

## **The Word is God - John 1:1-13 - Jn 01**

The year was about 85 A.D. There was an old man known as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” now living in Ephesus. It had been 50 years since Christ was crucified, and now all the Apostles were dead, except him. All the books of the Bible were written except his. And much of the NEW TESTAMENT was already in circulation.

Then the Holy Spirit would inspire the last Apostle to author the last gospel. He would also author the last book to be added to the NEW TESTAMENT – 3 John. And he would author the last book of the NEW TESTAMENT. In fact, much of His theology would be “eschatology,” the doctrine of last things.

In this Apostle’s life, God had become a man, incarnated at Bethlehem, and this Apostle had become His “best friend.” In fact, this beloved Apostle was actually the cousin of the Lord Jesus. He had seen God in the flesh heal the sick, feed the hungry, and teach the greatest of all eternal truths. And He had seen his friend and his Lord betrayed, beaten, and crucified, but not to defeat – instead, to the glorious victory of the resurrection, leading to the supernatural birth of the NEW TESTAMENT church.

10 days after the ascension, in a crowded upper room in Jerusalem during the Feast of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit would come like a mighty, rushing wind, and 3000 believers would be baptized into one body. But it had been maybe 50 years since that glorious day. There had been a Jewish revolt that ended with the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D., and Jews and Christians alike had gone into exile and hiding.

There was no temple, no sacrifices, no capital city, and no king but Caesar. Undaunted, the Jews held tightly to their rejection of Jesus Christ as Messiah, ignoring hundreds of fulfilled prophecies that occurred right before their eyes. And not only was the Jewish rejection staunch, but all kinds of false teachings were already creeping into the Christian church – false teachings that would be written into the history books with names like *Gnosticism*, *Apollinarianism*, *Eutychianism*, *Nestorianism*, *Ebionism*, and untold other “*ism*’s” that were rampant in the early church, just like they’re rampant in the church today.

And so, when John was an old man, the Holy Spirit commissioned “the disciple whom Jesus loved” to write not only 3 short epistles and the Revelation of Jesus Christ, but also the absolute crowning work of evangelism in the entire Bible. The Gospel of John conveys Jesus Christ in all His deity as the great Creator-God of the universe. At the same time, it conveys Jesus Christ as the one and only Savior of our souls. And what’s so great about the book of John is not only is it the simplest and clearest presentation of Jesus Christ as both God of the universe and Savior of our souls, but its depths remain unreachable for even the most learned Christian.

Commentator Leon Morris says: “*The Gospel of John is like a pool in which both a child may wade and an elephant may swim.*”

In C.S. Lewis’s book “The Chronicles of Narnia,” Aslan is the Lion (who is an allegory of Christ), and when Lucy comes back the second time to see Aslan, she says to him, “Aslan, you are bigger.” Aslan says to her, “That is because you are older, little one.” Lucy asks, “Not because you are?” And Aslan replies, “Every year that you grow, you will find me bigger and bigger,” and

that's exactly what you'll find with Jesus Christ. Each step that you grow in your understanding and relationship with Him, Jesus Christ just gets bigger, and bigger, and bigger.

It is my 2-fold prayer, as we study the Gospel of John:

- 1) That those who don't yet believe would believe; and
- 2) That to those who do believe, Jesus Christ would become bigger.

Let's start with the summary verses of the Gospel of John to answer the question, "Why was the Gospel of John written?"

### **John 20:31**

**"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."**

There are 2 reasons why the Gospel of John was written:

- 1) That you may believe; and
- 2) That believing, you may have life in His name.

The simple sentence of verse 1 is one of the most compact and powerful theological statements in all of the Bible.

### **John 1:1**

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

When John says, "In the beginning was the Word," he's not referring to the start of something. The Greek verb tense expresses a *continuous state*. It's expressing an existence that transcends time. We could say, "The Word always was." Before time began, that is when the Word existed.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God." The original language here denotes the deepest intimacy and communion. The literal meaning is *the Word was continually toward God*. Before time began, the Word has always been in perfect intimacy with the Father. Then John very carefully and very decisively concludes this critical first verse – "...and the Word was God," or *Theos en ho Logos* in the Greek. Again, the same Greek tense is used, meaning *before time began, the Word was always God*. The Greek word *Logos* means *the express image* or *the true essence*.

Look down in verse 14 where it says "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." It means *the exact true essence of God became flesh and dwelt among us*. But there's more in this word *Logos*. It also means *the expression* or *the communication*. So we could paraphrase the beginning of verse 1 as "In the beginning was the Communication."

Jesus Christ is the communication of God. He is the expression of God. Before time began, Jesus Christ was the communication of God, waiting to communicate God to you and me. Now literally translating the last statement in John 1:1 from Greek to English is very simple and very clear. It literally means *the Word has always been God – the Word was God*.

If you ever see a translation where the simple English word “a” is inserted here before the word “God,” know that inserting the word “a” violates ALL rules of Greek translation and grammar, and it cannot be remotely explained, except as blasphemy. Verse 2 reiterates the awesome truth John is conveying.

**John 1:2**

**“He was in the beginning with God.”**

Jesus has always existed in perfect intimacy with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. And not only has He always existed, but He is the vehicle of creation of the Godhead.

**John 1:3**

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

Jesus Christ is the “vehicle of creation” of the Godhead. The Greek word here for “all things” is *panta*. It means *all things individually*. It refers to the infinite details of creation.

Let’s just peek at the opposite ends of the “creation spectrum.” On the enormous side, scientists believe there are stars and suns that are billions of light years away from the earth, with each light year being 6 trillion miles. For an idea of how far away that is, our sun is 8 LIGHT MINUTES away. And how big are some of those stars? ANTARES could hold 64 million suns, and HERCULES could hold 100 million stars the size of ANTARES. Space is not only big – its precision is exact. Each of the planets in the universe turns on a perfectly designed axis and moves in a perfectly designed orbit.

Now the other end of Jesus Christ’s “creation spectrum” is the atom, the building block of the entire universe. An atom is less than 150 millionth of an inch in diameter. If you took one drop of water and turned each atom into a grain of sand, there would be enough sand to build a highway 1 ft. thick from New York to Los Angeles. From HERCULES, which could hold over 640 trillion of our suns, to the ATOM, which is 150 millionth of an inch in diameter – JESUS CHRIST created it all!

**1 Corinthians 8:6 says**

**“...Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live.”**

**Colossians 1:16-17 says**

**“<sup>16</sup> ...All things were created through Him and for Him.**

**<sup>17</sup> And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”**

**Revelation 4:11 says**

**“You are worthy, O Lord, To receive glory and honor and power; For You created all things, And by Your will they exist and were created.”**

Hebrews says that all things (every atom) are held together by the word of His power.

**Hebrews 1:3**

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

Guys, we need a bigger vision of Jesus Christ. He is the force that holds all things together, from the greatest galaxy to the smallest atom. The more we see the greatness of Jesus Christ, the stronger we'll grow in Him. And the stronger we grow in Him, the more we'll see His greatness.

Now even though we've talked about the incredible greatness of creation, we haven't even mentioned the crowning glory of Jesus Christ as Creator.

#### **John 1:4**

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

The most marvelous mystery, the loudest voice of the Creator, is life itself. If there's one thing an atheist wants to steer clear of, it's the origin of life. To take God out of “life” is the single, hardest thing the unbelieving scientific community has to prove because every cell, every membrane, every complex molecule, every strand of DNA screams, “The hand that made us is God's own hand!” And here, in verse 4, John tells us where this greatest miracle of all creation came from.

#### **John 1:4**

**“In Him (Jesus Christ) was life, and the life was the light of men.”**

Remember back in verse 1, I said the Greek word *Logos* means *the expression or communication*? This phrase, at the end of verse 4, is a phrase of communication. The source of life Himself came to communicate life to man. “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” The *Logos* is God in communication.

#### **John 1:5a**

**“And the light shines in the darkness...”**

Stop right there. We've established that:

- Jesus Christ is God;
- He is the creator of all things;
- In Him is life itself; and
- Life is the light of men.

So when verse 5 says, “And the light shines in darkness,” that is God Himself communicating life to man. The Greek tense here is *the light continually shines in darkness*.

So we have God Himself bringing life to man as a light shines in the darkness. But as we reach this amazing crescendo of God bringing life to man, we hit the second half of verse 5:

#### **John 1:5b**

**“...and the darkness did not comprehend it.”**

The One who said, “Let there be light” – the One who created us – He brought life to us as light rushing into darkness, and He was rejected. It's difficult to understand how darkness can reject light. How can darkness say to the light, “you can't come in here?” It's just that perplexing to me when I see a person reject the Creator of life and the Lover of their soul, Jesus Christ. So great a love – so great a life – yet so often rejected.

In verses 6-8, the Apostle John takes a break to introduce John the Baptist.

### **John 1:6-8**

**“<sup>6</sup> There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.”**

**<sup>7</sup> This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe.**

**<sup>8</sup> He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.”**

We'll hear more about John the Baptist next week, but the context here is still God coming into the world as light shines into darkness. So we go right back into that context in verse 9...

### **John 1:9**

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

The true Light, Jesus Christ, gives light, or illuminates, every man. The communication of God, Jesus Christ, illuminates every person. But not every person believes and receives “the life that is the light of men” spoken of in verse 4. Unbelievably, we can choose to reject the very “Giver of life.”

### **Turn to Romans 1:20-22**

**“<sup>20</sup> For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,**

**<sup>21</sup> because, although they knew God (were illuminated by the Light), they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.**

**<sup>22</sup> Professing to be wise, they became fools.”**

In Philippians 2, starting in verse 7, it says that Jesus Christ made Himself of no reputation, and taking the form of a bond servant He came to earth in the likeness of man. And because that still wasn't enough, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of an agonizing and horrible death on the cross. And the only reason He did it is so He could bring eternal life to you and to me, and we'll never know until glory what an incredible sacrifice He made to be our “Giver of life.”

### **Turn back to John 1:10**

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

The One who created life came and illuminated life to the world, and the world was clueless. The Creator of the world walked the Galilean fields and the Jerusalem streets. The people beheld God incarnate, and then they rejected Him. “Professing to be wise, they became fools” - Romans 1:22. Truly, some things haven't changed much from 2000 years ago to today. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

### **John 1:11**

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

The phrase “His own” is probably speaking directly of the Jewish people. Jesus had been preparing his own people for centuries. The prophets foretold His coming. The sacrificial system screamed out the need for Him. The Promised Land victories proved His presence. His arrival

gave them reason to believe. YET they did not receive Him. Truly, some things haven't changed much from 2000 years ago to today. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

But all is not lost because, today, we can receive Him. In verse 12, John gives us his first super-concentrated, power-house verse that so clearly spells out God's plan of salvation. We'll see many of these in the Gospel of John, but this is the first one.

### **John 1:12**

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

Here we see the eternally powerful, yet so simple, plan of salvation. To those who believe in His name and receive Him, to them He gives the right to become children of God. This is the formula for the new birth in Christ. In chronological order, it's BELIEVE – RECEIVE – BECOME.

FIRST, we must believe in His name. Why His name? Because Acts 4:12 says “...there is no other name under heaven . . . by which we must be saved.” And it's indeed a great step to believe in His name, but it's not enough to believe that Jesus existed or even that He is a Savior.

SECOND, Jesus Christ must become MY Savior personally. We must receive Him. We must invite Him into our lives to forgive us of our sins and to become our Lord.

These 2 steps end “our part.” We believe in His name and we receive Him as Savior and Lord. But the THIRD step is “God's part.” A natural, physical birth is a genuine miracle, but if a husband and wife don't do their part, God can't do His part. And in the “spiritual birth,” your role is first also. Your part is to believe and receive. From there, God takes over and He causes you to become a child of God. It's new life from above – the new birth in Christ. John clarifies the way the new birth comes to us in verse 13:

### **John 1:13**

**“Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”**

**“Who were born, not of blood...”** This is not a birth by human descent. You are not born a Christian.

**“...nor of the will of the flesh...”** No amount of human desire can bring this new birth about.

**“...nor of the will of man...”** No amount of human design can bring this new birth about. You can't earn it. The spiritual birth comes NOT by human descent, NOT by human desire, and NOT by human design, BUT BY GOD!

Your part is to believe and receive. God's part is to create the “new birth” in you. He will pour His Holy Spirit into you, and He will make you a new creation.

### **2 Corinthians 5:17 says**

**“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”**

Have you believed and received Jesus Christ today? If not, then I pray that today is the day of salvation for you. The only thing that you hold on to by not receiving Christ is HELL, and that's a horribly bad trade-off for the abundant life in Jesus Christ.