

EXPOSITION OF JOHN

Message #4

John 1:1-5

Years ago a guy I worked with in radio came to our home one day with his wife and brand new baby. This baby was barely a week old. We had a swimming pool and he and I were in the pool and Mary and his wife and the baby were beside it. He asked his wife to hand him his baby, which she did. Then he proceeded to tell me that if you take a baby underwater when it is just an infant, it will grow up and not be afraid of water and with that he dropped down under water with his baby in his arms. I was horrified and petrified. After about a three count, he came up out of the water with his baby in his arms and I said don't you ever do that again in this pool. We were all relieved when the baby started crying. I have never seen anything like that. Without any warning, without any introduction or notice, he just plunged that baby right into the water.

That is what the Apostle John does in the opening of his gospel. Matthew starts by giving the human genealogy of Jesus Christ - the God/ King . Mark starts by giving information of the forerunner of Jesus Christ - the God/ Servant . Luke starts by explaining why he undertook his research concerning the life of Christ - the God/ Man . But **John just plunges right into the depths of theology concerning Jesus Christ** - the God/ Son . That baby born in Bethlehem was the Great God and Savior (Titus 2:13). John does not wade in, he dives in and the first point he wants us to see is this:

JESUS CHRIST IS GOD AND HE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL CREATION AND LIFE.

To John, Jesus was much more than the story of a babe born in Bethlehem; He was the majestic Lord who deserved reverence and worship. In I Kings 8:27 Solomon asked a question - "Will God really dwell on earth?" Would the God of heaven, the God of Israel, really stoop to come to this earth? John begins by saying He sure did in the person of Jesus Christ.

There is no dodging this for that is precisely what these first five verses claim. Truth is, John makes no attempt whatsoever to even explain all the Divine mysteries. G. Campbell Morgan said every word here is "beyond our comprehension" (*The Westminster Pulpit*, Vol. 2, p. 232). He just begins by proclaiming truth. His doctrine in these first five verses is very deep. But John does not intend to skirt around issues when it comes to Jesus Christ, nor does he intend to tickle ears. He is out to set the record straight for the Church Age. If you are going to be right with God, you are going to have to believe truth about Jesus Christ. If you reject truth about Jesus Christ, you cannot be right with God. John is going to emphasize the importance of believing on Jesus Christ. So he begins with the fact that **Jesus Christ is God**. This is where it all starts. Now there are nine specific amazing facts brought out in these five verses about Jesus Christ:

FACT #1 – Jesus Christ was in the beginning. 1:1a

When you read "in the beginning," the first thought that comes into most people's minds is Genesis 1:1 and that is exactly the thought that should come into your mind. In fact, the Greek construction John uses "εν αρχη" is identical to the Septuagint's Greek Translation of the Hebrew in Genesis 1:1 - "εν αρχη".

The emphasis of Genesis 1:1 is that in the beginning God created everything and the emphasis in John 1:1 is that in the beginning Jesus Christ created everything.

Now carefully notice what is being said here - In the beginning “was” Jesus Christ. The verbal “was” is not the verbal “is.” **This verbal is formed from the “I am” verb (εἰμι), not the “I became at some point” verb (εγενετο).** We may understand this as the “I always Am continually was” concept.

The tense of this verb “was” is imperfect, which is the tense that presents continual action which moves forward from past continual time. So what John is saying here is that **Jesus Christ continually was in existence at the beginning of all things.** Jesus Christ was already in continual existence at the beginning of everything. By virtue of the fact that there is no article “the” before beginning - John is referring to the character and quality of the beginning of everything and anything. **Jesus Christ was in continual existence when everything began.** Jesus Christ was in existence when the angels began, when the atmosphere began, when the heavens and when earth began. He was in existence when all life began, both animal and human. **That means He is God!** John’s opening statement about Christ corresponds with other Biblical texts such as Colossians 1:16 and Hebrews 1:2, 11:3.

FACT #2 – Jesus Christ was “the Word .” 1:1b

This is a key title in this chapter: **First** - He is the Divine Word - 1:1; **Second** - He is the eternal Word - 1:2; **Third** - He is the creative Word (1:3); **Fourth** - He is the incarnate Word (1:14); **Fifth** - He is the rejected Word (1:10-11).

Now the title Jesus Christ is given in this verse is "the Word," literally "the logos" (ο λογος). The term "the word" or "the logos" is not the same as when we think of our noun word. A word to us is some combination of letters which becomes a basis for human communication. To the Greek mind, the concept of "logos" was much deeper. It was the embodiment of an entire concept or idea. The totality of the subject matter or the final word on the subject (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 271). Certainly this may be related to Jesus Christ because He was the embodiment of God, the totality of God. Jesus Christ is God revealed. G. Campbell Morgan said a good way to view this is that Jesus is the “full expression of God” (Vol. 2, p. 232).

But to John’s mind this was even more profound. If we keep in our thinking the historical reality that this is the last book John is writing, then we realize that he has already written the book of Revelation. As John neared the end of the book of Revelation, he connected this noun “the word” with the Person of Jesus Christ coming in all of His glory as the King of Kings and Lord of Lords (Revelation 19:13, 16), as He comes back to take over the world. **What John is saying here is that Jesus Christ - who is the totality and embodiment of God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, was continually in existence at the beginning of everything.** Everything Christ says is the Word of God. Everything Christ is truly is the Word of God. Everything Christ does is the Word of God. This average looking Jew with whom John traveled around Galilee and Judea was the King of Kings and Lord of Lords who has always existed as the eternal Word. He is God revealed in Person.

J. Vernon McGee observed if you take these first five words in the original Greek, "In beginning was the word," there "is not a man on top side of this earth who ... can understand it or fathom it" (Vol., 4, p. 369).

FACT #3 – Jesus Christ was with God. 1:1b

There is no doubt that whoever the Word is, He is not God the Father. He was obviously with God the Father, but He was not God the Father. The preposition "with" (pros) is one that speaks of close proximity (Smith, p. 383). This is not just close proximity in relationship, but close proximity in Person. It is interesting that Dana and Mantey point out that the root meaning of this preposition "with" is near as in facing each other (*A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, p. 110). In everything God is and everything God does the Word is in close proximity, **He is at a coequal face to face level**. Not one of us can even see God and live. The Word was at a face to face level with God, which means He is God. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, because it was not robbery, it was the truth.

FACT #4 – Jesus Christ is God. 1:1c

Lest there be any doubt about Jesus Christ actually being God, it is flat out stated in this verse that He is God. Jesus Christ is Deity. John plainly says this several times (1:1; 5:18; 10:33; 20:28). The Greek text literally reads "and God was The Word" (και θεος ην ο λογος). The verbal "was" is again the imperfect tense, expressing continual action in progress at all time including all past time. Jesus Christ was and is continually God.

I want to give you an important Greek lesson on this part of the verse because cultists tend to refer to the indefinite article to say "a god" as opposed to "the God." When an article "the" is used in Greek it specifies and particularizes. However, when there is no article, what is stressed is the character and quality of everything something is. In English an article or lack thereof tends to make something more or less important. That is not true in Greek. In Greek, an article stresses one thing and a lack of an article stresses another thing. Now this text literally may be understood this way - "and the character and quality of all God continually was and is, is the Word." Furthermore, the article "the" is used with the noun God several times in this context - John 1:6, 12, 13, 18. **What is stressed here is that all of the character and quality of God continually exists in The Word, who is none other than Jesus Christ.** Jesus Christ is God. He is all the quality of God and all the character of God. He is The God and He is all God is, always. This point is so strongly stated that confusion on this is inexcusable and damnable.

FACT #5 – Jesus Christ was with God in the beginning. 1:2

John again wants to underscore the fact that Jesus Christ is at a coequal face to face level with God from the beginning of anything and everything. Jesus was God in the beginning when everything else was created. By way of repetition and restatement, he is emphasizing the importance of Christ's Person and Identity. He has always been God. This verse again establishes this fact and He was so from all of time in the beginning. This as no normal person who came into this world, this One was God. If you are going to be right with God, you must have this view of Jesus Christ you must acknowledge that Jesus is Lord (Romans 10:9).

FACT #6 – Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things. 1:3

In the Bible, each Person of the Godhead is credited with Creation - Father, Son, Holy Spirit. In Genesis 1:1 God created all things and in John 1:2 Jesus created all things proving He is God. This theme of Jesus Christ being the Creator of all things is stressed time and time again in the New Testament: I Corinthians 8:6; Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-3; Revelation 4:11. Jesus Christ is the creator of things visible and things invisible. Many different misinformed men and movements have tried to say Jesus Christ was created. But this verse clearly defends the truth that Jesus Christ is not created, He is the Creator.

Now think about this for a moment. The average galaxy contains 100 billion stars and there are supposedly 100 million known galaxies in known space. Einstein thought that we had scanned with our largest telescopes only one-billionth of theoretical space. This means that there are probably something like 10 octillion stars in space. Jesus Christ created it all. Look at the Rocky Mountains. I have read many accounts of people who traveled from the east and first saw the Rocky Mountains standing glorious into the sky and it literally caused them to stop because it took their breath away. I remember the first time I saw the Tetons, the Sawtooths, Mount Borah and the White Clouds. They are staggering. Look carefully at the animals and birds that are so intricately designed, they were created by Jesus Christ. Look at a little baby, looking up at you with those trusting and dependent eyes - they were made by Jesus Christ. They display the glory of God and Jesus Christ is God. These are things we see, but there are other things He has created that we do not see. Certain molecules, organic existences, life things. All of it was created by Jesus Christ. No wonder He could say, "I and the Father are one" (10:30) or "he who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9). He is the Creator and Lord of all.

FACT #7 – Jesus Christ is the Creator of all life . 1:4

The noun "life" (ζωή) occurs some 38 times in John's Gospel and is an important theme (Moulten & Gedan, *Concordance to the Greek New Testament*, p. 422). This gospel and other New Testament books bring to view the clear truth that Jesus Christ creates and gives life both physical and spiritual (John 5:26; 6:57; 10:10; 11:25; 14:6; 17:3; 20:31). Dr. H. A. Ironside said, "Apart from Him (Jesus Christ) there is no life" (*John*, p. 15). Eternal life, joyous life, abundant life comes also from Jesus Christ (John 10:10). Notice what this says - in Him, in Jesus Christ "was" life. Again that verbal "was" is imperfect tense meaning continual action in progress for all of time. **Life has always stemmed from Jesus Christ.** If a person wants eternal life, he must believe in Jesus Christ, for He is the only one who can give it (John 14:6; 20:20-31).

There is something mysterious about life. A scientist can study the body - its structure and its composition. A doctor can study its ailments and sometimes bring about a cure, but there is a life to a body that no scientist or doctor can ever figure out. At the precise moment of death, the body is still here, but something is no longer here - that which we call life and that life is created by Jesus Christ. Only God can create life.

FACT #8 – Jesus Christ is the Creator of life and life is the light of men. 1:4b-5

Jesus Christ is the only Person who can illuminate a dark heart and mind in regard to God. Listen to what John is saying here - whatever life you possess, whether physical life or spiritual life, it is shining light to you concerning the reality of God and Jesus Christ. You have enough light within you to know about God and that light is your life. There is something very sacred about life. It is that which expresses eternal things to man. You have life because of Jesus Christ. No matter how dark your past, your soul and your mind may be lit up by Jesus Christ.

Without light you have no sight of anything - no vision, no reality, no direction, no hope of accomplishing anything. This is a dark, depraved world and we have dark souls. When Jesus shines His convicting light on us, it shows us how depraved and dark and far short of God's glory we really are. Most are so proud of themselves that they don't like that. In fact, they reject it.

Jesus Christ came to this earth and demonstrated the life of God. He literally raised people from the dead, but they still would not believe in Him. He brought light to this world, but this world didn't like it.

FACT #9 – Jesus Christ shines His light into this dark world, but this dark world does not receive it. 1:5

As John develops his gospel, we will discover that a few will receive Christ, but most reject Him. The Greek verb “comprehend” (καταλαμβάνω) means to comprehend something in the sense of appropriating it or seizing hold of it (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 235). Jesus Christ offers to light up a relationship with God and as Calvin said the nature of man is so corrupt that it will not yield itself to Jesus Christ. It does not comprehend this nor receive Him (John Calvin, *Gospel According to John*, Vol. 17, p. 34).

Life continually displays itself in this universe as a direct creative work of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ Personally came to this world and displayed Himself as God and this world didn't accept Him. He came to offer life and light to humans and they would not receive it. You would think that dark, depraved, depressed sinners would welcome the light and life into their lives. But they don't. When we continually manifest the life of God to this world and proclaim the truth of God to this world, we will discover that it doesn't accept us either. In fact, you present God's Word to people and it is so convicting they will get away from you.

These first five verses bring you face to face with the fact that Jesus Christ is God. Will you acknowledge this right now? Will you accept what this Scripture truly reveals? You can find life in Him. You can find light in Him. Your dark sin can be washed away. Your dark heavy guilt can be lifted from you for that is why He came into this world. Will you accept Him now? If you will invite Jesus Christ to come into your life, you will have God in your life forever.