

INTRODUCTION

1. This morning we are pausing from our study of Genesis 3 to direct our attention to another important passage that is found in the Gospel of John.
2. Please turn with me in your Bibles to John chapter one.
3. This morning we are looking specifically at the first two verses that I read this morning in our Scripture reading.
4. John 1:1-2 (NKJV) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.
5. I chose this passage for us this morning because it's my conviction that many are okay with talking about Jesus during Christmas as a baby in a manger.
6. But this passage says He was more than a baby. He's God.
7. John's purpose in this book is to "convince his readers of Jesus' true identity.
8. He presents Him as God incarnate (1:1, 14; 8:23, 58; 10:30; 20:28), the Messiah (1:41; 4:25–26), and the Savior of the world (4:42)" (MacArthur, 9) who "brings the gift of salvation to mankind.

9. People respond by either accepting or rejecting the salvation that comes only through believing in Him” (MacArthur 10).
10. As John begins his gospel, we are introduced to *Jesus the Word*.
11. In the first five verses John gives us both the deity of Christ and His pre-incarnate work.
12. Herbert Lockyer says of these 5 verses: “...In the brief compass of forty-two words—eternity, personality, deity, co-equality, and creatorship are ascribed to Him” (All the Divine Names and Titles in the Bible, 270).
13. The Gospel opens with one of the most elevated statements about Jesus found in the New Testament.
14. John begins his Gospel with the Greek word logos, which is translated “Word” three times in verse 1.
15. Logos occurs 1239 times in the LXX and 330 times in the New Testament.
16. The term generally refers to “a word or saying” (WE Vine) but here John is applying it to a Person, the Lord Jesus Christ.

17. When penning his letter to the believers in Asia Minor, he used this term for Jesus when he said in 1 John 5:7, “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the *Word*, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.”
18. When he was describing the Rider on the white horse in Revelation 19:13, he identified Him as the Word of God. He said, “He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called *The Word of God*.”
19. John is the only person to refer to Jesus by this term. No other writer refers to Him in this way.
20. Wayne Grudem says when this term is “applied to Jesus, the term implies both the Old Testament concept of the powerful, creative word of God and the Greek idea of the organizing and unifying principle of the universe” (Systematic Theology : An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine , 1246).
21. In other words, by calling Jesus *the Word*, God was expressing Himself to “mankind in the Person of the Lord Jesus” (MacDonald) and He was saying, “If you want to know the Word that brought everything into existence, here He is in a body, the Lord Jesus Christ.”
22. To the Greeks John was saying, “If you want to know the

‘organizing and unifying principle of the universe,’ here He is the Lord Jesus Christ.”

23. The writer of Hebrews captured this thought when he said in Hebrews 1:1-2, “God, who at various times and in various ways *spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, 2 has in these last days spoken to us by His Son*, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.”
24. Jesus is “the Word of the Lord” as expressed in the Old Testament and He is the “organizing and unifying principle of the universe” (MacArthur, 16) that the Greeks referred to.
25. The reason is because...

LESSON

I. Jesus was in the Beginning with God (v.1)

“In the beginning was the Word”

A. Jesus Existed Before Time and Creation

The word “beginning” is the Greek word *arche*. This word can mean “‘source,’ or ‘origin,’ or ‘rule,’ ‘authority,’ ‘ruler,’ or ‘one in authority’” (MacArthur).

All of these meanings are true of Jesus, who is the “source or origin” of the universe and who is its “Ruler.”

But arche as it is used here is referring to “to the period before creation” not the beginning of the universe because “creation is not mentioned until verse 3” (Newman Barclay, *A Handbook on the Gospel of John*).

Moulton & Milligan state that “In Genesis 1:1, the sacred historian starts from the beginning and comes downward, thus keeping us in the course of time. Here he (John) starts from the same point, but goes upward, thus taking us into the eternity preceding time” (Quoted by G. Campbell Morgan, *John*, 24).

“The Logos is before all time, so that no temporal statements can be made about Him. Eternal preexistence is plainly implied” (Kittel).

B. Jesus Has Always Been

John uses the imperfect verb *eimi* translated “was” to describe continuous action in the past.

So the verse could read: “In the beginning always existed the Word.”

By saying “In the beginning” “The Logos [Word] did not then begin to be, but at that point at which all else began to be, He already was” (The Expositor’s Bible Comm.).

J.C. Ryal said, “He had no beginning. He was before all things. There never was the time when He was not” (Expository Thoughts on John 1, 4).

1. Jesus said He was with God before the creation of the world when He prayed in John 17:5, “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You, *before the world was.*”
2. In Hebrews 7:3, the writer of Hebrews describes Melchizedek as “without father, without mother, without genealogy, *having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but made like the Son of God*, remains a priest continually.”

C. Jesus was with God the Father (vv.1b-2)

John says, “and the Word was with God...He was in the beginning with God” (vv.1b-2).

Here John gives us a glimpse of the glory of Jesus. He says that:

1. Jesus was literally face-to-face with God

He “was” (eimi, imperfect verb) “with God”

“With God” in Greek in pros ton theon.

This phrase means far more than merely that the Word existed with God; it “[gives] the picture of two personal beings facing one another and engaging in intelligent discourse” (W. Robert Cook, *The Theology of John*, 49).

“From all eternity Jesus, as the second person of the trinity, was ‘with the Father [pros ton patera]’ (1 John 1:2) in deep, intimate fellowship” (MacArthur, 17).

2. The Scriptures affirm Jesus had this kind of relationship with the Father

a) He said in John 8:58, “I AM”

b) Listen again to John 17:5 which says, “And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with *the glory which I had* with You before the world was.”

c) In John 17:24 He said, “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold *My glory which You have given Me*;

for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”

We hear these statements referring to the face-to-face relationship that Jesus had with the Father “yet in an infinite act of condescension, Jesus left the glory of heaven and the privilege of face-to-face communion with His Father. He willingly ‘emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men...He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross’ (Phil.2:7-8)” (MacArthur, 17).

John’s description of the Word reached its pinnacle in the third clause of this opening verse. Not only did the Word exist from all eternity, and have face-to-face fellowship with God the Father, but also the Word was God”

II. Jesus is God (vv.1-2)

He says, “and the Word was God.”

Herbert Lockyer says, “Language has no meaning if these four words do not clearly teach that Christ is very God of very God” (273).

This is John’s theme—Jesus is the God-man—God manifest!

John again uses the imperfect verb “was” to express the continuous existence of the Word as God. It could be read, “And the Word *was always* God.”

This phrase is “perhaps the clearest and most direct declaration for the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ to be found anywhere in Scripture” (MacArthur, 18). Yet many heretical groups have twisted their meaning to support their false doctrines concerning the nature of Christ.

The Greek word *theos* (God) is in the anarthrous construction, meaning it is not preceded by the definite article. “Some argue that it is an indefinite noun and mistranslate the phrase, ‘the Word was divine’ ...or...the Word was *a god*.”

“The absence of the article before *theos*...does not make it indefinite. *Logos* (Word) has the definite article to show that it is the subject of the sentence” (MacArthur, 18).

So it is not “God was the Word” because “the Word,” not “God” is the subject and it would be theologically incorrect since it would equate God with the Word, thus denying that they are two separate persons.

John Calvin said, “That there may be no remaining doubt as to Christ’s divine essence, the Evangelist distinctly asserts that *he is God*. Now since there is but one God, it follows that Christ is

of the same essence with the Father, and yet that, in some respect, he is distinct from the Father” (Calvin’s Commentaries: John).

A. His Titles Reveal Who He Is

1. “God with us” (Mat.1:21)
2. “the eternally blessed God” (Rom.9:5)
3. “Our God our Savior” (2 Pet.1:1)
4. “The true God and eternal life” (1 Jn.5:20)
5. “God” (Heb.1:8)
6. “Lord and God” (Jn.20:28)
7. “Our great God and Savior” (Tit.2:13)
8. “God our Savior” (Tit.2:10; 3:4)
9. YHWH (Rom.10:13; cf. Joel 2:32)

B. His Testimonies Reveal Who He Is

1. He said that “God was His Father” (Jn.5:18)
2. He said He was the “I AM” (Jn.8:58)
3. He said “I and My Father are One” (Jn.10:30)
4. He said He was the “Alpha and Omega” (Rev.1:11)

C. The Testimonies from Others Reveal Who He Is

1. Thomas called Him “My Lord and my God” (Jn.20:28)

2. Paul said He was “God manifested in the flesh” (1 Tim.3:16)
3. John said “the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit...are one” (1 Jn.5:7)
4. God the Father called Him “God” in Heb.1:8

CONCLUSION

1. Do you know Jesus as God this morning?
2. Do you see Him as He is presented in John’s Gospel?
3. John has presented Him to us as being in the beginning before the creation, as being face-to-face with God, and as being God.
4. In Matthew 16:15 Jesus asked His disciples “But who do you say that I am?”
5. How do you answer that question?
6. Peter said, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mat.16:16).
7. If that is your answer then God revealed that to you as He did to

Peter. Jesus said “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven” (Mat.16:17).

8. Remember John’s purpose is writing this Gospel?—“that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (Jn.20:31).
9. If you haven’t believed in Him today, do so now that you “may have life.”
10. Thomas Watson said that faith and repentance “are the two wings by which [we] fly to heaven...In Adam we all suffered shipwreck, and repentance is the only plank left us after shipwreck to swim to heaven” (The Doctrine of Repentance, 7, 13).
11. Let’s pray.