

## READING

John 1:1-18

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.**

**Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.**

**There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.**

**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 received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.**

**The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

**John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’” From the fulness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No-one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.”** (John 1:1-18 NIV)

### **The Prologue** (John 1:1-18)

Energy. We all need energy, we all use energy. And I do not mean the electrical energy we use to light our homes, run our appliances, etc, etc. I do not mean the gas we burn to keep our homes warm. Inside each of us is a fire. Just before someone goes for the fire extinguisher let me explain that. A fire requires three things, material to burn, a heat source to make it burn, and oxygen to help it burn. We take in food – the material to burn, we take in oxygen to help the material burn, the body provides the heat source and then we have fire, we have energy.

For years I had this theory that if the room I work in is cool, rather than baking hot then my body would need more energy in order to heat itself up and so I would therefore burn more fuel, more food and so it was a weight reduction method. As you can see the theory has failed abysmally!

But we do need energy. For a light we require energy. The simplest form of light we have is the candle and for years the brightness of something was measured in candlepowers. The burning of he wax produces heat and light, so we can see.

Light illuminates, light dispels darkness. I can remember when we first moved to our last church. Being in the country there was not the plethora of street lights that there are round here where I know that Charlie the Gardener can still work in the dark due to the street lamps. But in Swavesey there were lamps down the main street, but none behind our house and so for the first year when we went round the back of the house, I would always trip over the plant pots that Sue had put on the path and because we were new, she kept moving the pots around, so one would connect with my shin where one hadn’t been before!

**“The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was going to come into the world.”** (John 1:9 NLT)

The true light, a person because it says, **the one who is the true light** is for everyone, but as we read, there are those that reject him. Verse 11

**“He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”** (John 1:11-13 NIV)

People will always fall into two camps – those who accept, and those who reject, and there is no middle ground, no being on the edge, in that part between light and dark.

As John writes later in his gospel

**“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done through God.”** (John 3:19-21 NIV)

You either love darkness or light, but that is your choice. The light is there, but you can chose to stay in the dark, to hide away.

The darkness will probably not understand the light, how can something so different understand each other. There is a story, Sci Fi story of a huge spaceship that is a huge sphere. It has an artificial gravity and the people live on food grown with hydroponics. Fuel is non-exhaustive, but it went through a radiation belt and was damaged and many died and some were mutated, like the person who was called Jim-Jack, on account that he had two heads. The people within the ship were convinced that nothing existed outside their huge planetoid spaceship. Even when someone takes them up to the top of the ship, to the control room and slides back the portal cover and shows them the stars, they still do not believe it and say that someone has drawn the stars on the portal – the stars are in the glass!

Darkness can never comprehend the light, nor can it overcome it. Light will never be overcome by darkness because as soon as a light is shining, the darkness goes away.

John says in 1:5

**“The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not mastered it.”**  
(John 1:5 NIV)

And John uses a word that means either ‘understand’, or ‘overcome’, or to put the two thoughts together I have used the word ‘mastered’.

Light is energy, energy is light but we also need energy for life. Without energy we die. Plants change energy from the sun into food. Food that we eat, either directly or having passed through an animal which we then eat. John says, 1:4

**“In him was life, and that life was the light of men.”** (John 1:4 NIV)

In him was life. There is one who gives life and gives it abundantly. There are those people who when they come into a room, they make the place light up with their presence. They give life to any proceedings. Like the man I heard of who was the life and soul of any party, always had the funny stories and had people in stitches. And as he was leaving he would always come back in nearly as the door was closing and say, ‘And just before I go...’ and tell a final joke or story. Sadly he died and he was being cremated and as all the people gathered in the crematorium, they went through the service and minister pressed the button to close the curtains and the curtains began to close and they got about half way and something went wrong and the curtains began to open again, and a voice from the back of the room said, ‘And just before I go...’ The people then could not stop laughing.

So many people are living without life. Yes, they are existing but they are missing the every essence of life, on one who said

**“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”**  
(John 5:24 NIV)

And how do we get this life, this abundant life from the life-giver – we get it by faith that leads to salvation. John 1:12

**“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”** (John 1:12-13 NIV)

There is one who has come who gives life, but we need to believe in him, we need to follow him; we need to have faith in him. In the gospel of John, the word ‘faith’ is never a noun, it is always a verb. As noun faith is something we can have, an object. Faith then can be something we take out an examine and study and then put back. As a verb it means that we have to live it. A verb asserts something about the subject of the sentence and express actions, events, or states of being. With regard to faith it means that I have to have faith in something or someone and have to act it out in my life – it cannot be passive – it cannot be just a set of doctrines I get out and look at – it must result in a way of life.

So where does this energy come from for light, for life itself – comes from the Word. John 1:1

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.”** (John 1:1-5 NIV)

The initial creation was by word. Genesis 1 says that God spoke, presumably using words, and it happened.

The Word is Eternal; it was there before everything.

**“In the beginning was the Word...”** (John 1:1 NIV)

There was nothing before the Word. But the word is more than this.

The Word is God; it is divine.

**“...the Word was God.”** (John 1:1 NIV)

But this does not mean that God summed up in the Word. If we do that we make out God too small.

The Word is Personal; there is a relationship.

**“...the Word was with God...”** (John 1:1 NIV)

And this Word is Jesus. Jesus is God speaking very loudly and clearly to his world when Jesus came. Verse 14

**“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”**  
(John 1:14 NIV)

Jesus who always told the truth, what he says is the truth from God, a truth that brings healing to all people if they decide to follow him and obey his commands, obey his words. Jesus, the one who brings healing through his words.

The Word, Jesus, the bringer of life and light to all. That is what John wants to tell us at the start of his gospel, in what is called the Prologue, those verses from 1 through to 18. John is introducing some of the themes that he will be talking about later in his editing of the life of Jesus. John is wanting to introduce Jesus to us as the one who is the Word, who brings light and life to us.

So what about us? Well there is no difference for us today – we still need that word and we have that word in Jesus. We live in a dark world where we need to shed some light the light of the gospel wherever we go. Do you spread the light of the gospel where you are? Do you do similar to John the Baptist, John1:6

**“There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.”** (John 1:6-8 NIV)

We are called as well to testify what the light has done for us. Just on Wednesday in the last of our faith evenings, the speaker, Alex Chowdhry reminded us that Muslims will have a story, but that they will also listen to our story, our testimony concerning the light.

Also are you one who is known as bringing life to people or not? Do people leave you uplifted, or do they leave downhearted? We are people with life and we must give that away. Remember that the word was not something that was kept in heaven, but Jesus was given away for us.

May the words from our lips bring light and life to all those around us. So let us once again hear the words of the Prologue, in a slightly different form. Some of the old preachers use to take into the pulpit their Greek or Hebrew Bible and translate from it as they went along and this is one a similar exercise done by someone else, not me

# Beginning again

**AT THE BEGINNING God spoke the Word which called into being all that exists, gave life to all that lives, and gives light to all that understand.**

**This Word was as much part of God the Creator as the first seed-thought and the signature on finished work are part of a creative man or woman.**

**We give our word, we give ourself; the word and the person who utters it are one: so God's Word is one with God.**

**God spoke again — the same Word; light shone again — the same light. A man named John bore witness to the Word and the light.**

**The Man named Jesus Christ is the Word and the light — life-giving Word, and light undefeated by darkness.**

**He came to the world he made, but was unrecognised; he came to his own people but was unwelcome.**

**Yet to all who did recognise and welcome him he gave the right to live as God's true-born children.**

**The Word was embodied in a Man filled with grace and truth and the glory of God his Father.**

**John saw him, we saw him, and, like John, we bear witness that the God whom no one has ever seen is made known in Jesus Christ.**

John 1:1-18

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