

In the Beginning

Gospel of John, Part I

John 1:1-5

Stuart W. Bryan

- I. Prologue: The Identity of the Son of God (1:1-18)
- II. Jesus Proven to be the Christ & the Son of God in His Public Ministry (1:19-12:50)
- III. Jesus Proven to be the Christ & the Son of God in His Passion & Resurrection (13:1-20:31)
- IV. Epilogue: The Future Mission of the Son of God (21:1-25)

I. Introduction

II. Background

A. Author (cf. 1:40-41; 13:23; 18:15-16; 19:25-27; 20:1ff; 21:1-2, 7, 20-25)

B. Purpose (cf. 20:30-31)

“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.”

- *The Christ –*
- *The Son of God –*

C. Outline

III. The Word of God

A. Before the world was made (vv. 1-2 cf. 1 Jn 1:1; Rev 19:13)

- *In the beginning was the Word –*
- *and the Word was with God –*
- *and the Word was God –*
- *The same was in the beginning with God –*

“Our outward word has some similarity to the divine Word, for our word declares the whole conception of the mind; since what we conceive in the mind we bring out in word. Indeed our heart is as it were the source and the uttered word the stream that flows from there.”

Basil the Great (c. AD 330-379)

“Our Lord is called the Word because those things that were hidden were revealed through him, just as it is through a word that the hidden things of the heart are made known.”

Ephrem the Syrian (c. AD 306-373)

B. The making of the world (v. 3 cf. Ps 33:6; Col 1:16; Heb 1:2)

For the Word of the LORD is right, And all His work is done in truth. He loves righteousness and justice; The earth is full of the goodness of the LORD. By the Word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath [Spirit] of His mouth. Ps 33:4-6

C. The time of man's innocency (v. 4 cf. Ps 36:5-9)

1. Life (cf. Jn 5:26; Acts 17:25; Col 1:17)
2. Light

D. The time of man's corruption (v. 5)

- *Comprehend* –
- *Embrace* –
- *Overcome* –

O LORD, You preserve man and beast. How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! Therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Your wings. They are abundantly satisfied with the fullness of Your house, And You give them drink from the river of Your pleasures. For with You is the fountain of life; In Your light we see light. Ps 36:6-9

IV. Application

A. The charge of blasphemy

“John intends that the whole of his gospel shall be read in the light of this verse. The deeds and words of Jesus are the deeds and words of God; if this be not true the book is blasphemous.” C.K. Barrett

- 5:16-23 – Honor the Son just as you honor the Father!
- 6:60-62 – what if the Son ascends where He was before?
- 7:28-30 – I know Him, for I am from Him, and He sent Me.
- 8:58-59 – Before Abraham was, I am!
- 10:30-31 – I and My Father are one!

B. Trinitarian Basics

“Sabellius [Modalism] is overthrown by this text. For he asserts that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are one Person, Who sometimes appeared as the Father, sometimes as the Son, sometimes as the Holy Ghost. But he is manifestly confounded by this text, ‘and the Word was with God’; for here the Evangelist declares that the Son is one Person, the Father another. Because the Word was together with God, it is clear that two Persons are presented, though these two share one nature. The proof that there is one nature is this: ‘and the Word was God.’ Do you see that the Word is God? Therefore, the Father and the Son have one nature, because there is one divinity. Let both Arius and Sabellius be put to shame. Arius, who said that the Son is the creation and work of the Father, is shamed by this: ‘in the beginning was the Word and the Word was God.’ And Sabellius, who said there was a unity, not a Trinity, of persons, is shamed by this: ‘the Word was with God.’ The great John here proclaims clearly that the Word and the Father are different from each other, but not different in kind. They are different in their persons, but one and the same in their natures.”

Theophylact of Ochrid (d. 1107)

C. The re-creation of the world (cf. Is 59:15bff; 63:1-5)

V. Conclusion