

John 1:1 “In the beginning was . . .”

- John’s gospel – different than the other three
 - Matthew, Mark, Luke – “synoptic” gospels
 - “Seeing together” – gospels that basically recounting the same stories with little variation.
 - John’s Gospel: the “maverick”, different in many ways:
 - No genealogy
 - No account of Christ’s birth
 - No mention of His baptism
 - Institution of the Lord’s supper not mentioned
 - No Parables
 - No ascension
 - What does it have that the others don’t:
 - Wedding at Cana – water into wine miracle
 - Nicodemus
 - Woman of Samaria at the well
 - Raising of Lazarus – his dear friend.
 - Some of the greatest discourses spoken to His disciples
- Scholars generally date the synoptic gospels as having been written after the epistles of Paul and before the gospel according to John, thus between 60 and 115 AD.
- It is said that John wrote the “prologue” (**John 1:1-18**) of the Gospel with the **simplest Greek known** – but conveys the deepest sense of Jesus as fully God yet, in His carnation, fully man.
- **Luther wrote of it**, “This is the unique, tender, genuine chief Gospel. . . . Should a tyrant succeed in destroying the Holy Scriptures and only a single copy of the Epistle to the Romans and the Gospel according to John escape him, Christianity would be saved.”¹
- **Arthur W. Pink**: “In this book we are shown that the one who was heralded by the angels to the Bethlehem shepherds, who walked this earth for thirty-three years, who was crucified at Calvary, who rose in triumph from the grave, and who forty days later departed from these scenes, was none other than the Lord of Glory. The evidence for this is overwhelming, the proofs almost without number, and the effect of contemplating them must be to bow our hearts in worship before ‘the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ’ (Titus 2:13).”²

¹Boice, J. M. (2005). *The Gospel of John : An expositional commentary* (Pbk. ed.) (13). Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books.

² Arthur W. Pink, *Exposition of the Gospel of John* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1970), 10.

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

- **Three ideas given here:**
 - **The Word pre-existed before all things and is eternal**
 - **The Word existed with God for all eternity past**
 - **The Word is God**
 - **V14 – Jesus is the Word, the Word is God, Jesus is God**
- **“In the beginning was the Word . . .”**
 - “In Gen. 1:1, the sacred historian starts from the beginning and comes downward, thus keeping us in the course of time. Here he starts from the same point, but goes upward, thus taking us into the eternity preceding time” (Milligan and Moulton).³
 - **And when it is said the Logos was in this beginning, His eternal existence is already expressed, and His eternal position in the Godhead already indicated thereby** (Lange).⁴
- **John Courson:** “John marks the beginning of Jesus’ life as an event that took place before the beginning of eternity. **“In the beginning was the Word”—not “at the beginning,” not “from the beginning,” but “in the beginning,” Jesus was already there.**”⁵
 - **Jesus already existed!**
 - **Jesus simply “WAS.”**

Proverbs 8:23 I have been established from everlasting,
From the beginning, before there was ever an earth.

Psalms 90:2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or ever You had formed the earth and the world,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

- **“was”:**
 - **“was” is in the Greek imperfect tense, which means “was continuing.”**⁶
 - In fact, the entire first verse bears this sense. **“In the beginning was continuing the Word, and the Word was continuing with God, and the Word was continually God.”**⁷
 - **“Jesus always was wasing!”**
 - **Three times** in this sentence John uses this imperfect of εἰμι [eimi] to be **which conveys no idea of origin for God or for the Logos, simply continuous existence.**

³ Vincent, M. R. (2002). *Word studies in the New Testament* (2:24). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁴ Vincent, M. R. (2002). *Word studies in the New Testament* (2:24). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

⁵ Courson, J. (2003). *Jon Courson's Application Commentary* (435). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

⁶ Hughes, R. K. (1999). *John: That you may believe*. Preaching the Word (16). Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.

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- Quite a different verb (ἐγένετο [*egeneto*], “became”) appears in verse 14 for the beginning of the Incarnation of the Logos.⁸
 - See the distinction sharply drawn in *John 8:58* “before Abraham came (γενεσθαι [*genesthai*], began existence) “I am” (ἐγώ [*eimi*], timeless existence).⁹
- It is not enough to say that He is “a god,” that He is godlike, or that He is divine. The Bible teaches that He is God.¹⁰
- “the Word was with God, . . .”
 - Literally: The Word (Jesus) was continually toward God
 - Continually ‘face to face.’
 - The preposition “with” bears the idea of nearness, along with a sense of movement toward God. That is to say, there has always existed the deepest equality and intimacy in the Holy Trinity.¹¹
 - Jesus “was” forever pre-existing as God before anything was created. *Micah 5:2* “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, Though you are little among the thousands of Judah, Yet out of you shall come forth to Me The One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, From everlasting.”
- 2 Corinthians 8:9** For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.
- Philippians 2:5-8**
 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,
 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,
 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.
 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.
- Colossians 1:17** And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.
- John 17:5** And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.
- “And the Word was God.”
 - Literally: ‘the Word (Jesus) was, is and always will be God.
 - Eternally existing as God, in close intimate association with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

⁸Robertson, A. (1997). *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Vol.V c1932, Vol.VI c1933 by Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. (Jn 1:1). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

⁹Robertson, A. (1997). *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Vol.V c1932, Vol.VI c1933 by Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. (Jn 1:1). Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems.

¹⁰MacDonald, W., & Farstad, A. (1997, c1995). *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Jn 1:1). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

¹¹Hughes, R. K. (1999). *John : That you may believe*. Preaching the Word (16). Wheaton, Ill.: Crossway Books.

- The Hebrew word for God in Genesis 1:1 is *Elohim*, a word that speaks of three or more. The use of *Elohim* way back in Genesis hints at the mystery of the Trinity. Its use by John reiterates the reality of the Trinity.¹²

The simple point of John's first verse is to set the character of his Gospel right in each reader's mind

Jesus is God.

Not a God. Not an angel. Not just a prophet. Not just a revolutionary.

Jesus is God.

He said He is.

I believe by faith He is.

Prove me wrong.

But, by the way, you'll need to also prove other writers of the first century wrong, over 500 first hand witnesses of His resurrection wrong, and lastly you'll need to prove yourself wrong – because He has witnessed in your heart this very moment that this testament is correct.

¹²Courson, J. (2003). *Jon Courson's Application Commentary* (435). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.