

JOHN'S GOSPEL

John 1: 1

We will be looking at the Gospel according to John this evening.

This particular portion of scripture always thrills me because before I became a Christian I had opportunity to read the gospel according to John several times, but I had the hardest time understanding exactly what it was saying. I could understand the words, but that very first verse just seemed non senseical to me. It simply would not compute. Some of the reason was because if one is not a Christian they do not have the equipment to understand spiritual phenomena.

We can all understand the history or we can comprehend the geographical, we can even appreciate the scientific portions of the Bible, but to understand the spiritual we must have spiritual equipment.

Unless; one understands why there are four gospel accounts given they will miss the punch of the

opening chapter of John.

Our God is a very orderly God and He never does anything out of chaos or disorganization. Just as every part of the body has it's own function, so too, every book of the Bible has its function. John is no different. It is not as if John wrote this account because Matthew, Luke and Mark forgot something. The functions of those accounts present Christ in a different light from how John is presenting Jesus.

Matthew shows us Jesus from the point of His relationship to David the king and Abraham the father of all nations. His genealogy is traced back to these men, and He is spoken of seven times as, "The son of David."

Mark sees Christ as the servant of the Lord and presents him as such. Most of the book points to his servants work in performing miracles.

Luke's gospel gives us vivid insight into the human side of Christ as he presents to us "Christ

the man.” Luke traces his genealogy to Adam. It is Luke alone who presents all we know about the boyhood of Jesus.

In John, we learn about the deity of Christ as no other account gives it to us. There is to be no mistake about His divinity or His humanity. Here we have given to us what is known as “*The hypostatic union.*” That is; Jesus was all man and He was also all Divine in one body. Let that sink in for a moment and try to get a grasp on it as best you can.

In John more than anywhere else we have Jesus presenting himself as very God of very God, and it is here alone we have the declaration of Him taking the divine name of “I AM.”

So with this brief description let us open the magnificent Word of God to John 1: 1 and begin.

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

We shall take our time with this verse because if we do not understand this verse we shall miss the

punch of all that comes after.

This is the verse that gave me so much trouble understanding prior to my becoming a Christian. It is also the very first verse I understood immediately after my conversion. I simply could not get the back and forth ringing of the words - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

I have oft times told my wife that words convey a meaning and if the wrong word is used the wrong meaning is sent and therein will lay a problem in communication.

Allow me to be a little more succinct. A word is an expression and by words we articulate our thoughts to another in order that they might comprehend what we are striving to show them.

For instance, if I were to say to you that I am very gay. In today’s society you might get the false idea that I am homosexual, when in fact I am trying to tell you that I am happy. The word

“Gay” has been trampled so badly that its meaning is lost. If I am going to tell you I am happy, I shall have to choose another word if I do not use the word “Happy.” I suppose I would have to use the word “Elated” if I wish to express my emotion.

Here in our verse we read - *In the beginning was the Word*. This at once tells us two things.

1. *In the beginning*. And
2. *Was the Word*.

In this God is showing us some of His own mind by giving us some facts and He is going to do it with words we should understand.

What does He mean by the word “Beginning?” Please take note if you will that in the Greek there is no article “the” in this verse. Therefore it literally says “*In beginning was Word*.”

This will take us clear back beyond time. This beginning will clearly antedate any other beginning we read; such as:
The beginning of the world - Matt. 24: 21. -

"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be."

It antedates the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Mark 1: 1 -

It antedates the beginning of sorrows. Mark 13: 8 -
"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be earthquakes in various places, and there will be famines and troubles. These are the beginnings of sorrows."

And it antedates the beginning of miracles John 2: 11 - ***This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him.***

The “*In the beginning*” in John 1: 1 is clearly defined because of the title given in this verse of “*The Word*.”

Since all things were made by Him it stands that this beginning spoken of is taking us back to the

fatherest point of time when He was IN the beginning, not when other beginnings had their origin.

If He was in the beginning then He is one without beginning therefore He is eternal. Is that too much for our little minds to grasp? Yes, I believe it is. However, allow us to investigate a bit further.

This Word that was in the beginning was not alone. There was another being spoken of in this passage and that other one is --- Well, let's look for ourselves:

and the Word was with God, It appears as if this beginning One was with God himself, but here is the kicker - ***And the Word was God.***

Let us see if we can absorb some of this. In the Greek there are two separate words for the word "WAS." One means to *exist*. One of God's divine names is, "I AM." This is in the ever present tense. No past tense or future tense. It is always present. God is always present. There never was a time when God was not present.

The other Greek word for our English "was" means to *come into being*.

For instance, in John 1: 3b we read "***without him was not any thing made that was made.***" The "was" here is *egeneto*. It means, Come into being. I understand this to mean; Nothing came into being that is being *without him*. It didn't just have a BANG! and appear.

We have the very same word in 1: 6 "***There was a man sent from God.***" - or we can say, "***There became a man sent from God.***"

Once again in verse 14 we read "***And the Word was made flesh***" that is: at a point in time God came to us in flesh.

BUT, here in 1: 1 and 1: 2 the word used in the Greek is the word "Ito." This means He did not come into being but was "*with*" God from eternity. How does one put all this together? For that we will have to dig a little deeper.

This is where many sects go off on a tangent and

come up with Jesus being something other than He actually is. They call Him a prophet or an angel, but always something lesser than God himself.

Remember, a word is a medium of manifestation. It gives us information on what we are striving to learn and a misuse of words gives us the wrong manifestation.

What have we learned so far? We have seen that in the beginning that was no beginning (because of the Greek word ito) was the Word (that actually is more than merely a word), how do we know this? Because it is in Caps and denotes a divine name.

Now, this Word that was in the beginning was with God. Another divine name. In fact it is the divine name of God the Father. This is important for us to know because of the very next statement which screams out to us - AND THE WORD WAS GOD.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word

was with God, and the Word was God.

The Greek literally reads - “*In beginning was Word, and Word was with God, and God was the Word.*”

Allow me to state it a bit more clearly from the Greek.

In beginning was Logos and the Logos was with Theos, and Theos was the Logos.

Now once again allow me to translate it properly in the language we understand and as I do so, there will be no harm to the Greek structure or what God is teaching us here.

In the beginning was the Christ, and the Christ was with God, and God was the Christ.

This should at once tell us that Jesus is none other than very God of very God no matter how anyone else tries to twist scripture.

If we get this wrong, we get everything else wrong, because we strip Christ of His deity and His being in fact God - even God the Father.

Is that too much for you to understand? It's too

much for the cults and sects to comprehend, therefore they do not agree that Jesus is in fact God.

Verse two tells again - *He was in the beginning with God.*

Once again - What beginning? The beginning of time or the beginning of creation? No, no, no.

Turn with me in your Bible to Genesis 1: 1.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

Now what beginning is this? This is the beginning of generation. A distinct point in time. When? No one knows when.

The beginning spoken of in John 1 is a beginning without any reference to a point in time. It is timeless.

The beginning in Genesis has a point of time, but we cannot place it. Allow me to go a step further. Please look at Genesis 1: 2. With me. *The earth was without form, and void;* In the Hebrew it reads - *And the earth became formless and empty.*

Now many Bible commentators make a lot out of this, but the simple truth is; all it is telling us is that in this beginning of which we have no exact time reference, something came into being that did not exist prior to this time. In the beginning we are looking at in John there is no time reference, because it is eternal.

The point of all this is: be very careful in reading the word of God. Do not ever take it as lightly as one would the daily news paper. Hopefully we have a better understanding about the beginnings mentioned here so we will be ready for verse three.

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

Once again allow us to be very careful right here. In the KJV we read these words - *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

Which translation is correct? Is it by Him or through Him?

Allow me to say that only the KJV uses the word “By” all the others use the word “Through.” Why the difference? If one takes the KJV they will not be far off the mark, but it will confuse the thinking of verses 1 and 2.

We all know that our God is one God.
And we all know our God operates as a trinity.
So - - Were all things made BY Him or
THROUGH Him?

As the second person of the God head Jesus is the instrument of creation (for lack of a much better term) I detest using Jesus as an instrument.
However, for ease of understanding we are stuck with it for now.

God the Father originated the plan and God the Son carried out the plan. Not only in creation, but in redemption, salvation and justification as well as so much more.

God the Father loves the Son.

God the Son loves God the Father.

God the Father wanted to show His love to God

the Son and designed a perfect plan, but He desired to work through the Son and the son had no problem whatever because God the Son had the same idea. Why? Because they are one.

Therefore - all things came into being through the instrumentality of God the Son. He created all things and as our scripture tells us in verse 3 of the Greek text:

All things through Him came into being, and without Him came into being not even one thing which has come into being.

The reason I use the Greek text in this portion is because I believe it gives a much clearer understanding of the mind of God our Savior.
Now I believe we should be ready for verse four.

8

In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Remember our Greek lesson a moment ago on the word “was?” Well here we are again and we are talking about two things in this one verse.

1. In Him *was* life. - Jesus is the life.

He is not merely alive, He is life itself. If anyone or any thing is to have life it must come from the one who is life. The word “Was” here is our Greek word “ito” which means life that did not come into being. It always has been.

2. *And this life was the light of men.* The “was” in this portion means life that came into being. We can actually translate this verse as such - *In Him life was and the life gives light (or life) to men.* Let us go to what is known as the science of Biblical hermenutics and the rule of first mention; to get a little clearer understanding. Don't get lost now. Turn to Gen. 2: 7.

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being. Man became a living being because God breathed life into him. The life breathed into man came from the existing life that was in God.

What kind of life was breathed into the just created man? It was an eternal life because it came from the eternal one, however, the life had

conditions. One of the conditions was to not eat of the forbidden tree. If that occurred (and it did) man would lose the earthly life, but, and I want you to be careful here because you might get a little disturbed. The life man has is eternal, however, where one spends that eternity is the big question. It will be either in Heaven or in Hell.

Let's take a little stroll over to chapter three of John and pull in at verse 3: "***verily verily, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.***"

Here we have the same lesson being taught. In order for man to ever have a place in glory with Christ that one must, I say, must be born again because without it you will not see the kingdom of God.

Once again man has to receive life from God in order to be saved. We already are alive, but it is a life that is temporary. In order to spend time with God we must have the better life and be born again. Why is that? Verse 6 explains - "***That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that***

which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

The human birth is something we had no control over and like so we have no control over the spiritual birth. It is all from God and none of man. Many folk do not like the sound of that. We all like to think we are the master of our own destiny, but we are not. And all I can say is - “tough,” that’s the way it is. God did it, not me. Argue with him. Job tried and failed and God took him to school to teach him otherwise when He said in Job 38: 4 *“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding.*

The Lord continues through the rest of the chapter with the same scorching indictment.

Now we are safe to move to verse 6 and I think we’d better before we get into the same trouble Job did.

And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

When one walks into a dark room the first thing they do is grope for the light switch. If the door

opens left, they feel right on the wall. If the door opens right they feel left on the wall. They run their hand up and down the wall until it touches the switch. When it is discovered they at once flip it up and Lo and behold the darkness flees before the blaze of light.

That is not what this verse is saying. This verse tells us that the light is on, but the darkness refuses to dissipate.

The Greek reads thus: *And the light in the darkness appeared and the darkness it apprehended not.*

Have you ever had the experience of being in darkness so thick that light doesn’t seem to penetrate it? You turn on a flashlight and the beam seems to drop at your feet.

During the captivity of Israel in Egypt one of the plagues was extreme darkness. Light did not penetrate it. You could not see your hand in front of your face.

This verse teaches us that the light shone, but the darkness refused to get hold of it. - man has been given light, but man refuses the light. We are told this in Romans 2: 15 - *they have the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them*)

We have the law of God written in our hearts from birth, but we do not apprehend (take hold) of that law.

Again please note Rom. 1: 18-21. *For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,*

19 because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them.

20 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,

*21 **because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but***

became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. - They paid no attention to the light.

Now please do not make the mistake of thinking I am saying that every man has a spark of life in them. I am not. What I am saying is, what can be known of God is revealed to all yet, every one of us rejects that knowledge and we do not respond until God gives us the ability to respond. *“All have sinned and come short of the glory of God.”*

We grope around in the dark trying to find the light switch on the wall when all the while the light is manifest to all who will look to it. The problem is; we look for our own light switch and want to get illumination for ourselves, but *the light we need is shining in the darkness, and the darkness will not comprehend it.*

Before we close for this evening I would like to turn your attention to another verse of scripture. It is found in 1 John 1: -8.

1 John 1:1 *That which was from the beginning,*

(ito, eternal beginning) *which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life; (That Word that was in the beginning)*

2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us;

3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

4 And these things we write to you that your joy may be full.

5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.

7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all

sin.

My point is this: Even though we might look at those who do not know the Lord as Saviour and we see them as not comprehending the light, did you realize that if one knows the Lord, yet does not walk in the light, they are walking in darkness even while they have the Light within them.

Even though we have studied John many times. Even though we have read it many times, and even though we can recite great portions of John; if we do not continue to walk in the light given us, we will not get more light until we utilize the light we already have.

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

If this is true, and if we really believe all this

My question to all of us is this:

Does He mean more to us than merely a light perusal of his word. A skip and a holler a few times a month?

Are we drinking deeply of the fountain of life or do we only take a sip every now and then?

Is the light of His life overcoming the darkness in our life or do we spend our time groping for the switch.

Let us always remember how precious this verse in John 1: 1 is.

In the beginning was the Word, (our Lord Jesus Christ) and the Word was with God (Our heavenly Father) and the Word and God are one.

As Israel declares, “Our God is one God”
So too, we Christians agree and say a hearty,
“Amen.”