

How “in the Beginning Was the Word” Explains the True Nature of God

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John 1:1 in my opinion is the most important verse in the entire gospel of John. When you understand what John 1:1 means you will see that it shapes the lens by which you must look at Jesus throughout the rest of the book. One of the most important truths about who Jesus is and the character and nature of God appear in these few words.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

This one verse establishes the Word as being both divine and eternal in nature. Everything you read after this must be filtered through this reality that the Word was God. Take every action, every miracle, every teaching, and everything Jesus does and view it with this truth and you will understand why John 1:1 means so much.



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What Does It Mean That "in the Beginning Was the Word?"

The opening stanza of [John 1:1](#) is exactly the same as [Genesis 1:1](#). Both begin with “in the beginning.” John says “in the beginning was the Word” while Genesis says “in the beginning God.” The first thing John is establishing is Christ’s presence during creation, which points to the eternal nature of Jesus. He didn’t just show up when Mary gave birth, he existed from eternity past. To an audience that had long held to God being creator, John is now putting Jesus on the same level. He is giving him a place of equality with God. This term “in the beginning was the word” is therefore a statement of equality. Jesus is not just the Word, he is the creator, equal with God.

When you think about Jesus being called the Word, consider how it plays out in creation. Do you remember how God created the heavens and the earth? He spoke words and creation happened. [Genesis 1](#) is filled with God saying the words “let there be” and when he spoke the Word what he spoke happened. He used words to bring forth creation. I want you to consider that truth in light of [John 1:3](#):

“Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”

When you read this, it is clear to see that not only was Jesus present at creation, Jesus was responsible for creation. Jesus was the Word that was responsible for bringing forth everything that was made in creation.



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What Else Does John 1:1 Establish?

There is something else you will discover which helps us understand more of what [John 1:1](#) means. When you look at this verse you see that it establishes a relationship between God and the Word. They are separate yet they are equal and connected to each other. John says the Word was with God. And he doesn’t say this once, he actually says this twice.

“He was with God in the beginning” ([John 1:2](#)).

Let's begin to put this together a little more. We see clearly that the Word was both with God and also was God. This is a statement of co-existence and one of co-equality. In essence, John was saying in the beginning, God was with God. This ties back to the nature of who God is and is clarifying and pointing to the triune nature of God. I want to show you a simple comparison between these first two [verses](#) of [John 1](#) with the first two verses of [Genesis 1](#).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning” ([John 1:1-2](#)).

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters” ([Genesis 1:1-2](#)).

When you put these verses together, God's triune nature is on display. Please notice who was present at creation. God the Father was present. John tells us the Word or Jesus was present. [Genesis 1:2](#) shows us the [Holy Spirit](#) was present. Here we see three distinct aspects that point to God's triune nature. If you are not familiar with that term, it simply means that there is one God, yet he is revealed in three persons.

These three are distinct yet they are one, which is known as the doctrine of the trinity. In the introduction to God in Genesis and the introduction to Jesus in John, we are directed to consider the true nature of who God is.



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What Is the Context of This Verse?

To give more context to this verse it is important to understand who John is writing to. His audience was most likely Jewish Christians. If they were Jewish converts, they would know and understand that the Old Testament clearly states there is only one God. Yet, here is John identifying Jesus as God and they were not confused, nor did they reject the idea. As you move further down into John you get to verse 14:

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” ([John 1:14](#)).

This verse works beautifully with [John 1:1](#) because this Word who was present at the beginning and who was God now has appeared in the flesh and dwelt with us. Jesus taking on human flesh did not cause him to lose his divine nature. He was able to be fully God and fully man while he walked the earth. In fact, he carried in him the fullness of Godhead.

“For in Him all the fullness of Deity (the Godhead) dwells in bodily form [completely expressing the divine essence of God]” ([Colossians 2:9](#), AMP).

What this means is that Jesus – who is the Word, God in flesh – was the full package. He carried in him the nature of God, the power of God, and the authority of God simply because he was God. John was not trying to hide this but was making it abundantly clear, and this is at the heart of what [John 1:1](#) means.



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What Does This Verse Teach Us about the Nature of God?

When you read through the [Bible](#) it is clear that God has never attempted to hide who he is. He has been very clear in defining his character and his nature. To the people of Israel, God showed that he is the one and only God.

“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one” ([Deuteronomy 6:4](#)).

“You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides him there is no other” ([Deuteronomy 4:35](#)).

The Bible is clear there is only one God and there is no God beside him. Yet the Bible clearly identifies Jesus as God in [John 1](#). The [Holy Spirit](#) is also defined as God; you can see one instance of this in [Acts 5:1-4](#). These instances make it clear to know there is one God revealed in three persons. They are all distinct yet equal and are eternal in nature and essence.

When you think about what [John 1:1](#) means, it is about Jesus and it is also about the true nature of God. Jesus is established as God from his first introduction in this book, and as I said at the beginning, you must look at everything after it through this divine lens. God has revealed who he is, in the person of Jesus and as John says “we have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth” ([John 1:14](#)).