

The Gospel of John 1:1 - 4¹ introduces the most basic of truths that separates Christianity from all other religions: the **uniqueness of Jesus Christ**.

Genesis 1:1 starts us at the Beginning and the message is clear: at the Beginning God **always had been**. This same God created the universe. He also said "Let us make..."², the very first reference to the Trinity. John amplifies this theme by introducing us to **the Logos**. All this was *before* time or the universe were created. We really, as mortals, have no frame of reference for this. Nevertheless, it is true and John gives us the "big picture" about the universe and time and the true nature of Jesus Christ. The whole book is like a toccata and fugue, where the toccata declares in clear thunderous tones the true nature of our Savior, the Logos at the creation. Then, as the book unfolds chapter by chapter, verse by verse, the most wondrous of fugues - themes, counterpoints, the richest of fugues in heaven and earth develops this **truth** of Jesus' person.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John 1:14 KJV.

John masterfully, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, plays to us the theme of the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, the God-Man - richly illustrated with accounts of Jesus' life, until the mighty crescendo in John 20:28 where "doubting Thomas" exclaims "...my Lord and my God." There is so much!³

Then the final chord:

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen. John 21:25, KJV.

No small wonder! An infinite God incarnate in human flesh in union that defies all human rationale.

My Own translation of John 1:1 - 4

Before we go any further I would like to share with you a translation that I did many years ago on what I call a position paper of the Nature of Jesus Christ. This was taken from the original and doesn't make for good English but the purpose was to put in writing my understanding of the original of our text of interest in this lesson. Here goes:

[1] On the occasion of the beginning of time eternally was the Word. And the Word was forever in intimate, reciprocal, communion

¹ Verse 5 is still a work in progress after over 10 years. These 5 verses are so profound that I may have to wait until my retirement so that I can have the time to finish this "work."

² Genesis 1:26a

³ Read also verses 30 and 31.

with the [other persons of the] Triune God and God was the Word.⁴

[2] This One [and no other]⁵ eternally was [on the occasion of the Beginning] in intimate, reciprocal communion with [the one and only] God.

[3] All things were made to pass from nothingness to existence through Him; and apart from His agency not even one single thing passed from nothing into existence which has become.

[4] Summed up in Him was the essence of Life and the Life was eternally the Light, the Luminary of the men.

The Person of the Word

John's Gospel is the ultimate book on the Person of Jesus Christ. So many times I have heard from Bible students that the Gospel of John teaches the divine nature of Jesus Christ. I have no argument with that assertion except I do not think it is the sum of John's theme. I would rather teach that the Gospel of John teaches about the Person of Jesus Christ, which includes His divine nature. Who can dispute that the humanness of Jesus Christ is not strongly emphasized by such passages as John 11:35 where He wept over the death of His friend Lazarus - and again in verse 38, His grieved emotionally while being led to Lazarus's grave - it was obvious to those around Him that His humanity was very much in evidence. Then at the command His divine nature⁶ was also much in evidence when He spoke "Lazarus, come forth" and Lazarus was made alive and walked out of the grave under his own power. I do not think it was an accident that John brought both of these points into the narrative for he was writing about the whole Person of Jesus Christ not just His divine nature.

The Mystical union of Jesus Christ is not a doctrine that hidden in the closet of some extreme Christian denomination. No. It is a basic *major* doctrine of the church and I have to wonder if the average Christian was asked to explain the doctrine if words would fail that person. Throughout this lesson, you will hear me use the term Mystical Union and Hypostatic Union or Jesus' "hypostasis." I apologize for appearing pedantic but sometimes we must be a bit technical to understand certain basic biblical doctrines and this is one of those occasions. But, as my one favorite theological professors used

⁴ Normally this phrase would be translated "...and the Word was God.." The position of God *before* the Word gives strong emphasis on the divine nature of Jesus Christ. The anarthrous use of the original for God lends to the *divine nature* of the Word. It could be translated "and the Word was divine in nature" but I'm reluctant to express it that way. The JW's are completely wrong to say that Jesus was a *god* from this anarthrous use of *theos*.

⁵ The Greek *outos* is a demonstrative pronoun with strong emphasis. There is no really good English word for it. You may say "This One", underline it and capitalize the 'One.' One thing is for certain: John is not allowing for anyone else but Jesus Christ, The Logos.

⁶ Evidence of the essence of Life which is summed up in Him. See vs. 4a.

to say 'I digress.'

Before we leave this section I would like to propose three points that John makes in this section. John us makes three statements regarding the Person of Jesus Christ.

1. The Logos, Jesus Christ, was eternally existing at and before the creation.
2. The Logos was forever in intimate, reciprocal communion with the other Persons of the Trinity.
3. The Logos was always divine. He was never less than God in essence.

These are the most basic of axioms necessary to understand Jesus' **uniqueness** - His person.

The Eternal Existence of the Word.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. John 1:1⁷

My working translation: "On the occasion of the beginning of time..." This whole section is so profound. What John is talking about here is the creation of the universe *and* time itself. The original gives a special emphasis on the preposition "in." It can be translated as I have done so - the Amplified treats this in an interesting way: "**IN THE beginning [before all time]...**" We must compare John's statement here with his statement in his epistle:

"That which was from the beginning,..." 1 John 1:1. Vincent make a statement about this comparison that I could not possibly improve upon:

"The difference is that by the words 'in the beginning' the writer places himself at the initial point of creation, and, looking back into eternity, describes that which was already in existence when creation began. 'The Word was in the beginning.' In the words 'from the beginning,' the writer looks back to the initial point of time, and describes what has been in existence from that point onward. Thus, 'in the beginning' characterizes the absolute divine Word as He was before the foundation of the world and at the foundation of the world. 'From the beginning' characterizes His development in time.⁸

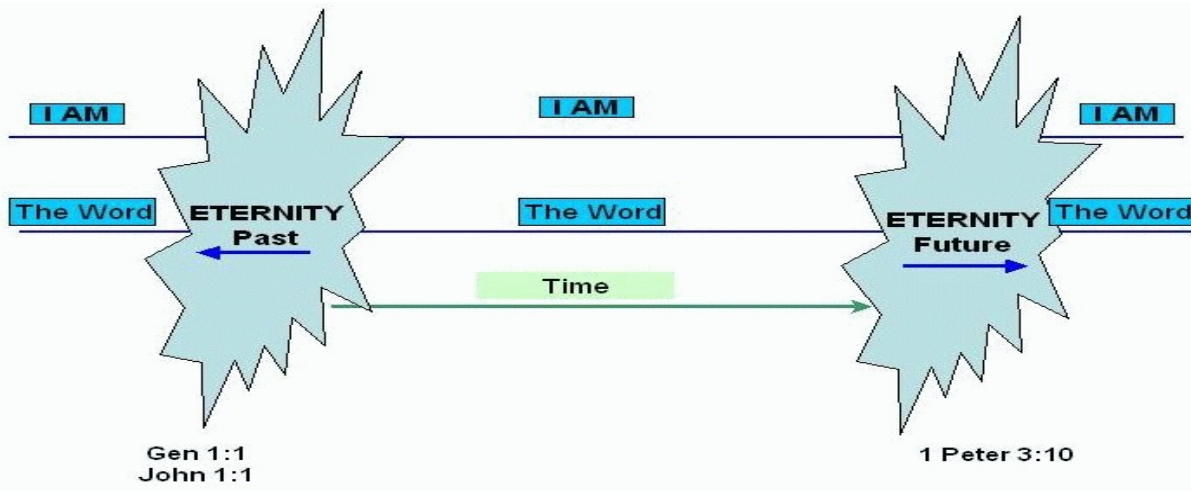
Lenski refers to this "in" as timeless.⁹ In = Eternity.

⁷ All passages will be KJV unless otherwise noted.

⁸ Vincent, Word Studies In the New Testament, vol II, Pg. 304, 305.

⁹ Lenski, Interpretation of St. John's Gospel, Pg. 28, Par. 1.

I would like to diagram it this way:



So John, in these two references, gives us not only the picture of an eternal Logos (Word), but I think he was consistent with his awareness that man is going to tend either come down on one of two sides of His Person - the human or the divine nature of Christ instead of His real Person - the unique God-Man Who is superior to both time and the universe. This why he frequently mixes both the humanity and the divinity of Jesus in his narratives and statements. In his gospel he picks the occasion of the creation and looks backward into eternity and sees an eternally existing Logos (Word). In his epistle he picks up this theme and looks downward from the beginning of time throughout history to the incarnation and writes of his own, correct viewpoint of His Person.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 1 John 1:1, my emphasis.

"...was the Word..." This really is the "big picture." All of human history - all of the universe all of the progression from creation down through time itself culminating in the end of the universe as we know it is inferior to the existence of Jesus Christ. Man, especially the theologians tend to put Jesus' Person "in a box." Again, the doctrine of the Mystical Union is *not* doctrine that is strange to the thinking of the church fathers - rather it is a doctrine that has not been properly emphasized in the church. This portion of God's word does just that. I have spent all this time just exegeting the first part of John 1:1. John commented on the whole subject of the person of Jesus Christ in this way:

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen. John 21:25.

I echo those words.