

Jesus Christ, The Eternal God

John 1:1-4

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God.

³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

Introduction:

What is the single most important question ever asked?
The question came from the lips of Jesus in [Matthew 16:15](#) and was addressed to His disciples -- "**Who do you say that I am?**" **So even as we begin this study of John how would YOU answer the question Who is Jesus?**

A. T. Robertson calls the Gospel according to John the "most wonderful of all books."

What will you do with Jesus?
Neutral you cannot be,
Some day your heart will be asking,
"What will he do with me?"

“Now the gospel of John is in itself identified by many through the centuries as the holy of holies of the New Testament. It’s the most sacred place you can go. In fact, if there’s a most sacred chapter in the entire Bible, it would be the seventeenth chapter of John where our Lord Jesus prays to the Father in that intimate inter-Trinitarian prayer, the likes of which appears nowhere else in Scripture. That might be considered to be the very mercy seat of the holy of holies. But John is often called the holy of holies, because in this gospel the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ is fully displayed. And what was not accessible to people in the Old Covenant, namely the Holy of Holies, has become accessible to us in the New Covenant because the veil is down, the way is open, we come boldly into the presence of God. And as we enter the gospel of John, we—like a priest of old on the Day of Atonement—have access to the Holy of Holies to see the glory of Christ.” John MacArthur

Whenever you study a book of the Bible, you want to understand the writer's purpose for writing. In some books this is difficult to discern but not in the Gospel of John. So let's see if we can understand his purpose by reading [John 20:30-31](#) -

Therefore many other **signs (semeion)** Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples (**mathetes**), which are not written in this book but these have been written so that you may **believe (pisteuo)** that Jesus is the Christ (**Christos**) (Messiah), the Son of God; and that **believing** you may have **life (zoe)** in His name (**onoma**).” ([Jn 20:30-note](#), [John 20:31-note](#))

A **key word** is a word or phrase that functions to unlock the meaning of a text. There are a number of key words in John's Gospel but the most important is **believe [pisteuo]**. John

used the verb **believe** 98 times which is more than all the uses in the Synoptic Gospels combined.

Erdman on the profundity of John - Its stories are so simple that even a child will love them, but its statements are so profound that no philosopher can fathom them.

John MacArthur adds that this "opening section of John's gospel expresses the most profound truth in the universe in the clearest terms. Though easily understood by a child, John's Spirit-inspired words convey a truth beyond the ability of the greatest minds in human history to fathom: the eternal, infinite God became a man in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. The glorious, incontrovertible truth that in Jesus the divine "Word became flesh" ([Jn 1:14](#)) is the theme of John's gospel." (**John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary**)

James Montgomery Boice - The Gospel of John has blessed the hearts of God's people through the centuries. It has been called "God's love letter to the world." Luther wrote of it, "This is the unique, tender, genuine chief Gospel. ...Should a tyrant succeed in destroying the Holy Scriptures and only a single copy of the Epistle to the Romans and the Gospel according to John escape him, Christianity would be saved." Luther must have especially loved the Gospel because he preached on it for many years from the pulpit of the parish church of Wittenberg....It has probably been the means by which more persons have come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord than any other single portion of Scripture. (**The Gospel of John: An Expository Commentary**)

Henrietta Mears summarizes some of the interesting features of John...

No genealogy is recorded—neither His legal lineage through Joseph (as given by Matthew), nor His personal descent through Mary (as given by Luke).

No account of His birth—because He was "in the beginning."

Nothing about His boyhood.

Nothing about His temptation. Jesus rather is presented as Christ the Lord, not the One tempted in all points just as we are.

No transfiguration.

No appointing of His disciples.

No parables.

No account of the Ascension.

No Great Commission.

Yet only here is He called "the Word"

The Creator

The only begotten of the Father

The Lamb of God

The revelation of the great "I AM" ([Exodus 3:14](#)) (**What the Bible is All About**)

SEVEN "I AM" & SEVEN SIGNS OF HIS DEITY

One striking feature of John are the **seven "I Am" statements** none of which are found in the Synoptic Gospels (in fact **92% of John** is unique material not found in the Synoptic Gospels!). Note Jesus' repeated use of metaphors - Bread, Light, Door, Good Shepherd, Resurrection and Life, Way, Truth and Life, and Vine.

[John 6:35](#); Jesus said to them, "**I am the bread of life**; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst. - **The Son has the resources to meet all of man's needs.**

[John 8:12](#) Then Jesus again spoke to them, saying, "**I am the Light of the world**; he who follows Me will not walk in the

darkness, but will have the Light of life.” - **The Son has the power to overcome the darkness of sin in our life.**

John 10:7 So Jesus said to them again, “Truly, truly, I say to you, **I am the door of the sheep.** John 10:9 **“I am the door;** if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. - **The Son by virtue of His sinless life and sacrificial death is literally the only way through which man can enter the Kingdom of God.**

John 10:11 **“I am the good shepherd;** the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. John 10:14 **“I am the good shepherd,** and I know My own and My own know Me - **The Son is our Divine Shepherd whose infinite resources meet all of our needs for guidance, care and protection.**

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, **“I am the resurrection and the life;** he who believes in Me will live even if he dies. **The Son of God has the power to raise the dead from the grave.**

John 14:6 Jesus *said to him, **“I am the way, and the truth, and the life;** no one comes to the Father but through Me. **Only the Son can bring us into the presence of His Father, can counter the lies of Satan with the Truth and can give us eternal life.**

John 15:1 **“I am the true vine,** and My Father is the vinedresser. John 15:5 **“I am the vine,** you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing. **The Son (via His Spirit) is the sole supernatural source that enables His followers to be spiritually productive.**

J D Watson - People call Jesus "a good man," "a wise teacher," "a moral example," and other such platitudes, but flatly reject Him as God. At the core of several cults is the denial of the deity of Christ, but this truth is an absolutely cardinal doctrine of Christianity; without it, Christianity collapses of its own weight. It's

also a doctrine that is clearly taught in Scripture with no ambiguity whatsoever.

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We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father.

Through Him all things were made.

For us and for our salvation
He came down from heaven:
by the power of the Holy Spirit
he became incarnate from the virgin Mary,
and was made Man.

I. Preexistent

v. 1 In the beginning was the Word,.....

and the Word was God

In the beginning (en **arche**) - What **beginning**? When is the **beginning**? Does he mean the **beginning** of eternity? Of course not, as eternity by its very nature has no **beginning**

and no end, a truth no finite mind can fully grasp. What John is saying could be paraphrased "Before even time began was the Word." And so **beginning** refers to the inception of creation. When the creation came into existent, Jesus was already there. No matter how far back we believe the **beginning** to be, we will find Jesus, the pre-existent Word. **Athanasius** put it this way "There never was when He was not, when the Son of God was not."

This phrase **in the beginning** is used in...

[Genesis 1:1](#) **In the beginning** God created the heavens and the earth. (Lxx = *en arche epoinsen o theos ton ouranon kai ten gen*)

[Hebrews 1:10](#) - And, "THOU, LORD, **IN THE BEGINNING** DIDST LAY THE FOUNDATION OF THE EARTH, AND THE HEAVENS ARE THE WORKS OF THY HANDS; (**Exploring the Gospel of John**)

In the 2nd century, Clement of Alexandria wrote that one of the atheistic Platonic philosophers, said of [John 1:1-3](#), "This barbarian hath comprised more stupendous stuff in three lines, than we have done in all our voluminous discourses."

Beginning (746)(**arche**) refers to the commencement of something as an action, process, or state of being. **Arché** refers to first in relation to time (priority in time, the beginning of anything, the origin and by far the most common use in the NT.

Was the Word - John begins without hesitation, without genealogy, without apology, without doubt by describing our Lord's "ineffable Person!" In three sweeping statements John presents the Word as fully God.

The verb **was** (**ēn**) is in the **imperfect tense** which depicts continual existence, a continuous state, not a completed past. As **Phillips** says "It suggests the idea of "absolute, supra-temporal existence." Or stated another way, the verb in this tense "denotes neither a completed state nor a coming into being. It is appropriate to eternal, unchanging being. John is affirming that the Word existed before creation, which makes it clear that the Word was not created." (Morris). "The Word continually was" is the idea. This truth provides definitive proof of Christ's deity, for only God is eternal. As **Phillips** says John "does not refer to a **start**, but to an infinite **state!**"

Was (1510) (**ēn** which is the imperfect form of **eimi**) means to be and is the usual verb for existence. In the metaphysical sense as in [John 1:1](#), "In the beginning was the Word," meaning it had been before there was any beginning or existed before the beginning of anything; [John 8:50](#), *estín*, in the pres. tense indicating."

(**Zodhiates**) Notice John does not say in the beginning CAME the Word or BEGAN the Word, but WAS the Word. This verb is in the **imperfect tense** which speak of continuous action. In a word, the Word was continually existing!

Watch John's masterful use of the Greek verbs and Greek tenses -- four times in [Jn 1:1-2](#) he uses the **imperfect tense** (**ēn**) of the verb **eimi** to say the Word **was** God (all of John's statements regarding His pre-existence are in this tense), but in [Jn 1:14-note](#) he uses the verb **ginomai** in the **aorist tense** (**egeneto**) (**punctiliar**, an instantaneous intervention, decisive, at a moment or point in time - the aorist usage here refers to some historical time in the past as the beginning of the new state) He became Man. So Jesus who always **was** God, **became** Man in a moment in time, doing so without ceasing to be God! Amazing truth! John never says Christ **became** God but only that He **was** (always) God!

John Phillips commenting on John's use of the imperfect tense says "This is not nearly so arresting in English as it is in the original. In each case it sets before the reader not something past, or present, or future, but something ongoing. It refers to a mode of existence that transcends time. Time is a device to help finite beings relate to their mode of existence. The verb John uses takes us into the sphere of the timeless. In other words, the one John calls "the Word" belongs to a realm where time does not matter. The word did not have a beginning. The word will never have an ending. The word belongs to eternity..

William Hendriksen remarks, this phrase "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God" is "just another way of saying that He existed from all eternity. He was not what certain heretics claimed Him to be, a created being." In fact Christ did not merely exist, but He began the beginning (creation).

[John 8:58](#) Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."

[Col 1:17](#) And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

The Word (3055)(**lógos/logos** from **légō** = to speak with words; English = logic, logical) means something said and describes a communication whereby the mind finds expression in words. To the Greek philosophers Logos was the impersonal, abstract principle of reason and order in the universe. Logos referred "to the abstract conception that lies behind everything concrete-to the ideal." (**Phillips**) However, Jesus was not an impersonal source, force, principle, or emanation, but was a Person who became a Man ([Jn 1:14](#)).

Utley - "[Jn 1:1-18](#) are an attempt to relate to both Hebrew and Greek minds by use of the term logos." Utley goes on to

summarize the attraction of Logos to both Jews and Greeks -
"Hebrew background - (a) The power of the spoken word ([Isa. 55:11](#); [Ps. 33:6](#); [107:20](#); [145:15](#)), as in Creation ([Ge 1:3](#), [6](#), [9](#), [11](#), [14](#), [20](#), [24](#), [26](#), [29](#)) and the Patriarchal blessing ([Gen. 27:1ff](#); [49:1](#))
 (b) [Proverbs 8:12–23](#) personifies “Wisdom” as God’s first creation and agent of all creation

John MacArthur on Logos - John borrowed the use of the term “**Word**” not only from the vocabulary of the OT but also from Gr. philosophy, in which the term was essentially impersonal, signifying the rational principle of “divine reason,” “mind,” or even “wisdom.” John, however, imbued the term entirely with OT and Christian meaning (e.g., [Ge 1:3](#) where God’s Word brought the world into being; [Pss 33:6](#); [107:20](#); [Pr 8:27](#) where God’s Word is His powerful self-expression in creation, wisdom, revelation, and salvation) and made it refer to a person, i.e., Jesus Christ. Greek philosophical usage, therefore, is not the exclusive background of John’s thought. Strategically, the term “Word” serves as a bridge-word to reach not only Jews but also the unsaved Greeks. John chose this concept because both Jews and Greeks were familiar with it.

and the Word was God

literally

καὶ Θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος

and God was the Word

The **Jehovah's Witnesses** mistranslate this verse in their 2013 revised "**New World Translation**" - "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was a **god**." (**Online perversion**) This cult brazenly and falsely calls the **Word** or Jesus a **god** with a little "g." If Jesus was not God with a capital "**G**" then all of mankind is still dead in its trespasses and sins, for a little "g" god cannot effect redemption. Only the God-Man can fulfill the requirements of a Kinsman-Redeemer! (**See refutation of the Jehovah Witnesses' blatant mistranslation on John 1:1**)

Spurgeon - I know not how the Deity of Christ can be more plainly declared than in his eternal duration. He is from the beginning. In his glory he was "with God." In his nature he "was God."

Compare

[John 1:18](#) No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God (the Word), Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

[John 20:28](#) Thomas answered and said to Him (the Word), "My Lord and my God (kai o theos mou)!"

[Jn 10:30](#) "I and the Father are one."

[Jn 14:9](#) 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 do you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

[1 John 5:20](#) And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

Alistair Begg on this great statement by John - "This is not theological lumber. This is not post-graduate theology for eggheads. This is the heart of historic Christianity."

The **Word was** fully divine for John states emphatically, “**the Word was God**” (more literally, “God was the Word”). Christ has always been and will always be divine even from His birth (He did not **become** the Son of God - He **was already** the Son of God). Furthermore, Jesus was fully divine throughout His life and at His death and His resurrection. In other words even though He became a Man, He never ceased being the Son of God. He never ceased being God.

Here are parallel passages:

[Phil 2:6](#)-note Who, although **He existed in the form of God**, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

[Col 1:15](#)-note And **He is the image of the invisible God**, the first-born (**prototokos**) of all creation.

[Col 2:9](#)-note For in Him **all the fulness (pleroma) of Deity dwells (katoikeo in the present tense = continually) in bodily form**,

[Heb 1:3](#)-note And He (Jesus) is the **radiance (apaugasma) of His (Father's) glory (doxa) and the exact representation (charakter) of His (the Father's) nature....**

Don Fortner makes an interesting observation that "With this one sentence John sweeps away and abolishes every heresy by which Satan has harassed the Church of God from its beginning.

- **Arianism** - which asserts that Christ is a Being inferior to God.
- **Sabellianism (Modalism)** -, which denies the distinction of Persons in the **Trinity**, and says that God sometimes manifested himself as the Father, sometimes as the Son, and sometimes as the Spirit.
- **Socinianism** Unitarianism, which declares that Jesus Christ

was not God at all, but mere man, a good and great man, but only a man.

- **Arminianism** which declares God to be changeable as one whose love, will, purpose and grace are all subject to the will of man! (**Sermon on Jn 1:1**)

John MacArthur addresses the cults like Jehovah's Witnesses misinterpret this passage noting that "heretical groups almost from the moment John penned these words have twisted their meaning to support their false doctrines concerning the nature of the Lord Jesus Christ. Noting that theos (God) is anarthrous (not preceded by the definite article), some argue that it is an indefinite noun and mistranslate the phrase, "the Word was divine" (i.e., merely possessing some of the qualities of God) or, even more appalling, "the Word was a god." The absence of the article before theos, however, does not make it indefinite. Logos (Word) has the definite article to show that it is the subject of the sentence (since it is in the same case as theos). Thus the rendering "God was the Word" is invalid, because "the Word," not "God," is the subject. It would also be theologically incorrect, because it would equate the Father ("God" whom the Word was with in the preceding clause) with the Word, thus denying that the two are separate persons. The predicate nominative (God) describes the nature of the Word, showing that He is of the same essence as the Father (cf. H. E. Dana and Julius R. Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* [Toronto: MacMillan, 1957], 139–40; A. T. Robertson, *The Minister and His Greek New Testament* [Reprint: Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978], 67–68). According to the rules of Greek grammar, when the predicate nominative (God in this clause) precedes the verb, it cannot be considered indefinite (and thus translated "a god" instead of God) merely because it does not have the article. That the term God is definite and refers to the true God is obvious for several reasons. First, theos appears without the definite article four other times in the immediate context ([Jn 1:6](#), [12](#), [13](#), [18](#); cf. [Jn 3:2](#), [21](#); [9:16](#); [Matt. 5:9](#)). Not even the Jehovah's Witnesses' distorted translation of the Bible renders the anarthrous theos "a god" in those verses. Second, if John's meaning was that the Word was divine, or a god, there were ways he could have phrased it to make that unmistakably clear. For example, if he meant to say that the Word was merely in some sense divine, he could have used the adjective **theios** (cf. [2Peter 1:4-note](#)). It must be remembered that, as Robert L. Reymond notes, "No standard Greek lexicon offers 'divine' as one of the meanings of theos, nor does the noun become an adjective when it 'sheds' its article" (Jesus, Divine Messiah [Phillipsburg, N.J.: Presb. & Ref., 1990], 303). Or if he had wanted to say that the Word was a god, he could have written *ho logos ēn theos*. If John had written *ho theos ēn ho logos*, the two nouns (theos and logos) would be interchangeable, and God and the Word would be identical. That would have meant that the Father was the Word, which, as noted above, would deny the **Trinity**. But as Leon Morris asks rhetorically, "How else [other than *theos ēn ho logos*] in Greek would one say, 'the Word was God'?" (The Gospel According to John, The New International Commentary on the New Testament [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979], 77 n. 15). Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, John chose the precise wording that accurately

conveys the true nature of the Word, Jesus Christ. "By theos without the article, John neither indicates, on the one hand, identity of Person with the Father; nor yet, on the other, any lower nature than that of God Himself" (H. A. W. Meyer, Critical and Exegetical Hand-Book to the Gospel of John [Reprint; Winona Lake, Ind.: Alpha, 1979], 48). ([John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#)) (See also sermon [Why Does John Refer to Jesus as -the Word?](#))

JESUS IS GOD THE EGO EIMI

The argument of skeptics one often hears is that Jesus never claimed to be God. **Let's look at several instances where Jesus clearly claimed to be God.** Specifically, let's look His claim to be "I Am" which is known affectionately in Greek as the "Ego Eimi" (Spell it out for them). **Ego** of course is "I" and **eimi** is the simple verb meaning "to be" and is the usual word for existence. **Eimi** is in the present tense and so what Jesus is saying is "I continually exist." In fact the idea is that when Jesus used this description He was saying in essence "I am eternally self-existent!"

And so for example in [John 8:58](#) (addressing a group of Jews who had supposedly "believed" in Him earlier in [John 8:30](#)), He declared "Truly, truly (Amen, Amen), I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am (ego eimi) He (where "He" is not in the Greek but added by the translators. More literally He said "I Am")." And guess what response He solicited from this group of Jews? John records in [Jn 8:59](#) **"Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him,** but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple."

Why did this group of Jews who had professed belief in Jesus some 28 verses earlier now seek to stone Him to death?

To answer that question let's turn to Exodus 3 which is Moses' famous "Burning Bush encounter" where God is giving him instructions to go and rescue His chosen people Israel from bondage in Egypt, to which Moses responds in [Exodus 3:13](#) "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I will say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His Name?' What shall I say to them?" to which

"God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" In the Greek translation (known as the **Septuagint**) of God's Name "I Am who I Am" find the phrase "EGO EIMI." So when Jesus declared He was "EGO EIMI" the Jews clearly understood that He was saying that He was God and thus they sought to stone Him for blasphemy because they did not believe Him to be God.

We see Jesus make a similar claim in [John 8:24](#) declaring to the Jews "Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I AM (again the translators add "He" but it is not in the Greek text), you will die in your sins." So what is Jesus' claiming? That He is God and He is clearly implying that belief in Him will mean that a person does not have to die in their sins! Who do you say that Jesus is? Do you believe in His Name, "Ego Eimi." If you do, you will never see the Second Death described by John at the Great White Throne Judgment in [Revelation 20:11-15](#).

In his classic book "**More Than a Carpenter**" Josh McDowell says that Jesus is either "**Lord, Liar or Lunatic?**" (*As an aside when we post this sermon transcript on the Antioch website, we will give you a link to an online version of this simple but well done apologetic resource that can be read in less than 3 hours and equip you to be able to share your faith without fear*). But Jesus clearly claimed to be God and did not leave any other option open. He either LIED about it, was OUT OF HIS MIND or He is LORD of all.

Josh McDowell - Was He Lord? I cannot personally conclude that Jesus was a liar or a lunatic. The only other alternative is that he was the Christ, the Son of God, as he claimed. When I discuss this with most Jewish people, it's interesting how they respond. They usually tell me that Jesus was a moral, upright, religious leader, a good man, or some kind of prophet. I then share with them the claims Jesus made about himself and then the material in this chapter on the tri-lemma (liar, lunatic, or Lord). When I ask if they believe Jesus was a liar, there is a sharp "No!" Then I ask, "Do you believe he was a lunatic?" The reply is "Of course not."

"Do you believe he is God?" Before I can get a breath in edgewise, there is a resounding "Absolutely not." Yet one has only so many choices. The issue with these three alternatives is not which is possible, for it is obvious that all three are possible. But rather, the question is "Which is more probable?" Who you decide Jesus Christ is must not be an idle intellectual exercise. You cannot put him on the shelf as a great moral teacher. That is not a valid option. He is either a liar, a lunatic, or Lord and God. You must make a choice. "But," as the Apostle John wrote, "these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and"—more important—"that believing you might have life in His name" ([John 20:31](#)). The evidence is clearly in favor of Jesus as Lord. Some people, however, reject this clear evidence because of moral implications involved. They don't want to face up to the responsibility or implications of calling him Lord. **(More Than a Carpenter)**

(Walter Martin in his classic work "Kingdom of the Cults" has the following note which helps us understand why the conversation of Adrian Rogers and the JW came to an abrupt halt! Martin writes "Jehovah's Witnesses know beyond doubt that if Jesus is Jehovah God, every one of them is going to a flaming hereafter; and hell they fear above all else. This no doubt explains a great deal of their antagonism toward the doctrines of the Trinity and hell. The Witnesses, it must be remembered, consistently berate the Trinity doctrine as of the devil and never tire of proclaiming that the hell of the Bible is the grave. The thought of being punished in unquenchable fire for their disobedience to God is probably the strongest bond holding the Watchtower's flimsy covers together.")

Barry Horner writes "For those who have no knowledge of Greek, a simple rebuttal of the Jehovah's Witness runs as follows. The claim is made that the Greek here has no definite article or "the," so that "a god" is more literally correct. However there is no indefinite article or "a" in Greek! Nevertheless, enquire if a passage of Scripture that clearly addresses Jesus as "the God"

were revealed, then would not Jesus' deity be established? Refer to [John 20:28](#) where Thomas confesses Jesus to be, literally, "the Lord of me and the God of me," ho kurios mou kai ho theos mou, with the use of the definite article. **F. F. Bruce** has written: "Those people who emphasize that the true rendering of the last clause of [John 1:1](#) is 'the word was a god,' prove nothing thereby save their ignorance of Greek grammar. "Those who know even some basic Greek will understand that the verb "to be" here takes a predicate nominative, so that the article with "Word" establishes the subject of the sentence. Thus John wants to declare that "the Word was God," and not that "God was the Word." (**John 1:1-18**)

Notice how the **New World Translation** used by the Jehovah's Witnesses translates this phrase in [John 1:1](#) "the Word was a god."

Gotquestions notes that "The New World Translation is unique in one thing – it is the first intentional, systematic effort at producing a complete version of the Bible that is edited and revised for the specific purpose of agreeing with a group's doctrine. The Jehovah's Witnesses and the Watchtower Society realized that their beliefs contradicted Scripture. So, rather than conforming their beliefs to Scripture, they altered Scripture to agree with their beliefs. The "New World Bible Translation Committee" went through the Bible and changed any Scripture that did not agree with Jehovah's Witness theology....The most well-known of all the New World Translation perversions is [John 1:1](#). The original Greek text reads, "the Word was God." The NWT renders it as "the word was a god." This is not a matter of correct translation, but of reading one's preconceived theology into the text, rather than allowing the text to speak for itself. There is no indefinite article in Greek (in English, "a" or "an"), so any use of an indefinite article in English must be added by the translator. This is grammatically acceptable, so long as it does not change the meaning of the text.

There is a good reason why *theos* has no definite article in [John 1:1](#) and why the New World Translation rendering is in error. There are three general rules we need to understand to see why.

1. In Greek, word order does not determine word usage like it does in English. In English, a sentence is structured according to word order: Subject - Verb - Object. Thus, "Harry called the dog" is not equivalent to "the dog called Harry." But in Greek, a word's function is determined by the case ending found attached to the word's root. There are two case endings for the root *theo*: one is -s (*theos*), the other is -n (*theon*). The -s ending normally identifies a noun as being the subject of a sentence, while the -n ending normally identifies a noun as the direct object.

2. When a noun functions as a predicate nominative (in English, a noun that follows a being verb such as "is"), its case ending must match the noun's case that it renames, so that the reader will know which noun it is defining. Therefore, *theo* must take the -s ending because it is renaming *logos*. Therefore, [John 1:1](#) transliterates to "kai *theos* en ho *logos*." Is *theos* the subject, or is *logos*? Both have the -s ending. The answer is found in the next rule.

3. In cases where two nouns appear, and both take the same case ending, the author will often add the definite article to the word that is the subject in order to avoid confusion. John put the definite article on *logos* ("the Word") instead of on *theos*. So, *logos* is the subject, and *theos* is the predicate nominative. In English, this results in [John 1:1](#) being read as "and the Word was God" (instead of "and God was the word").

The most revealing evidence of the Watchtower's bias is their inconsistent translation technique. Throughout the Gospel of John, the Greek word *theon* occurs without a definite article. The New World Translation renders none of these as "a god." Just three verses after [John 1:1](#), the New World Translation translates

another case of theos without the indefinite article as "God." Even more inconsistent, in [John 1:18](#), the NWT translates the same term as both "God" and "god" in the very same sentence.

The Watchtower, therefore, has no hard textual grounds for their translation—only their own theological bias. While New World Translation defenders might succeed in showing that [John 1:1](#) can be translated as they have done, they cannot show that it is the proper translation. Nor can they explain the fact that that the NWT does not translate the same Greek phrases elsewhere in the Gospel of John the same way. It is only the pre-conceived heretical rejection of the deity of Christ that forces the Watchtower Society to inconsistently translate the Greek text, thus allowing their error to gain some semblance of legitimacy in the minds of those ignorant of the facts.

It is only the Watchtower's pre-conceived heretical beliefs that are behind the dishonest and inconsistent translation that is the New World Translation. The New World Translation is most definitely not a valid version of God's Word. There are minor differences among all the major English translations of the Bible. No English translation is perfect. However, while other Bible translators make minor mistakes in the rendering of the Hebrew and Greek text into English, the NWT intentionally changes the rendering of the text to conform to Jehovah's Witness theology. The New World Translation is a **perversion**, not a **version**, of the Bible." (**Is the New World Translation a valid version of the Bible?**)

Until around 1950, Jehovah's Witnesses carried with them a copy of the American Standard Version of the Bible (because it features the name Jehovah throughout the Old Testament). But they faced the embarrassing problem of trying to deny the deity of Christ, while the very Bible they held in their hand said plainly that "the Word was God." This problem was solved when the Watchtower Society published its own New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures.

Now, when Christians refer JWs to [John 1:1](#), the Witnesses can answer, “That’s not in my Bible!” They can turn to [John 1:1](#) in their own translation, and read “the Word was **a god**.”

By reducing Jesus Christ to “**a god**,” the Watchtower places him among the “many ‘gods’ and many ‘lords’ ” of [1 Corinthians 8:5](#)—on the same level as Satan, “the god of this system of things” ([2Cor. 4:4](#), NWT).

The Watchtower Society presents the New World Translation as the anonymous work of the New World Bible Translation Committee—and resists all efforts to identify the members of the committee. They say they do this in order that all credit for the work will go to God. But an unbiased observer will quickly note that such anonymity also shields the translators from any blame for errors or distortions in their renderings. And it prevents scholars from checking their credentials. In fact, defectors who have quit Watchtower headquarters in recent years have identified the alleged members of the committee, revealing that none of them was expert in Hebrew, Greek, or Aramaic—the original languages from which the Bible must be translated.

II. Coexistent

v. 1b and the Word was with God,

² He was in the beginning with God.

The Word was with God (*logos he pros ton theon*) - One could accurately paraphrase this as "the Word was [being] intimately

before God." In other words John is saying there is more than one person in the Godhead! And picture is of the Word facing God. The Son was continually "inclined toward" the Father. The Son was forever face to face with the Father. The picture simply, but profoundly paints the picture that the Father and the Son enjoyed **intimate fellowship** with each other **throughout eternity**, being continually "face-to-face" as it were! The implication is clear that the Father had fellowship with a Person, not a philosophical principle (given that Logos could have a very abstract sense in Greek). This pre-existent Word was distinct from the Father, not in essence, but in Person.

In [Jn 1:18](#) we see another allusion to this intimacy, John writing "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, **Who is in the bosom of the Father**, He has explained [Him.]" The phrase "in the bosom" clearly speaks of intimacy and communion between the Father and the Son. Jesus Himself describes this intimate communion in [Jn 17:5](#).

With (4314)(**pros**) is a preposition which properly speaks of motion towards to "interface with" (literally, moving toward a goal or destination). In [Jn 1:1](#) **pros** indicates place or accompaniment, but also disposition and orientation.

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

[John 17:5](#) "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

[John 17:24](#) "Father, I desire that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am, in order that they may

behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me; for Thou didst love Me before the foundation of the world.”

here is no new information in this verse which was not taught in [John 1:1-note](#). As **Bob Utley** says "This is parallel to [Jn 1:1](#) and emphasizes again the shocking truth in light of **monotheism** that Jesus, who was born around 6–5BC., has always been with the Father and, therefore, is deity." (**John 1 Commentary**)

He (this one) (houtos) - Masculine singular. Refers to the **Word**, the **Messiah**. John reiterates that He is **eternal** and that He is in close relationship with the Father. As **Leon Morris** says "These Two are not the same, but they belong together. The fact that One may be said to be “**with**” the Other clearly differentiates Them. Yet though They are distinct, there is no disharmony. John’s expression points us to the perfect unity in which they are joined." (**See related topic - How is the doctrine of the Trinity not tritheism?**)

A T Robertson on **houtos** - “This one,” the Logos of [John 1:1-note](#), repeated for clarity, characteristic of John’s style. He links together into one phrase two of the ideas already stated separately, “in the beginning He was with God,” “afterwards in time He came to be with man” (Marcus Dods). Thus John clearly states of the Logos Pre-existence before Incarnation, Personality, Deity. (**John 1 Word Pictures in the N**

Hendriksen on [Jn 1:2](#) - This fully divine Word, existing from all eternity as a distinct Person, was enjoying loving fellowship with the Father. Thus, the full deity of Christ, His eternity, and His distinct personal existence are confessed once more, in order that heretics may be refuted and the Church may be established in the faith and love of God. (**New Testament Commentary Exposition of the Gospel According to John**)

III. Self-Existent

³ All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life,

All things (pas) - The Greek word pas (panta) leaves no room for exceptions. Since He created all things, by default He was not Himself created. Note striking contrast with "**nothing**" (literally "not even one thing") in the second clause which gives the same truth from a negative point of view. "Just as He was before all things, and therefore, **eternal**; so was He the Originator of all things, and therefore, **omnipotent**." (Pink)

MacLeod - Everything in the universe was made and put there by God. God has made it all, and He has made it through Jesus Christ. Because Jesus Christ is the Creator God of all things ([Col. 1:16](#)), we "can trust such a God with everything. Because He is Creator," says Hughes, "He knows just what His creation, His people, need." Hughes writes further, It was said of Charles Steinmetz, the mechanical genius and friend of Henry Ford, that he could build a motor in his mind, and if it broke down he could fix it in his mind. So when he designed it and actually built it, it ran with precision. One day the assembly line in the Ford plant broke down. None of Ford's men could fix it, so they called in Steinmetz. He tinkered for a few minutes, threw the switch, and it started running again. A few days later Ford received a bill from Steinmetz for \$10,000. Ford wrote back, 'Charlie, don't you

think your bill is a little high for just a little tinkering?’ Steinmetz sent back a revised bill: ‘Tinkering—\$10. Knowing where to tinker—\$9,990.’ Only [the Creator, the Lord] Jesus knows where the tinkering should be done in our lives to keep us in perfect running order. Christ always knows which screw to turn, which belt to loosen, and the most beneficial octane [for each of His creatures]. ([The Eternality and Deity of the Word- John 1:1-2](#))

All (things) (3956)(**pas**) means "all" in the sense of "each (every) part that applies." The emphasis of the total picture then is on "one piece at a time." When **pás** modifies a word with the definite article it has "extensive-intensive" force – and is straightforward intensive when the Greek definite article is lacking.

Through (1223)(**dia**) is a preposition which means across (to the other side), back-and-forth to go all the way through, "successfully across" ("thoroughly"). **Dia** is also commonly used as a prefix and lend the same idea ("thoroughly," literally, "successfully" across to the other side). **Dia** is a root of the English term *diameter* ("across to the other side, through"). Before a vowel, **dia** is simply written di. As used in the present context **dia** is a **marker of instrumentality by which something is accomplished**, by means of, through (cp [2Jn12](#), [Ro 5:2](#), [Col 2:19](#)). Thus "*by means of*" the Word all things were created. In other words, the Logos was the Father's Agent of creation of all things both visible and the invisible.

Him - As in [Jn 1:2](#), the Word of [John 1:1](#) is given personality even though He will not take on flesh and blood until [Jn 1:14](#).

Through Him - Jesus is the effecting agent. John follows with a sad commentary that "He was in the world, and **the world was made through Him**, and the world did not know (by experience = **ginosko**) Him." ([John 1:10](#))

MacArthur - That Jesus Christ created everything (cf. [Col. 1:16](#); [Heb. 1:2](#)) offers two further proofs of His deity. First, the Creator of all things must Himself be uncreated, and only the eternal God is uncreated....That Jesus is the Creator also verifies His deity, because God is portrayed throughout the Bible as the Creator ([Gen. 1:1](#); [Ps. 102:25](#); [Isa. 40:28](#); [42:5](#); [45:18](#); [Mark 13:19](#); [Rom. 1:25](#); [Eph. 3:9](#); [Rev. 4:11](#)). (**John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary**)

Came into being (were made) (1096)(**ginomai** in the **aojist tense** = at a point in time in the past) means the universe came into existence.

A T Robertson says "**Came into being** is "Second aorist middle indicative of **ginomai** — the constative **aojist** covering the creative activity looked at as one event in contrast with the continuous existence of **ēn** (**imperfect tense**) in [John 1:1-note](#) and [John 1:2-note](#). All things "**came into being**." Creation is thus presented as a **becoming** (**ginomai**) in contrast with **being** (**eimi**).

Even as the worlds came into being by the Word, so those in darkness are transferred into light by the proclamation of the same Word, and now " **we are His workmanship** (**poiema**), created (**ktizo**) in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." ([Eph 2:10](#)) We are the result of His Spirit's work on those dead in their trespasses and sins, those who now are His "poetic masterpiece". Ponder this truth for a moment!

John Piper writes that "**Creation** is God's **poiema - Work of Art** - What does He do to make Himself evident? He made the world. He created - like a potter, or a sculptor or a poet, except He created out of nothing. In [Ro 1:20](#), when it says that God is "understood through what has been made," the words "what has been made" stand for one Greek word (which you will all recognize), the word **poiema**. **It's the word from which we get "poem."** **The universe and everything in it is God's work of art.** What's the point of this word? The point is that in a poem

there is manifest design and intention and wisdom and power. The wind might create a letter in the sand, but not a poem. That's the point. God acted. God planned. God designed. God crafted. He created and made. And in doing that, Paul says in [Ro 1:19](#), God made Himself evident to all mankind. The universe is a poem about God. (**Displays of God Remove the Excuse for Failed Worship**)

Paul gives us a parallel passage descriptive of the Word's creative power...

[Colossians 1:15](#)-note And He (Jesus) is the image of the invisible God, **the first-born (prototokos** = The 'firstborn' was either the eldest child in a family or a person of preeminent rank, in this context the latter. Jesus was not created as Jehovah's Witnesses falsely teach, but was Creator. The take verse 15 out of **context** - Context is King of accurate interpretation!) of all creation. 16 **For (A very important term of explanation)** by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him. 17 And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

So from Colossians we glean the following about Christ and the Creation. He is...

THE ORIGINATOR: BY HIM
THE AGENT: THROUGH HIM
THE GOAL: FOR HIM

[Heb 1:1-3](#)-note God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, **through whom also He made the world**. 3 And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and **upholds () all things by the word of His power**. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high

Upholds - The picture is that of continuous ([present tense](#)) active and dynamic involvement by the Creator with His creation, not a passive and static (deistic) involvement. The Lord Jesus holds all things together and in their proper relationship to each other by His own power. The oceans are held in their beds. The rivers run down into the sea. The heavenly bodies are held in their orbits.

Application of the truth that Jesus is our Creator - The Psalmist shows us how to apply [Jn 1:3](#) declaring "I Will lift up my eyes to the mountains; From where shall my help come? My help comes from Jehovah, Who made heaven and earth. ([Ps 121:1-2](#)) Jesus is my Creator. He is *my* Help (note personal possessive pronoun). Therefore I will choose to lift my eyes to Him (enabled His Spirit) when trouble comes. He is able because all things were made through Him! If He can create everything then surely He can give help in my distress. Nothing is too difficult for Him! The next time you are in distress, will you humble yourself and lift up your eyes to your Creator Who made heaven and earth?

John Phillips - The Greek word panta ("all things") refers to all things individually, all things separately. It is a reference to the infinite detail of creation. The scientist takes his or her telescope and focuses it on the reaches of space. Out there are distances so vast that a special unit of measure is needed with which to express those concepts. The astronomer's yardstick is a light year: the distance light travels in one year (at 186,273 miles per second-the equivalent of encircling the earth at the equator seven and a half times). In round numbers, that is about six trillion miles. Our sun, by that yardstick, is eight light minutes away. But out there in space are suns and stars believed to be billions of light years away. Nor can we count the stars or guess how many billions there are.

Some stars are large beyond all thought. The star Antares, for instance, could hold sixty-four million suns the size of ours. In the constellation Hercules is a star that could contain one hundred million stars the size of Antares. Our galaxy, the Milky Way, is 100,000 light years in diameter. It is revolving at a speed of two

hundred miles an hour. It takes two million years to complete one revolution on its axis.

Not only are we awed by the size of space and the prodigality with which the creator has strewn it with stars, but we are overwhelmed by the precision with which all these vast orbs pursue their appointed paths. Our planet, for instance, does not travel in a true circle. It travels in three directions at the same time. It revolves on its axis, it travels around the sun, and its path is deflected by other planets. Yet it does not lose more than one one-hundredth of a second every one hundred years.

Let us turn from the world of the infinitely large to the world of the infinitely small. The building block of the universe is the atom, an entity so small that each one is less than one hundred fifty millionth of an inch in diameter. If the molecules of a single drop of water could be converted into grains of sand, there would be enough sand to build a concrete highway half a mile wide and one foot thick all the way from New York to San Francisco.

That is the world of inanimate things. When we turn to living things the complexities that confront us on every hand are incredible. Each cell in a living creature contains two hundred billion molecules of atoms. The nucleus of a cell (a complex life factory) is less than four ten-thousandths of an inch in diameter. The membrane that encloses the cell's component parts is only one half of that, or one-millionth of an inch thick.

Jesus made it all. "Without him," says the Holy Spirit through the inspired apostle, "was not anything made that was made." The form of the text in Greek is even more emphatic: "not even one thing." (**Exploring the Gospel of John**)

Apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being - panta di' auto egeneto (3SAMI), kai choris autou egeneto (3SAMI) oude en ho gegonen (3SRAI) - John follows a positive declaration with a negative one for emphasis, "another note of his style as in [John 1:20](#) and [1 John 1:5](#). Thus John excludes two heresies (Bernard) that matter is eternal and that angels or aeons had a share in creation." (A T Robertson)

Nothing is more literally "not even one thing," which is emphatic. "The whole of creation is included in one broad sweep. Nothing is outside the range of his activity." (**Leon Morris**)

Apart (5565)(**choris** related to **chora** = land from **choros** = field or place usually where cattle range and feed or **chasma** = thru idea of empty expanse) as an adverb means apart, separately, by itself ([Jn 20:7](#)). **Choris** as a preposition means (1) separately from, without, which is the main sense in the NT

Nothing (3761)(**oude**) means literally absolutely not one. The point is that this negative conjunction denies absolutely and objectively that nothing that came into being did so but through Jesus! **A T Robertson** says "**Not even one thing!**"

Has come into being - The verb *ginomai* is in the **perfect tense**.

Vincent writes "tense points back to the work of creation considered as a definite act or series of acts in the beginning of time. The perfect tense indicates the continuance of things created; so that the full idea is, that which hath been made and exists. The combination of a positive and negative clause (compare [Jn 1:20](#)) is characteristic of John's style, as also of James." (**John 1 Commentary - Vincent's Word Studies**)

Leon Morris - There is a change of tense. ***Were made*** (aorist - "came into being") pictures creation in its totality, as one act, but ***has been made*** ("come into being") is perfect, which conveys the thought of the continuing existence of created things. What we see around us did not come into existence apart from the Word, any more than what appeared on the first day of creation. ([John 1:3](#)) (**The Gospel of John The New International Commentary on the New Testament**)

Wiersbe on **has come into being** (*ginomai*) - The verb is perfect tense in the Greek, which means a "completed act." Creation is finished. It is not a process still going on, even though God is certainly at work in His creation ([John 5:17](#)). Creation is not a process; it is a finished product. (**The Bible Exposition Commentary**)

In Him - "He was the fountain of life—**physical, moral, and eternal**—its principle and source." (Vincent) Notice that John does not say (as with the Creation by the Logos) that life is "through" Jesus but is **in Him**. (cf [Jn 3:15](#), [16](#), [Jn 3:36](#), [Jn 6:40](#), [Jn 11:25](#)) Paul takes this a step further in [Colossians 3:4](#) (**note**) when he describes "**Christ** [Who is] **our life**" (literally "Christ our life").

John explains later that "just as the Father has life **in Himself**, even so He gave to the Son also to have **life in Himself**." ([Jn 5:26](#))

Was (1510) (**eimi**) means to be and is the usual verb for existence. In the metaphysical sense as in [John 1:1](#), "In the beginning was the Word," meaning it had been before there was any beginning or existed before the beginning of anything; [John 8:50](#), *estín*, in the pres. tense indicating." (**Zodhiates**) Notice John does not say Jesus became life but that He was always life. **Was** is in the **imperfect tense** which speaks of continuous action in the past. In a word, the Word was continually life! This means that "from all eternity and throughout the entire old dispensation, life resided in the Word." (**Leon Morris**)

A W Pink on in Him was life - This follows logically from what has been said in the previous verse. If Christ created all things He must be the Fountain of life. He is the Life-Giver. We understand "life" to be used here in its widest sense. Creature life is found in God, for "in him we live and move and have our being"; spiritual life or eternal life, and resurrection life, are also found "in Him." If it be objected that the Greek word for "life" here is "zoe," and that zoe has exclusive reference to spiritual life, we answer, Not always: see [Luke 12:15](#); [Luke 16:25](#) (translated "life-time"), [Acts 17:25](#), etc., where, in each case, "zoe" has reference to human (natural) life, as such. Thus, "zoe" includes within its scope all "life." (**John 1:1-13 Christ the Eternal Word**)

Guzik - The Word is the source of all **life**. The ancient Greek word translated **life** is zoe, which means "the life principle," not bios, which is mere biological life.

Life refers to that supernatural life which includes a fullness of life which alone belongs to God the Giver of life and is available to His children now ([Ro 6:4-note](#), [Ep 4:18-note](#)) and forever, amen ([Mk 10:30](#), [Titus 1:2-note](#) on Eternal Life).

John frequently associates **life** with **Jesus**...

[John 5:21](#); [26](#) "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them **life**, even so the Son also gives **life** to whom He wishes. [26](#) "For just as the Father has **life** in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have **life** in Himself;

[John 11:25](#) Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the **life**; he who believes in Me shall **live** even if he dies,

[John 14:6](#) Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the **life**; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.

Life (2222)(**zoe**) speaks of "life in the sense of one who is possessed of vitality and animation. It is used of the absolute fullness of life, both essential and ethical, which belongs to God. The ethical and spiritual qualities of this life which God is, are communicated to the sinner when the latter places his faith in the Lord Jesus as Saviour, and this becomes the new, animating, energizing, motivating principle which transforms the experience of that individual, and the saint thus lives a Christian life." (Wuest)

If Jesus Christ shares the nature of God, we are called to worship Him **without cessation**, obey Him **without hesitation**, love Him **without reservation** and serve Him **without interruption**.
To Him be all glory for ever - Milne