

## **Jesus is God – Part 1**

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**John 1:1a-b**

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So when John sits down to write this book that we're going to read, he was writing something for every person who has ever lived or will ever live. And do you notice where he started his account of Jesus? It's very important. We just read it. He started before creation when all there was was God. Now it's hard to, for us to imagine a time when God was all there was, we can take our minds back, maybe through events in history. Maybe we can imagine the creation itself. We can read Genesis 1 and put ourselves there and kind of see it all take place in our minds. But before time began before stars and moons and water and fish and bugs and people and oceans and planets, that's not easy for us to kind of picture. However, the setting for the history of Jesus of Nazareth, John just said is more than geographical.

And it's more than temporal. The true story of Jesus life is eternal before seeing Jesus as a son or brother or a friend, or even as the Messiah, John is saying to know him correctly, to know the real Jesus, we must start in eternity past. Imagine John writing those words. Okay, the man that he walked with, talked to, learned from even lived the better part of three years with never had a beginning. And that's because verse 1, "Jesus is the word." How do I know that's Jesus in verse 1? Verse 14 says, "the word became flesh." And then in verse 17, the word is named Jesus Christ. Now by calling Jesus, the word, John is doing something that's incredibly brilliant. See whether a person was Jewish or not Jewish. Everyone in that day had a concept of the word. So if you went to synagogue your whole life, you would've learned from the Old Testament that that the word of God is God revealing himself.

It's God saying, "Here's who I am and here's what I want." One important Jewish author around the same time as Jesus actually taught that the concept of the word is the bridge between God and the world. Now for non-Christians, if you were going to school, you would've heard that the word was the unifying principle of all things. It's the thing that holds all things together. Or you would've learned that the word was reason or logic or you would've learned in school that the word is, is what brings order to creation. So this term word or logos in Greek, is a term most people were familiar with whether you're Jewish or not. And that's why it's brilliant. Because John takes this term that everybody knows and redefines it to show that this this word that that people been talking about for centuries at the time, this word in fact is Jesus who He's going to write about in this gospel.

So for the Greek and Roman world who didn't have an Old Testament, didn't grow up in uh in Sabbath school, didn't go to synagogue, who had no concept of a Messiah. This is a brilliant way to preach Christ so that they would understand, taking one of their concepts and going, no, 'Let me tell you, let me give you the truth about what you've heard about your whole life.' So by beginning his work with the word, the rest of the gospel now is going to clarify what John means refers to Jesus as the word. Now, as we go through the book, we're going to see that John is saturated in the Old Testament. He knows his Old Testament incredibly well. So what does the Old Testament say about the word? Again, the word in the Old Testament is how God reveals himself. It's how he tells us who he is and what he wants.

And it's how God gets done what he wants. I mean, think about creation. Was God running around with a hammer you know making a bunch of stuff? No. All things came into being, how? He spoke his word. And it all came into being. In the Old Testament, the word's not only tied to creation and it's not only tied to God revealing himself, saying who he is and what he wants. But God's word is also tied to salvation. God rescues those who trust in him and punishes those who don't based on their response to what? On their response to his word. And I notice verse 18. It says, "the only God" that is Jesus, verse 18, "the only God who is at the Father's side, he has made him known." He has revealed him. He has made it clear this is who God is. Why?

Well because that's what words do, right? Just like your words reveal who you are, your words reveal what you're thinking, what's on the inside. What is it that you want? What is it that you want to accomplish? Your words reveal who you are. So God's word, Jesus reveals who God is. But there's more, since the word is Jesus, whatever John says about the word applies to Jesus. So let's see what John has to say. Look at verse 1, "In the beginning was the word", those words in the beginning, do those sound unfamiliar? A lot like Genesis 1:1 first verse of the Bible, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." But instead of saying "in the beginning, God", he says, "In the beginning was the word." John's allusion to Genesis 1 and the creation account gives us a time. But I want you to notice that word "was", that word "was" in your Bible is critical.

John is saying, "in the beginning, the word" already "was", he continually was, he already existed. The very moment the beginning began, he was already there. That little word "was", takes us back beyond creation to the past before there was a past, to the unending present before time. In that place, in that dimension, that that timeless time when God was all there was, in that place, the word already was. And it seems the way the sentence was structured, the word *was* is being emphasized. If you're a Bible underliner, you would underline the word "was" because John is screaming. If John had bold and and and uh and caps, he would put "WAS" in bold caps, our focus should fall there. It's like He's saying, "In the beginning WAS the word. That's what he wants you to see. This is what John wants you to know most, the word is before all time and space, he existed before he was born, before he was conceived, he was before all things.

So John is saying that when you, when you talk about Jesus correctly, it's only right to start, not with his conception, not with his birth and not with his ministry. It's not even right to start with creation itself. If you're going to talk about Jesus rightly, he was already in creation because point 1) ***Jesus is eternal. Jesus is eternal.*** Jesus existed before creation, before the heavens in the earth, he already was. He existed before every creative thing. He had no beginning. He is eternal. And by the way, Jesus knew this about himself. You can keep your little ribbon here in chapter 1 and go to John 17. I want you to see this in Jesus' own words, John 17, He's praying to his Father. It's a couple hours before He's arrested. And He's He's put on trial for his life, eventually convicted and crucified.

And before that happens, He's praying to the Father. In John chapter 17, drop down to verse 5. Jesus says, "Father glorify me in your presence with the glory that I had with you." When "Before the world existed." He existed with God's glory before the world existed. Jesus shared God's glory with the Father before the beginning began. And God loved Jesus before creation as well. Which again, means Jesus is eternal. If God loves Jesus before creation, it means that Jesus existed before creation. Therefore He's eternal. How do I know all this? Drop down to verse 24, John 17, verse 24. Jesus is still praying, end of the verse. Notice what he says, "You loved me"

when? "Before the foundation of the world." This is why Isaiah 9:6 describes the promised Messiah, which is Jesus, which is why it describes him as everlasting.

On Christmas Eve we saw that word means to continue forever, to have no beginning, to have no end. In short, Jesus is eternal. Micah 5:2 says this about the Messiah as well. The Messiah is Jesus. The baby born in Bethlehem would be quote, "from of Old, from ancient days." That phrase probably means that that that this baby was active during Israel's history. But, but that would suggest that the Messiah actually has the attribute of being eternal. He existed before he was born. Colossians 1:17. Paul puts it this way when he says, Jesus was quote, "before all things." So put every single thing on one side, everything, all of it on one side, Jesus existed before all of it. Now go back to John 1. Notice how John puts this in verse 3, he says, without Jesus, verse 3, John 1:3, without Jesus quote, "was not anything made that was made."

So everything in the category of made things, it says there, was made by Jesus, which means that he existed before all of those made things or he could not have made them. He existed before every created thing because again, he is eternal. This is seen in the title for Jesus, that is the Alpha and the Omega. He is the beginning and the end, the first and the last, which I think is just another way of saying I am. I've always existed. I exist now and forever, before all time, into the endless ages of eternity, which means, what, what does that mean? Like bring that down. If, if that's true, what's the opposite of that? If that's true, that means there was never a time when Jesus didn't exist. He didn't come into existence one second after not existing, if He existed before the creation of all things, then He's not the highest and first created being.

He's not even in the category of created things. He didn't come into being at all. He's always been. No matter how far you go back, no matter how far back history goes, time goes. When time stops because it's created, when time stops and existence keeps going, Jesus is there. He was not created like the Jehovah's Witnesses say he was, he was not born in the preexistence like Mormons say he was, He is eternal. This has been the consistent teaching of Christians since the beginning. Like we're seeing it in the book of John here. As one scholar put it 1700 years ago. So 1700 years ago, there were Christians. And 1700 years ago, they were saying the same thing. This scholar put it this way, "there was never a time when Jesus was not, there was never a time when Jesus was not."

Why? Because in the beginning was the word. Now, not only does Jesus start, I'm sorry, does John start his gospel by saying, "Jesus is eternal." But look at what it says next, "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God." This is brilliant statement. So "in the beginning", before the beginning began, "the word was", and before the beginning began, "the word was with God." That word "with", might seem like it's talking about location. Like maybe right now you're with a family member. You're here in the same place. But this word "with" means something more than that. Back in the day. When when a couple was dating, they would say something like, I'm I'm with so-and-so and that's, that's kind of the impact of this word here. The word speaks of relationship, being in the presence of, interrelated, face to face intimacy.

So for all of eternity, look at the text, for all of eternity, the word was in the presence of face to face, as close as possible, united with God, eternally interconnected at a level of intimacy we can't possibly imagine, deep everlasting fellowship, friendship, love, unity, equality, between the word and God. Now, by saying that, by going like this, notice what that is there. I have to do that with two hands because you can't be with yourself. The word and God while being united together with, interrelated or also the word is separate from God. Notice He's not in God but

He's with God and you can't be with yourself. If you're with yourself that 72 hour hold thing, like might, might, might be needed.

Another way to put it is this, to be with someone is to be a separate person from the person that you're with. Right? Okay. So while being eternally in the presence of God, the word, which is Jesus, has been an eternally separate person from God. He's distinguishable from God. There's the word and there's God but He's not now and has never been distinct from God. Something I tried to summarize in point # 2) ***Jesus is equal with God. Jesus is equal with God.*** He is and always has been in an equal place, face to face with God, an intimate unity on every possible level. And yet at the same time, He's an equal person, not a separate being with a separate existence, though a separate person from God. Remember I told you, stretchy, stretchy time, stretchy.

John 5:18, the Jews wanted to kill Jesus. And it says they wanted to do that because quote, "he was making himself equal with God", John 5:18 and John 10:30, Jesus says that quote, "I and the Father are one." So think about that for a second. "I and the Father", separate persons but on an equal level because we "are one." "I and the Father are one", face to face, united, as close as divinely possible. I want you to see this equality in another passage, so turn to Philippians chapter 2, Philippians chapter 2, page 1084 in your Bible if we, if you have the one that we give away. Philippians chapter 2 as you're turning there. Paul is encouraging Christians, Christians, there are uh, there in the city of Philippi, hence the name Philippians. He's encouraging them to be humble, to be considerate, to think of other, other Christians as more important than them. And to encourage that humility, he says to these Christians, he says, I want you to remember something. I want you to remember the gospel verse 6. And I want you to remember verse 6, that even though Jesus "was in the form of God", meaning he has the same nature as God, even though God is who Jesus is. Jesus noticed, "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped." That doesn't mean that Jesus is, is reaching for something he doesn't have. It means that He's equal with God but He's, He's not holding on to all the blessings and benefits of being God in heaven. He's not holding on to that so tightly and tenaciously but in fact, verse 7, notice here's the humility. Instead, Jesus "emptied himself by taking on the form of a servant." In heaven He's not a servant. Right?

In heaven Jesus is what? He's Lord, He's God, all the angels of creation worship him. But he comes here and he gets none of that. He takes on the form of a servant. Jesus doesn't relinquish his deity but he added humanity, notice, "being born in the likeness of men." So here's the point for us. It's not humility to take on the form of a servant and be found in the likeness of men, unless you're already what? It's only humility to become human and to become a servant, if you are already equal to and have the same nature as God. And I think equality of relationship and equality of person is what John was getting at when he writes quote, "the word was with God." As you think about this idea, that word "with", I want you to realize that means there's not now and there's never been any opposition between Jesus and God the Father, God the Holy Spirit for that matter. There has always only ever been perfect friendship, perfect relationship.

There's never been the slightest ounce of disconnection. There's never been a fraction of a millimeter of disconnection between Jesus and the Father and the Spirit. He's equal to God, relationally, forever interconnected and equally a person, He's a separate person from God because he is face to face with him. Jesus is who he is. The Father is who he is. They're not identical but they are one united face to face. "The word was with God." Here, this is so brilliant. You think about this. With that first phrase, "In the beginning was the word", he decimates every

teaching that Jesus was a created being, okay? You can find entire books on that subject. And yet John decimate it with six words in English, five words in Greek, decimates it. He is not created. He is eternal. A non-eternal Jesus, a created Jesus, a Jesus that had a beginning is a false Jesus and should be rejected based on just the first words of John 1:1.

Then in the next phrase, which we just looked at, John contradicts the idea that Jesus is the Father or that the Father became Jesus when this was born. The people who believe this today are called Oneness Pentecostals. They typically are found in churches that are called Apostolic churches. They believe that there's one being in one person who wears three different masks. Just like if you are a, just think about it, you are a child and maybe a husband and a Father. You've got one person, three different roles that you play. And they say, well, that's just like God. He puts on the Father mask and he creates everything. He he does, he you know works through in, in the nation of Israel and then when Jesus is born, he takes the Father mask on, puts the Jesus mask on and then he lives 30 years until he is ascended, when he takes off the Jesus mask, puts on the Holy Spirit mask, which He's been wearing for 2000 years now and He's going to do his thing and that's it. Well, that does not describe the one True God, that is a false God. Why? Because Jesus was, what does the text say, "With God." He's with the spirit. He is not now and nor has he ever been the Father. Think about it, when Jesus prayed, he wasn't praying to himself, was human nature talking to his divine nature? Some crazy thing like that. And at his baptism, right voice from heaven, "this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased", Jesus, wasn't going, this is my beloved son Whom I'm... That's not, not what Jesus was doing. Right? Throwing his voice. Jesus and the Father are separate persons and yet there is one God, that is what this second phrase in John 1:1 is saying, to be with God is to be distinguishable from God and at the same time eternally in his presence. Well from just those two phrases, these first two in John 1:1, all of that can only mean one thing, at the very top of your notes, Jesus is God. That's what it means. Jesus is God, who is Jesus really? What is it that John doesn't bury in some obscure chapter in 21 out of 21 but what does he put front load at the very beginning? Jesus is God. If the logos already existed, if the word already existed, when creation was created, He's, He's not only not part of creation but he must be eternal. The only eternal being is God.

So 1:1, the eternal deity of Jesus is established. He is God and always has been. And He's eternally with God. He's not identical to God. He's distinguishable from God. And yet with God in the closest possible connection with God. Equal in relationship, face to face, eye to eye, equally persons and yet separate but never separated but "with", intimately interconnected eternally. And I know it's hard to understand how there can be one God and three persons but listen, it's verses like this, it's words like this, "with", that force us to say, it may be hard to understand but this is what the Bible teaches. I was talking to a young man last night, probably about 10 years Old, had questions about this. And, and what seemed to make sense to him, is what I'm trying to answer his questions and it's hard to understand. It's hard to understand because we are one being in one person.

That's why it's hard to understand. All beings are are individual, all individual beings are individual persons. So He's trying to wrap his mind around that. And and as I'm doing that, I finally said, "I know this is hard to understand but if God was easy to understand, he probably wouldn't be God." And it was that statement that you could just see the penny drop and He's like, "Yep, that's it." If someone is eternal and equal in relationship and equally a person with God that can only mean one thing. That someone is God and that someone is Jesus. This is what John wants us to know about him from the very beginning and the rest of this book will only make

sense as you grasp that profound truth, Jesus is God. So now point #3, let's ask a question. You ready? **3) So what? So what?** That's great. Jesus is eternal. Jesus is equal with God. Why does that matter beyond getting Jesus right? Which is kind of important but what are the implications of this? What can we take away from the fact that Jesus is eternal, He's equal with God, intimately united and yet a separate person, so what? And the first thing we'd take away from is this, that we must admit no Jesus, no God. Must admit no Jesus, no God. In other words, we don't walk away from the one true God. When we believe in Jesus, in fact, it's the exact opposite. Why? Because he was with God before all things and always has been. The truth is there's no relationship with God. There's no interaction with the only God that there is unless a person believes in Jesus.

So to reject Jesus is to be without God. Why? Because Jesus is eternally what? With God, that's why Jesus said John 14:6, "no one comes to the Father except through me." Why? Because he knows the Father better than anyone else. He's only been with him forever. No one has ever had a closer relationship with God than Jesus has. So to be with Jesus is automatically to be verse 1, "with God."

As we saw, He's been with God, loved by God. Only, ever since the beginning of the beginning, before the beginning of the beginning. That's why 1 John 2:23 says this, "no one who denies the son has the Father." Well, I love God. God's wonderful and get that Jesus stuff out of here. I just want God. You can't have God without Jesus. Why? Because Jesus is what? "With God" and John continues, He's says, "But whoever confesses the son has the Father also." Translation, it's a package deal. No Jesus, no God. You got Jesus, you get the Father with him. And again, why? Again, verse 1 because Jesus has been with God for all eternity. Second, so what for us to think through is this. If this is true, let's resist being ashamed. Let's resist being ashamed. Notice how John wrote, notice how he wrote this first verse. There's not even a hint of fear or qualification. He doesn't seek to prove anything that he says in verse 1. He just announces it. He says the highest possible things that you can say about a person, about a man that he spent three years walking next to and he doesn't stutter. His language is confident and clear. There's no doubt, there's no speculation, there's no conjecture. He's not sharing his feelings. He's not, "Hey, here is my perspective." He is proclaiming, this is reality. And if you take these words to heart, you'll do the same. Why? Because if Jesus is eternal and equal with God, what do you have to be afraid of? Let's not be a bunch of Peters, scared of people finding out where Christians, if you have Jesus but lose everything, respect and get canceled and face ridicule and rejection, like truly, at the end of the day, so what. Listen, Jesus, isn't the loser participation trophy after all the winners get theirs. "Well, you know, at least I have Jesus."

No, He's not the consolation prize. If everything in verse 1 is accurate, then what you have in Jesus, listen, is the true story of reality. It is the way the world is. It is the lens that all things should be seen through. It is fact. Which means all that disagrees is fiction. Which means the favor of the world will be the most putrid garbage compared to the favor of Christ when every knee bows and every tongue confesses that Jesus is Lord.

In that moment, you're not going to be there going, "Yeah. I mean you're Lord but you know what I went through down there. Yeah. It was hard to be one of your followers." You'll be like, "Yes, like this is what my soul has been longing for. Vindication, everybody now sees what I've known by God's grace is that Jesus is Lord." And by the way of Jesus is Lord. It also means that He's God. And the third, so what of these first two phrases is this, realize Jesus is God. Realize

Jesus is God. Realize Jesus is God. You might be thinking, "well, you know Jon, you've been saying that for a little while now."

And I know I have but here's why, later today I want you to go to the website, **thestateoftheology.com, thestateoftheology.com**. Back in August, the results of a large national survey came out and on the survey, 35 questions. One of the statements that you're supposed to agree or disagree with. Here's, one of the statements on the survey was this, "Jesus was a great teacher but he was not God." Now, when that statement was made to America in general, 51% of people agreed with that. He's a good teacher but he is not God. Thankfully 37% disagreed, which is surprising. It's about 120 million people. So that's good.

But when that same statement was made to evangelicals, evangelicals are people who believe the Bible is their highest authority that Jesus death removes the penalty of sin and only people who trust in Christ go to heaven. So when that statement is made to evangelicals, "Jesus was a great teacher but he was not God", 66% disagreed, only 66% disagreed with that statement. But listen, 30% of evangelicals agreed. "Jesus is a good teacher but He's not God." 30% of people that go to churches in basic agreement with, are what we teach statement here, agree. "Jesus was a great teacher but he was not God." And then when a second statement was made, here's the second statement. "Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God." When that statement was made to evangelicals, 28% disagreed.

28% disagreed, 65% agreed, "Jesus is the first and greatest being created by God." Two out of every three, "Jesus is the first and greatest being God created." So if some of you're wondering, did we really only go through two thirds of one verse today? Why in the world would you do that, Jon? Because it might be that one of those 30% that deny the deity of Jesus or one of the 66% that think Jesus was a created being, you might be here right now and you need to realize, embrace, understand, Jesus is God. And it's not like some theology exam. Like you're going to get to heaven. God's going to be like, "Okay, no, hold on, stay out of that gate. No back up, take out your Scantron, Number two pencil. Right? True or false, Jesus is God." No, Jesus put it this way. John 8:24, "unless you believe I am, you will die in your sins." "Unless you believe I am", quoting the voice of the burning bush, God's name Yahweh, "Unless you believe" that I'm the God of the universe, "you will die in your sins." So yes, in a person is saved, their life changes. They go from living for self to living for Christ and go through that struggle of repenting from sin and trusting in Jesus. Yes, it starts their salvation. It continues in their salvation. But when a person is saved, their mind changes too. What you think about God changes from whatever you thought to Jesus is the Christ. He is the Lord And he is God.

And practically speaking, people come to that realization, through you and me teaching them. So I want you to embrace this truth if you don't. But if you embrace this truth, I want you to be able to use your Bible with anyone who disagrees, like 51% of Americans. Anyone who's not sure, anyone who comes to your door and says, "Hi, I'm from the local Kingdom Hall. And you go to church, right?" "Oh yeah." Well, tell me about your church." "Oh, believe Jesus is God. Well, no, let me tell you that He's not God." And you go, "Oh really? Why don't you take out your Bible? I'm going to tell you, no, that he actually is God." I want you to be able to do that.

So this really hasn't been sit back relax, critique the sermon time. This is equipping time, where we teach you stuff that you can then take to others and teach them. And like I said, you only have 51% of Americans as your mission field on that one. Graciously give them the true truth, not your own personal truth but the true truth, the really real, the real before anything else was real,

That Jesus is God. We're not going to be able to say that enough. We can't say that enough. We're going to say it dozens more times through the book of John because Jesus is going to say it dozens and more times in John. That while being truly human, just as human as you and me yet without sin, Jesus is also truly and eternally and equally God. As the team comes back up here, let's pray.

Jesus, we're going to sing again about how great you are. And it is right for us to do that because you are God, there is no higher being, there is no greater, there is none more majestic, there is none more lofty and exalted. My words failed to describe the heights that you actually exist in. And then to think that from those heights, you left heaven came here to become a human, to die for human sin. It is too wonderful for us to truly comprehend. So even though we can't comprehend it, we worship you for it. And my prayer is for each of us here, if we don't know this truth or we don't embrace this truth, that the power of your word will make it clear that you are God. And for those here who believe that, who believe that with all their hearts, give us the opportunity to share this truth with someone else this week, Do this, please. I pray for the glory of your name. Amen.