

Misunderstood Messiah: The Gospel of John

Misunderstood Messiah

JOHN 1:1-14, 43-51

CORE TRUTH

Week of January 18, 2026

Jesus came into a world that didn't understand him—and often still doesn't. But faith begins when we are willing to look again and see who he really is.

WELCOME to remind us why we're here.

⌚ Spend about 5 minutes here.

Mission – To become more like Jesus – together.

Vision – We work out our salvation side-by-side—with honesty, humility, and hope. We walk with one another, not just to talk about Jesus, but to be transformed by him. (Philippians 2:12-13)

Guidelines – Our Group Guidelines help us live out our mission and vision with kindness and humility. We encourage you to read and discuss the guidelines together regularly—they can be found on the last page.

HEAD to help us examine what the word shows and let in what's true.

⌚ Spend about 10 minutes here.

- As you read this passage, what stands out to you about Jesus?
- Where do you notice people clearly understanding Jesus—and where do you notice misunderstanding?

HEART to help us wrestle with what we believe and be with each other in it.

⌚ Spend about 30 minutes here.

- Which person or response in this passage do you relate to most right now?
- What expectations do you bring to Jesus that shape how you understand him?
- Jesus fully sees Nathanael before Nathanael sees Jesus. What is it like for you to process being fully seen and known by Jesus?

HANDS to help us live out the truth with the Spirit as we go out into the world.

⌚ Spend about 15 minutes here.

- **Meditate on the following reflection now and throughout the week:** Where might Jesus be inviting you to *look again* this week—to set aside assumptions, slow down, and see who he really is?
- **Use the following prayer based on Psalms 119 to close your time together:**

Open our eyes, Lord,

That we may see wonderful things from your word.

Help us to see you more clearly. Amen.

LEADER RESOURCES

• [Weekly Leader Video](#) • [Bible Project John Part 1](#) • [Why The Gospel of John Is Special](#) • [Tim Keller Podcasts on John](#) •

NEXT WEEK'S PASSAGE

John 2:1-12

GR^oUPS

Misunderstood Messiah: The Gospel of John

Misunderstood Messiah

JOHN 1:1-14, 43-51

SETTING THE SCENE

The Gospel of John is written to help us see who Jesus really is. Throughout the book, Jesus reveals himself again and again—but almost every time, he is misunderstood. People hear his words, see his actions, and still struggle to grasp what he truly means. When Jesus speaks about new life, people wonder how that could possibly work. When he offers living water, people focus on what they can see and touch. Again and again, Jesus speaks about something deep and life-giving, and people respond with confusion or skepticism.

This pattern of misunderstanding is intentional. John shows us that Jesus is not just a great teacher, but the Messiah revealing God himself. Because of that, his words and actions often don't fit our expectations. As we begin this series, Misunderstood Messiah, John invites us to consider an honest question: What if Jesus is not exactly who we thought—and what if the things we thought about him we haven't fully understood?

SCRIPTURE

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 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. 7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. 9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

CORE TRUTH

Week of January 18, 2026

Jesus came into a world that didn't understand him—and often still doesn't. But faith begins when we are willing to look again and see who he really is.

11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. 14 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.

43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 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." 46 Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" 48 Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." 49 Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" 50 Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater things than these." 51 And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

DISCIPLESHIP GROUP GUIDELINES

- **Safe Group:** We strive for an environment where everyone can be open, and honest about his or her struggles and victories.
- **Confidentiality:** What is said in the group stays in the group.
- **Listen:** We want to value one another by really listening to what is being shared. Try to avoid thinking about how you are going to respond while someone is sharing.
- **Pause:** Allowing a pause in the conversation after one person shares and before the next person shares gives the person sharing a chance to finish. A pause also gives the group an opportunity to consider before responding.
- **Silence:** It is important to allow silence in the group as it provides an opportunity for people to think deeply, to gather their thoughts in order to share, and to genuinely consider what others have shared.
- **One Conversation at a Time:** Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.
- **No Fixing:** We are not here to fix each other; Jesus does that part. Give encouragement and ask questions, but try not to solve or fix one another.
- **No Rescuing:** When people are sharing something deeply personal, please resist the tendency to try to make them feel better about themselves or their situation by providing immediate condolences. This will often cause people to stop sharing.
- **Be Curious:** By asking the next question, we communicate genuine interest. We keep the conversation moving forward while building relationships and intimacy.
- **Be Self-Aware:** Be mindful of how you are personally affecting the small group environment through your words, actions, and non-verbal communication. Be sensitive about the amount of time you share, whether too much (dominating) or not enough (hiding).
- **Use "I" Statements:** It is very easy to talk about other people's issues, but, for our purposes, we want to put ourselves on the table. Use "I" statements rather than "them", "the church", "people", "you", "us", "we", etc.
- **Resolve Conflict Biblically:** As a group we commit to extend grace to one another. Conflict is not bad, it's an opportunity for growth. We are all being transformed to be more like Jesus. Conflict and change are a part of that journey. (Matthew 18)
- **Manage Technology:** Let's respect one another by silencing alerts on our devices.

Scan the QR code if
you need childcare
reimbursement.

