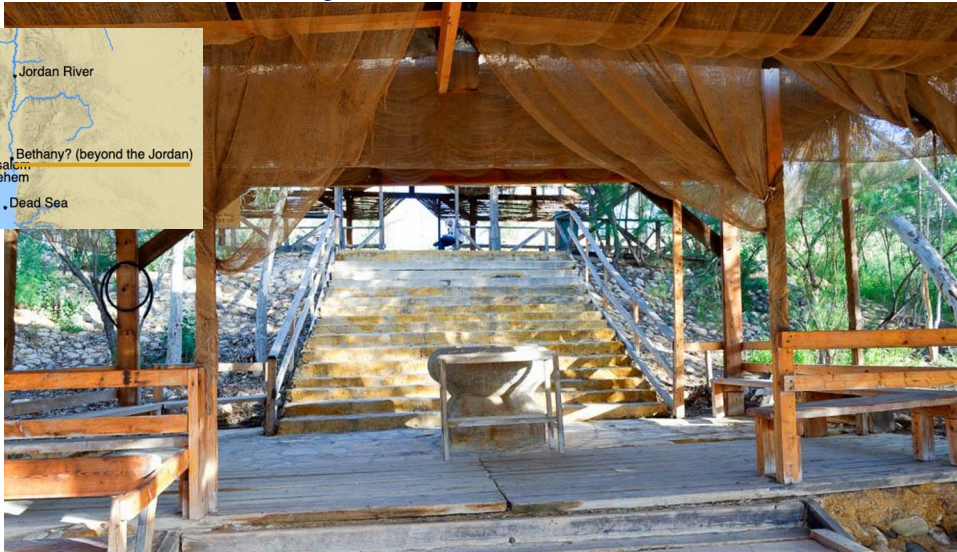


"Cave of John the Baptist"

1:6

8

There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John



Jordan River at Bethany beyond the Jordan, Jordanian baptismal site

1:6

9

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John 1:7

He came as a **witness**, to bear **witness** about the light, that all might believe **through** him

10

He came as a witness, that He might bear witness concerning the light



Dead Sea Scroll 4Q175 Testimonia (“Messianic Anthology”),
1st century BC

1:7

11

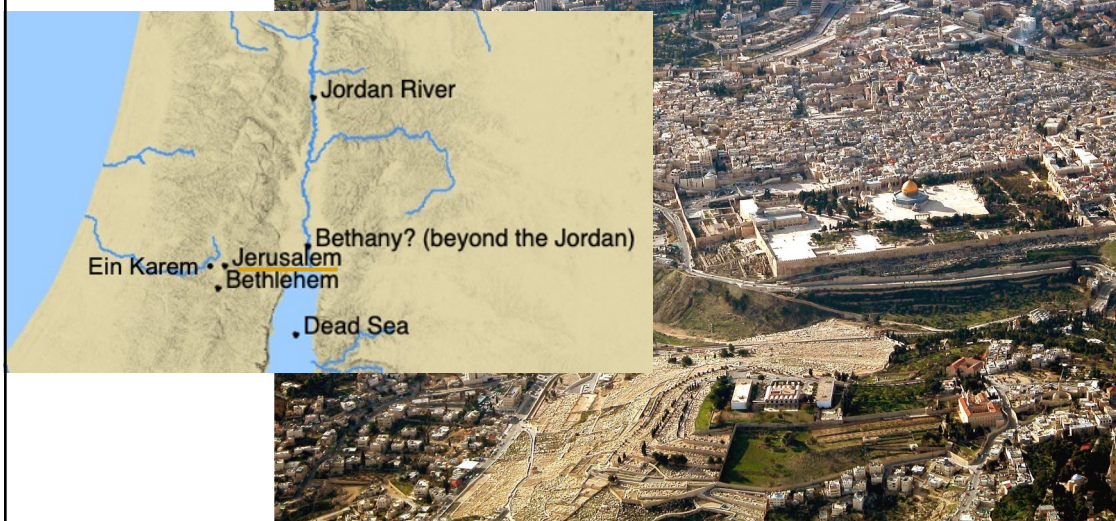
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John 1:8-13

He was not the light but came to bear **witness** about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he **gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.**

12

He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him



Jerusalem (aerial view from the east)

1:11

13

But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God



Cross from early Christian basilica at Delphi

1:12

14

Only Son from the Father

John 1:14-15

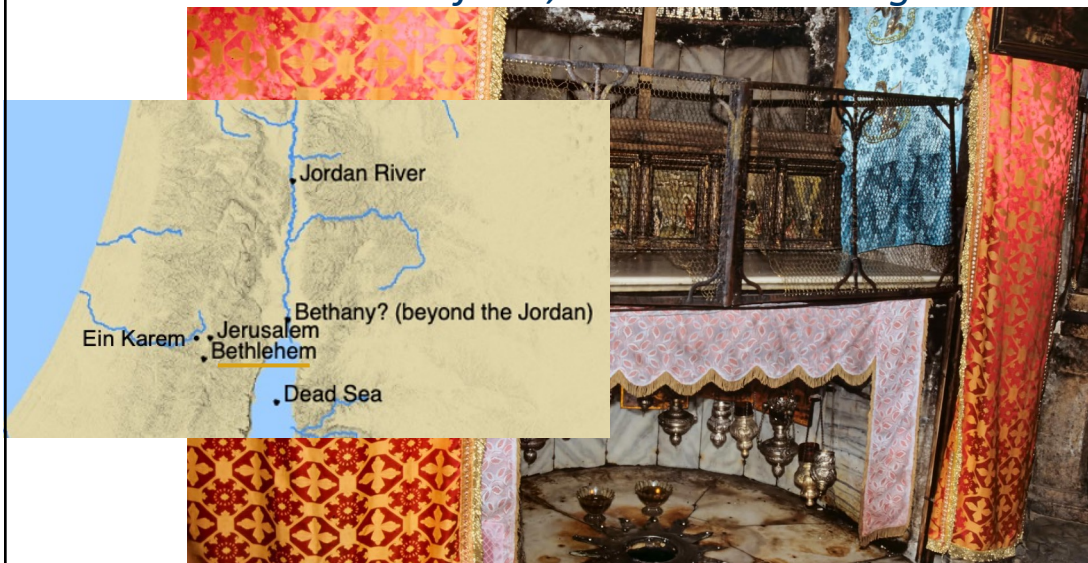
And the **Word became flesh and dwelt among us**, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the **only Son from the Father**, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'")

References

Genesis 22:2 He said, "Take your son, your **only son Isaac**, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you."

15

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us



Traditional place of Jesus's birth in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem

1:14

16

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us



Tabernacle model

1:14

17

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us



Carpenter and son at Nazareth Village

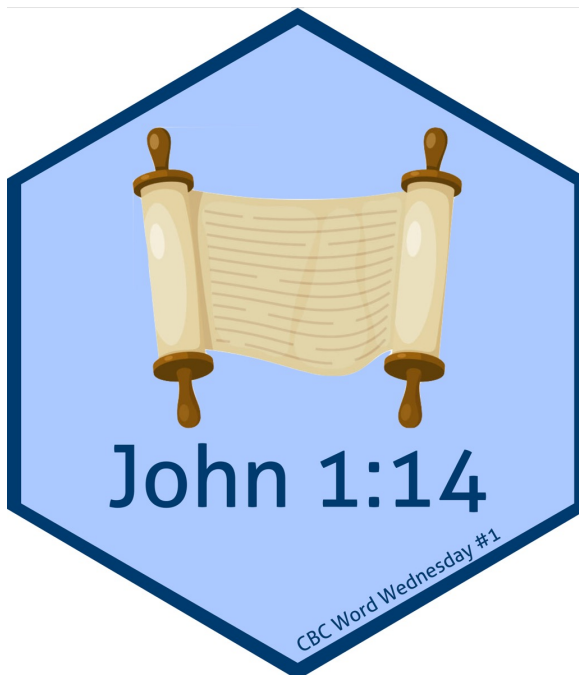
1:14

18

John 1:16-18

For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For (**just as**) the law was given through Moses, (**so also**) grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

19



And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

20

Lesson 1 Questions

- How can anachronisms and eisegesis be a barrier to my studies?
- In what ways does John 1:1-5 parallel Genesis 1:1-5 and what does this tell me about the design of the Bible?
- Do I think “His own” in verse 11 refers to all Jews? Why or why not?
- What was John the Baptist’s mission (1:6-8)? What is my mission and how can I put it into practice?
- Rephrase John 1:14 in your own words as if talking to an unbeliever. Discuss why it is important for that unbeliever to understand the significance of the verse.
- Did my understanding of the Law/Old Testament change after studying 1:17? How can I apply this going forward?

21

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Inset maps: Bible Mapper. <https://biblemapper.com>

22



23