

God: The Logos – Sunday, September 14, 2003

I. Introduction – Why did John write his gospel?

Belief and life (*zoe*)

John 1:1-2 - *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος
En archay, en ho logos, kai ho logos, en pros ton Theon, kai Theos en ho logos.

II. The Word – *logos* – Historical background

Understanding John's audience – **Greek and Jew**

A. Greek understanding of *logos*

Heraclitus divine “**reason**” or “**word**” – *logos* – that kept the universe in order.
and gave man the power to reason and think – “*the mind of God*”

B. Jewish understanding of *logos* (Hebrew - *Memra*)

Genesis 1 – *en archay* – ***In the beginning & God said, ‘let there be light’***

a **personal** concept. – Psalm 33:6

hidden in creation

personified in ‘wisdom literature’

Job 28:12, Prov 8&9, others . . .

The Word is a **healer** in Psalms 107:20;

a **messenger** in Psalms 147:15;

the agent of the divine decrees in Isa. 40:11.

Psalms 110 Jehovah addresses the first verse to the *Memra*.

“Adonai said to the Memra

C. Heresies concerning the nature of Christ during John's time

Cerinthus

Jesus was not born of a virgin, but was the real son of Joseph and Mary;
at his baptism, *the Christ*, or the *Divine nature*, descended into him
when he was about to suffer, this *Christ*, or *divine nature*, departed
Similarities to ‘New Age’ movement

Gnosticism

God had all things and beings included in Himself;

Supreme begin → *logos* → ‘Only Begotten’ → (aeons) → → demiurge

John's response to Gnosticism (John 1:1-3 – see chart)

Paul's response to beginning of Gnosticism in Colossae (Col 2:8-10)

D. John's description of the *logos*

III. A word-by-word analysis of John 1:1

A. “***In the beginning***” – Jesus was there already!

B. The little word “***was***” – *en* (imperfect tense – never was He not)

compared to *egeneto* in verse 3 – “came into being” (at a definite time)

“When all things began, the Word already was.” (NEB)

C. **The Word** (*ho logos*) **was** (*en-* [always was]) **with God** (*pros ton Theon*)
Face to face in an eternal ECHAD relationship

D. **The Word was God**
Theos en ho logos – there could be no clearer words in Greek

Based on the sentence structure it is clear that:

Theos is the object or predicate (it is **anarthrous** meaning it has no definite article)

It is placed first in the sentence for emphasis

When a predicate is placed first in a sentence, the definite article is removed

ho logos is the subject (it has a definite article)

This must be true, by definition, because the subject is given the definite article

E. Why is it wrong to translate this as “**The Word was a god**” - New World Translation
Other examples where no definite article is needed:

God is love

Thy Word is Truth

Why not put “a” before *Theos* the other 288 times it is this way in the NT?

vs. 6 – was John sent from a god?

vs. 12 – are we children of a god?

Clearly theology teaches us that it is NEVER appropriate to put “a” before God

IV. A Final look at “The Word Was God” in Greek compared to other constructs

There are three proper Greek ways that this sentence can be written:

1. <i>Theos en o logos</i>	θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος
2. <i>o logos en Theos</i>	ὁ λόγος ἦν θεὸς
3. <i>o logos en o Theos</i>	ὁ λόγος ἦν ὁ θεὸς

Construct # 1 is the **correct rendering** of John 1:1 “*The Word was God.*”

The subject gets the definite article, ὁ λόγος, **the Word**.

θεὸς is the predicate or object which is placed first for **emphasis**.

Construct # 2 says word for word “*The Word was God*”

Why didn't he **move John** to write it this way?

Written this way, *the Word* is the subject, and *God* is the object.

With the object not first, there are no rules concerning definite articles.

With no definite article, construct # 2 reads: “*The Word was a god.*”

Construct # 3 translated word for word is: “*The Word was the God.*”

There is **no distinction** between Jesus and God –

This is the basis of **modalism** or “**Oneness Pentacostalism**”

Since John 1:1 is not construct # 2 or # 3, it is only consistent with **Trinitarian doctrine**.

V. **Conclusion - Jesus is Jehovah!** How important is this doctrine:

The **atonement** is meaningful

John 8:24 “for unless you believe that I am, you shall die in your sins.”

WE CAN KNOW GOD and WORSHIP HIM IN TRUTH!

JOHN'S GOSPEL

1. **The Word and the Only begotten are not different, but the same person,** John 1:14, 8,34; 3:35,36; the conversation of Christ with Nicodemus, John 3:16,18, in which Christ calls himself the only begotten Son; the speech delivered by Christ to the Jews, John 5:17-47; and other passages, in which he calls God his Father.

2. **The Word was never made, but existed from the beginning,** John 1:1. As a proof of this position may be alleged perhaps what Christ says, John 8:58.

3. **The Word was in the beginning with God,** John 1:1,2. Clarifying a distinction between 'the Word' and 'God,' but more than that emphasizing the dynamic and eternal relationship between the Father and Son – face to face for eternity.

4. **The Word was God,** John 1:1. The proofs of this position are contained in John 5; 10:30; and 14:7,11.

5. **The Word was the creator of all things,** John 1:3,10. The assertion, that the Word was the creator of the world, is equivalent to the assertion, that he was GOD in the highest possible sense.

6. **In the Word was life,** John 1:4. Also John 3:15,21; ch. 6, 14:6,9,19, and the resurrection of Lazarus

GNOSTICISM

1. Usually ascribed all the divine qualities to 'the Only begotten,' but he was not considered the "Supreme Being."

2. The Gnostics granted that 'the Word' existed before the creation; but they did not admit that 'the Word' existed from all eternity. The 'Supreme Being,' as also the matter from which the world was formed, were prior in existence to the Word.

3. Again while the 'Supreme Being' was believed to be present at the beginning, 'the Word' was not. There is also no indication that Gnosticism taught the dynamic interaction between 'the Word' and 'the Supreme Being.'

4. Gnostics believe that 'the Word' was divine – a deity in the lower sense of the word – not truly God in the highest sense.

5. This is one of John's principal positions against the Gnostics, who asserted that the world was made by a malevolent being.

6. The Gnostics, considered the different attributes or operations of the almighty as separate persons, so Life was a distinct deity from the Word. Life was called 'Mother of the living.'

The Athanasian Creed

We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance.

For there is one Person of the Father, another of the Son and another of the Holy Spirit. But the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit is all one, the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son and such is the Holy Spirit.

The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Spirit uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Spirit incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Spirit eternal. And yet they are not three eternals, but one eternal. As also there are not three uncreated nor three incomprehensibles, but one uncreated and one incomprehensible.

So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Spirit almighty; and yet they are not three almighties, but one almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; and yet they are not three Gods, but one God. So likewise the Father is Lord, the Son Lord, and the Holy Spirit Lord; and yet they are not three Lords, but one Lord.

For like as we are compelled by Christian truth to acknowledge every person by himself to be God and Lord; so are we forbidden by the universal faith to say: There are three Gods or three Lords.

The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone; not made nor created, but begotten. The Holy Spirit is of the Father and of the Son; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers; one Son, not three Sons; one Holy Spirit, not three Holy Spirits. And in this Trinity none is before or after another; none is greater, or less than another. But the whole three persons are co-eternal, and co-equal.

So that in all things, as aforesaid, the Unity in Trinity and the Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity.