

THE WORD OF LIFE

John 1:1-5

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

There is probably no more majestic beginning to any book in the entire Bible than that of John 1:1-5. We are entering the Holy of Holies of Biblical theology. The teaching here is profound and awesome. In verses one through five John shows us the Word's relation with His Father, His relation with His creation, and specifically His relation with both the unsaved and saved world of men.

YOU MUST KNOW YOUR SAVIOR AND MUST BOW IN SUBMISSION TO HIM.

I. THE WORD'S RELATION WITH HIS FATHER (1-2)

VERSE ONE IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT IN ALL THE BIBLE!

A. His Eternity—"In the beginning was the Word."

1. "In the beginning"—a reference to Genesis 1—the moment of creation
The reference here is to absolute beginning of all that is in the universe.

2. "Was"—The verb is continuous past tense—"was existing". Otherwise, it shows that the Word was not part of the creation, but was already existing when all else began. It implies His eternal preexistence.

3. "The Word"—Much ink has been spilt over this expression. Let us clarify simply. The concept comes out of the Old Testament background as amplified in post-exilic and rabbinic Judaism. There was much speculative writing about the "Word" by a Jewish philosopher named Philo who allegorized biblical teaching and combined it with Greek philosophy. John's teaching has a solid Biblical base and is not derived from the speculations of men like Philo. [The commentaries of Westcott, Morris, and Plummer provide details of clarification.]

Christ is called the Word because He expressed (and still does) the thoughts of the Father and has revealed them throughout human history. All revelation about God has come through the Son.

B. His Individuality—"The Word was with God."

The expression means "face-to-face with God; it shows the presence of one person with another, and expresses nearness and movement toward. This is a **profound** expression of the eternal communication and fellowship of the Father and the Son! These words show that the "Word" **is a Person**. The Word is not merely some emanation from God as in the Rabbinic Jewish conception; nor is He merely a personification of God as in some of the OT passages such as Proverbs 8.

C. His Deity—"The Word was God."

He is not merely a created being nor some inferior deity. **HE IS GOD. I can state categorically that all translations that render, "the Word was a god" are inaccurate.** John words the expression precisely to avoid to false and heretical teachings concerning Jesus Christ. *I ask you to bear with me as we delve into some Greek grammar that is essential to understand these words.*

POSSIBILITIES—different ordering of the same Greek words:

1. και ο θεος ην ο λογος—"And the God was the Word." By adding the Greek article (ο) to "God", this teaches the identity of the Father with the Son as the same Person. It expresses an ancient heresy known as Sabellianism.

2. και ο λογος ην θεος—"And the word was a god." This ordering of the Greek words expresses the ancient heresy known as Arianism—Jesus is merely an inferior deity not equal with God the Father.

3. και θεος ην ο λογος—The exact order of the words found here in John 1:1 is the only way John could have expressed the truth that Jesus is full deity, yet not the same identical person as God the Father. "All that God is, the Word is." The Word possess all the fullness of the divine attributes. This verse shows in the clearest possible way that Jesus Christ, the Word, is **eternal**, is **individually distinct** from the Father, and that He is **fully God**.

"The same was in the beginning with God." The pronoun, "the same" is emphatic and points back to v. 1.

II. THE WORD'S RELATION WITH THE CREATION (3)

"All things were made by Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made."

A. The Word created everything individually

1. "All things" without the article stresses the individuality of each thing made.
2. "Were made" shows that they "came into being." The creation did not previously exist as did the Word! The Word "was existing" at the time of creation. Matter is not eternal; evolution is not true! "Spirits" do not preexist on some other planet (as Mormonism teaches). **All things came into being at creation.**
3. The Word is the intermediate agent of creation—"through Him". God the Father is the immediate agent. See I Cor. 8:6—All things **from** the Father, and **through** the Son.

B. Nothing was made "apart From" Him.

1. His presence was required at creation.
2. His powerful manifestation was exerted at creation.

C. There are no exceptions—"not one thing" came into being apart from Him.

D. That which He has created continues to exist (perfect tense verb—"has been made") It is still here today. God made what we see about us.

III. THE WORD'S RELATION WITH HUMAN CREATION (4-5)

A. Life resided in the Word (4a)

1. Life *was existing* in Him from eternity.
2. All forms of life owe their life to Him—especially human.
3. Life in John is especially eternal life.

John uses the term "life" more than any other NT writer—over ¼ of all references. Compare 10:10—abundant life in Him; 6:51, 53—eating His flesh brings life; 5:40—come to Him for life; 10:28—those who are His will never perish; he is the Life—11:25; 14:6. See 5:26—The Father is the source of life, but has given the Son to have life in Himself.

B. Life is Found in Light(4b) (Compare Jn. 3:16-19—life and light together; 8:12—the light of life; 12:46-50—He has come as light—the result is life.

Compare the original creation—light first created; light sustains all life.

Light is stressed much in John—23 times, 1/3 of all NT references. It refers to the revelation of and the understanding of divine truth. In 12:36 Jesus exhorts people to "believe the light." We receive life through seeing light!

We come to understand God in His marvelous attributes and works—especially redemption.

C. The Light shines in the Darkness (5)

1. The shining is continuous (present tense verb—only one in passage)
Brings us to John's day and ours!
2. The light shines "in the Darkness."
 - a. Darkness represents the evil forces (satanic) and those dominated by them in opposition to God—unsaved of all races and genders. The Fall is implied here, not described.
 - b. Light vs. darkness is a prominent theme in John.
 - c. Light's purpose is to dispel darkness. Jesus shining in the world and makes men "children of light."
3. The darkness does not either "comprehend" (grasp, understand) the light, nor "overpower" (suppress) the light. In the context, and according to the figure of light and darkness used here, the latter meaning is the most likely one. Darkness will not overshadow and suppress the light. However, John, as quite often, may have meant us to see both meanings here. Darkness is a hostile power to light and resists and seeks to block out the light.

CONCLUSION

The Battle is engaged, but the forces of darkness cannot win! The light continues to shine and displace darkness. One day darkness will be permanently dispelled.

We have seen the Word's relation to the Father, to all of creation, and to human creation. I now have a few questions: Do you love the light? Are you a child of the light? Do you live like it?

John speaks of a marvelous divine benefit offered to man, and then the tragic refusal of man to respond to God in a favorable way!