



JOURNEY with JESUS

The Word

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John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The first three words of John's gospel are the same first three words of the entire Bible: "In the beginning." Genesis 1:1-2 says "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."

The hearers of this gospel in the first century would have recognized those first three words, "In the beginning." John takes his hearers back to the beginning of time - not just to the birth of a man named Jesus, but to the beginning of time itself.

The next phrase is a little different. Instead of "God created the heavens and the earth" we have "was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God." And then John emphasizes the point "He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."

In Genesis 1:1, the word translated as God is plural. We are told in 1 John 4:16 that "God is love" and in 1 Corinthians 13:10 that love is completeness. Love must have an object; therefore, in order to be love, there must have been someone or something for The Word to love. In other words, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit existed in completeness and love while the earth was formless and void.

John is stating emphatically that Jesus was with God from the beginning. And this is one of the main themes of John's gospel: "Jesus is divine."

Let's back up a minute and talk about "The Word." The Greek word here is "ho logos." Both Jews and Greeks would have recognized this word "Word." The Word is a Jewish reference for God. Jews were taught that God has revealed himself perfectly in his Word. For Greeks, "ho logos" is the basis of organization and intelligence in the universe: Ultimate Reason, with a capital U and capital R, if you will. This Reason controls all things. John wants to tell his readers about the logos that they have heard about for centuries: "ho logos" has appeal to both the Jew as the perfect revelation of God, and to the Greek, as the Ultimate source of reason and wisdom in the universe.

After equating Jesus to the creator, John calls him the “light” and the “life,” two more themes that occur throughout John’s gospel. The word for “life” carries with it the notion of being eternal, or everlasting, or existing “beyond the vanishing point.” John states that Jesus is eternal not only in the future tense, as the souls of believers will be after death, but also in the past tense. The Word existed before time. The Word is present now. The Word will remain with us forever.

John 1:6-14

There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Verse 14 is the most miraculous and earth-shattering part of this chapter. The Word - the eternal Ultimate Reason - came in the flesh and lived among human beings. John mentions John the Baptist, himself, and others “we” who have witnessed the physical presence of Jesus on this earth. They lived with him, they ate with him, they walked with him, they touched him. Jesus was not only the Word, he was also a man.

This is hard for us to understand. Think about it for too long and your head will start to hurt. But we can still live by it. The Word, the life, the light, became flesh and made his dwelling among us. Then he left his spirit with us to live in us.

Think of it this way: we can use our eyes even though we don’t understand everything about how vision works. Similarly, we can have a relationship with the eternal - past and future - trinity without understanding the intricacies of the relationship. We can have fellowship - koinonia - sharing, communion, a common bond and a common life, love with God, who is love, and one another, who bear his image and carry His Spirit.