

**Program:** SS Panel 2024 4 Q

**Quarterly title:** Themes in the Gospel of John

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**Lesson Title:** #3 The Backstory: The Prologue

**For Lesson Dates:** October 12-18, 2024

**Section title:** Sunday - In the Beginning--The Divine Logos

**Note:** This color and font = quarterly text

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**Next week: #4 Witnesses of Christ as the Messiah**

Lesson 3

\*October 12–18

## The Backstory: The Prologue

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### SABBATH AFTERNOON

**Read for This Week's Study:** *John 1:1–5, Gen. 1:1, John 1:9–13, John 3:16–21, John 9:35–41, Matt. 7:21–23, John 17:1–5.*

**Memory Text:** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" *John 1:1.*

Week one dealt with the end of John, which explained why he wrote his Gospel. This week's lesson returns to the beginning of the Gospel, where John sets forth

**the direction that he, inspired by the Holy Spirit, intends to take the reader.** In the first words and paragraphs of their writing, New Testament writers often present the themes that they intend to cover. So does John, whose themes are presented as part of a grand cosmic sweep that depicts overriding truths about Jesus Christ—truths that reach back to even before Creation.

This presentation, at the opening of the book, gives readers, knowing already that Jesus is the Messiah, an advantage that the characters in the book itself did not have. The reader can clearly see the grand themes that the evangelist returns to as he tells the story of Jesus. These great themes are placed within the historical period of Jesus' earthly life.

This week's lesson will begin with the Prologue (*John 1:1–18*) and summarize its major themes. These themes will then be looked at in other places in John's Gospel, as well.

*\*Study this week's lesson to prepare for Sabbath, October 19.*

**SUNDAY**

*October 13*

## **In the Beginning—The Divine Logos**

[>>] The Apostle John states the purpose why he wrote the book in **John 20:31**, but let's read verse 30 and 31:

**Jhn 20:30** And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

**Jhn 20:31** But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

**Read John 1:1–5. What do these words reveal about the Word, Jesus Christ?**

**John 1:1–5** 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was in the beginning with God.

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

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

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

### **In the beginning**

This seems to allude to Genesis chapter 1 verse one that indicates that “in the beginning God created the heavens in the Earth”. But it is intended here to specify a time where no beginning can be found. In other words an infinite time, or moment” in the past. But this is clearly a declaration by John the apostle with carefully chosen words to declare that Jesus Christ, the “Word” is God and is a separate and dissecting person from God the Father. The greek word “Logos” translated “Word”

### **was**

From: [Robertson’s Word Pictures](#): Was (ēn). Three times in this sentence John uses this imperfect of [eimi](#) to be which conveys no idea of origin for God or for the Logos, **simply continuous existence**. Quite a different verb ([egeneto](#), became) appears in [Jhn 1:14](#) for the beginning of the Incarnation of the Logos. See the distinction sharply drawn in [Jhn 8:58](#) “before Abraham came ([genesthai](#)) I am” ([eimi](#), timeless existence).

[From SDABC](#) Was. Gr. ēn, a form of the verb eimi, “to be,” expressing continuity of existence, or being. The Word was, throughout all eternity; He never became such. But, in time, the Word “was made [literally, “became,” Gr. egeneto, a form of ginomai, “to become,” expressing action initiated and completed at a given time] flesh” (v. 14). Thus, Christ has ever been God (John 1:1; Heb. 1:8); but, in contrast, He became man (John 1:14; cf. Phil. 2:7). Thus, both in the words and in their form, John stresses the continuous, timeless, unlimited existence of Christ prior to His incarnation. In eternity past there was no point before which it could be said that the Word was not. The Son was “with the Father from all eternity” (AA 39). “There never was a time when He was not in close fellowship with the eternal God” (Ev 615). Compare Rev. 22:13, where Jesus proclaims

Himself “the beginning and the end.” He is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb. 13:8).

The word *ginomai*, used in v. 14, appears also in v. 3 of the creation of all things (literally, “by him everything became”). Jesus declared, “Before Abraham was [Gr. *ginomai*, literally, “became,” or “came to be”], I am [Gr. *eimi*]” (ch. 8:58). The same contrast appears in the LXX of Ps. 90:2: “Before the mountains came into being [Gr. *ginomai*], from age to age thou art [Gr. *eimi*] God.”

*Ēn* occurs three times in John 1:1, first of the eternity of the Word, then of His eternal fellowship with the Father, and finally of His eternal equality of nature with the Father.

Verse 2 reaffirms the duration of this state of being throughout all eternity.

### the Word

Word: [G3056](#) ([Strong](#)) *λόγος* *logos*: [G3056](#): something *said* (including the *thought*); by implication a *topic* ([Mounce](#)) a word, a thing uttered,

>> There in not time in the history past that the WORD did not exist.

With (God): [G4314](#) ([Strong](#)) *πρός* *pros*: A strengthened form of [G4253](#); a preposition of direction; *forward to*, that is, *toward* (with the genitive case *the side of*, that is, *pertaining to*; with the dative case *by the side of*, that is, *near to*;

[G4314](#) ([Mounce](#)) *πρός* *pros* 700x: from; met. for the benefit of, [Act 27:34](#); with a dative, *near, by, at, by the side of, in the vicinity of*, [Mrk 5:11](#); [Luk 19:37](#); with an accusative, used of the place to which anything tends, to, unto, towards, [Mat 2:12](#); [Mat 3:5](#); [Mat 3:13](#); at, close upon, [Mat 3:10](#); [Mrk 5:22](#); near to, in the vicinity of, [Mrk 6:45](#);

### was with God

**From: SDABC With God. Gr. *pros ton theon*.** The word *pros* denotes close association and fellowship. Had John meant simply that in the beginning the Word was in proximity to God, he might have been expected to use either the word *para*, “beside,” or the word *meta*, “with” (cf. on ch. 6:46). But John intended more than either of these words would convey, as when he wrote, “we have an advocate with [Gr. *pros*] the Father” (1 John 2:1)—not in the sense that Jesus is simply in the Father’s presence, but that He is

closely associated with the Father in the work of salvation. Pros is used in the same sense in Heb.

**From: [Robertson's Word Pictures](#):** With God (*pros ton theon*). Though existing eternally with God the Logos was in perfect fellowship with God. *Pros* with the accusative presents a plane of equality and intimacy, face to face with each other. In [1Jn 2:1](#) we have a like use of *pros*: “We have a Paraclete with the Father” (*paraklēton echomen pros ton patera*). See *prosōpon pros prosōpon* (face to face, [1Co 13:12](#)), a triple use of *pros*. There is a papyrus example of *pros* in this sense *to gnōston tēs pros allēlous sunētheias*, “the knowledge of our intimacy with one another” (M.&M., *Vocabulary*) which answers the claim of Rendel Harris, *Origin of Prologue*, p. 8) that the use of *pros* here and in [Mrk 6:3](#) is a mere Aramaism. It is not a classic idiom, but this is *Koiné*, not old Attic. In [Jhn 17:5](#) John has *para soi* the more common idiom.

## The Word was God

\*\*\*READ???

And then, he says, “And the Word was God.” **But how can the Word be with God and at the same time be God?** The answer is found in the Greek. Greek has a definite article, *the*, but no indefinite article, *a/an*. What’s important for us, then, is that the Greek definite article, “*the*,” points to particularity, some particular object or person.

**1 John 4:16** And we have known and believed the love that God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him.

>>> the way the Greek is expressed here is in the same category as in John chapter 1 verse one. You cannot say “love is God” the construction of the sentence makes it only possible to say that “God is love”.

**REF:>>: SDABC** The Word was God. The absence, in the Greek, of the definite article before the word “God” makes it impossible to render the statement, “God was the Word.” Thus to render it would equate God with the Word and thus limit Deity exclusively to the Word. The two terms,

“Word” and “God,” are not altogether interchangeable. It would be no more proper to say that “God was the Word” than to say that “love is God” (cf. 1 John 4:16), or, “flesh was made the Word” (cf. John 1:14). Although here in v. 1 the word “God” lacks the definite article, it is still definite. The statement cannot be translated “the Word was a God,” as if the Word were one God among many other gods. In Greek the absence of the article often emphasizes quality expressed by, or inherent in, a word. Accordingly, John means that the Word partook of the essence of Deity, that He was divine in the ultimate and absolute sense. Thus in one terse declaration John denies that the Word was either a God, one among many, or the God, as if He alone were God.

**REF:>>From: Barnes** - He was “with God” - that is, he was united to him in a most intimate and close union before the creation; and, as it could not be said that God was “with himself,” it follows that the λόγος Logos was in some sense distinct from God, or that there was a distinction between the Father and the Son. When we say that one is “with another,” we imply that there is some sort of distinction between them.

The Gospel of John begins with this amazing thought: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (*John 1:1*). **This one beautiful sentence contains a depth of thought that we can barely grasp.**

First, the evangelist alludes to the Creation story, Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning.” The Word was already there before the beginning of the universe. Thus, **John affirms Jesus’ eternal existence.**

Next, “And the Word was with God.” In John 1:18, John indicates that He is “in the bosom of the Father.” No matter how we may try to envision what this exactly means, one thing is sure: **Jesus and the Father are intimately close.**

And then, he says, “And the Word was God.” **But how can the Word be with God and at the same time be God?** The answer is found in the Greek. Greek has a definite article, **the**, but no indefinite article, *a/an*. What’s important for us, then, is that the Greek definite article, “the,” points to particularity, some particular object or person.

In the phrase “the Word was with God,” the term “God” has the article, thus, pointing to a particular individual, the Father. *And the Word was with the Father.* In the phrase, “and the Word was God,” **the term God does not have**

**the article, which, in this setting, points to the characteristics of divinity.**

Jesus is God—not the Father, but he is still the divine Son of God, the second Person of the Godhead.

The apostle verifies this understanding, for John 1:3, 4 says that Jesus is the Creator of all things created. Anything that once didn't exist but, then, came into existence did so only through Jesus, the Creator God.

**\*\*\*READ???**

"From the days of eternity the Lord Jesus Christ was one with the Father; He was 'the image of God,' the image of His greatness and majesty, 'the outshining of His glory.'" —Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 19.

**Why is the full deity of Christ such an important part of our theology? What would we lose were Jesus, in any way, a mere created being? Bring your answer to class on Sabbath, and be prepared to discuss why Christ's eternal deity is so important to our faith.**

[>> Many throughout history have claimed to be a God. But Jesus is actually God!

**Col 1:16** For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:

**Col 1:17** And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

**1Ti 3:16** And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

**John 1:2 2** He was in the beginning with God.

## Was in the beginning with God

**From: Vincent Word Studies:** In [Jhn 1:1](#) the elements of this statement have been given separately: the Word, the eternal being of the Word, and his active communion with God. Here they are combined, and with new force. This same Word not only was coeternal with God in respect of *being* (ἦν, *was*), but was eternally in *active communion* with Him (*in the beginning with God*: [πρὸς τὸν Θεὸν](#)): “not simply the Word with God, but God with God” (Moulton). Notice that here [Θεὸν](#) has the article, as in the second proposition, where God is spoken of absolutely. In the third proposition, *the Word was God*, the article was omitted because [Θεὸς](#) described the nature of the Word and did not identify his person. Here, as in the second proposition, the Word is placed in *personal* relation to God.

This verse forms the transition point from the discussion of the personal being of the Word to His manifestation in creation. If it was *this same* Word, and no other, who was Himself God, and who, from all eternity, was in active communion with God, then the statement follows naturally that all things were created through Him, thus bringing the essential nature of the Word and His manifestation in creation into connection. As the idea of the Word involves knowledge and will, wisdom and force, the creative function is properly His. Hence His close relation to created things, especially to man, prepares the way for His incarnation and redeeming work. The connection between creation and redemption is closer than is commonly apprehended. It is intimated in the words of Isaiah ([Isa 46:4](#)), “I have made, and I will bear.” Redemption, in a certain sense, grows out of creation. Because God created man in His own image, He would restore him to that image.

**John 1:3** All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.

**From: SDABC 3. All things.** A common philosophical phrase denoting the entire universe (see 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; cf. Heb. 1:1, 2; see on John 1:9).

Were made. Gr. ginomai, “became,” “came into being,” “came to be” (see on v. 1). John describes creation as a completed act. Material things are not eternal; there was a time when they “were made.”



By him. John was not thinking of the Logos, or “Word,” in the abstract, metaphysical sense of Greek philosophy. The association of Christ with the Father in the work of creation is set forth again and again in the NT (see Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16, 17; Heb. 1:1, 2; cf. Rev. 3:14). Here John presents Christ as the Creator of all things, as in John 1:14 he sets Him forth as the agent of divine mercy and grace for the restoration, or re-creation, of all things. In eternity past the Word was not a passive, inactive entity, but was actively and intimately associated with the Father in the development and administration of “all things.”

Without him.The same truth stated negatively. Uniquely and exclusively, the “Word” is Creator.

**John 1:4** In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

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

Still seeking to give a true direction to her faith, Jesus declared, “I am the resurrection, and the life.” **In Christ is life, original, unborrowed, underived. “He that hath the Son hath life.” 1 John 5:12. The divinity of Christ is the believer's assurance of eternal life.** “He that believeth in Me,” said Jesus, “though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?” Christ here looks forward to the time of His second coming. Then the righteous dead shall be raised incorruptible, and the living righteous shall be translated to heaven without seeing death. The miracle which Christ was about to perform, in raising Lazarus from the dead, would represent the resurrection of all the righteous dead. By His word and His works He declared Himself the Author of the resurrection. He who Himself was soon to die upon the cross stood with the keys of death, a conqueror of the grave, and asserted His right and power to give eternal life. DA 530.3



**Additional notes:**

[From Barnes](#)

Was God - In the previous phrase John had said that the Word was “with God.” Lest it should be supposed that he was a different and inferior being, here John states that “he was God.” There is no more unequivocal declaration in the Bible than this, and there could be no stronger proof that

the sacred writer meant to affirm that the Son of God was equal with the Father; because:

1. There is no doubt that by the **λόγος Logos** is meant Jesus Christ.
2. This is not an “attribute” or quality of God, but is a real subsistence, for it is said that the **λόγος Logos** was made flesh **σάρξ sarx** - that is, became a human being.
3. There is no variation here in the manuscripts, and critics have observed that the Greek will bear no other construction than what is expressed in our translation - that the Word “was God.”
4. There is no evidence that John intended to use the word “God” in an inferior sense. It is not “the Word was a god,” or “the Word was ‘like God,’” but the Word “was God.” He had just used the word “God” as evidently applicable to Yahweh, the true God; and it is absurd to suppose that he would in the same verse, and without any indication that he was using the word in an inferior sense, employ it to denote a being altogether inferior to the true God.
5. The name “God” is elsewhere given to him, showing that he is the supreme God. See [Rom 9:5](#); [Heb 1:8](#), [Heb 1:10](#), [Heb 1:12](#); [1Jn 5:20](#); [Jhn 20:28](#).

The meaning of this important verse may then be thus summed up:

1. The name **λόγος Logos**, or Word, is given to Christ in reference to his becoming the Teacher or Instructor of mankind; the medium of communication between God and man.
2. The name was in use at the time of John, and it was his design to state the correct doctrine respecting the **λόγος Logos**.
3. The “Word,” or **λόγος Logos**, existed “before creation” - of course was not a “creature,” and must have been, therefore, from eternity.
4. He was “with God” - that is, he was united to him in a most intimate and close union before the creation; and, as it could not be said that God was “with himself,” it follows that the **λόγος Logos** was in some sense distinct from God, or that there was a distinction between the Father and the Son. When we say that one is “with another,” we imply that there is some sort of distinction between them.
5. Yet, lest it should be supposed that he was a “different” and “inferior” being - a creature - he affirms that he was God - that is, was equal with the Father.

This is the foundation of the doctrine of the Trinity:

1. That the second person is in some sense “distinct” from the first.

2. That he is intimately united with the first person in essence, so that there are not two or more Gods.
3. That the second person may be called by the same name; has the same attributes; performs the same works; and is entitled to the same honors with the first, and that therefore he is “the same in substance, and equal in power and glory,” with God.