

# Christian Doctrine

## In the Beginning Was the Word

John 1:1-2,14

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## In the Beginning Was the Word

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### INTRODUCTION

John begins his gospel with the sentence "In the beginning was the Word."

This opening of John's Gospel carries a striking resemblance to the opening of Genesis.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

In the beginning was the Word,...

### All Stand and Read Scripture

**John 1:1-2,14 (NASB)**

#### **The Deity of Jesus Christ**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

<sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God.

#### **The Word Made Flesh**

<sup>14</sup> 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.

### Prayer

### BODY:

#### **I. JESUS IS THE WORD.**

##### **What did John mean when he declared that Jesus is the Word of God?**

The answer to this question is found by first understanding the reason why John wrote his gospel. We find his purpose clearly stated in John 20:30-31.

**John 20:30-31 (NASB)**

Why This Gospel Was Written

<sup>30</sup> Therefore many other signs Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; <sup>31</sup> but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

Once we understand that John's purpose was to introduce the readers of his gospel to Jesus Christ, establishing Who Jesus is (God in the flesh) and what He did, all with the

sole aim of leading them to embrace the saving work of Christ in faith, we will be better able to understand why John introduces Jesus as “The Word” in John 1:1.

By starting out his gospel stating,

**John 1:1 (NASB)**

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

The term "**word**" is used in different ways in the Bible. In the New Testament, there are two Greek words translated "word": **rhema** and **logos**. They have slightly different meanings. Rhema usually means “a spoken word.” For example, in **Luke 1:38**, when the angel told Mary that she would be the mother of God's Son, Mary replied, "**Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word [rhema].**"

*Logos*, however, has a broader, more philosophical meaning. This is the term used in John 1. It usually implies a total message, and is used mostly in reference to God's message to mankind.

"The Word" (*Logos*) in John 1 is referring to Jesus. Jesus is the total Message—everything that God wants to communicate to man. The first chapter of John gives us a glimpse inside the Father/Son relationship before Jesus came to earth in human form.

John is introducing Jesus with a word or a term that both his Jewish and Gentile readers would have been familiar with. The Greek word **Logos** was common in both Greek philosophy and Jewish thought of that day.

So, for his Jewish readers, by introducing Jesus as the “Word,” John is in a sense pointing them back to the Old Testament where the Logos or “Word” of God shows how God accomplished His will by simply speaking the WORD.

For example, in the Old Testament the “**word**” of God is often personified as an instrument for the execution of God’s will.

We see this very clearly during the creation account in Genesis.

- Then **God said**, “Let there be light”; and there was light.
- Then **God said**, “Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.”
- Then **God said**, “Let the waters below the heavens be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear”; and it was so.
- Then **God said**, “Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, *and* fruit trees on the earth bearing fruit after their kind with seed in them”; and it was so.
- Then **God said**, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night, and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years; <sup>15</sup> and let them be for lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth”; and it was so.
- Then **God said**, “Let the waters teem with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth in the open expanse of the heavens.”
- Then **God said**, “Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind”; and it was so.
- Then **God said**, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle

and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”

By using the term Logos or “Word”, John is applying a concept with which his audience was familiar and using that to introduce his readers to the true "**Logos**" of God in Jesus Christ, the Living Word of God, fully God and yet fully man, who came to reveal God to man and redeem all who believe in Him from their sin.

John argues that Jesus, the Word or Logos, is eternal and is God. Further, all creation came about by and through Jesus, who is presented as the source of life. Amazingly, this Logos came and lived among us.

In Greek philosophy, the term Logos was thought of as a “divine reason” or “the mind of God”. Logos was a bridge between the supreme God and the material universe. Therefore, for his Greek readers the use of the term Logos would have likely brought forth the idea of a linking mediator between God and the world.

John’s Gospel begins by using the Greek idea of a “divine reason” or “the mind of God” as a way to connect with the readers of his day and introduce Jesus to them as God. Greek philosophy may have used the word in reference to divine reason, but John used it to note many of the attributes of Jesus. In John’s use of the Logos concept, we find that...

- Jesus is eternal: (“**In the beginning was the Word.**”)
- Jesus was with God prior to coming to earth: (“**The Word was with God.**”)
- Jesus is God: (“**The Word is God.**”)
- Jesus is Creator: (“**All things were made through him.**”)
- Jesus is the Giver of Life: (“**In him was life.**”)
- Jesus became human to live among us: (“**The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.**”)

So, essentially, what John is doing by introducing Jesus as the Logos is drawing upon a familiar word and concept that both Jews and Gentiles of his day would have been familiar with and using that as the starting point from which he introduces them to Jesus Christ. But John goes beyond the familiar concept of Logos that his Jewish and Gentile readers would have had and presents Jesus Christ not as a mere mediating link like the Greeks perceived, but as a personal being, fully divine, yet fully human. Also, Christ was not simply an image of God’s spoken will as the Jews thought, but was indeed God’s perfect revelation of Himself in the flesh, so much so that John would record Jesus’ own words to Philip:

### **John 14:9 (NASB)**

<sup>9</sup> Jesus \*said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how *can* you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

## **II. JESUS IS FULLY GOD.**

Not only did Jesus’ make specific claims about Himself, but His disciples also acknowledged the deity of Christ.

### **Matthew 16:13-17 (NASB)**

#### **Peter’s Confession of Christ**

<sup>13</sup> Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup> And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup> He \*said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup> And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven.

When Thomas saw the nail prints in Jesus' hands, he cried out to Jesus, "**My Lord and my God!**"

Actions that can be accomplished only by God are credited to Jesus. Jesus not only raised the dead and forgave sins, He created and sustains the universe.

John's claims the deity of Christ in the first verse by declaring that "**the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God**".

This begs the question: **If Jesus is the Son of God, how could He have been in the beginning with God?** Wouldn't He have had to be born at some point to be a son?

Jesus is God's Son in that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit!

### **Luke 1:35 (NASB)**

<sup>35</sup> The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

That does not mean Jesus did not exist before He was conceived. Jesus has always existed. When Jesus was conceived, He became a human being in addition to being God.

Jesus is both God and man. Jesus has always been God, but He did not become a human being until He was conceived in Mary. Jesus became a human being in order to identify with us in our struggles and, more importantly, so that He could die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins.

### **How is Jesus the Son of God?**

Jesus is the Son of God in that He is the manifestation of God in flesh. Jesus was as much human as you or I, but He was also a completely different type of human, because unlike us, He was without sin. Like other humans, He was born of a woman, but His conception was completely different, having been conceived in the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit that He should not "**inherit**" the curse of Adam's sin.

During His life on earth, there were few of the religious leaders who believed that Jesus could ever have the status of "Son of God," despite His miracles and the power He manifested.

Jesus openly admitted to the High Priest that He was the Son of God, for which He was accused of blasphemy). Later, taken to trial and cross-examined by Pilate, the issue was concerning His divinity. "The Jews answered him, 'We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God'" (**John 19:7**). This is a doctrine that is consistently attacked, even today. Whoever claims to be the Son of God is

claiming to be on a level co-equal with God and, according to Jewish law at that time, it warranted punishment.

As the Son of God, Jesus was the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being, but His glory was veiled by His humanity. It was only, for example, on the Mount of Transfiguration, that the glory of the Son was truly manifested and then only to three disciples (Peter, James, and John). But one day all of mankind will see the Son of God coming in power and glory and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus, the Son of God, is Lord ([Philippians 2:10-11](#)).

### **III. JESUS IS FULLY MAN**

#### **What does it mean that the Word became flesh?**

Jesus told a parable to explain why the Word had to become flesh.

#### **Luke 20:9-16 (NASB)**

#### **Parable of the Vine-growers**

<sup>9</sup> And He began to tell the people this parable: “A man planted a vineyard and rented it out to vine-growers, and went on a journey for a long time. <sup>10</sup> At the *harvest* time he sent a slave to the vine-growers, so that they would give him *some* of the produce of the vineyard; but the vine-growers beat him and sent him away empty-handed. <sup>11</sup> And he proceeded to send another slave; and they beat him also and treated him shamefully and sent him away empty-handed. <sup>12</sup> And he proceeded to send a third; and this one also they wounded and cast out. <sup>13</sup> The owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; perhaps they will respect him.’ <sup>14</sup> But when the vine-growers saw him, they reasoned with one another, saying, ‘This is the heir; let us kill him so that the inheritance will be ours.’ <sup>15</sup> So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him. What, then, will the owner of the vineyard do to them? <sup>16</sup> He will come and destroy these vine-growers and will give the vineyard to others.” When they heard it, they said, “May it never be!”

In this parable, Jesus was reminding the Jewish leaders that they had rejected the prophets and were now rejecting the Son. The Logos, the Word of God, was now going to be offered to everyone, not just the Jews. Because the Word became flesh, we have a high priest who is able to empathize with our weaknesses, one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet He did not sin (Hebrews 4:15).

#### **Jesus had to be born as a human being for several reasons.**

#### **Galatians 4:4-5 (NASB)**

<sup>4</sup> But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, <sup>5</sup> so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.

**Only a man could be “born under the law.”** No animal or angelic being is “under the law.” Only humans are born under the law, and only a human being could redeem other human beings born under the same law. Born under the law of God, all humans are guilty of transgressing that law. Only a perfect human—Jesus Christ—could perfectly keep the law and perfectly fulfill the law, thereby redeeming us from that guilt. Jesus accomplished our redemption on the cross, exchanging our sin for His perfect righteousness ([2 Corinthians 5:21](#)).

Another reason Jesus had to be fully human is that God **established the necessity of the shedding of blood for the remission of sins** ([Leviticus 17:11](#); [Hebrews 9:22](#)). The blood of animals, although acceptable on a temporary basis as a foreshadowing of the blood of the perfect God-Man, was insufficient for the permanent remission of sin because “it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins” ([Hebrews 10:4](#)). Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God, sacrificed His human life and shed His human blood to cover the sins of all who would ever believe in Him. If He were not human, this would have been impossible.

Furthermore, **the humanity of Jesus enables Him to relate to us in a way the angels or animals never can.** Only a human could sympathize with our weaknesses and temptations. In His humanity, Jesus was subjected to all the same kinds of trials that we are, and He is, therefore, able to sympathize with us and to aid us. He was tempted; He was persecuted; He was poor; He was despised; He suffered physical pain; and He endured the sorrows of a lingering and most cruel death. Only a human being could experience these things, and only a human being could fully understand them through experience.

Finally, it was necessary for Jesus to come in the flesh because **believing that truth is a prerequisite for salvation.** Declaring that Jesus has come in the flesh is the mark of a spirit from God, while the Antichrist and all who follow him will deny it ([1 John 4:2-3](#)). Jesus has come in the flesh; He is able to sympathize with our human frailties; His human blood was shed for our sins; and He was fully God and fully Man. These are biblical truths that cannot be denied.

## **CONCLUSION:**

It is one thing to claim to be God or to fool someone into believing it is true, and something else entirely to prove it to be so. Christ offered many miracles as proof of His claim to deity. Just a few of Jesus' miracles include...

- Turning water to wine.
- Walking on water
- Multiplying the fish and the loaves.
- Healing the blind, the lame, and the sick.
- And even raising people from the dead.

The miracle of all miracles was His death, burial, resurrection, and appearances.

Even critics admit that the disciples claimed they saw the risen Jesus. Neither lies nor hallucinations can transform people the way the resurrection did.

First, what would they have had to gain? Christianity was not popular and it certainly did not make them any money.

Second, liars do not make good martyrs. There is no better explanation than the resurrection for the disciples' willingness to die horrible deaths for their faith. Yes, **many people die for lies that they think are true, but people do not die for what they know is untrue.**

**This is the Day!**