

In the Beginning Was the Word

John 1:1-5

Reading: Genesis 1:1-5

Bethany Baptist Church

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...pray...

“In the beginning...”

Do you *recognize* that expression?

Can you tell me where it’s *found*...? (Careful!)

Gen 1:1 – *In the beginning God...*

John 1:1 – *In the beginning was the Word.*

Gen 1:1 – *In the beginning God created...*

John 1:1 & 3 – *In the beginning was the Word...and all things came into being through Him.*

One more expression, *for now*: *And the Word was God.*

Turn w/me to John 1:1-18. John’s *Prologue (Into)*. **Today: vv.1-5.**

In case you *missed* John’s *very first point* in his book, let me make a *compelling connection*:

John 1:1 – *The Word* – do you know who *He* is? He’s *God* – but John wants you to see that there’s *way more to it* than that!

John 1:14 – *The Word ...became flesh. When did that happen? In a womb of a of a young, Jewish virgin! Now John tells us why...*

Three enormous **truths** about *Jesus of Nazareth, the incarnate Word of God.*

1. The Truth about the **Word & Eternity** (vv.1-2).
2. The Truth about the **Word & Creation** (vv.3).
3. The Truth about the **Word & World** (vv.4-5).

The Word from *Eternity* (vv. 1-2).

1. John **isn't** *subtle*! He begins by taking out his *Bible-sledgehammer* and *smacking* you right between the *eyes*! (**Say v.1**) – ***In the beginning was the Word... Wham!*** (pause)
2. Let's start by identifying **2 keywords**: the term "*Word*" & the verb "*was.*"
 - a. The term *word* (Gr. λογος). → Only *John* uses this title for *Christ*: i.) **3x** here in **v.1**; ii.) then (*huge*) **v. 14**; iii.) also in 1 Jn 1:1 & Rev 19:13.
 - i. The concept of "*the Word*" was rich in meaning to every reader in John's **1st** century audience: to *Greeks & Jews*.
 - ii. To the *Greek philosophers* the "*Word*" captured the idea of *creative force & cosmic intelligence*. But the Greeks **never** pictured *the Word* as a personality or a *man*...
 - iii. To the *Jews* the **Word** of the Lord (**OT**) expressed YHWH's *power & His wisdom*.
 - iv. **V.1: *The Word...the Word...the Word!*** What does John *teach* that *the Word* – the *power* of God & the *wisdom* of God – *was*...that it still *is*? (**pause**)
 - b. And then there's the verb ***was***. Little *packages* can be *stuffed* with *dynamite*!
 - i. "*Was*" (Gr = εἶμι). It simply refers to *existence*. *Existence w/o reference beginning or end*.
 - ii. Since "*was*" (εἶμι) is a verb, it has to have a *tense*. John carefully selects the Greek ***imperfect*** verb tense. ***Imperfect*** tense verbs suggest *repeated* or *customary* or *habitual* action.
 - iii. John is telling you, that without reference to *beginning* or to *end*, the Word ***always*** *was*.

3. Can John be saying that Jesus, the *Word*, is God? **Absolutely!** In fact, John immediately makes **3 claims** that Jesus the Word has *always* been fully God. That the Word is *eternal & distinct & fully divine*.
 - a. Jesus, *the Word*, is **eternal**. *In the beginning was the Word*. One of my *Greek Geeks* translates **v.1** like this: *When the beginning began, the Word was already there! (2X)*
 - b. Jesus, *the Word*, is **distinct**. *And the Word was with God*. John's Greek is much *richer* than our English. The picture here is *face to face*. Since before time began, *the Word* lived in *face to face* fellowship w/ God. And to *face* God (*fellowship* w/ Him) means the Word is a *person* in His own rights. *Distinct*.
 - c. Yet Jesus, *the Word*, is also clearly identity **as** God. *And the Word was God*. *Fully God, in all His essence*.
 - i. Some *cults* (spec. **JW**) misconstrue the *Greek grammar* under this text to claim that Jesus is *like* God, or is a *lesser god*. They simply (*fatally*) get the Greek *wrong!*
 - ii. John says it about the only way he could in **four compact** but *potent* words. This might be the *clearest* statement of Christ's *deity* in your entire Bible: ***the Word was God***.
4. Then John takes back out his *Gospel-sledgehammer* and *hits you again!* **Vs. 2** simply *distills & repeats* what John just said. (That means it's a *crucial truth*). **Read v.2.** → Three *key truths* about Jesus the Word:
 - a. *He already was, when the beginning began*.
 - b. *He was in fellowship with God*.
 - c. Therefore (you *have* to conclude) *He is God*.
5. **VV. 1&2** *boil down* to the most *important truth* in the story of *Jesus Christ*. He is *God*. If you *won't believe* this, you *can't* be a *Christian*.

First truth – *the Word has always been: eternal, distinct, ... divine.*

The Word at *Creation* (v. 3).

1. We make a pretty *big deal* in v. 1 about the Word *always existing before* Creation (*in the beginning*). But that's not *all* John has to say on the topic of *Christ & Creation*.
2. John makes the same point *twice* (3). He makes it in the *positive*, then *immediately underlines his idea* by making it again in the *negative*:
 - a. Positive: *All things came into being thru Him.*
 - b. Negative; *Apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.*
 - c. John's contrast is *terse & arresting*: *all things & nothing; thru Him & apart from Him. → All things through Him. Nothing apart from Him!*
3. I want to **circle** that expression *came into being*. It shows up **3x** in v.3. This translates John's second verb about *existing*!
 - a. This Greek verb is **γίνομαι** – *begat; become; be created*.
 - b. In **vv.1-2**, we *bore down* on John's claim that the Word has *always existed (w/o beginning or end)*. That verb was **εἰμι**.
 - c. Now he *changes-up* his vocabulary to tell us that the Word *created* His world. That Christ made *everything, w/o exception*, that has ever *come to be*.

4. You see what *that* means, *don't you?* If the Word *made it all*, then of course, the Word is *God*.
- a. After all, the Bible is *clear* – this was all *created* by *God*. **Gen 1:1** – *In the beginning...God created the heavens & the earth.*
 - b. Beyond that, if *everything* was created *through* the Word, then the Word Himself was *not created*. Why? Because he had to *already exist*, before the very first thing was *brought into existence*. **2X**
5. Beloved, *John* makes this point, *Paul* makes this point, & so does the writer of *Hebrews*.
- a. **Col 1:16** – *For by [God's beloved Son] all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created thru Him & for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together!*
 - b. **Heb. 1:2** – *In these last days [God] has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world!*

First truth – *the Word has always been: eternal, distinct, ... divine.*

Second truth: *the Word created every single thing, w/o exception!*

The Word came into our *World* (read vv. 4&5)

1. The concepts of *life & light* are **two** very important ideas in John's *Gospel* & other writings. And along with those ideas are the contrasts of *death & darkness*.
 - a. **John** will say over & over, because **Jesus** will say over & over, that Christ is *life & light*.

2. When John writes in **v.4** that the *Word* has *life* in Himself, what does he mean?
 - a. First, the apostle uses an *underlying Greek term* he often uses to describe *spiritual* life, specifically, ...

 - b. John says this life *was always* (**εἶμι**; 1&2) in the Word – *In Him was life!* This is much more *stunning* than it might first sound.
 - i. *All* living things are *given* life. Life is *created, breathed into, formed, given, summoned, conceived, begat*. *All* things are *given* life (*become*) – *all* but **One!**

 - ii. God simply **has** life. Has *always* had life. No one *gave* it to Him – no one *made* God. A theologian would say that God is *self-existent* and *eternal*.

 - iii. Now John is saying that the **Word** simply has *always had life* (*self-existent & eternal*). Do you see John's point? Only God *has life* in Himself. But the Word *has life* in Himself! *Get the point...!?! The Word is...?*

 - iv. The apostle just can't *get over this* – the Word is **God**...therefore, our *Savior* (*Bethlehem's baby*) is **God in the flesh!**

3. **(Re-read v.4.)** *Light* is John's 2nd big word, and you see it a lot in your *Bible*. *Light* in Scriptures suggests at least these 2 important ideas: *truth & holiness*.
- God is *truth*; **Christ** is *truth* – “*the way & the truth & the life!*”
 - God is *holy*; the **Word** is *holy* – “*tempted in all things as we are, yet w/o sin.*”
- a. *Light* also reminds us of its *polar opposite... darkness*.
 - b. John says the *Light* of the Word *shines* in the **darkness**. John *loves* the contrast! *Darkness* is **not** darkness like a cave **w/o** lights or midnight on overcast evening; *darkness* is an entire *world system*: darkness is Satan's pervasive *rule & system* of *sinfulness & evil*. Hey, this idea affects **you**...here's *how*:
 - i. All men & women are born as *slave-citizens* of the *Kingdom of Darkness*. They *stumble & grope* in spiritual darkness, & darkness molds their daily lives.
 - c. **Read v.5.** If your **NT** says *did not comprehend*...it would be *better* translated *did not overpower* it. The Ruler of *darkness* resists the *liberating invasion of Light!*
 - d. The Bible documents Satan's repeated attempts to extinguish the *Life & Light* of Christ. Satan tried to *destroy Israel*, then tried to destroy Israel's line of *kings* (Christ would be born from *Israel & her kings*). Evil King *Herod* killed every baby in *Bethlehem* (but *Baby Jesus* was gone!). Satan *tempted* Jesus to abandon His mission w/ those *wilderness temptations*. He then planted a *traitor* (Judas) among Jesus' *closest friends*. The Enemy thought he'd finally *pulled it off* on the Cross!
 - e. But here (**5.b**) is John's *preview* of *Golgotha*, & the *Resurrection* that followed on Day **3**. Here is the *victory* of the Word, who is *Life & Light*: *The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overpower it!*

Beloved, rejoice! The third truth: Word has come into our world!

It isn't just *Satan* who hates the *Light*!

Until the Word gives us *life*, we won't love His *light* – we'll *hide* from it!
 We'll choose *slavery in darkness* over *liberty* in His *light*!
Every time!

Here's how Jesus explained that in **John 3:19** – “*This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.*”

Do you think that's **not true**...?

Apart from Christ, we (each & every one of us!) live *selfishly & proudly*.

We *lie*. We *lust*. We *covet*. We *steal*. We *scoff at truth*.

We refuse to *honor God*. We take His name in *vain*. We worship **our** way – or **no** way at all.

Apart from Christ – **you** love darkness. What can you *do*?

Friend, the *Life of God* in the *Light of Christ* came into the world **2000** years ago to *shine in darkness*. He **still shines!**

Will you put away your *evil deeds* & come to the *Truth* & the *Light*?

Trust Christ to *forgive* you & *free* you. Why not start the New Year by **receiving** God's *gift of life*!

...pray...