

# GOSPEL OF YOHANAN

## Chapter 1

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Our study, today, is on the Gospel of John or the Gospel of Yohanan which in Hebrew means “God is gracious.” This book is a true grace from God as it uncovers some wonderful truths that will cast our mind in eternity past, where there was nothing but...God...God in His fullness, God in all His self-sufficiency, with no creation, no earth, no universe, and no angels...where God dwelt alone. This is where the book of John brings us, right at the start.

### **John 1:1**

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

Right at the start the reader is carried beyond time and space to another dimension; one that reason, by itself, could not reach. Here the Spirit of God leads the reader at the edge of revelation, because beyond this point we are told nothing. It is here that the imagination must not dare go beyond, for it is very holy ground.

It was, I believe, at this point that Moses; the man who spoke to God, face to face, said that “*The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us...*” (Deut. 29:29).

This is how far what belongs to us brings us-right at **John 1:1**.

As one stands at this threshold, one cannot but be amazed that our mind can in fact be brought to travel that far in time past and brought to reach this very beginning in eternity. That is a true grace from God.

This first verse, one that in fact precedes the time of **Genesis 1:1**, is the beginning of the greatest story ever told. We are at the point where God has decided to create beings with whom He is to share His creation. We are at the point where God knew, by His foreknowledge, what that will cost Him. He knew about the crucifixion. He knew, as we see in **verse 5** “*that the darkness*” will “*not comprehend it.*” Yet He decided to go forward.

The knowledge of His great suffering on the cross, did not dissuade Him. His love and grace, His very nature, brought Him to proceed.

Looking at the first two verses, it is as if God, after taking that decision, stands and decides to leave His throne and come down to earth; because this is what was required for Him to do in order to share His glory with the coming creatures.

It flows here, as you read the two verses: **John 1:1-2**

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

We first read of the Word, then the Word was with God, and we are then reminded that the Word was God. Then, in verse 2, we see that personal pronoun “He” was in the beginning with God.

As the Son slowly became more and more distinct, it is as if He came out of the Trinity and slowly became flesh and dwelled with us.

It is at this time in verse 2, that the Son prepared Himself to come down to earth. That in itself is enough for anyone to fall on his knees and to ponder on this truth.

Does the fact that God decided to create mean that He was in need of something? Absolutely not! God does not need anything or anyone. The creation added nothing to God essentially. His glory cannot increase nor diminish. He changes not! We read in **Malachi 3:6** where God says: *For I am the LORD, I do not change*

Nothing obligated Him nor constrained Him to create; all is done by grace. Even in **Romans 11:34-35** we read:

*For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counsellor? Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?*

Meditating on this fact will help us realize that God is independent of us. He does not need any of us; and whatever He has done for us was out of love, out of grace and out of mercy.

As you consider these truths, you are reminded of the reason why all of these things have been given to us; the reason why the whole of the Gospel was written.

See what it says in **John 20:30-31**:

*And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.*

As far as God is ready to bring you in eternity past, He is ready to do His utmost so that many will believe. Of those who believe, He will do great things so that their faith will increase.

This book was written for the unbelievers, so that they may believe. It was written for the believers, so that their faith may increase; so that we may believe even more in God and in His Son whom He sent.

In the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) the word “*believe*” only occurs about thirty times, yet in the book of John it is found over fifty times. It is at the heart of every discourse. It is the Spirit’s preoccupation for you, as you can see in the following verses:

The first miracle at Cana had the result that “*His disciples believed in Him*” (**John 2:11**).

At the first Passover “*many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did*” (**John 2:23**).

At the well of Sychar, Jesus revealed Himself to an outcast woman, “*and many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him*” (**John 4:39**).

Jesus said to the nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum, “Go your way; your son lives.’ So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way” (**John 4:50**).

The feeding of the five thousand led Peter to say, “Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (**John 6:69**).

He offered Himself as the light of the world, and “many believed in Him” (**John 8:30**).

The man born blind received his sight and immediately, as Jesus revealed Himself, he replied “Lord, I believe!” (**John 9:38**).

Beyond Jordan the crowds followed Him and “many believed in him there” (**John 10:42**).

There are many levels of belief among believers. We do not all believe the same way and the Gospel of John is available to help strengthen our faith and belief.

As this book reveals to us the nature of our God, it also reveals His connection with Him. Do you know that the one name for God that Jesus used constantly in this Gospel was “Father?” Why is that? As the Son stood up and left His throne, He was not only concerned with our salvation but with our sanctification as well. Jesus not only came to save us from being eternally separated from God, but also that we may enjoy having a close relationship with Him. I believe that Jesus called Him “Father” so that we may also delight in calling our God “Father.” My prayer, at this time, is that the Gospel of John will amaze you.

As the Spirit of God wrote in **1Corinthians 2:9-10**:

*....Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man The things which God has prepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit.*

He is about to do that with anyone who approaches this book of John with due reverence.

As we read the first verses, we ask a question: Why is John using the "Word" to reveal God? Why the Word? For one thing, a word is a means of communication; it is a medium of manifestation. If I want to know someone well, since I cannot read the thoughts of others, I would have to rely on the words that person will tell me, in order for me to be able to build up an idea of who that person is. When it comes to God, since it is impossible for us to know the mind of God, God revealed Himself to us through the Word; the Word here, is Yeshua himself. Speaking of the Word of God is speaking of God Himself.

Jesus is the true and only revelation of God as we see it well explained in **John 1:18**:

*No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.*

In Yeshua, then, we have the full revelation of God.

The use of the name “Word” is not a new idea that John is bringing us here. In fact, in the OT the reader has been prepared all along for this moment in **John 1:1**.

In the OT, we often see that the Word of the Lord is synonymous to Jehovah Himself.

In **Psalm 33:6** we read:

*By the Word of the LORD the heavens were made*

We know that God is the Creator, yet we are told that He did it by His Word. Also in **Psalm 107:20** we read:

*He sent His Word and healed them.*

By using this Word, the Spirit of God also appealed to the Jewish people of the time. Prior to the First Coming of the Messiah on earth, many Jewish readers of the OT understood this. In the Targums, for instance, which are books where the passages of the OT were translated and paraphrased in Aramaic, the Word plays an important role in their writings in pointing to God. “Word” in Aramaic is “Memra.” Let me give you some examples from the Targum of Pseudo-Jonathan on how they used this word and we will better understand why John used it in his Gospel.

In **Genesis 5:2** we read:

*He created them male and female, and blessed them*

This is how the rabbis of the time paraphrased it:

*---Male and female he created them. He blessed them in the name of His Memra: of His Word.*

In **Genesis 19:24** we read:

*Then the LORD rained brimstone and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, from the LORD out of the heavens.*

See how they paraphrased it:

*--- And the Memra of the Lord sent down favorable rains upon Sodom and Gomorrah so that they might repent.... Therefore sulphur and fire came down upon them from before the Memra of the Lord out of heaven.*

This goes on and on. Instead of the Scriptural verse “*You did not believe in the Lord,*” Targum **Deuteronomy 1:32** has “*You have not believed in the Memra of the Lord.*”

Targum of Jerusalem says on **Exodus 32:35** The Memra “plagued the people” instead of “*the LORD plagued the people.*”

In **Exodus 33: 22** we read in the Targum “I will cover you with My Memra,” instead of “*My hand.*”

In **Jeremiah 39:18** - it is in the “Memra man puts his trust” instead of “*‘ you have put your trust in Me,’ says the LORD.*”

It is here that John comes and tells them that this Memra is now about to appear and to dwell with us. This word was not used in a vacuum; it carried with it such a weight that it must have called them to investigate.

So John's Jewish audience knew what he was saying or, at least, those who knew the Word of God recognized what he was saying.

Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum made an in depth study on the subject and found out that in fact what was true about the Word, or Logos, in John 1 was true about the rabbis' use of the word Memra. He presented six points which are brought out in the first part of the book of John. Let's look at them again briefly.

**First**, it was believed that the *memra* was sometimes the same as God, but sometimes it was distinct from God.

This paradox we readily see in the first verse: as the Word is God and the Word is with God.

The **Second** thing the rabbis taught about the *memra* was that the *memra* was also the agent of creation. Everything God created, He created by means of His *memra*, by means of His Word, so without the *memra* nothing would exist that now does exist.

This is what we are about to see in **Verse 3**, that all things were created by Him.

The **third** thing the rabbis taught about the *memra* was that the *memra* was the agent of salvation.

This is the reason why the Word became flesh.

The **fourth** thing the rabbis taught about the *memra* was that the *memra* was the agent or the means by which God became visible throughout the pages of the Old Testament.

That is what is called the Theophany; here in Jesus we have the ultimate theophany of all the Scriptures.

The **fifth** thing the rabbis taught about the *memra* was that the *memra* was the agent of revelation.

Yeshua came to reveal God to us.

The **sixth** and last thing the rabbis taught about the *memra* was that the *memra* was the means by which He signed and sealed His covenants.

Yeshua came to ratify the new covenant and seal it with his death and resurrection.

So here John tells us that this Memra has come down to earth to dwell with us. This is not the only thing that John says as he speaks to his Jewish brothers who had the OT in their hands. His emphasis was that Jesus not only fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies, but He also fulfilled the types. He speaks of Jesus as the Lamb of God; Jews knew about the Pascal Lamb in the temple. He spoke of Yeshua as the Ladder from heaven to earth (John 1:51; and see Gen. 28:12). He is the New Temple (John 2:19-21). He is the serpent lifted up (John 3:14), and the Bread of God that came down from heaven (John 6:35).

He also presents truths that are not emphasized in the other Gospels. All four Gospels record the feeding of the 5,000, but only John gives the great sermon on the Bread of Life (John 6) that explains the meaning of the miracle.

Jews had and have today a great testimony about the Messiah in the Gospel of Yohanan. But the Spirit of God also spoke very clearly to those outside of Israel. The choice of the word to describe God works for both the Hebrew and the Greek. The Greek word used here is *Logos* and this word spoke loud to the people of the time. The Stoics were followers of an ancient Greek school of philosophy, founded around 308 BC, by Zeno. These asserted that happiness can only be achieved by accepting life's ups and downs as the products of unalterable destiny. This school of thought had a lot of influence in the first century. But these followers understood *logos* to be the rational principle by which everything exists; everything exists through the *logos*. As far as they were concerned, there is no other god than *logos*. Here John comes and tells them that the *Logos* is Jesus and that Jesus is God.

Philo, the Jewish philosopher who lived in Egypt a century before Christ, made a distinction between the ideal world, which he calls the *logos of God*, and the real or phenomenal world which is but its copy. For Philo, the *logos* would refer to the ideal man. Here comes John and asserts that Yeshua is the *Logos*. That the God of the OT was actually the *Logos*: Yeshua who made His appearance in Israel. This is the very same Logos that Philo was familiar with as a Jew. That word was not foreign to the people of the first century. Whether Jews or Gentiles or whether they lived in Israel or not, that Word spoke to them.

Let's go to the first two verses and see how Yohanan brings us these great truths.

**John 1:1-2**

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

Here, the Triune nature of God is very well portrayed. First, one may notice that it is not written that "the word was with the Father" but "the word was with God." In the name "God" the three Persons of the Trinity are contained.

We read that—The Word—the Word was God—The Word was with God. Notice how "the Word" is mentioned three times and "God" is mentioned three times.

Word

Word       with God

Word       was God

He         with God

How could it be possible that someone can be one and at the same time be with that same one? It does not add up in our minds; we have a paradox here.

At the onset of our quest for God, we realize that God may not be comprehended through the human intellect. Our intellect may tell us that there is a God; Nature tells us that there is a God; our moral law points to Him as well, but beyond that we ought to let His Holy Spirit lead.

This is why, in **Verse 13**, it is said of those who received Him:

*"who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"*

Why? Because they cannot; knowledge of God is possible only when He reveals Himself to us. Are we not told in **John 4:24** that “*God is Spirit?*” Since God is spirit, we can know Him only through the spirit.

In addition to teaching us about the knowledge of God, this verse is actually stressing the divinity of the Messiah. It is all over the chapter and all over the book as well.

See the next verse: **John 1:3**

*All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.*

This would not be true if He was a creature Himself; and so we are told that Yeshua is the Creator. That says a lot.

Let me bring you to the book of **Isaiah 45:18**.

*For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens, Who is God, Who formed the earth and made it, Who has established it, Who did not create it in vain, Who formed it to be inhabited: “ I am the LORD, and there is no other.*

Who is speaking here? Who is the LORD of **Verse 18**?

*For thus says the LORD, Who created the heavens,*

The Hebrew is the four letter word that we often pronounce Yehovah. So Jesus is the Jehovah of the OT.

Try to picture this: the Creator of the world has come down on earth. That brings the OT closer to the believer today, because you will find Jesus in there as well. In fact, without realizing this truth, I don’t believe that one can possibly understand the God of the Bible. We know it is very crucial because it is the doctrine that is the most attacked. The denial of this doctrine is a common denominator of those who attack the Gospel, even among those who say they are Christians. Yet it is so well shown here. But here again, the truth of God can only be received through the Spirit of God.

In Genesis, when God created, we read that “God said” and then the creation occurred (Genesis 1:3,1:6, 1:9, 1:11, 1:14, 1:20, 1:24, 1:26). God created through the power of His Word. Here we are given the name of the Word: Yeshua–Jesus.

See now the next verse: **John 1:4**

*“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men”*

This follows logically from what has been said in the previous verse. If Yeshua created all things He must be the Fountain of *life*. He is the *Life-Giver*. Only God can be a life giver. Here it goes beyond the natural creation, as it also speaks of the spiritual birth.

We read in the next verse: **John 1:5**

*And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.*

We, in our unbelieving state, represented that darkness. When we consider light and darkness we tend to think of them as equal forces, but this is false. A very small candle in a room will

dissipate darkness, and darkness itself cannot have any effect on the candle light. We can understand the same parallel in the spiritual realm, and we ought to dwell more on this. We fear; we are apprehensive, forgetting that the closer we get to the source of light—who is God, who is Yeshua—the less the force of darkness will have an effect on us. The more we separate ourselves from it, the more likely we will believe they are of equal forces.

Remember what God says in **Isaiah 45:7**

*I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil; I, the LORD, do all these things (KJV).*

What did God mean by that? That He creates evil?

Darkness does not exist by itself. It is just a byproduct of what good once was. Evil is a corruption of what was good. God created what is good and because He allowed it to become evil, in that sense, He created evil.

This statement belittles darkness and brings it to its right size. Darkness may have a big mouth and a loud voice. It makes all kinds of gestures and faces to scare us, but it is nothing compared to the source of light. It will dissipate as you get closer to the source of light—to the Word of God. We tend to be dualists in believing that light and darkness are **equally** opposed to each other—that is a lie.

**1John 4:4** *You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.*

He is *much* greater. If God allows darkness and evil now, it is only for now, for a little while. But there will come a time, when we shall be in heaven and darkness and evil will not be there at all. This verse tells us that Yeshua is the source of light; the closer we get to Him, the further away darkness will be. See how the process is described in **1John 2:8**

*.....because the darkness is passing away, and the true light is already shining.*

As Yeshua passes by, darkness dissipates; and this is ever true in our walk. It was Spurgeon who said: "When you have been sitting in a well-lighted room and are suddenly called into the outer darkness, how black it seems. Thus when a man has dwelt in communion with God, sin becomes exceedingly sinful, and the darkness in which the world lies appears like tenfold night."

Light does give comfort.

A story is said about a certain Dr. John Rosen who pioneered a new treatment for some people who were severely mentally ill. These were catatonic patients, curled up in the fetal position on their beds, refusing to acknowledge that anyone else even existed. They would neither move nor speak. Dr. Rosen moved in on the ward. He put up a cot there. Every day he saw those patients. Sometimes he would stop by a bed, take off his jacket, and climb into bed with the patient. He would put his arms around patients and gently embrace them. Some returned to the world of the living because of that wordless expression of concern. In Christ Jesus, God moved in on the ward. This is the effect the Word of God will have in you.

What do we learn so far about our Messiah from these first verses?

1- He is eternal	<i>In the beginning was the Word, (Verse 1)</i>
2- He has a distinct personality	<i>The Word was with God, (Verse 1)</i>
3- He is God	<i>The Word was God, (Verse 1)</i>
4- He is the Creator	<i>All things were made through Him (Verse 3)</i>
5-He is Life	<i>In Him was life, (Verse 4)</i>
6-He is the Light	<i>And the light shines, (Verse 5)</i>
7-He came on earth	<i>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, (Verse 14)</i>
8-He was Rejected	<i>The darkness did not comprehend it. (Verse 5)</i>

Jesus never had a beginning; He always was. The Triune nature of God always was and always will be.

We are told, later in **John 1:14** that this light came and dwelled with us. See how this Great Light is described here in this verse:

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Notice the phrase: "*We beheld His glory;*" God's glory can only be visible in the Messiah. What does it mean to see the glory of God? Did not Moses ask to see the Glory of God in **Exodus 33:18-19**? According to some commentators, this is one of the most mysterious scenes described in the Bible; see what it says:

*And he said, "Please, show me Your glory."*

*Then He said, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion."*

Let's stop right here. Isn't it Jehovah who tells Moses "*I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of Jehovah?*" Then, why did He not say, "*I will proclaim My name?*"

Here we see the same paradox as in **John 1:1**; the Lord is God and the Lord is with God.

Starting in **Exodus 33:20-23** we read:

*But He said, "You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live."  
And the LORD said, "Here is a place by Me, and you shall stand on the rock.  
"So it shall be, while My glory passes by, that I will put you in the cleft of the rock, and will  
cover you with My hand while I pass by.  
"Then I will take away My hand, and you shall see My back; but My face shall not be seen."*

Who did Moses see?

See what **John 1:18** says:

*No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.*

The word "declared" means *to tell, to lead out*. Yeshua, then, is the One who has made the incomprehensible God intelligible.

That is a great revelation for us here:

Who did Moses see in **Exodus 33:18-19, 34:5-6**? **Yeshua**

Who did Jacob see in **Genesis 32:30** when he said I have seen God face to face? He saw **Yeshua**.

What about Gideon, Isaiah and Samson's parents?

Who was walking in the Garden in the cool of the day?

Who did Adam see? It was Yeshua.

It was none else than Yeshua.

It is because no one can see God face to face and live.

Let me give you a small illustration. The Emperor Trajan speaking to a believer:

"Why cannot God be seen by the mortal eye? You say that your God is everywhere. I should like to see Him."

"Well," said the believer, "suppose we go first and look at one of His ambassadors," and so saying, he asked the emperor to look at the dazzling sun.

"Are you unable then to look at one of His creatures? How, therefore, could you hope to look upon the Creator Himself and live?"

That is very true.

God's coming on this earth divided the world in two: the believers and the unbelievers. We see it here again, very clearly.

### **John 1:9-11**

*That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.*

*He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.*

*He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.*

In those verses we see those who refuse Him: The world—that is the gentile world and His own—that is Israel. Both did not recognize Him.

See the next two verses (**12, 13**) where it speaks of those who recognized Him.

*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:*

*who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

It is not for nothing that **John 1:1** starts in the same way as **Genesis 1:1**. As **Genesis** speaks of the creation of the world, here in **John** it speaks of the new creation; and in both creations, the Word is the Creator.

The two divided groups are personified: the unbelievers by the Pharisees, and the believers by the disciples.

Let's look at the Pharisees first: Those who investigated and made the decision for the people were, as it seems, the Pharisees.

See **Verse 24**

*Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees.*

These were the ones that represented this group. Many times John the Baptist tried to bring them back to the Word.

In **John 1:19-27**, when they asked John the Baptist who he is, he tells them twice that he is not the Christ. He had to confess twice to them. You know, when a prophet of God is reduced to convince the world that he is not the Messiah, it is because something has gone terribly wrong. That shows you that they were very far from the Word. When they insisted, John quoted a very appropriate passage in the OT that should have brought them to their knees.

In **Verse 23** he said: *"I am `The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Make straight the way of the LORD," as the prophet Isaiah said."*

The unfortunate thing is that this passage did not faze them. It did not because they did not know the Word of God. If they knew the Word, they would have readily understood that John the Baptist was speaking of the Messiah. Let's just see what the first two verses say:

### **Isaiah 40 verses 1-3**

*"Comfort, yes, comfort My people!" Says your God.*

*"Speak comfort to Jerusalem, and cry out to her, That her warfare is ended, That her iniquity is pardoned; For she has received from the LORD'S hand Double for all her sins."*

*The voice of one crying in the wilderness: "Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God.*

These were the religious leaders and they did not know this passage. Instead of realizing what John the Baptist was saying, and recognizing the Messiah to come, the Bible sadly reports in the next verse:

**John 1:24**

*Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees.*

As if it said: what do you expect—these are the Pharisees. That speaks volumes.

In fact, see what John the Baptist further tells them in **Verse 27**

*"It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose."*

How can we understand that? In the Talmud it says that a student is able to help his rabbi in many areas of need except he was not allowed to loosen his sandal strap—loosening of the sandal strap was delegated either to a servant or to a slave.

Talmud, Mas. Kethuboth 96a:

“R. Joshua b. Levi ruled: All manner of service that a slave must render to his master a student must render to his teacher, except that of taking off his shoe.”

John, having said that he was not worthy to loosen the strap, showed that Jesus was much higher than any of their teachers. **John the Baptist** was then speaking their language and using their own terms to bring out a truth. In this sense this book is important for us.

John the Baptist went as far as telling them about the divinity of the Messiah, but they were too far from the truth to discern his proclamations. Twice John the Baptist repeats in this chapter that Jesus existed before Him, even though John was six months older than Jesus.

**John 1:15** *John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'"*

**John 1:30** *This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.'*

All this was so that we might know who the Lord is.

I once read an interesting illustration about a dolphin:

Jacques-Yves Cousteau reported the strange behavior of a dolphin he sighted near Corsica. The great animal was not swimming; it was just watching the boat draw nearer and nearer. They decided that the dolphin was sick, so they netted it and examined it. There was neither resistance nor fear on the part of the dolphin. There was no sign of any wound or illness. Yet an hour later, the animal was dead. The conclusion Cousteau reached was that the dolphin may have been ostracized by other dolphins. When they are excluded in this way, they become desperate, attach themselves to anyone or anything, and sometimes will themselves to die. Like the dolphin, we need fellowship with our Lord. We need companionship with Him. Without Him we will die.

Now let's look at the second group which is represented by the disciples who recognize Yeshua and who represent for us such a refreshing account—See for instance Phillip and Nathanael.

**John 1:45**

*Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote----Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."*

See how Philip recognized Jesus: by the Word of God. He is the one whom Moses and the prophets wrote about. Why didn't the Pharisees see it? Why don't the rabbis see it today?

See what Jesus says of Nathanael in **verses 47-49**, as opposed to the Pharisees who thought they had the prerogative to decide who is a Jew and who is not, much like it continues even today.

Jesus says that Nathanael, as a believer, is a true Israelite. See what it says:

*Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"*

*Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."*

*Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God!*

*You are the King of Israel!"*

The irony here is that these Pharisees did represent Israel, without being the true Israel. The true Israel is said to be Nathanael.

As Paul says in **Romans 9:6**

*But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel,*

The true Israelites, according to the Scriptures, are those Israelites who believe in God through the Messiah Yeshua.

The next verse introduces us to John the Baptist; who is this man?

**John 1:6-8**

*"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John"*

Why is he so abruptly included in the narrative? Here the text speaks of the very nature of God, and in the middle of it, one man is mentioned: John the Baptist. In fact, all the three synoptic Gospels introduce the record of Yeshua's public ministry by an outline of the ministry of John the Baptist. In the book of Acts, when Peter addresses Cornelius' household, he points to the familiar role of John the Baptist in proclaiming the ministry of Jesus—he says that it all started with John the Baptist (**Acts 10:37**); so does Paul in his address at a synagogue in Pisidian Antioch (**Acts 13:24**).

These accounts are important because John the Baptist is a witness. His witness is still alive today as it touches every man—every man that ever lived, that is living or that will live on this earth. Let me explain.

When one speaks of a witness, one speaks of a judgment to come. As God is so loving and gracious, He brings in the word *witness* very often. John uses this word in his Gospel over 40 times as a verb or noun.

Why a witness?

Every single human being will have to face God for the things that God has done for him.

Everyone will have to face God for the things that are written in this book. Let no one plead

ignorance because, as it is shown in Romans 1:20- 21, everyone knows God; and so a judgment is about to come.

In this Gospel, we see many witnesses:

The Father - **John 5:37**

*And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.*

The Son - **John 8:14, 18**

*Jesus answered and said to them, "Even if I bear witness of Myself, My witness is true, for I know where I came from and where I am going;  
I am One who bears witness of Myself, and the Father who sent Me bears witness of Me.*

The Holy Spirit - **John 15:26**

*But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me.*

The miracles - **John 5:36**

*But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish--  
--the very works that I do----bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me.*

The Scriptures - **John 5:39**

*You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.*

The disciples - **John 15:27**

*And you also will bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.*

John was the first witness, as he constantly points to Him. In fact, twice he calls Jesus “the Lamb of God.”

**John 1:29, 36**

*The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!*

*And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!"*

Under the Old Testament system, every worshiper had to bring his own lamb. If he had no lamb, he had to buy a lamb. He could not borrow a lamb. No one could give him a lamb. He had to provide his own lamb. In the New Testament everything is reversed. God provides the Lamb!

All this is done that all might believe: **John 20:31**

*but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ*

Yet, the Pharisees did not recognize Him.

Speaking of the Lamb that takes away the sins of the world, I read the other day that a thief broke into a church in Buffalo, N.Y. and got away with some valuable equipment and several dollars from a collection box. The next day the church's outside bulletin board carried the words, "If the person who burglarized this church will contact the pastor, he will receive important news." Interested, reporters called on the pastor. "What's the good news?" they wanted to know. Replied the pastor,

*"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9).*