

Jesus as John Introduced Him

Understanding Jesus by Understanding the Word In Relation to Creation, Life and Light

Introduction

We have been leaning in and trying to understand what John has written about the Word so that we will better understand Jesus who he is introducing. We have gleaned so far that the Word is eternal (not-created), personal (not an impersonal force) and divine (the Word was God).

Let's learn a little bit more about the Word in John 1:3-5.

1	In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.	Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.
2	He was in the beginning with God.	οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.
3	All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.	πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν
4	In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.	ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων·
5	The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.	καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

I. "All Things Came Into Being Through The Word

A. Verse 3 Text

1. a

- a) NASB: **All things came into being through Him,**
- b) NIV: Through him all things were made;
- c) ESV: All things were made through him,
- d) NA28: πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, (A.M.I. 3rd. Sing. of γίνομαι)

2. b

- a) NASB: **and** **apart from Him**
nothing came into being
that has come into being.
- b) NIV: without him
nothing was made
that has been made.
- c) ESV: and without him
was not any thing made
that was made.
- d) NA28: καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ
ἐγένετο (see above)
οὐδὲ ἓν. (lit. not one/single thing)
ὃ γένονεν (Perf. A. I. 3rd Sing of γίνομαι)

B. Noteworthy

- 1. The "Him" (2x) of v. 3 refers to "the Word" of vv. 1-2
 - a) The Word of vv. 1-2 is eternal, personal, and divine.

b) **The shift to John's use of a personal masculine pronouns adds support to the personal nature of the Word already evident in vv. 1-2.** "The Word" is no impersonal force, but a personal being who has always been in a face-to-face (person to person) relationship with God. John uses "Him" to refer to "the Word" and with John we should regard "the Word" as a person, not a thing.

2. The Action of v. 3 is Creating

a) **"came into being" -- "To Be" (of verses 1 and 2) → "To Become"**

(1) The shift from "to be" in vv. 1-2 describing the Word (In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This one was in the beginning with God.), to "to become" in v.3 (All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.) indicates John is here talking about not what was in regards to the Word, but about what happened in regards to the Word. And what did happen? **Creation happened** -- Things **came into being** that did not previously exist. Things were "**made**" (as the NIV translates the verb in this verse).

3. The Subject of v. 3 is Creation = "All things came into being..."

(1) But Remember the Context (Fun with a Chiasm)

Created Things are the Subject of v. 3

But "**the Word**" is still the subject of the passage

And Jesus is the still the subject of the Gospel

John is introducing Jesus

By writing about "**the Word**"

In Regards to **Creation**

If we are to understand Jesus as John introduced Him we must understand that all things **came into being** through the Word who John is associating with Jesus.

4. The Scope of the Subject is Universal/All Inclusive

a) **"All things" itself is as broad and unbounded as it gets.** It translates πάντα (neuter, plural, nominative) of the noun πᾶς and is typically rendered as it is here "all." With John's clear allusion to the Gen 1:1 creation account in own his use of "In the beginning was the Word" in John 1:1 John's readers are oriented to the cosmic universal nature of John's thinking. John was not talking about some subset of all things, like "all of us in this room" (a subset of humanity), he was talking about all things in the context of the creation account where God created all that is when the nothing that existed with God was described by such words as "formless," "void," and "darkness." Into this absence of things God creates all things. Reread Genesis 1 and 2 and you will capture the universal scope of the "all things" John had in mind as he wrote the passage before us.

b) **The Combination of Both Positive & Negative Assertions Makes the Universal Scope of John's "all things" Even More Explicit**

(1) **Positive:** 3a: All things came into being through Him,

(a) Note plural "things"

(2) **Negative:** 3b: apart from Him nothing came into being...

(a) Note singular "nothing" (Lit. = "**not one/single thing**")

c) **All things (not one single thing excluded) came into being (were created) through Him (the person of the Word).**

d) **The only thing excluded from the universal scope of creation is the Creator Himself through whom creation was created.**

(1) **It becomes a helpful twofold categorization scheme when talking about all things from a theological perspective: Creator; Creation.**

(a) **Creator (God)**

(i) **God the Father**

(ii) **God the Son (The Word, Jesus)**

(iii) **God the Holy Spirit**

(b) **Creation (Non-God)**

(i) **Everything else in the natural world including mankind**

John 1:3 establishes that “all things” (all that is non-God) came into being through some creative activity. Who acted in creation? John 1:3 says, “All things came into being through Him”, i.e., through “the Word” who v. 2c declares to be God -- of the same essence and nature as God. Expanding this a bit more, let’s look at...

5. The Role of the Word in the Creation of All Things

a) **He (the Word) was the agent of creation.**

(1) **δι’ αὐτοῦ** -- preposition *dia* with the genitive of the personal pronoun indicating means/agency.

b) **Logical Relationship between The Word and Creation**

**All things came into being -----□E*
through Him -----□M or C**

c) **Remembering that “the Word was God”, the Word (later incarnate in our Lord Jesus) was the agent of the creation of all things.**

C. Reflection Worthy

So what does it matter that we know Jesus to be the eternal, personal God through whom all things came into being bar none?

[This is our Lord Jesus. He is not less. He is all that the Scriptures reveal Him to be. The Scriptures reveal Him to be the incarnation of the eternal, personal, creator-God. Knowing Jesus for who He is affects how we live. If we believe Jesus to be less than He is we will live our lives less than what they should be. Knowing Jesus more completely leads out living our lives in a manner that is more worthy. If we know Jesus to be some of what He is, we will bring some honor to His name. If we know Jesus as God has revealed Him to be we will walk in a manner worthy of Him.]

1. Paul

a) **Paul valued knowing Jesus -- Philippians 2:8a -- “I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord”**

b) **Paul saw a connection between knowing more completely and walking in a manner worthy of our Lord.**

(1) **Col 1:9ff -- 9 For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that **you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, 10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;**11**

strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.

c) What did Paul Want the Colossians to know? He speaks of the “knowledge of His will” but the follow context has him speaking of our Lord Jesus Christ

(1) **Col 1:15ff -- 15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. **16 For by Him 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 through Him and for Him.** 17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. 18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. 19 For it was the *Father’s* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, 20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

2. The Writer of Hebrews

- a) See also Heb 1 esp. v.2 where he speaks of Jesus saying “...through whom also He made the world.”
- b) This leads him to say more concerning Jesus that seems to be more than just factual reporting it has the ring of worship.

(1) Heb 1:3ff -- **3** And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, **4** having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.

It is my conviction that when we more fully know Jesus as He is we are led into a more worthy life, we are lead into a life of worship. Life is what John now turns to in verse 4.

II. “Life” Was Inherent in the Word

A. Text

4	In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.	ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.
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B. Hinderance to our understanding of this verse is our familiarity with “life” -- life of a different kind.

We hear these simple words, “In Him was life” and their simplicity sends off no signals that we need to pause and think. I know what “in” means, I know what “Him” means. I know what “was” means. I know what “life” means. That is a whole lot of knowing. Let’s move on. But if you take a random sample of humanity and ask them what this simple clause means you are going to get quite the variety pack of answers. Let’s try it here. How do you understand this simple sentence? [Gather answers]. But what is more important to the student of the Bible who is also a disciple of Jesus is NOT what he or she thinks a Bible passage means but what the writer and his first readers understood him to mean. We seek not to be right, but to understand what the Spirit inspired author meant, knowing very well that in some things we are wrong. We seek to grow in our understanding of God, NOT prove that we understand Him already. Paul prayed incessantly/continually for the people of Colossae that they would be filled with the knowledge of God’s will (Col 1:9, above). They were Christians, they already knew, yet he prayed that they would be filled... We must approach the Scripture seeking to be filled with the knowledge we now lack.

1. We have a hard time thinking of life outside of the “life” that is most familiar to us. We think a person has life at conception, or others would place it at birth. We think of life as biological life. I was born in 1956. I lived in Hawaii, before I lived in Colorado, before I lived on the east coast, before I lived here in Monterey. My “life” is full of my family and where I have lived and what I have done.

C. What John Means by “In Him was LIFE”

1. But John means something different when he speaks of “life”. He uses the word exclusively for what we mean when we say eternal life, true life, spiritual life. He uses life to describe that which biologically living people do NOT have in their estrangement from God. Paul similarly understands that people can be alive in one sense and dead in another at the same time. In Eph 2:1ff he says,
 - a) And **you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2** in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience.³ Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest. **4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ** (by grace you have been saved), **6** and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus,
2. Here: In Him (the Word) was life. In the eternal, personal, divine Word through whom everything other than God was created... In Him was life -- life by John’s definition. Not biological life. Not the life we can lead apart from God. Not the day to day life of getting up and going to work doing laundry and dishes making the rent payment... Not that life. But the life that is inherent to the very nature and being of the living God.
3. In the Genesis Creation Account God breathed life into Adam in a unique manner from all the rest of creation which was created and alive with a different life.
 - a) Gen 2:7 NASB -- Then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of **life**; and man became a **living** being.
 - b) Gen 2:7 LXX -- καὶ ἐπλασεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον χοῦν ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς καὶ ἐνεφύσησεν εἰς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ πνοὴν **ζωῆς**, καὶ ἐγένετο ὁ ἄνθρωπος εἰς ψυχὴν **ζῶσαν**.
4. When mankind fell they “died” a different “death” than biological death (2:17); it was the death of living under the curse, living in estrangement from God, living but not partaking of the tree of life, living but not living in communion with God in the garden sanctuary of His provision. They were living but dead in their “trespasses and sins” (Eph 2:1). The Bible speaks of what we call ‘life’ as death.
5. They were dead spiritually, without life that is truly life. They were without life which is bound up in God alone. And if mankind was to have life again it was to come to him only from the living God. And I think we will see if we pay close attention that the true life that we can have, the life that John says here was in the Word, really only comes to us not as our independent possession but as we share in the life of Christ Jesus. But I am getting ahead of myself.
6. That life was “in Him” the eternal uncreated Word who is distinct from the rest of creation, even biologically living creation, indicates that “life” is intimately bound up in the Word and implies that it is not so inherent in the rest of creation even created mankind. John’s word order places the emphasis on the Word, “**In Him** was the life.” The source of life, true/ultimate/spiritual/eternal life is the Word.

7. Pastor Kit Culver sees the life John is referring to here as a principle inherent to the living God, not life that is inherent to living plants and animals. He sees John's words in verse 4 here as "an elaboration on the idea that the Word was God" from verse 3. Life is divine life. Life which is inherent to the living God who calls Himself and wants us to know Him as "I am" (Ex 3:14). Principle of existence as it exists in God Himself. Not the life possessed by other plants and animals. "Only human beings can possess this life that inheres in God." And "only as God makes them to share in His life. "Life as it comes to humanity involves "participation (sharing in God's own life) not impartation." This thought is made clear in OT and in Paul.
- a) John 14:6 -- Jesus *said to him, "**I am the way, and the truth, and the life**; no one comes to the Father but through Me.
 - b) He does not say I have the ...life and I can give it to you, but I am the life. If we share in His life, we participate in it (as opposed to receiving it by impartation)
 - c) He does not say no one comes to the Father but through the way, the truth or the life that I give you, but that we all must come to the Father "through Me." Our reconciliation to God is through Jesus Himself not a life He imparts apart from Himself.
 - d) I think this right here can be a point of growth for many of us. Not all agree with pastor Kit on this point. John MacArthur describes life coming to man by impartation saying about eternal life: "It is imparted by God's sovereign grace... to all who believe savingly in Jesus Christ... It was to impart spiritual life to sinners who "were dead..." that Jesus came into the world..." (p. 22). Contra Culver: Quoting pastor Kit again, "Life as it comes to humanity involves "participation not impartation." Listen to Kit's 005 at and around minute 30. The distinction being drawn by Pastor Kit seem to have to do with the way we receive life. Impartation allows one to think of receiving something from God that is independent from God. Like a football thrown to a receiver by a quarterback. The receiver receives the ball and runs down the field separate from the QB. Participation on the other hand does not allow for this same degree of autonomy. You participate in something that exists outside yourself. We have life, Kit would say, by way of our participation with God who is life. He doesn't give it to us and we run with it. We share in the life that is inherent to God. We will come back at this as we look at the rest of the passage and more thoroughly still as we encounter more verses that deal with life and that coming to man. Suffice our discussion at this point to raise the question, "How does the life John says is "In Him" come to us? In just a few verses we will come to John 1:12. Listen to that verse and ask how it indicates life coming to mankind. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name." Hold that question in tension if you will and be alert to further insight was we move further through our study of the Gospel of John.
- (1) Kit offers a much need refinement on the Christian understanding of "eternal life." Eternal life amongst Christians is widely but erroneously understood to mean life as we conceive it that goes on forever. When eternal life as John uses it refers "not to time frame, but to kind." Eternal life refers to the life that is inherent to God. Life

that has come to us in the incarnate Word in the person of Jesus the Christ. A life that we can share in by way of participation with Jesus in the New Creation Kingdom of God that He has inaugurated.

I trust this stretches you in the best of ways and causes you to learn and grow in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. In the Word was life. The ultimate experience of life according God is found only in God Himself. Do you want life? Look to the Word. Look to Jesus. Look not to what the creation or the work of man can offer. Look to God who alone possesses life. John speaks in the remainder of verse 4 about the life as it comes to us.

III. That Life Inherent in the Word Was the “Light of Men”

A. Text

4 In Him was life, ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν,
and the life was the Light of men. καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

B. **This clause provoked more questions for me right off the bat.** In what sense was the life the Light of men? What do you mean by Light, John? Are we talking about light like turn on the light light or like spiritual illumination light. What’s up with the capital L Light? Is John using Light as a title for Jesus?

C. Certainly John uses Light (as he does “the Word” and “life”) in a way that is different than how we might use light in our own day-to-day life and perhaps differently than we use light even in our spiritual discussions.

1. **A quick survey of John’s use of “light” in the book of John shows that** except when he was talking about the light associated with John the Baptist (5:35) or the light of daylight (John 11:9-10), **Light always refers to Deity and most commonly Jesus Christ.** The NASB except as noted above always capitalizes the L in Light. I have been trying to figure out if they do that because they feel Light is a title, or if they are following a rule similar to their convention of capitalizing the personal pronouns associated with deity. Certainly the effect on me as a reader is to know that the Light being referred to is the divine Light inherent to God and made most manifest in the person of Jesus Christ.

2. **The construction of our verse, “the life was the Light of men” clearly equates light and life as John uses them.** This construction allows us to say us to say that not only is it true that “the life was the Light of men” but it is also true that the Light of men is the life that is inherent in the Word. A=B and B=A. This is Wallace’s “Convertible Proposition” classification of the Predicate Nominative which this clause employs. Life and Light go together so closely that John says in this verse they are one in the same.

D. Pastor Kit Culver went where I would not have gone and I refer you to his excellent sermon and notes, the 5th sermon in his study through the Gospel of John. There he explains the Light as John uses the word by referring us to Light as a concept in salvation history. The Light that God first spoke into existence that pierced the darkness of pre-creation reality. “Let there be light” God said “and there was light” (Gen 1:3). Light brought order out of darkness and chaos. It illumined creation both physically and spiritually in that it manifested the presence of God in creation especially with His image bearers. Light is associated with God, His purposes and works. Light stands antithetical to darkness which belongs either to the realm of pre-creation or fallen creation. I remember with you the light of the Shekinah glory of God that filled the tabernacle and then the temple; it was the presence of God with His people. Pastor Kit reminds us that Israel was to be light to the world that Zion was to be a city set on a hill so that the nations would come to the light of God and God themselves. But Israel failed to be that light of the world. From the midst of Israel’s failure God’s prophets spoke of the light that

would come. And in the fulness of time God brought His Son who is the Light of the World. Indeed in John 8:12 we will read, “¹² Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, “**I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.**”” Light and darkness are not to be understood starting from our own creative thinking, but from the way the Scriptures have used them in the scope of salvation history.

E. Kit sees the life inherent to the Logos has a specific goal. Not the impartation of animate existence in what was created through Him. **“Not animation but illumination.”** The function of the Word who has life in Himself was illumination of men to the truth of God and the truth of man for the greater goal of communion.

1. This too is a significant point of growth for me and I hope for us as we dialogue this week and in the weeks ahead.
2. Light is that which displaces darkness. And when light and darkness refer respectively to the purposes of God and the forces that resist them we see the Light of God functioning to displace the darkness of non-God or counter-God. In creation light displaced the darkness of non-God. In the fallen world Light displaced the darkness of counter-God.
3. The natural light helps us to understand the divine Light. As morning displaces the darkness of night, so the coming of the divine Light displaces all that is not of the divine purpose and will. The divine Light not the physical light is what is in John’s mind. Think God’s purposes in Creation and Redemption. Pastor Kit took us to Rev 21 and 22 where Light is spoken of as the illumination of God in the fullness of the consummation of the New Creation. As I read from there try to discern the difference between the physical light and the Light as John uses it.
 - a) Read Rev 21: - 22:5

Conclusion

Let’s conclude with a quick look at verse 5

5 The Light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness did not comprehend it.

καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει,
καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

1. Note that the Light “shines.” Present Active Indicative describing ongoing action in the present. John now does not talk only about what the WAS, but what IS. The Light, which is the life not only shone/shined in the past (as in creation, as in God’s presence with Israel throughout salvation history) but it also now shines.
2. The word “comprehend” can be translated in two main ways. Both Carson and Culver think the ambiguity is intentional. John meant the term to mean both comprehend/apprehend (discern, embrace...) and overcome/overpower. Think of people dealing with spiritual Light and darkness
 - a. People living in darkness did not comprehend the light that came either in the pre-incarnate Word or in Christ Jesus. John 1:11 -- He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.
 - b. But the darkness did not overpower the Light either, as the Light displaced the darkness in Creation, so in Christ Jesus the the darkness of estrangement from God and His purposes has been displaced albeit in the already but not yet.

1	In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.	Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.
2	He was in the beginning with God.	οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.
3	All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.	πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν
4	In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.	ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων·
5	The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.	καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

Let's pray.

Head's up:

- Next week adjust clocks for daylight savings.
- I am out for Tuesday groups. Talk amongst yourselves to plan whether or not to meet.

Sermon Audio Input

Full Msg. Title: Jesus as John Introduced Him, Part 2
Short Ver. Title: John 005
Series Title: The Gospel of John
Text: John 1:3-5
Key Words: Word, Life, Light

Message Outline

Jesus as John Introduced Him
Understanding Jesus by Understanding the Word
In Relation to Creation, Life and Light

- IV. **“All Things Came Into Being Through The Word**
- V. **“Life” Was Inherent in the Word**
- VI. **That Life Inherent in the Word Was the “Light of Men”**

Please See

Pastor Kit Culver’s sermon and study notes for his John 005 message, “The Logos in Relation to Creation” from 8/9/15.

Examine the Scriptures (Be Berean!)

- John 1:1-18

Consider & Discuss (Be Transformed!)

- Recap what verses 1 and 2 said about the Word. How has that grown your understanding of God?
- Why might John use the present tense “shines” in verse 5?
- **How does John use the word “life”?**
- **What does it mean to say that “life” was “in” the Word?**
- **What does it mean to say that the life that was in the Word was the “light of men”?**
- **Community Group Discussion: Why does John give us all this information regarding the Word? What is the significance and the relevance to our faith? Why does it matter that we know God as the Bible reveals Him?**

Memory & Meditation Verse

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This One was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” John 1:1-5

Community Life

- **Looking Ahead: Goal for Fall 2015:** That we (each and together) would be the members of the body of Christ God intends, being “transformed by the renewing of our minds”, ministering and being ministered to as He has gifted. **Means:** While actively and thoughtfully listening to what God has given us in the Gospel of John, I encourage everyone to either participate in one or more of the Community Groups available at SHC, or come up with your own God honoring “Body Life Plan.”

Next Sunday

John 1:6-13