

“In the Beginning Was the Word”

The Incarnation, a core doctrine of Christianity, states that in Jesus Christ, God became fully human while remaining fully divine. In John 1:1–18, we see one of the earliest expressions of that doctrine. Those verses are printed below. Read the passage carefully and meditatively, at least once. Then use a highlighter or underlining to mark parts of the passage that seem to describe Jesus Christ as being fully human. Use a different color highlighter or a different style of underlining to mark parts of the passage that seem to describe Jesus Christ as being fully divine. After completing those tasks, read the passage once more. Finally, write a paragraph that explains your understanding of the doctrine of the Incarnation.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth. (John testified to him and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.’”) From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

(From the *New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, Catholic Edition*. Copyright © 1993 and 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. All rights reserved.)

