



January 9, 2022

“The Word?”

*Sunday school at 9:30, Service at 10:30 with King’s Kids.*

NEWS

Wednesday Night Classes resume... Annual Church meeting Sunday 1/23 at 9:30. Q&A at 12:00.

330 N. Somers Rd. (Mail: PO Box 10626) Kalispell, MT 59904~ (406) 755-1776

Visit the website ~ [www.myaletheia.com](http://www.myaletheia.com)

New Podcast Host: [myaletheia.podbean.com](http://myaletheia.podbean.com) Or go to Spotify, and type in [myaletheia](http://myaletheia)

Like us on Facebook ([aletheiachristianfellowship](http://aletheiachristianfellowship))

Emails: [pastor@myaletheia.com](mailto:pastor@myaletheia.com), [stacey.sundt@myaletheia.com](mailto:stacey.sundt@myaletheia.com)

**JOHN 1:1 ~**

In the beginning was the Word,

and the Word was with God,

and the Word was God.

John was by tradition the \_\_\_\_\_ of the 12 Apostles. He was raised with his older brother James on the north end of the \_\_\_\_\_ where they worked in their father’s family’s fishing business. John and James were most likely \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus through their mom, Salome.

John was probably born in about \_\_\_\_ A.D. and was part of Jesus’ inner circle.

He stayed in Jerusalem until the 60’s A.D. when he made his way to \_\_\_\_\_.

During the Persecution of the Emperor Domitian, John was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. According to tradition, he was supernaturally preserved and so, exiled to \_\_\_\_\_. John was released in \_\_\_\_ A.D. and returned to Ephesus.

John wrote 5 Bible Books...

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

Titus Flavius \_\_\_\_\_, in about 190 A.D. wrote that “John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the (previous) Gospel(s), being urged by his friends, and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel.”

The Temple was obliterated by the Romans in \_\_\_\_ A.D.

No one with any familiarity with the Bible can possibly miss the \_\_\_\_\_ between John 1:1 and Genesis 1:1. The LXX, or Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) starts identically.

Ἐν ἀρχῇ (ēn ārchē). “In the Beginning”. It is actually just \_\_\_\_\_ words, just as the original Hebrew בְּרֵאשִׁית (bə-rā-shēt).

To create the physical, where a beginning can exist, requires a desire, an intelligent action, and energy. Psalm 33:6, “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.”

We are wrongly called human beings, we are human \_\_\_\_\_ because we are in a constant state of change. Everything is like that. Heraclitus wrote from \_\_\_\_\_ and came up with the concept of the \_\_\_\_\_. Five centuries later Philo Judaeus applied it to the God of the Bible.

“Was the Word.” “Was,” means already \_\_\_\_\_.

“And the Word was with God.” It is \_\_\_\_\_ Word, and it is \_\_\_\_\_ God.

“With” is woefully inadequate - it is \_\_\_\_\_ in close personal relationship.

“And the Word was God.” It is actually, “And God was the Word.”

Martin Luther, marveled at the perfection of it, saying “The lack of an article is against Sabellianism; the word order is against Arianism.”

-----  
Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

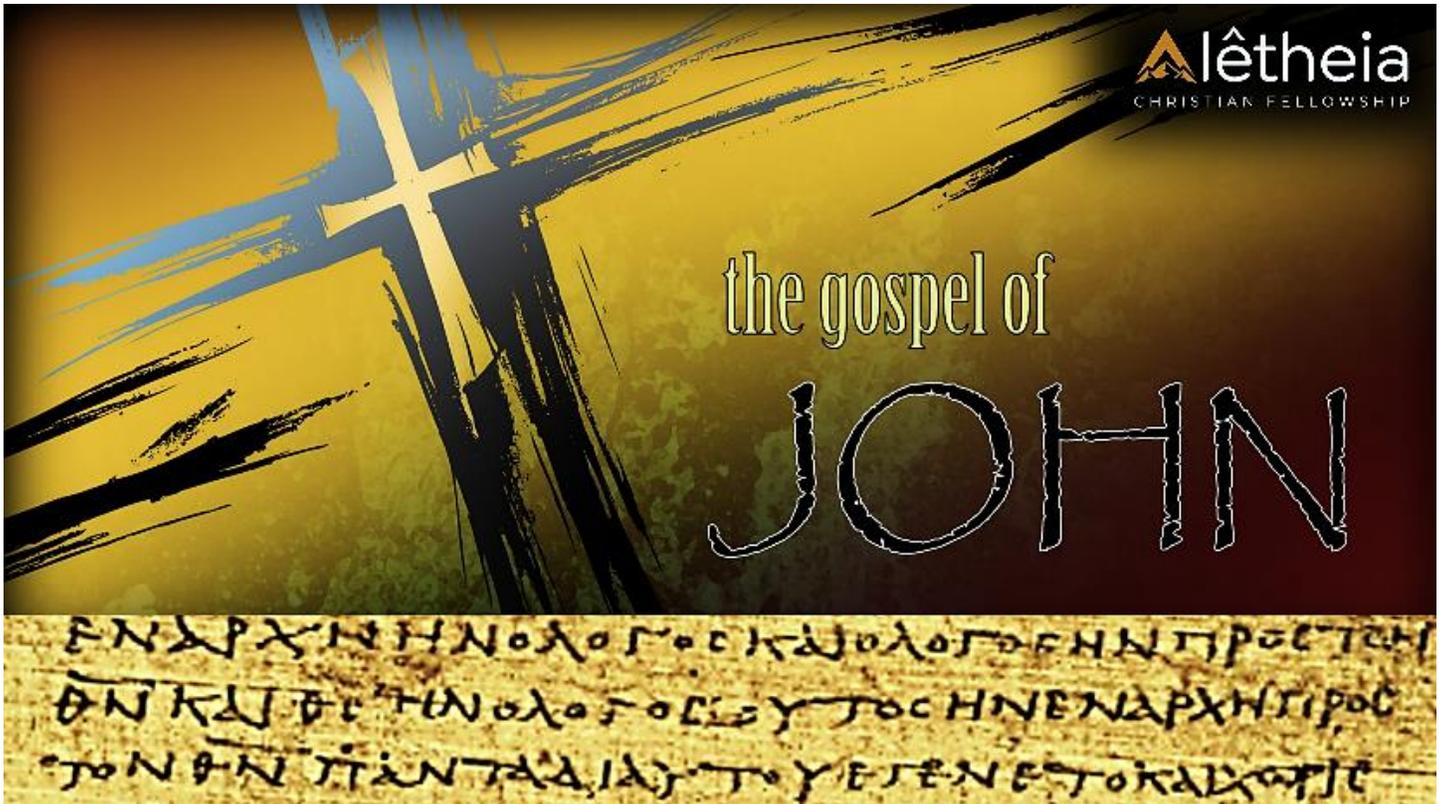
The logo for Alêtheia Christian Fellowship features a stylized orange mountain range icon to the left of the word "Alêtheia" in a white, sans-serif font. Below "Alêtheia" is the text "CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP" in a smaller, white, all-caps, sans-serif font.

# Alêtheia

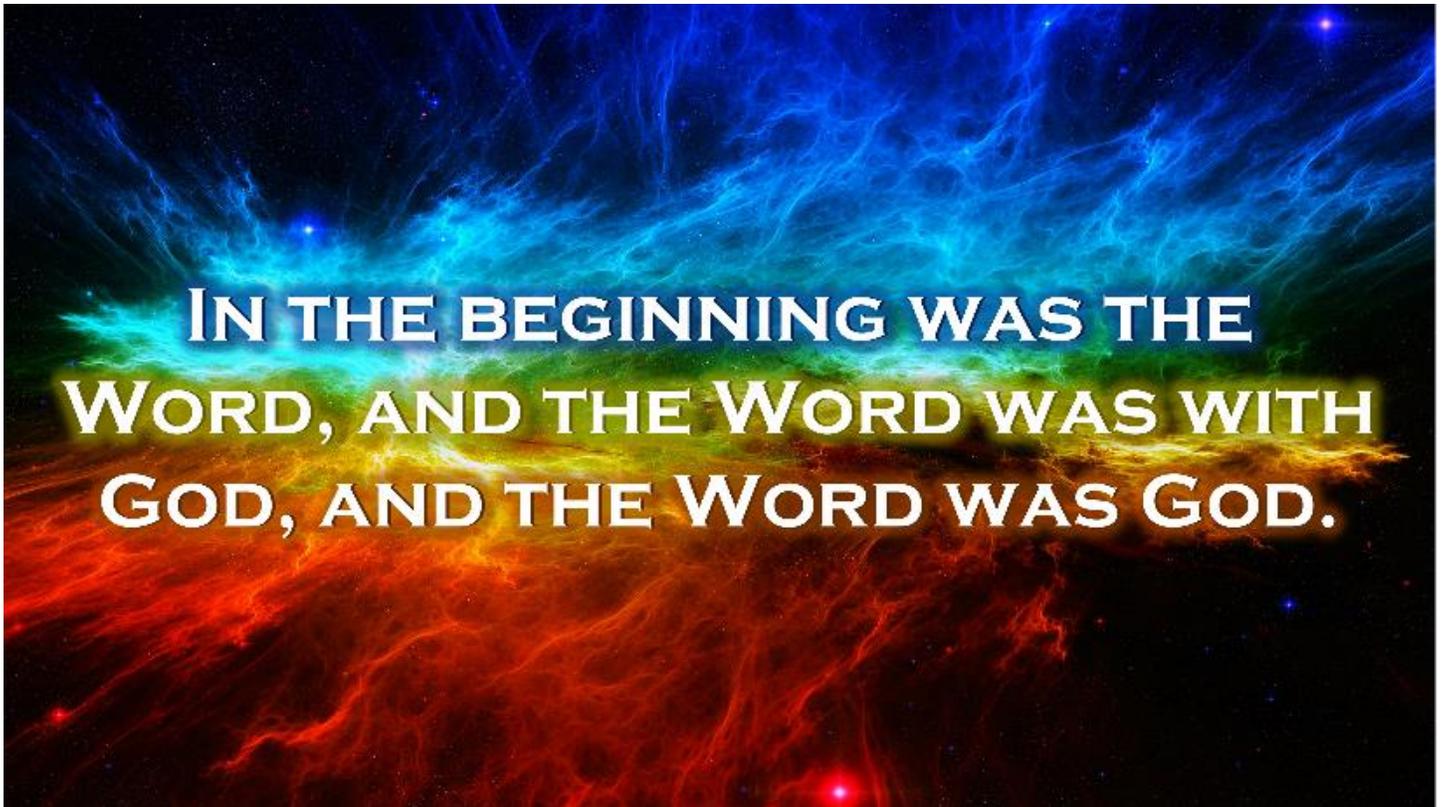
CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP



We are going to work our way through the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to the Beloved Disciple, a Son of Thunder, the Apostle of Love, our brother John.



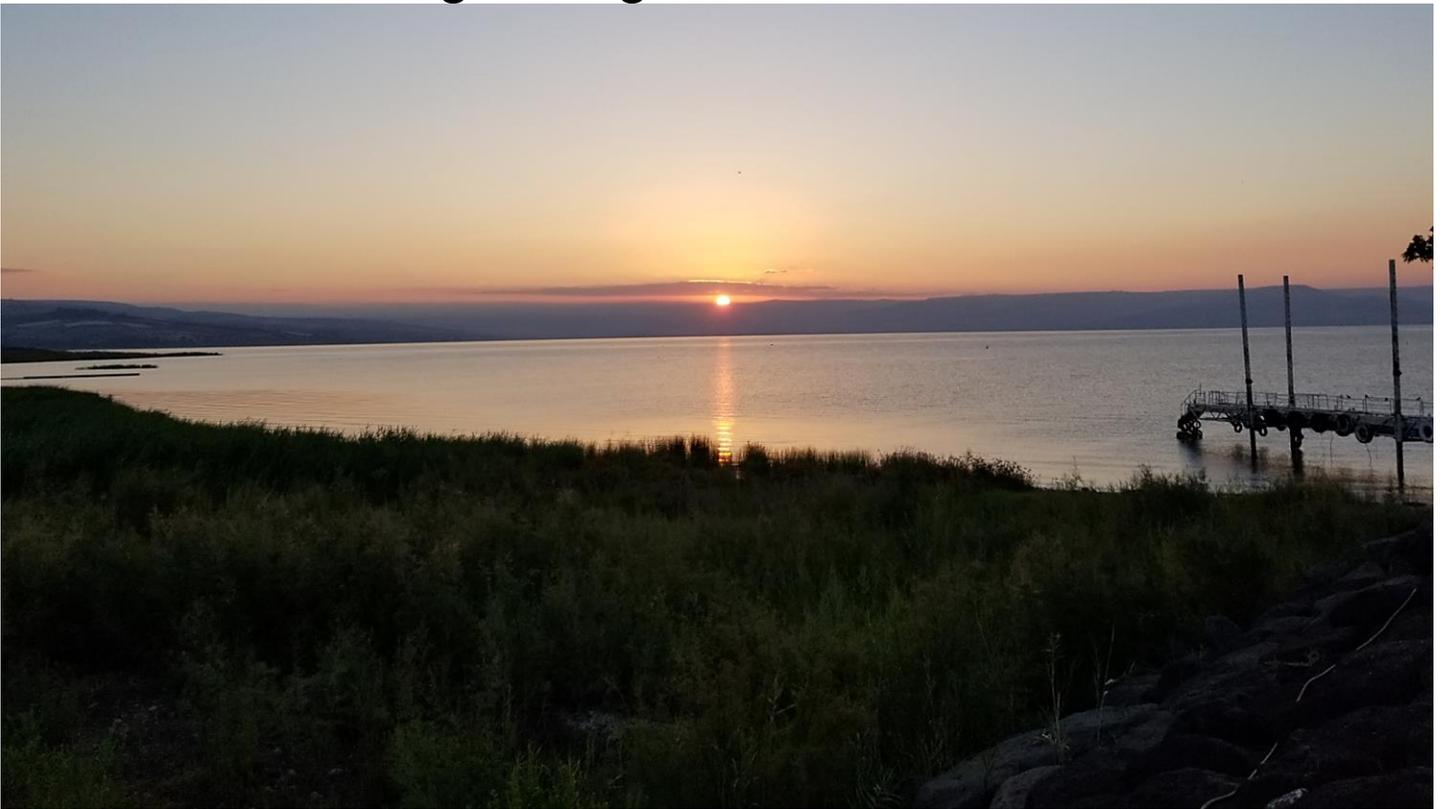
We're fairly familiar with John by now having just spent 6 months going through his First Epistle. As we saw it is a profound Letter, with a profound opening. That's a word you need to get used to - profound. It's the word that best describes the Gospel as well and in particular the prologue or opening...



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

I can honestly say that we could spend a month of Sundays studying those 17, simple, repetitive, seemingly artless, English words. I'm not exaggerating one bit. As we saw in I John, our author was blessed by an inspiration of the Holy Spirit that enabled him to basically use a child's vocabulary, repeat that limited vocabulary of small words in circular patterns, and through that create the most profound Truths found in God's Holy Word. It is remarkable.

John may not have benefited from much of a formal education, but he was brilliant. I don't know if his brilliance was natural, or only the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, or some combination of both, but whatever his intelligence, understanding, and ability in other areas, His Biblical writings are genius.



John was by tradition the youngest of the 12 Apostles. He was raised with his older brother James on the north end of the Sea of Galilee where they worked in their father's family's fishing business. The Sea is just a lake my friends - just a lake, roughly 1/3 the size of Flathead Lake. That's still a big body of water though. Josephus, writing in the same timeframe as John,

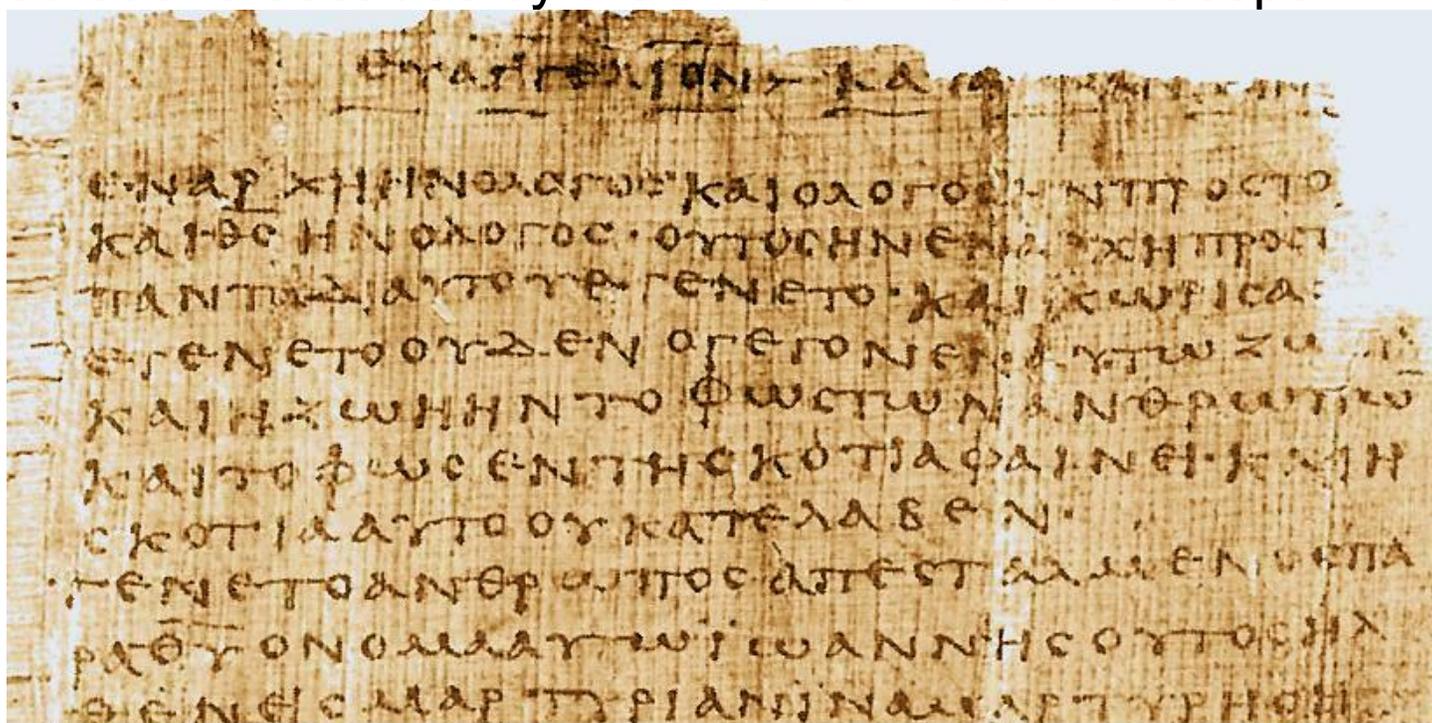
commented that during a visit to the area he counted 230 fishing boats working on the lake from his vantage point.

John and James were most likely cousins of Jesus through their mom, Salome. She was likely Mary's sister. Her husband was Zebedee. Just to clarify, our John, is not John the Baptist - that was a different, older, relative of Jesus. While we're at it his brother James was the fellow inner-circle Apostle, not the guy who wrote the Bible Book called James. That James was Jesus' half-brother.

John was probably born in about 10 A.D. He would have had some Old Testament education from the local Synagogue, and since it seems that he was known to the High Priest of Israel, it's possible that he was better educated in Judaism than we think.

Whatever his Jewish education, he was clearly not classically trained. His is the weakest Greek in the New Testament, particularly in the Book of Revelation written while in exile - perhaps without any assistance from a scribe. All of that said, John spent three years in "Seminary" training under the tutelage of the Lord

Jesus Christ Himself. Additionally, John had continued in his studies of all things pertaining to Christianity for at least 3 decades by the time he wrote this Gospel.



Papyrus 66 dated to 175-225 A.D. Opening of John

Even though his Greek was poor, John was able to make himself readily understood. That means that we today, can easily understand what John thought was important enough to convey. That bit, his thoughts, his understanding, his teaching, is profound. The words, not so much, but the meticulous way he used them more than makes up for it. I'm blown away by how such little words can be used over and over in a pattern that produces such earth-shattering, life-altering, Truths.

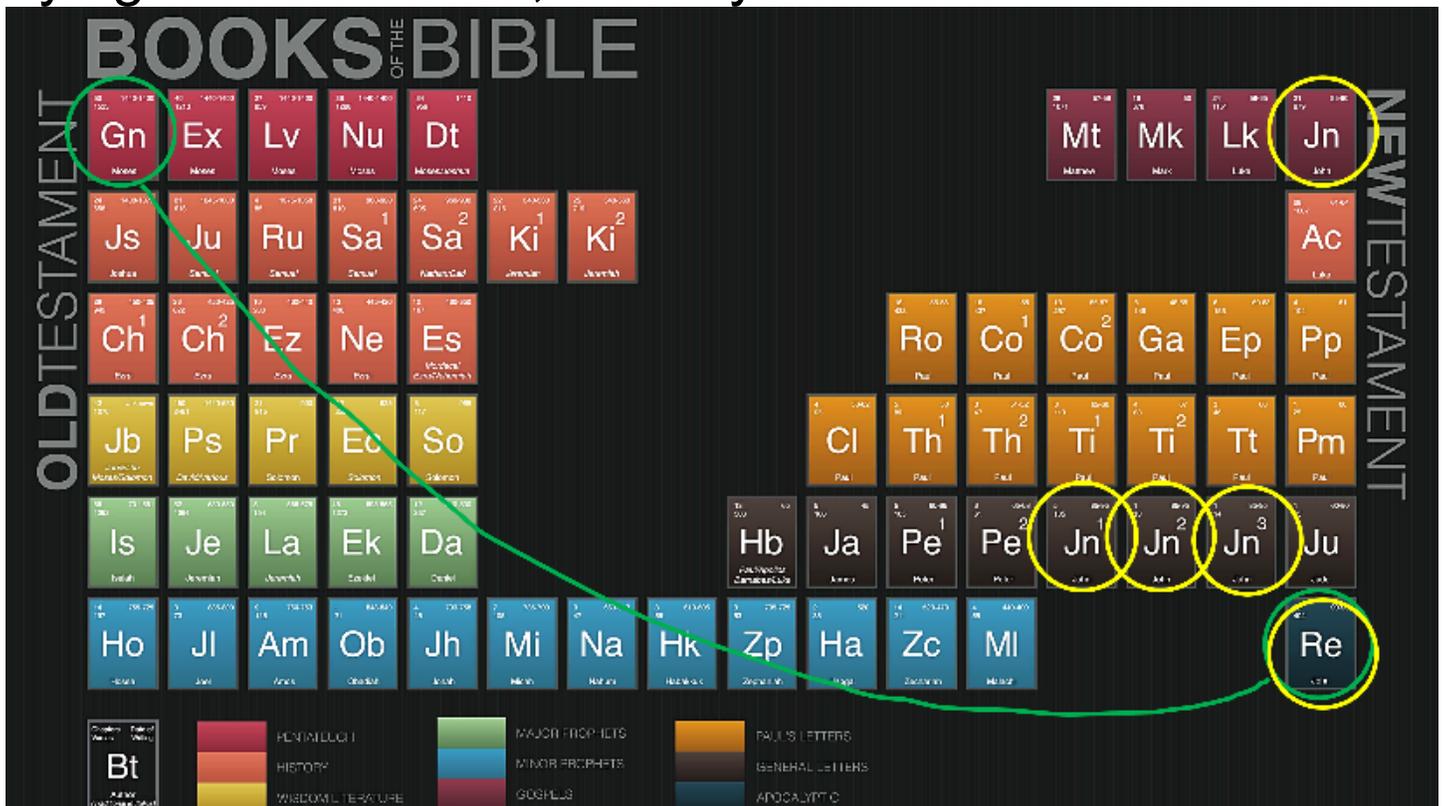
John was part of Jesus' inner circle with his brother James and Peter. John may have witnessed Jesus Baptized. He was likely present at Jesus' first miraculous sign in Bethany, and he was definitely present when Jesus walked on the water, calmed the storm, healed and fed the multitudes, cast out demons, raised people from the dead, and was transfigured in the company of Elijah and Moses. John was in the Upper Room where Jesus washed his feet and ate next to Him while He instituted Holy Communion. John witnessed Jesus being arrested, being tried, being tortured, being crucified, being buried. It was John who was the first Apostle to reach the Empty Tomb. He saw Jesus Resurrected and He saw Him Ascend into Heaven. John was in the room when the Holy Spirit descended upon them and filled them on that monumental Day of Pentecost.



He stayed in Jerusalem until the 60's A.D. when he made his way to Ephesus, on the western coast of modern-day Turkey. Church tradition tells us that John moved to that city with Jesus' mother, his aunt Mary, and that he established a kind of school to train the next generation of Christian leaders. Ancient church documents describe how other Apostles and Disciples who had personally known Jesus would pass through each staying for a time sharing their stories.

During the Persecution of the Emperor Domitian, John, by then about 80 years old, was captured and thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil. According to tradition,

John was supernaturally preserved through that ordeal and the Romans, being extremely freaked out, decided to exile him to a penal colony on the Island of Patmos. Patmos is just off the coast of Ephesus. That took place in roughly 90 A.D. John was released in 96 A.D. when the Emperor Domitian died. He returned to Ephesus where he lived out his last few years, himself dying in his late 80's, or early 90's.



John wrote 5 Bible Books. This Gospel, the 3 Epistles and the Book of Revelation. One scholar said that to really understand John's Gospel you must relate it to Genesis and to Revelation. It's an interesting comment

and I see a lot of validity in it so, I'm going to try to do that a bit as we go forward.

When did John write this Gospel? Part of the answer is contained within the Gospel and part must be determined from the secondary sources. You'll hear people say that John was not the author, but rather that the Gospel was produced by this Johannine School in Ephesus sometime in the second century. Such people, despite what they may say, do not believe in God's supernatural intervention in the affairs of mankind. That's a fancy way of saying that they don't believe that the Holy Spirit wrote the Bible through human authors. Ultimately, they don't believe in the Biblical Jesus because they don't believe in the Bible as factually true when it speaks about Him.



While I do consult such scholars for the work they have done, I completely disagree with their assumption that the Bible is merely the product of men. Titus Flavius Clement, a pagan philosopher from Athens, converted to Christianity, and in 190 A.D. took over the “Seminary” that had been started by John Mark in Alexandria, Egypt. Yes, the Mark who wrote that Gospel. Titus Flavius Clement is better known as Saint Clement of Alexandria. He is the one who “Gives the tradition of the earliest (church fathers), as to the order of the Gospels, in the following manner: The Gospels containing the genealogies (Matthew & Luke), he says, were written first. The Gospel according to Mark (after

them). But, last of all, John, perceiving that the external facts had been made plain in the (previous) Gospel(s), being urged by his friends, and inspired by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel.” The Gospel according to John.

Most people agree that the Gospel of Luke was written while Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea spanning the time from about 58 to 60 A.D. That would indicate that John wrote his Gospel account from Ephesus in the early to mid-60's A.D. That fits very well with the internal and external evidence. There are others who think that John wrote from Ephesus after his release from exile in the mid to late 90's A.D.

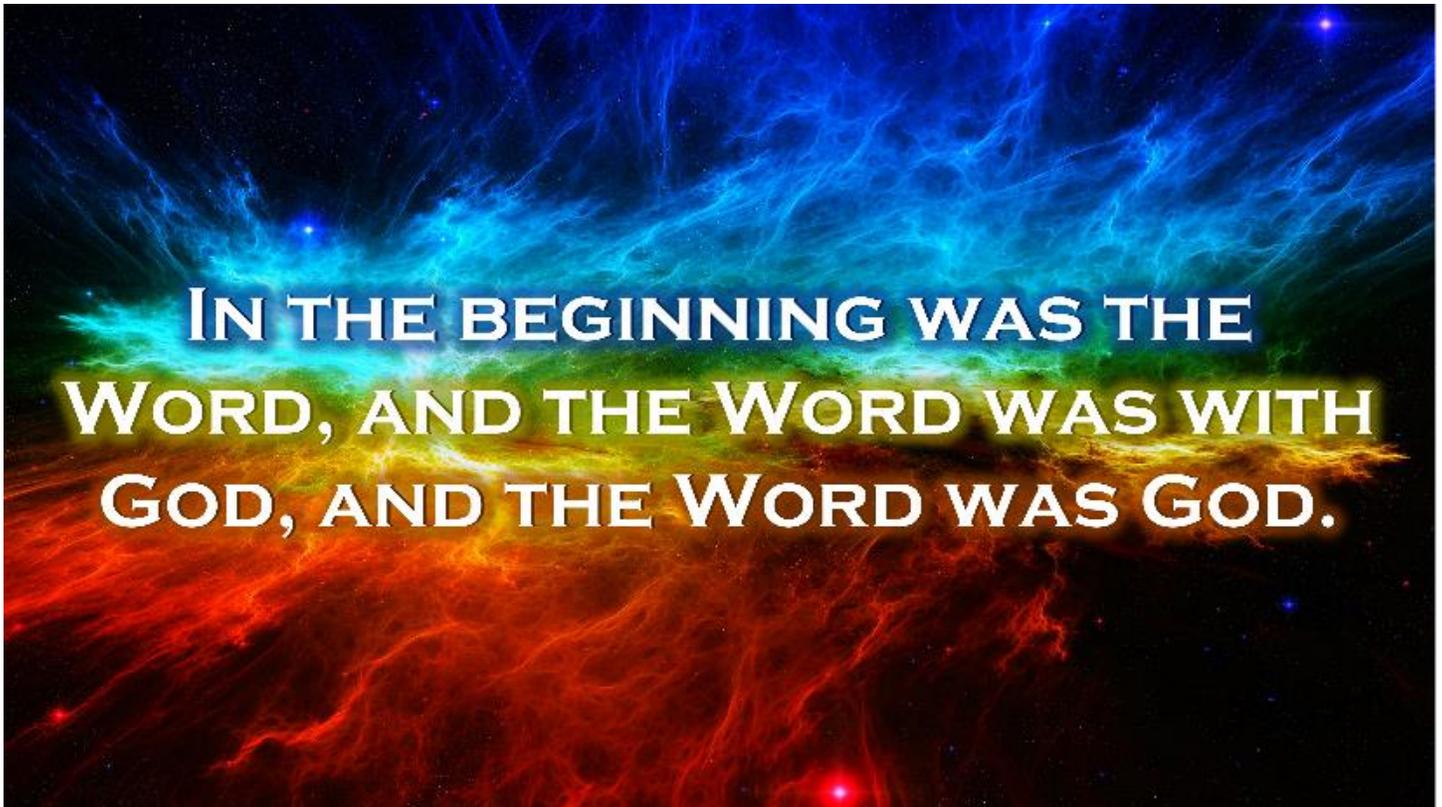


In this Gospel, John often alludes to the New Covenant replacing the Old - that Jesus was the fulfillment of the Old and has forever ushered in the New. Jesus, during His earthly ministry, put a temporary end to Temple sacrifice to show that one day it would end forever as He became the once and for all sacrifice. Well, the Temple was obliterated by the Romans in 70 A.D. Nearly everyone agrees that the Gospel could not have been written during the 70's or 80's because the Temple destruction would have been too fresh and, as such, John would have explicitly mentioned it, because it plainly proves the point of His Gospel. Nowhere does he even allude to it and so the thinking goes, he had to

have written either before it was destroyed in 70 or much later - like 25-30 years after the event.

In my humble opinion, there is no way on God's green earth, that John could have written after the Temple was destroyed and not have mentioned it - even if 100 years had passed - he didn't forget that his homeland was torched, that his capitol city was burned, that his people died by the hundreds of thousands, that 100,000 of his countrymen were enslaved and that the great Temple had been erased - John didn't forget. He would have never missed the connection between the Temple's destruction and Jesus.

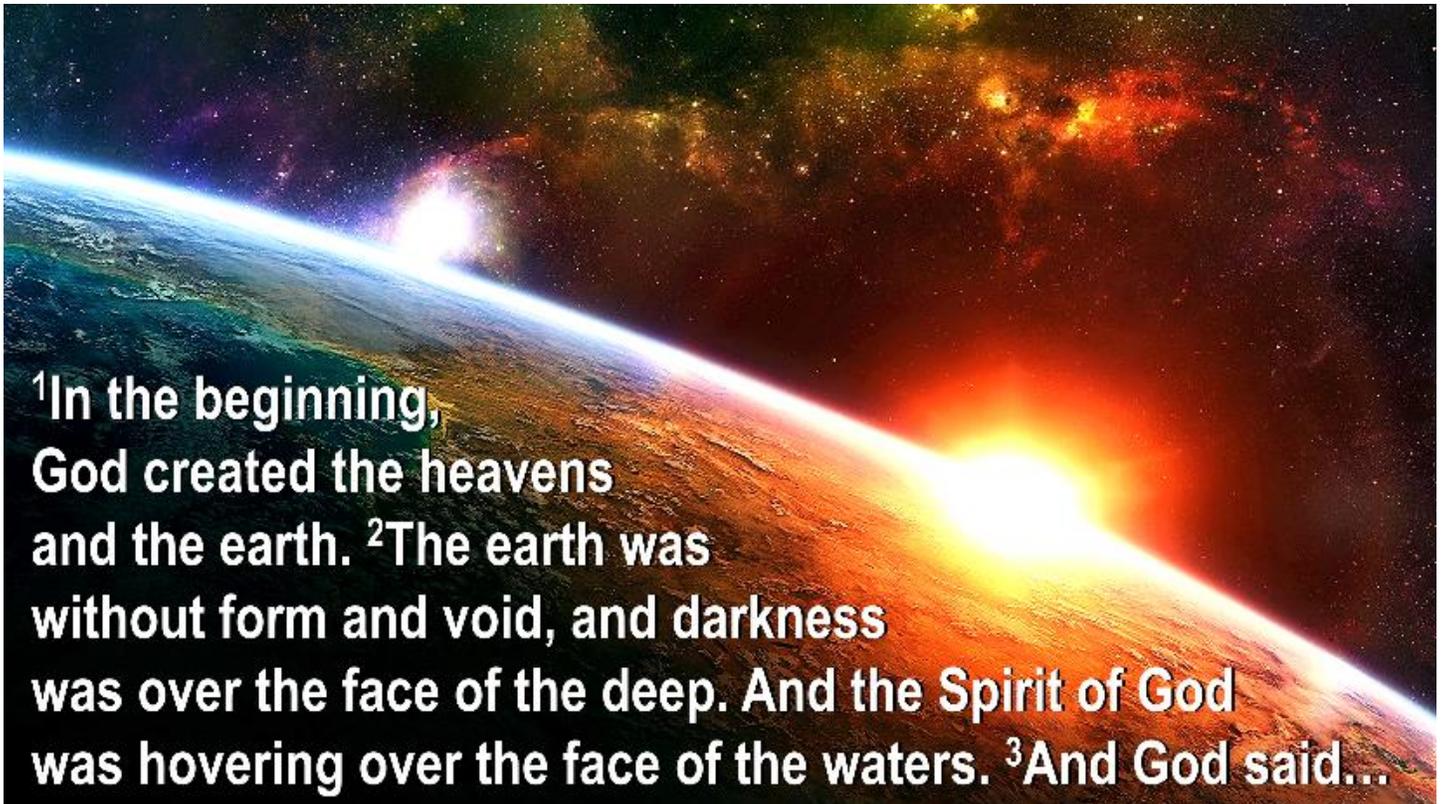
Why? Because as I have repeatedly said, once the Temple was ruined Biblical Judaism ceased to exist. That is far too significant to a Gospel trying to convince people that the Messiah came and completed the work to end Biblical Judaism in favor of a New Judaism in a sense. Far too easy to make the case for Christ if the Temple was no more and John does not make that case therefore, I believe He wrote in about 65 A.D.



**IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE  
WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH  
GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD.**

What did he write? John 1:1 ~ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

No one who knew anything about the Bible or Judaism back then could have possibly missed the connection to Genesis 1:1. For one thing everyone was most familiar with the Greek translation of Genesis completed about 300 years before Jesus' ministry. The LXX, or Septuagint, or Greek Old Testament Bible starts identically.



Ἐν ἀρχῇ (ĕn ä̀r-ĉā). “In the Beginning”. It is actually just two words - the preposition “In,” and the word “Beginning.” In the original Hebrew it is בְּרֵאשִׁית (bə-řä-shēt). That translated into Greek it is, just as John wrote it in his Gospel, Ἐν ἀρχῇ (ĕn ä̀r-ĉā). It mirrors the Hebrew by omitting the definite article - the English word “The.” We add the word “The”, so it makes sense in English, but it misses the nuance.

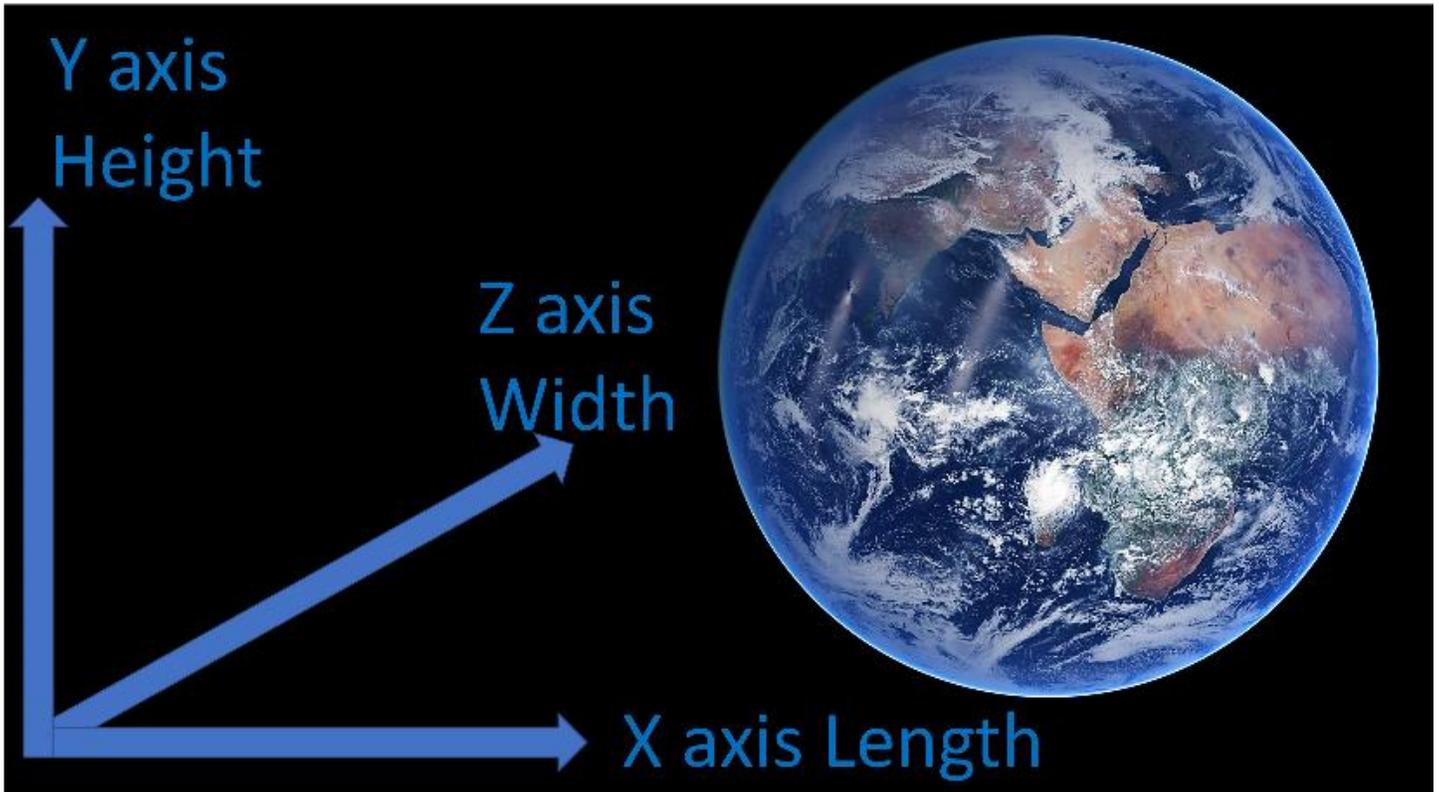
Moses, writing Genesis, was trying to convey, not a specific beginning and not an indefinite beginning either, but a qualitative beginning. What does that mean? A definite beginning is one where I point to a

calendar and say Billy Bob was born at 11:03 and 17.65 seconds A.M. Eastern Standard Time on March 6, 2005. In order to be definite... Time already has to exist. An indefinite beginning means that it is undefined and could therefore be any beginning, but Moses didn't just have any beginning in mind.

By stating it the way he did in Hebrew, Moses pointed to the precise moment that God began His creative activity in this physical reality which did not yet exist. This is the time before time, so to speak.

Imagine that there is no universe at all - no physical material, no container to hold anything, so no physical space and therefore no physical time either. There is only God. Pure energy, pure intelligence, pure goodness, pure love, pure spirit. Existing without beginning and without end and so by very definition, without middle and forever unchanging and unchangeable.

Imagine God converts a tiny bit of His energy into physical matter - something Einstein proved possible with relativity.

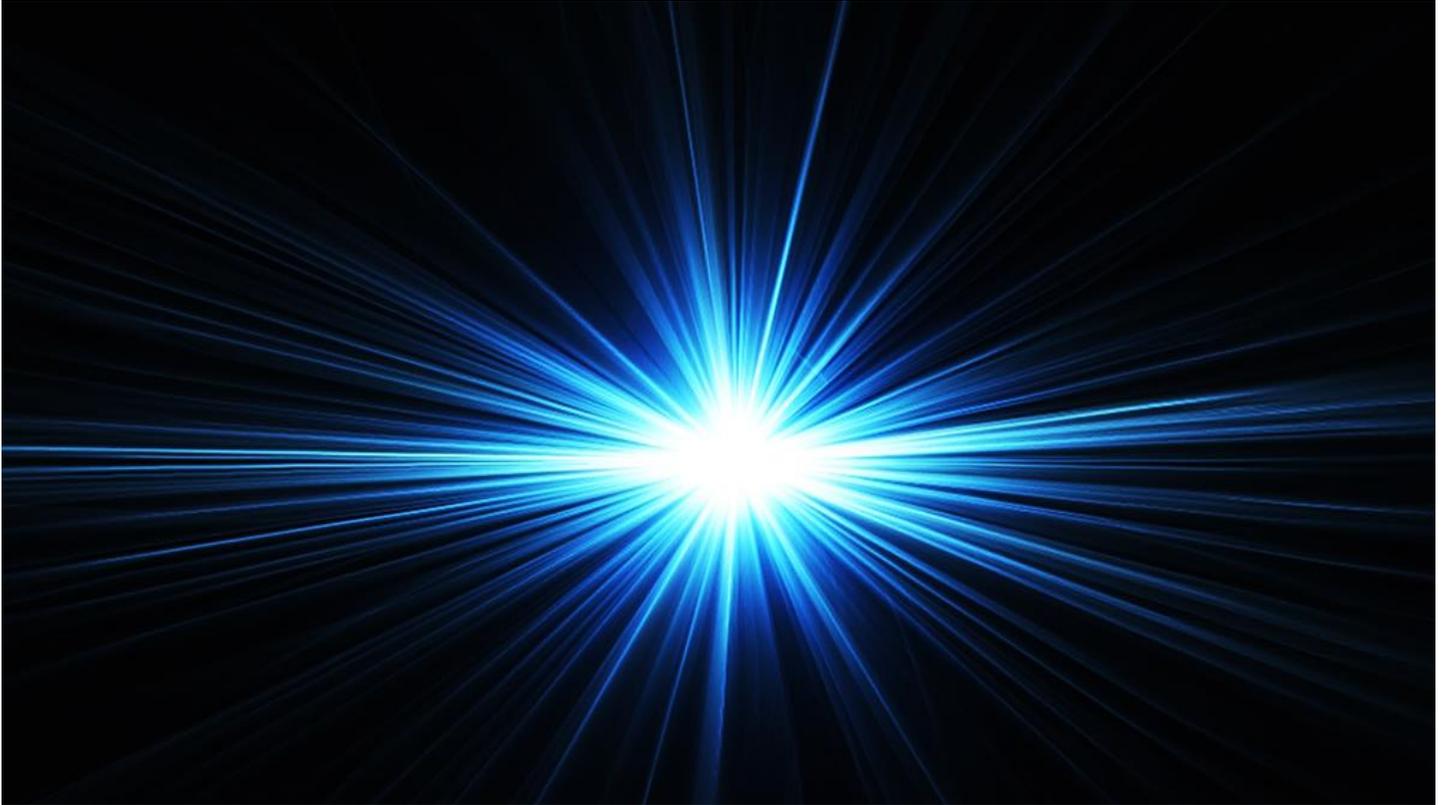


Once God creates physical matter, space to contain that 3-dimensional matter is necessitated. You can't have mass without the space to contain it. Now we have a container to hold the matter.



That space, no matter how small and no matter how quickly you can travel within it, still requires some time, no matter how slight to transit the space thus necessitating the fourth dimension we call time.

Time is a variable and completely dependent function of space, which itself is a variable and completely dependent function of matter and matter is merely the result of intelligently converted energy.



To create the physical, where a beginning can exist, requires a desire, an intelligent action, and energy. Psalm 33:6, “By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.” That is the desire, or will of God we call our Father. That is the intelligent action we call the Word of God, His coherent Message that is propelled by means of His Breath, his Spirit, His power, His energy. God in three persons spoke the universe into existence in the beginning, which was no beginning, because a beginning was part of His creation.

Unlike any other religious text, the Bible starts before anything at all existed in the physical world and insists that in that time before any time there was God, there was One and only One God, that one God was perfectly internally relational, three in one, that He was fully actualized and needed absolutely nothing else at all. That He was pure existence and therefore a being. God is the only being... everything else is a becoming. We are wrongly called human beings, we are human becomings because from the moment of conception until there is nothing left of us but dust we are in a constant state of change.

Everything in this physical reality is like that - nothing stays the same - everything decays, wears out, dies, everything and everyone. Modern Science confirms that - what it confirms is that our old buddy Heraclitus was right all along.

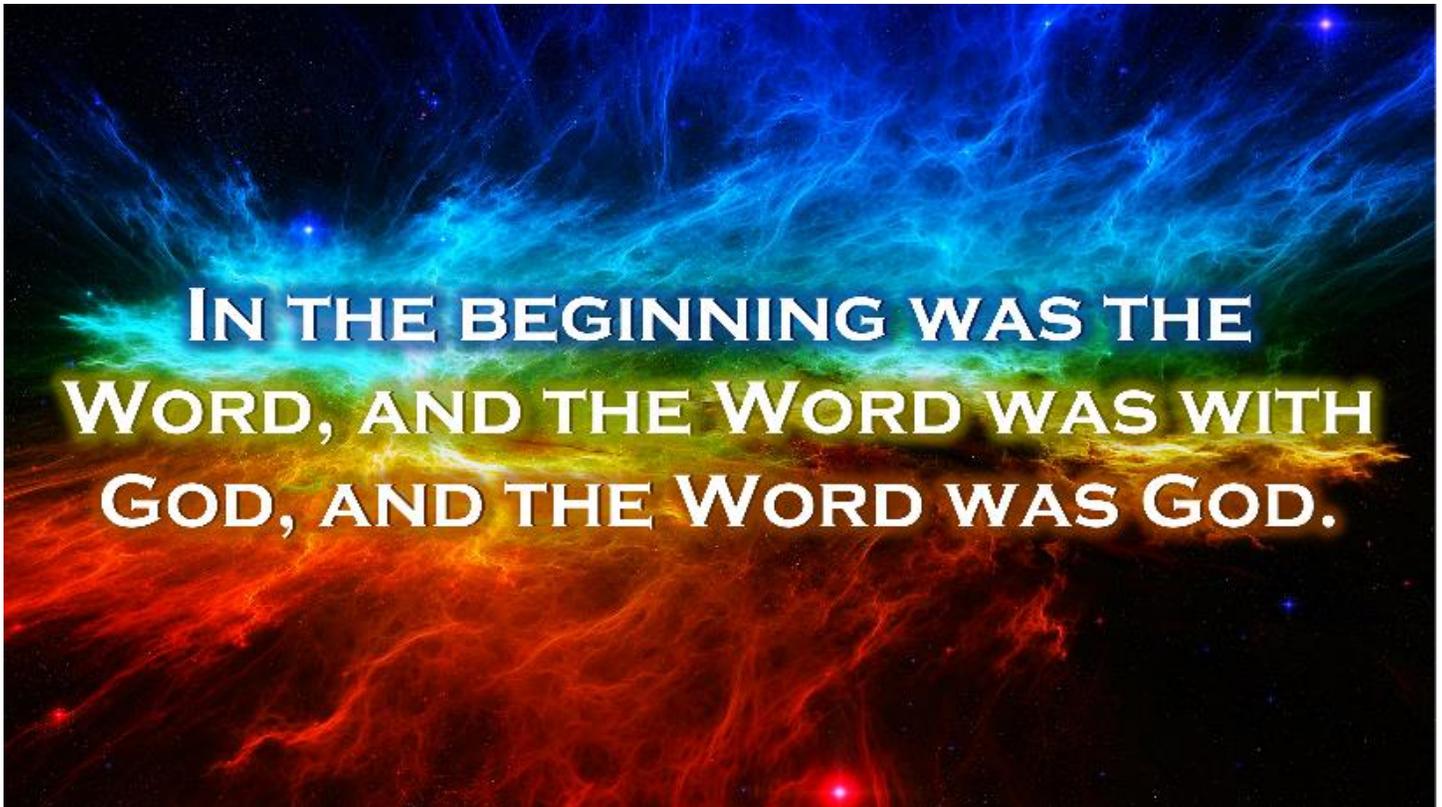


Well over 500 years before John wrote from Ephesus, Heraclitus wrote from Ephesus. He is most famous for his statement that “You can never step into the same river twice.” His point was that the water flowed and so the river was never identical from one moment to the next. Both it and everything else was in a constant state of flux, or change.

Heraclitus realized that the divine could not be like that - constantly changing and ultimately decaying. God and man were wildly different. There was no way for man to approach God and for God to approach man. He would have to speak to man through a mediator.

Heraclitus came up with the idea that the divine mediator would be the Logos - the Word - better the intelligent and intelligible coherent Message.

Philo Judaeus was a Jewish philosopher writing a bit before John. He took Heraclitus' work and applied it to the God of the Bible. Here we have John, extremely familiar with the Scripture, particularly the Torah starting with Genesis. A guy living in a city whose most famous philosopher invented the concept of the divine Word. A man of Jewish ancestry no doubt very familiar with Philo's work, an Apostle taught by Jesus, assisted by fellow eyewitnesses and inspired by the Holy Spirit. This is what he came up with and it is... Profound.



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

So, “In the beginning” means before time existed at all - and since no time, no space. Since no space, no material. See, you can go the other way around as well.



According to Genesis “God Created”. God is Elohim, the Hebrew plural word for God. Since “God is One,” it’s correctly translated as God instead of gods, but it is plural. There’s an obvious reason for that from a Christian perspective, but without going into all the details, I will say that while the Tri-unity is implied, there are many deep concepts involved here as well.

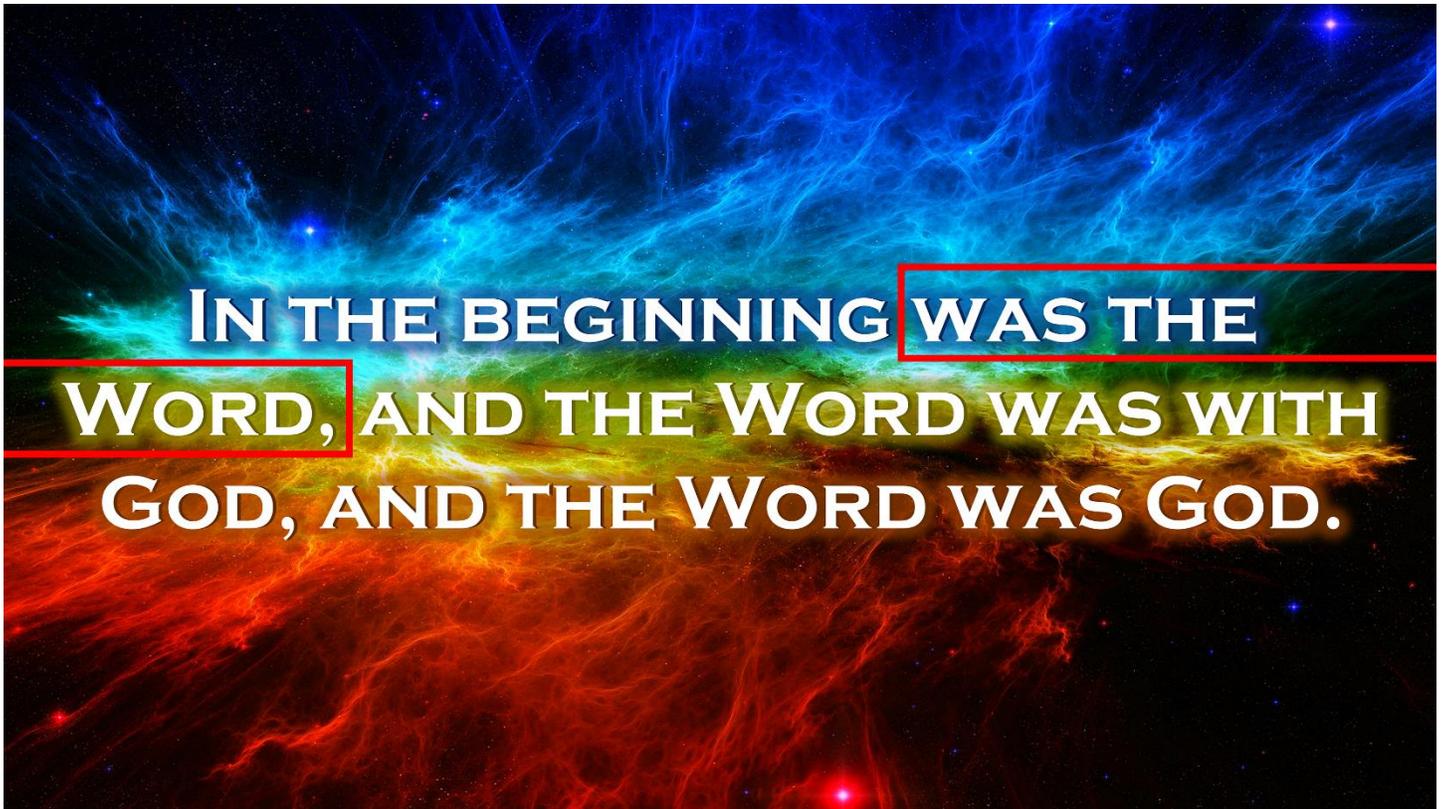
“Created” is a word in Hebrew used exclusively for the activity of God alone. We humans are matter and energy rearrangers, God actually creates. Liberal scholars object to the notion that ancient people could have understood the concept of God creating

something from nothing - that is creation ex nihilo. 1) First, modern people plagued with the monumentally wrong idea of Neo-Darwinian evolution think that ancient people were less intelligent than we are today... That humans are evolving to be smarter. In actual fact it's just the opposite. 2) Second, God certainly understood the concept. He can and does have people operate beyond their own understanding. 3) Third, as I said, God didn't create from nothing, He created through His Will producing His Word propelled by His Breath. That confirms something else. If I convert cash into a cash card it's still my money. God exchanges some of His own personal energy for matter, space and time, He still owns all of that - it is all literally His. The mass that constitutes you, the space you occupy, the time you think you have, all literally belong to God.

Really, even little ole me? What did God create - specifically? He created "The Heavens and the earth." It does not mean that He created those two things, although I don't know what else there is... "The heavens and the earth," is a colloquialism, idiom or saying in Hebrew, which is two opposites to indicate something all-encompassing. Technically it is called a

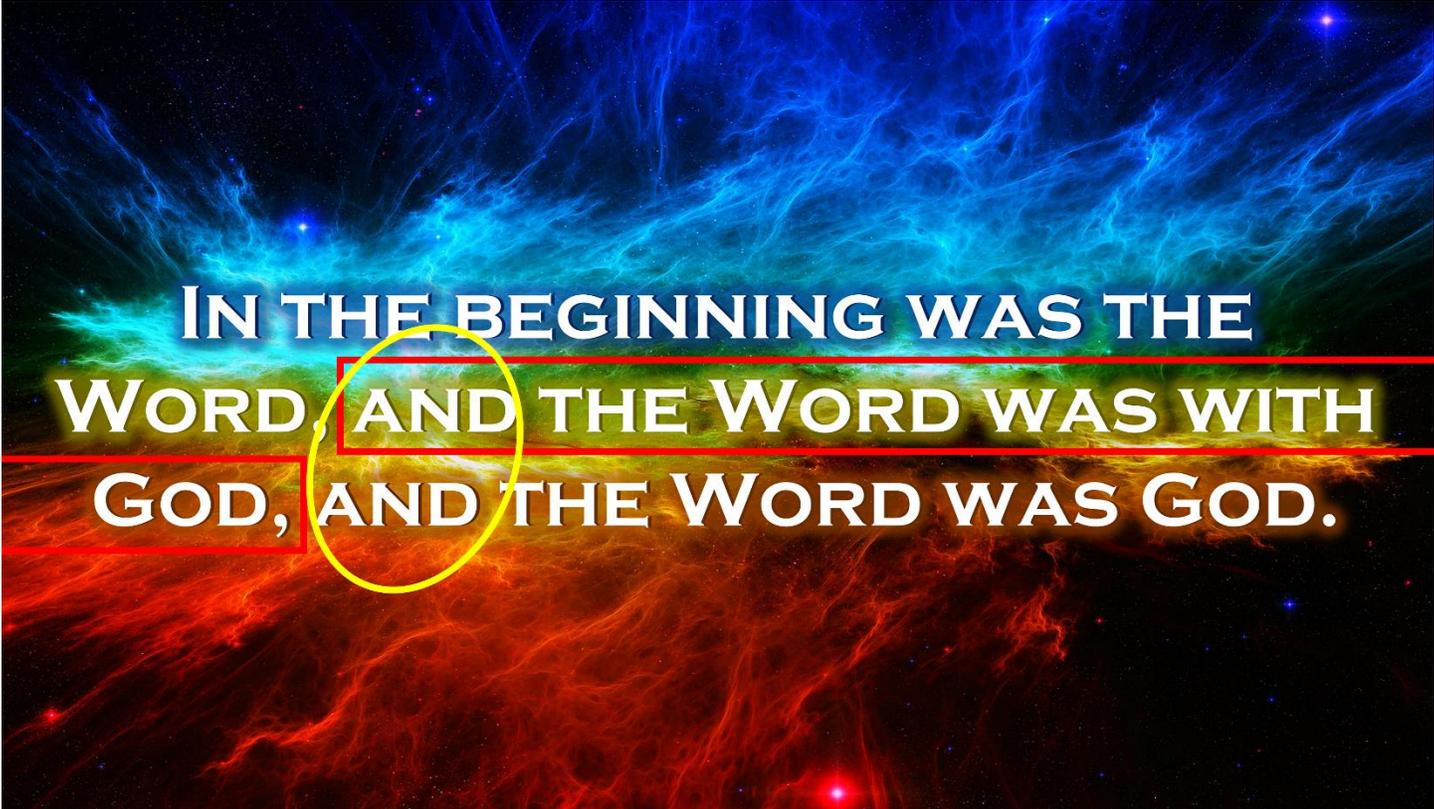
merism. It like our saying, “Search high and low,” meaning search everywhere. We incorporate a series of merisms in our wedding vows, “For better for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health...” We are not saying only better or worse, only richer or poorer, only sick or well, but everything in between. In other words, I take you no matter what...

Two other obvious things I’ll quickly mention in the Genesis opening. 1) First, God through His Will, His Word and His breath created everything and so therefore nothing apart from God Himself exists that He did not actively create. 2) Second, unlike any other religion that exists, nothing can be known before that “Beginning.” This is the mistake that Richard Dawkins and other atheists make. They assume that God needs a creation story. Dawkins often claims that substituting God, for the physical conundrum of “Where did the stuff of the universe come from?” is just changing the question to “Where did God come from?” He’s wrong, because God is not a physical becoming, He’s an eternal Being.



Back to John, in the “Before there was anything” “Was the Word.” “Was,” means already existed. It’s the verb “to be” in the imperfect tense. What’s the imperfect tense? In this situation it makes, “Was,” mean “Already existed” with the sense that existence continues.

Enough grammar. The “Word,” is The Logos. Again, not just a word, or words in general, but a word spoken for a purpose - it is better understood as The Message.

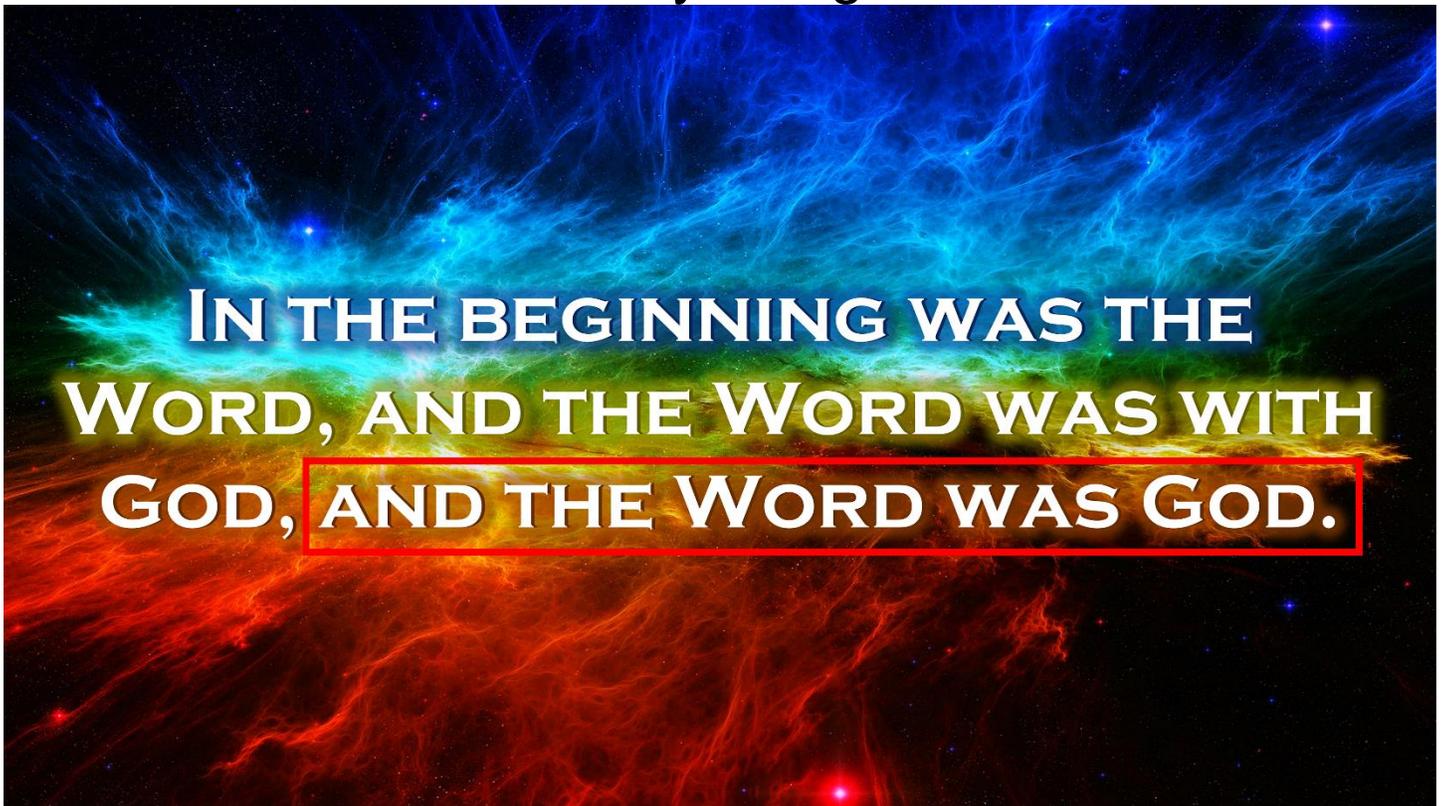


IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE  
WORD, AND THE WORD WAS WITH  
GOD, AND THE WORD WAS GOD.

“And the Word was with God.” A couple of things I need to point out here. This phrase is tightly connected to the previous phrase and will be likewise tightly connected to the phrase to follow. That’s what the two “Ands” do. You can’t break these three phrases of verse 1 apart.

Next, it is The Word, and it is The God. We drop the second “The” to make proper English. What it means is John in this second phrase is identifying the Word and God as separate from each other and as each specifically defined. You have the Word over here and you have God over there.

Finally, the word “With” is woefully inadequate for what’s going on. It is a preposition that indicates movement. The best single English word translation is “Towards.” In this construction and context, it was a Greek way of saying together in close personal relationship. The Word and The God were intimately related to each other - they’re together.



Last phrase. “And the Word was God.” It is actually, “And God was the Word.” We rearrange it in English to make it flow better, but understanding it as it was originally written is vital. Also understanding that John here has dropped the word “The” connected to God. It

is now just as in English, The Word, but then not The God, just God. That's incredibly important.

God already existed as The Word. In the first phrase we had The Word already existing before anything was created. In the second phrase we had The Word and The God in close personal relationship. Now, in the third phrase we have God already existing as The Word.

That final bit "The Word was God," needs unraveling. Those four Greek words, in this case reflected by four English words, are called the tersest theological statement in the Bible. 500 years ago, Martin Luther, marveled at the perfection of it, saying "The lack of an article is against Sabellianism; the word order is against Arianism." An article is a word defining specificity. In English we have two of them. The definite article "The." When I say, "The apple," I mean a specific apple. The indefinite article is "A," or preceding a vowel and most "H"s, "An." If I say "An apple," I mean any apple.

If it was "The God," God with the definite article, just like it was in phrase 2, it would be saying that the Word

and God were the same thing. There would be no differentiation between the two at all. It would be like saying that the Scott - specifically this Scott, is the Keller - specifically this Keller. It's just two names for the same thing.

That would render phrase 2 weird and make phrase 1 unnecessary. Verse 1 could simply be The God is also the Word... Let's have verse 2. In other words, The Word would just be a costume God sometimes wears. More technically it would be a mode of being God occasionally uses. That is modalism. Modalism is a heresy most famously put forward by a dude named Sabellius in about 215 A.D. It's called Sabellianism.

It's a heresy currently taught by Oneness Pentecostals. Locally, the New Life Center on Airport Rd near The Montana Club in South Kalispell. A lot of other Christians mistakenly, unknowingly, accidentally promote a modalistic view when explaining the Trinity using the three phases of H<sub>2</sub>O. Water whether, solid, liquid, or vapor is still just water. Water existing in different modes. The Father is fully God, the Word is fully God, the Holy Spirit is fully God, but they are each individuated - we say they are each "Persons of the

Trinity” - it’s an imperfect way to describe it, but why would we think that God would be easy to understand, let alone describe?

I said the word order is backwards in English. The Greek is “God was the Word.” If the word order was as we translate it into English, it would potentially mean that The Word was a god. Perhaps even a god similar to The God, but definitely not The God. By reversing the order, something you can easily do in Greek, but not in English, it makes it explicit that the essential essence of God is what’s being discussed and that the Word was that. The easiest way to understand it is that the Word was 100% God, but that The God was more than the Word only.

Well, that makes perfect sense. My well-thought out, preplanned, coherent Message is 100% me, but I am more than my Message. John was saying that the Word was fully God, but that the full God was more than the Word alone. We would say add the Father and the Holy Spirit and you have the full God. There’s an interesting parallel in Genesis 1:27, “God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” I won’t go into it

today, but what it means is that if you want to see an image of God, look no further than man, but specifically a male and a female together. If you only have a dude, the image is incomplete. If you only have a dudette, the image is incomplete. It requires two individuated but fully together persons to give a full image of God. A guy named Arius lived a bit after Sabellius. He believed that Jesus was a god, not The God. He knew Greek far too well to have ever used this first verse of John to support his position, but he disagreed with John. Arianism was a difficult heresy to put to rest and is the primary reason for the Council of Nicaea and the resultant Nicene Creed, which affirms that the Word is fully God along with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Today it is primarily the Jehovah's Witnesses' and the Mormons who hold to an Arian heretical view of Christ. Both of those religions teach that the Word is a god as in a much lesser deity than The God. They point to this third stanza of verse 1 for support because they don't understand Greek. Based on the English translation, inept Greek and incompetent theology the JW's translate in their New World Bible, "And the Word was a god." So, as Martin Luther said, "The lack of an

article is against Sabellianism; the word order is against Arianism.”

We will eventually get there, but the earth-shattering bit comes in verse 14. Many Greek philosophers would have been okay with verse 1, but verse 14... John 1:14, “And 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.” God intervened in the affairs of mankind.