

# The Beginning and the Word

## John 1:1-13

**John 1:1-14** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. <sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. <sup>5</sup> The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. <sup>6</sup> There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light. <sup>9</sup> There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. <sup>11</sup> He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup> 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, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

**Introduction:** We have all heard of the four gospels, but it is probably more accurate to speak of the three gospels and then the gospel of John. This is not to say that John is not a gospel, but it is so profoundly different from the other three that it stands alone in the cannon of Scripture. The Spirit led John down a different path than Matthew, Mark and Luke. Those three are called synoptic gospels....a Greek term meaning “together” or “unified in content.” John’s gospel follows another pattern entirely. John has no parables, no list of the apostles, no account of Christ’s birth, baptism, transfiguration, temptation or ascension. On the other hand 90% of the material in John is not found in other accounts of His life. This makes John indispensable in our knowledge of Christ. It even begins where none of the other accounts begin. It begins in the dark recesses of eternity past. It begins where history begins in Genesis 1:1.

**Genesis 1:1-2** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. <sup>2</sup> The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

What do men really know about this event? Absolutely nothing! Nothing other than what God has chosen to tell us. This is a serious blow to the arrogance of modern men who fancy themselves as uncreated and therefore unaccountable to anyone. But evolutionists know nothing of a scientific nature about the origins of life. No one was there....in the beginning....and that is just as true of them as it is of believers. For the believer the question hangs on the credibility of the witness. How reliable is God when it comes to telling us the truth?

This is a question that every professing Christian needs to settle. Either God can or cannot be trusted to tell us the truth about our origins, our lives, our nature, our future and our eternity. When some of the scribes and Pharisees said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see a sign from You."

Jesus answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation craves for a sign; and yet no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; <sup>40</sup> for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. <sup>41</sup> "The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. **Matthew 12:38-41**

Jesus' life, miracles, power over life and death were the proof of the claims of God about His nature. The more you hear those claims and the more you see what God reveals about Jesus in John's gospel the more you will embrace what John calls belief or faith which is simply trust in God and Christ. Jesus spoke about you and me when He said this to Thomas:

Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed *are* they who did not see, and *yet* believed." **John 20:29**

John completes the thought by quickly adding....Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. **John 20:30-31**

Today I want to begin where God begins with the life of Christ. God will explain

His Eternal Existence [1:1-2]

His Sovereign Creation [1:3]

His Splendid Coming [1:4-9]

His Absolute Rejection [1:10-13]

## **His Eternal Existence [1:1-2]**

**John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God.

**In the beginning:** Universally understood to describe the beginning of all things. God is taking us back to a time when nothing existed but God Himself. God is Eternal and therefore this does not describe the beginning of God. It speaks of the beginning of the physical creation and the origin of all things physical.

Men apart from God have no ability to understand these things. They are spiritual in the sense that they are not physical. Science deals with the physical...physics. It is very successful in studying and understanding how the physical universe works. Science, math, chemistry and physics are all able to unlock the workings of our physical universe. But Christ transcends the physical universe. He existed before it existed....in the beginning and therefore cannot be known, or scrutinized by the physical. It is easy for

men to say that the physical is all there is because it is the only thing they are comfortable with or can study....but....mankind cannot explain the personality of men, love, pity, hate, mercy and the like. Like the God whose image they portray....they are only known by the spirit.

**1 Corinthians 2:14-16** <sup>14</sup> The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. <sup>15</sup> The spiritual person judges all things, but is himself to be judged by no one. <sup>16</sup> "For who has understood the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.

**The Word:** Somewhat of a mystery if we stop here, but we won't do that. To non Jews steeped in Greek tradition and wisdom "The Logos" or word, was the "force" of the universe. The Greeks knew the universe had order and power. God had made that plain to them like He has to all men. But they did not know the One True and Living God. When John spoke of the Word he was telling them about the life force that energized the universe that they observed. Paul knew this when he spoke in Athens.

**Acts 17:22-28** <sup>22</sup> So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus and said, "Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. <sup>23</sup> "For while I was passing through and examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. <sup>24</sup> "The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; <sup>25</sup> nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; <sup>26</sup> and He made from one *man* every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, <sup>27</sup> that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; <sup>28</sup> for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.'

To the Jewish listener John was speaking of the creator

**Genesis 15:1-4** After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not fear, Abram, I am a shield to you; Your reward shall be very great." <sup>2</sup> Abram said, "O Lord GOD, what will You give me, since I am childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" <sup>3</sup> And Abram said, "Since You have given no offspring to me, one born in my house is my heir." <sup>4</sup> Then behold, the word of the LORD came to him, saying, "This man will not be your heir; but one who will come forth from your own body, he shall be your heir."

**Psalms 33:6** <sup>6</sup> By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.

The Jew knew exactly what the Word of God was. It was the expression of the sovereign power of the living God. It was synonymous with the Nature, Character and Power of the Living God.

**The Word was with God:** The Greek phrase describes the Word as looking toward God. The Word was face to face with God and engaged with God. John MacArthur said:

“From all Eternity Jesus as the second person of the trinity, was with the Father in deep intimate fellowship...The word is a person, not an attribute of God or an emanation from Him...And He is of the same essence as the Father...Yet...in an act of infinite condescension, Jesus left the glory of heaven and the privilege of face to face communion with His Father.”

**Philippians 2:6-8** <sup>6</sup> who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

**The Word was God:** The Jehovah’s Witness and all cults will do anything and break any rule of grammar to eliminate this verse from John’s gospel. There is no clearer declaration of the full Deity of Jesus Christ than these four words. Some say it means the word was divine, but there is no evidence that the word Theos ever gets translated as anything other than God.

**He was in the beginning with God:** The Holy Spirit drives this point home with this phrase. The word “was” does not mean that it was only in the past that the word was God. It means that the word was always with God even before the beginning which is the starting point here. Whoever the Word is He has always been face to face with God throughout all eternity and was in that state when He began to create the physical Universe.

### **His Sovereign Creation [1:3]**

**John 1:3-4** <sup>3</sup> All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

**All things came into being through Him:** The ESV is simplifies the English. “All things were made through him” I am always amazed how unbelief struggles to find a way out of this. The Jehovah’s Witness say “all other things” even though there is no word for other in the Greek text. It just cannot mean that, the unbeliever reasons. Jesus cannot be the eternal God because the implications of that are too staggering. It means that He is not the founder of one of the major religions of the world, but the only God and creator and owner of us all. The one man to whom every man will give account.

**Apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being:** Men do not have trouble believing this because it is unclear. They have trouble with it because it is crystal clear. If anything at all exists Christ brought it into being. That means you my friend and it means every physical thing or creature that has ever been.

## His Splendid Coming [1:4-9]

**John 1:4-9** <sup>4</sup> In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. <sup>5</sup> The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. <sup>6</sup> There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. <sup>7</sup> He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. <sup>8</sup> He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light. <sup>9</sup> There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.

**In Him was life:** Jesus Christ was not given life like we were. He is the source of life. Knowing His chosen destiny at the Cross Jesus made that very, very clear.

**John 10:17-18** <sup>17</sup> "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. <sup>18</sup> "No one takes it away from Me, but **I lay it down** on My own initiative. **I** have authority to lay it down, and **I** have authority to take it up again.

**John 5:26** "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;

**The life was the Light of men:** Life here is spiritual life. It is not the bios meaning physical life, but the force that gives life and sustains life. God connects Life and Light in this verse the same way he connects the word and God. They are the same although they are displayed differently. Jesus linked them for us when He said about Himself:

**John 8:12** 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."

**The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it:** Some translation say "did not comprehend it" but the Greek word has another meaning and it is more suited for this verse. Satan works unceasingly to obscure Christ from men...even believers.

Christ Jesus alone and not doctrines about Him or religious creeds or any religious ritual or confession brings life to lost men. To be in darkness is to be ignorant of Christ. A man can be moral, religious, pious or even righteous, but he will still be in darkness until He sees Christ as God reveals Him and trust [has faith] only in Jesus. How does God reveal Christ to us in Scripture?

He is the creator God...that means He owns you and has the right to rule you. He is Lord!

He is the sole source of life. The planet exists because He made it and you breath and live because it was His will to give you life and to sustain it in you. He is Lord over your physical life.

He has spent Eternity in intimate, blessed communion and joy with His Father. Never any darkness, sin or grief. Every joy and blessed benefit was His eternal possession. Yet...we are about to discover that for the love of you...He left the side of the Father and came into a cesspool of spiritual darkness, sin, hatred, injustice, murder and pain.

The Light shines in the darkness wherever Christ is exalted this way. There is no such light in creeds and religion...It is Christ that Satan hates and seeks to obscure, not teaching or religion about Christ. Listen to how Paul described this battle:

**2 Corinthians 4:1-4** Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we received mercy, we do not lose heart, <sup>2</sup> but we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness or adulterating the word of God, but by the manifestation of truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. <sup>3</sup> And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, <sup>4</sup> in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

**There came a man sent from God, whose name was John:** This was John the Baptist.

**He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but *he came* to testify about the Light:** God has called us to testify about Christ. Most Christians testify about their religion. They talk about what you need to do, or pray, or believe to be saved, but forget to testify to the light of the gospel of the Glory of Christ. LET THAT SINK IN FOR A MINUTE!

**There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man:** How glorious is Christ to you? How profound is your sense of His mercy and love for you in your sin. How broken do you see yourself in the light of the glory of Christ. Leaving heaven for someone like you and me who did not even desire Him? I testify that there is no one else is worthy of your life, love and obedience. NO ONE!

You can only testify to someone you know. You and I are supposed to testify about who He really is. That means going deep into the Glory of Christ like John is taking us this morning and letting it...no praying for it, to explode upon you mind, your inner man like the light of the Sun when it rises on the earth. Paul explains what it looks like to testify to Christ.

**2 Corinthians 4:5-7** <sup>5</sup> For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. <sup>6</sup> For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. <sup>7</sup> But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

The world has not overcome the light of the gospel of the Glory of Christ! I know because I saw it. I know because I am preaching it to you and many of you have seen it. You have not just become Christian or gotten religion....You have beheld His Glory and have forsaken all other solutions to the darkness of your soul. You have come to know what the twelve came to know as the religious and the self righteous went away one by one from Christ.

**John 6:67-69** <sup>7</sup> So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" <sup>68</sup> Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have **words of**

eternal life. <sup>69</sup> "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."

## **His Absolute Rejection [1:10-13]**

**John 1:10-13** <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. <sup>11</sup> He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. <sup>12</sup> 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, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him:

**He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him:** Israel. He was their promised Messiah but they were not looking for God. They were religious, self-righteous and moral. They did not need a Savior. They wanted someone to give them their best life now! They wanted a God made in their image who would do their bidding, not a God who created them and owned them. They wanted to keep God in a box where He was safe and under control.

**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:** But Jesus Christ was out of the box. He was bristling with the Power of life and resurrection. He scoffed at religion and overturned the lives of hypocrites. He condescended instead to the hopeless. To lepers, cripples and blind. To prostitutes, thieves and murders.

**Who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God:** God does not trade eternal life in exchange for faith anymore than a parent will consult a child before conception. That does not fit the metaphor of birth. In the real world parents decide to conceive a child and give it life. I was born in May of 1949 and I do not recall anyone consulting me about it. The next time your child in anger says..."I didn't ask to be born!" you need to make sure they know you agree. You wanted them. You chose to have them. It was your desire that they should be your children.

But this is spiritual life. It is not about blood [what race you belong to]. It is not through "the will of the flesh" [what you desire or even what others desire for you] and it is not through will of a man [what men determine to be true or religiously correct] It is a Sovereign work of God in the heart of a man. There are so many places where this is affirmed in the Scripture I hardly know where to begin.

**Ephesians 2:4-5** <sup>4</sup> But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

**1 Peter 1:3-5** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

**John 6:37-40** <sup>37</sup> "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out. <sup>38</sup> "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. <sup>39</sup> "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. <sup>40</sup> "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

**CONCLUSION:** In John's Gospel Jesus Christ is The Living God and Creator of the Universe. There is no mention of His genealogy here. For John's purposes it is not important. He is who He has always been from Eternity past. To the Greek He is the universal life and wisdom giving force. To the Jew He is Yahweh the Creator. But John adds this earth shaking truth ...

**John 1:14** <sup>14</sup> .... the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

I never cease to be amazed by those who quarrel over the Lordship of Christ. Can there be any question about who Christ is even from these opening verses of John? Can the God who made the heavens and all that is in them not own them? Is it possible that those who say they trust Him should not give Him their lives and their love and their obedience? Yes! We will fail. And Yes, we will obey imperfectly for we are still groaning in a fallen world and fallen human nature, but nevertheless we can purpose to give our lives to Christ. Do that! Don't hold back your heart because it is imperfect in its affection and obedience. Come to Christ in humility and obedience.

**Psalm 93:1-5** The LORD reigns, He is clothed with majesty; The LORD has clothed and girded Himself with strength; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved. <sup>2</sup> Your throne is established from of old; You are from everlasting. <sup>3</sup> The floods have lifted up, O LORD, The floods have lifted up their voice, The floods lift up their pounding waves. <sup>4</sup> More than the sounds of many waters, *Than* the mighty breakers of the sea, The LORD on high is mighty. <sup>5</sup> Your testimonies are fully confirmed; Holiness befits Your house, O LORD, forevermore.