

The Trinity Delusion

An exposé of the doctrine of the Trinity

John 1:1

In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

The Trinitarian Claim

Trinitarians interpret the text as if John is referring to the beginning of the Genesis creation and John is telling us that the Son was God.

The Problems with the Claim

1. Eisegesis

Trinitarians impose their doctrine upon the text by imagining the person Jesus is being styled with the title, "the Word" and identified as God. But it simply does not say Jesus was with God nor does it say Jesus was God. Moreover, John 1:14 does not say Jesus became flesh. It says the Word became flesh.

2. Can't See the Forest for the Trees

It is common for Trinitarians, and others, to suppose the interpretation of John 1:1 rests entirely upon the grammar of John 1:1c, that is, the meaning of the anarthrous noun *theos*. This approach essentially ignores any other questions which must be asked concerning this verse. There are several other questions pertaining to this verse which Trinitarians disregard.

3. Mythical meaning attached to the word *pros*.

John 1:1b has been typically translated as, "the word was **with** God. More than one Greek word is translated as "with" in English translations. The Greek word here is *pros* and it usually refers to directional motion "toward" something in the sense that one thing is coming to be before another thing. Sometimes, Trinitarians suggest that the Greek preposition *pros* with a stative verb, as we have at John 1:1, necessarily implies a personal relationship indicating the Son and the Father were in a "face to face" relationship. However, this reads far too much into this common everyday Greek preposition than the word can offer and loads an everyday Greek preposition with a fourth century doctrine. The Greeks actually had a term for a face to face relationship, "*prosopon pros prosopon*," but this is not what John said. The Greek word *pros* with a stative verb simply implies that one thing 'X' is positionally before another thing 'Y.' For example, the Old Testament (LXX) says several times that the word of God came *pros* Prophet X referring to a message from God which came to that prophet. Once the word of God had come to him, we could say the word of God was *pros* Prophet X.

4. The Definition of *theos* at 1:1c

It is not uncommon for Trinitarian laypeople to suppose John is telling us WHO the Word was at John 1:1c. They being by assuming that the term "the Word" refers to

Jesus and then they also suppose the word "God" means that John is telling us WHO Jesus was/is.

However, Trinitarian scholars and theologians deny that John was indicating WHO the Word was (although this fact doesn't seem to stop them from citing this verse to try and prove Jesus is that identity known as God). Trinitarian academics insist, rather, that John is telling us WHAT the Word was, and the word "God" essentially means "divine" or "deity" in a qualitative sense. In other words, they are defining the word "God" (*theos*) as a qualitative noun in an adjectival sense. The problem with this interpretation is that John actually said, "and the word was *pros ton theon and theos* was the word." The point here is not whether *theos* or *logos* is the predicate noun but the meaning of the word *theos* at 1:1c. Even though John's word order is "God and God," we are expected to accept the notion that the first instance of the word "God" means "the Father" but the second instance means just the opposite: "not the Father." It is highly unlikely that John would join two instances of the word "God" with the conjunction "and" and expect readers to assume that each instance of the word "God" has different, and even opposite, meanings.

και ο λογος ην προς τον θεον και θεος ην ο λογος

and the word was *pros* God and God was the word

Is it reasonable to suppose John would expect his readers to suppose the first instance of *theos* means "the Father" but the second instance means "not the Father"? It is an extremely far-fetched proposition.

5. The Word/Logos

In the New Testament Gospels, the "Word" refers to the proclamation of the Gospel of the Kingdom of God through the ministry of Jesus Christ. This fact is entirely ignored by Trinitarian interpreters. The "Word of God" came to John the Baptist (Luke 3:2) and he proclaimed the Good News. Both Mark and Luke begin their Gospels by referring to the beginning of the Good News (Mark) and the beginning of ministry of the Word (Luke). And again, John opens his first letter by telling us they heard the Word of Life and that is the message which he is announcing in his letter. Jesus kept his Father's word (8:55).

6. 1 John 1:1

The language 1 John 1:1 is obviously referring to the same concepts. John refers to "what" they had seen, "what" they had heard, "what" they had touched with their hands concerning "the word of life." And then John proceeds to announce that same word to his readers, the word they had heard. It should be rather obvious that the word in question is the same Word proclaimed by that flesh Jesus.

7. "In the beginning"

Since the book of Genesis begins with the words "In the beginning," Trinitarians suppose that John is establishing a time frame when the Word was with God and when the Word was God. However, New Testament writers clearly portray Jesus' life, beginning with the baptism of John, as the beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ and the imminent establishment of the Kingdom of God. The "Word of God" came to John the Baptist (Luke 3:2) and he proclaimed the Good News testifying to the Light coming into the world (1:6). Mark similarly opens his Gospel with the words, "the beginning of the Good News of Jesus Christ." Luke opens his Gospel referring to the beginning of the ministry of the Word and his opening statement in the Book of Acts

refers to his Gospel as "all that Jesus began to do and teach." And in his first letter, John refers to the Word as what they had heard from the beginning.

Additionally, not a few scholars have noted that John's Gospel is about the new creation since he routinely uses Genesis creation imagery. Indeed, the new creation of God is the reconciliation of the Genesis creation. The ministry of Jesus is the beginning of the new creation of God.

8. *Houtos* and *Autos*

Supposing that John 1:1 refers to the beginning of the Genesis creation, John 1:3 is generally interpreted by Trinitarians to mean the Genesis creation was created through the Son. On this basis alone, the Greek words *houtos* and *autos* are translated as "he" and "him" respectively in verses 2 and 3. These personal pronouns lead readers to suppose that the Word mentioned verse 1 is being identified as a person. This is due to the fact that most readers are ignorant of Greek grammar and do not realize these two Greek words do not function like our English words "he" and "him." They are also be used to refer to inanimate objects.

The words *houtos* and *autos* are often translated as "He" and "Him" in verses 2 and 3 in Trinitarian based translations. However, these two Greek words are not equivalent to our English words "He" and "Him." These two Greek words function very much like our English word "This." We use the word "this" to refer to both persons and inanimate objects and that is how these two Greek words operate. The word *houtos* is routinely translated as "this" in the New Testament. The word *autos* functions in the same manner and is routinely translated as "it." Both of these words refer back to the subject which is under discussion. To illustrate, the exact same words are used at John 6:60 where Jesus is referring to the *logos* he had just spoken to the Jews. Compare John 1:1-3 with John 6:60:

In the beginning was the *logos*.... *houtos* was with God in the beginning.
All things came to be through *autou* and apart from *autou* not one thing
has come to be that has come to be.

εν αρχη ην ο *λογος*.... *ουτος* ην εν αρχη προς τον θεον παντα δι *αυτου*
εγενετο και χωρις *αυτου* εγενετο ουδε εν ο γεγονεν

Therefore many of his disciples, when they heard *autou* said, "*houtos* is a
difficult *logos*; who can hear *autou*?"

πολλοι ουν ακουσαντες εκ των μαθητων *αυτου* ειπον σκληρος εστιν
ουτος ο λογος τις δυναται *αυτου* ακουειν

Laypeople are often further confused by the fact that Greek is a gender specific language. In English, only people have gender but in Greek, both people and inanimate objects have gender. For example, a spoken *logos* is a grammatically masculine thing in the Greek language. Masculine words do not mean a male person is in view.

When either of the two words *houtos* and *autos* are referring back to the subject in view, and the subject in view is a person, it is appropriate to respectively translate these words as "he" and "him" because that is how we speak in English. It is appropriate not because that is precisely what these words mean but that is how we would express the same idea in English. And when the subject is an inanimate object, these **same two words** must be translated as "this" and "it." If we don't know whether the subject is a

person or an inanimate object, the words *houtos* and *autos* do not tell us whether the subject is or isn't a person.

The grammar of John 1:2-3 does not tell us whether a person is in view or not. All we can say in verse 2 is that the Word was with God in the beginning. And all we can say in verse 3 is that all things were created through the Word mentioned in verse 1. Neither of these two words can tell us that the Word is a person, nor can they tell us the Word isn't a person.

9. God Created with Two different Words?

We know that the Word by which God created all things in Genesis was His spoken Word. The Trinitarian interpretation of John 1:1-3 introduces an incomprehensible confusion whereby we are to suppose John is referring to the beginning of the Genesis creation and God created all things by means of two different Words: (1) His spoken Word, and (2) a person called the Word.

The confusion of Trinitarians here is especially entertaining since they view verse 3 as referring to the Genesis act of creation. However, the Scriptures tell us that the Genesis creation was accomplished by means of God's SPOKEN Word.

10. The Light

The immediate context says the Light shines in the darkness. If John is talking about reality at the creation of the world, then John is talking about Genesis 1:2-3 where darkness was upon the face of the deep and God said, "Let there be Light." And the Trinitarian is stuck in his own folly since this Light was the first of God's creations.

We are informed that this Light is the Father in John's first letter (1 John 1:5). We also see that the Light of the Father was expressed through His Messiah in the ministry of Jesus who was the expression of the Father through the words he said and the works he did. This suggests John does not have the beginning of the Genesis creation in mind but the beginning of the Good News of the Kingdom. And indeed, we are immediately told in verse 9 that the Light was coming into the world as John was testifying to that Light. John came to announce the true Light which was coming into the world since that Light had not yet come into the world.

11. The Word became flesh

Trinitarians are again guilty of reading their doctrine into the text concerning this verse. Verse 14 is usually interpreted to mean the Second Person of the Trinity became a human being when he descended into the womb of Mary. However, the text itself says nothing of the sort. God's Word is something which is expected to be fulfilled. For example, Paul said the mystery of godliness was manifested in flesh which means that a human being of flesh named Jesus manifested godliness during his ministry. In the same way, "the Word became flesh" refers to the fact that the Word of the Father was manifested in all the things that flesh said and did. The Word came to be flesh when the Spirit descended upon Jesus and he began to walk according to that Word, that is, the Good News of the Kingdom which God Anointed him to proclaim.

Analysis of the Evidence

The Biblical facts show that John's introductory words (1:1-5) refer to the beginning of the Gospel of the Kingdom and the Word proclaimed through the ministry of God's

Anointed, Jesus of Nazareth. The Word of John 1:1 is the Word proclaimed through the ministry of Jesus.

1. The Beginning of the Proclaimed Word

In the New Testament, "the Word" is an expression referring to the proclaimed Word of God and it is synonymous with the Good News. The ministry of Jesus was considered the beginning of the Word, the beginning of the Gospel. Mark and Luke open their Gospels in a similar introductory manner:

In the beginning was **the Word** and **the Word** was with God and **the Word** was God

Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from **the beginning** were eyewitnesses and servants of **the Word**...
Luke 1:1-2

The beginning of the **Good News** of Jesus Christ. Mark 1:1

Luke also opens the Book of Acts in this manner:

The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus **began to do and teach**, until the day when He was taken up... Acts 1:1-2

The ministry of Jesus, from his baptism at the Jordan to his death and resurrection, was considered to be the beginning of the Word, the beginning of the Gospel.

2. John's First Letter

John opens his first letter in a manner very similar to his Gospel:

What was from **the beginning**, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning **the Word** of Life... 1 John 1:1

The Word is something they had heard. John then immediately proceeds to announce that Word:

What was from the beginning, **what we have heard**, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning **the Word** of Life— and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and **announce** to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us. **What we have seen and heard** we **announce** to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His son Jesus Christ. These things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. This is **the message we have heard from Him** and **announce** to you.... 1:1-5

The Word which they had heard is a message which John is announcing. John makes it even more clear in his letter what he means in his opening statement. The Word is something his audience had heard from the beginning:

What was from **the beginning**, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands,

concerning **the Word** of Life

Beloved, I am not writing a new command to you, but an old command which you have had from **the beginning**. The old command is **the Word which you have heard**. 2:7

As for you, let that [Word*] abide in you which you heard from **the beginning**. If what you heard from **the beginning** abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. 2:24

*See v.14

This is **the message which you have heard from the beginning**, that we should love one another. 3:11

John's letter tells us quite clearly what he means by his language in the first verse of his letter and his Gospel. The "beginning" is the beginning of the proclaimed Good News and "the Word" refers to that proclaimed Word.

Also notice that the Word was something they had seen, something they had touched with their hands. Jesus proclaimed the Gospel in word and deed. He embodied the Word of God, the will of God. That flesh named Jesus always kept his God and Father's Word. To see that flesh was to see the mystery of godliness manifested in the flesh.

4. John 1:1-9 and John the Baptist

The Word of God came to John the Baptist and he proclaimed the Good News of the Kingdom.

The **Word of God** came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness and he came into all the district around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins; as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet... Luke 3:2-4

John the Baptist came, **proclaiming** in the wilderness of Judea, saying, "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet... Matthew 3:1-2

The beginning of **the Good News** of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. As it is written in Isaiah the prophet... John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness **proclaiming** a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins... Mark 1:1-4

In the beginning was **the Word**... There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. John 1:1-7

4. ...and the Word was God

It is easy enough to understand that the proclaimed Word was *pros* God (1:1b), but what did John mean when he said, "the Word WAS God?" In verse 18, John tells us plainly what he means.

... and the Word was God

the only begotten in the bosom of the Father he declares* Him

*Greek *exēgeomai* - unfolds, expounds, explains, expresses. See Luke 24:35; Acts 10:8; 15:12, 14; 21:19

The Word proclaimed through Jesus was the declaration of God the Father Himself - "the Word was God." No one has ever seen God but John tells us that Jesus came so that we might have understanding of the Father and so that we might know the Father, the only true God (cf. 17:3; 1 John 5:20). John's words, "the Word was God" refer to the fact that the Word proclaimed by Jesus revealed God the Father Himself to us.

Although no one has ever seen God the Father, Jesus teaches his disciples they had indeed seen the Father, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." Jesus also immediately explained to them how they had seen the Father. They had seen the Father in the words Jesus spoke and the works Jesus did. Jesus testified many times in the Gospel of John that his words were not his own but the Father's who sent him. In the same way, his works were not his own but the works of the Father which he did in his Father's name.

The proclaimed Word is not simply uttering a verbal message. Jesus proclaimed the Good News in Word and Work/Deed. The Word of God was all the things God did through Jesus His Anointed.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me wherefore He anointed me to proclaim the Good News to the poor. He has sent me to herald release to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free those who are oppressed, to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord. Luke 4:18

Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God with miracles and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst. Acts 2:22

God anointed Jesus of Nazareth in the Holy Spirit and with power, and how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. Acts 10:38

The Father abiding in me does the works. John 14:10

5. John's Introductory remarks and the Light of the Gospel: God the Father

In the first verse of Genesis, we read that God created the heavens and the earth. This is an introductory statement since what follows is a description of God creating the heavens and the earth. We should then ask ourselves whether John 1:1-5 is an introductory statement in a similar manner. In Genesis it says, "In the beginning, God created.... darkness was upon the face of the deep and God said, 'Let there be light.'" In John, it says, "In the beginning was the Word... all things came to be through the Word.... the light shined in the darkness."

God the Father is Light. John the Baptist came to testify to that Light (1:7-8). The true Light which enlightens every man was coming into the world. When was the Light coming into the world? The Light was coming into the world when John the Baptist began to proclaim the Word. Because God the Father was at work in Jesus His Anointed, he was the full expression of the Father who is Light. For that reason, Jesus could say, "I am the Light of the world." In contrast, John the Baptist testified that he

was not that Light. Rather, he only testified about the Light. In other words, John the Baptist's mission was to testify about the Light of the Father coming into the world. Jesus of Nazareth's mission was to be that Light - the full expression of the Father Himself - and he did this by always keeping his God's Word and doing his Father's will.

6. The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us (1:14)

The Hebrew word for "Good News", *bsr*, is the verb form of *bsr*, flesh (see John 6:53-55,63). The shekinah glory of the Father tabernacled in that flesh named Jesus. God the Father's glory was seen in Jesus' words and deeds. In the Gospel of John, Jesus did signs which revealed the glory of God.

The man of flesh named Jesus was the embodiment of the Word of God since he always obeyed his Father's word. Obedience to his God's will was HOW he proclaimed the Word to the world.

7. The Beginning of the New Creation

There is a very good reason John uses the language of Genesis in his opening statement. Not a few commentators have observed John's Gospel employs creation imagery. For example, when Jesus is about to die on the cross, he said, "It is finished" echoing Genesis 2:1. And when the risen Jesus breathes the Spirit into his disciples at John 20:22, we are reminded of Genesis 2:7. Jesus walking on water recalls the Spirit of God hovering over the waters of the Genesis creation. And again, the Light shines into the darkness in the Genesis account just as we see the Light of God shining into the darkness of the world through the ministry of Jesus. In every respect, we are to see the activity of God the Father's Spirit at work in Jesus just as we see the activity of the Spirit in the Genesis creation account.

The new creation is the reconciliation of the Genesis creation. Paul tells us that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself and those in Christ are new creations in him. In the same respect, God created anew all things in heaven and earth in the risen Christ by reconciling all things in heaven and earth to Himself in Christ (Col 1:16-19). It is for this reason, we ourselves new creations in Christ who is the firstfruits, the beginning of the creation of God.

8. Everything Came to Be through the Word (1:3)

If we carefully consider John 1:5, "the Light shines in the darkness," it is obviously apparent that these words are referring to the ministry of Jesus (see 3:19-21; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35-36). In verse 4, we also read that life was in the Word and that life was the Light of men. It should be plain here that John is not referring to the Genesis act of creation. The true Light which enlightens every man was presently coming into the world (1:9).

With these facts in view, it is obviously apparent that John 1:3 is not referring to the Genesis act of creation but to all the things that came to be through the proclamation of the Word through the ministry of Jesus. For this reason, Jesus cried, "It is finished" upon the cross just as we find God was finished all His works in the Genesis act of creation. Jesus' ministry was the beginning of the new creation of God, the new

heavens and earth, where our risen Lord is the firstfruits of that new creation, the beginning of the creation of God.

Conclusion

An honest exploration of the facts demonstrates to us that the Word of John 1:1 is the Word proclaimed through Jesus in his ministry and the Word he proclaimed was the proclamation of God the Father Himself, "the Word was God." He who had seen Jesus had seen the Father in terms of the things Jesus did. God is Life and Jesus fully expressed that Life in the words he spoke and the works he did. God is Truth and Jesus fully expressed that Truth by everything he said and did. God is Light and Jesus fully expressed the Light of the Father in all the words he spoke and works he did in the name of his God. God is Love and the flesh named Jesus fully expressed the Father's Love, dead flesh hanging on the cross for your sins and mine. The Word of God was something the flesh named Jesus always kept. The Word became flesh, that is, God the Father was manifested in flesh, that flesh named Jesus. Jesus came so that we might know the Father and Jesus fully expressed the Father in all the things he did because he always kept His Father's Word. Jesus' words and works were not his own but the Father's. The Word as proclaimed by Jesus... was God.

Truly, truly I tell you, whoever hears my **Word** and believes **Him** who sent me has eternal life.

John 5:24

If I say that I do not know Him, I will be a liar like you, but I do know Him and **keep His Word**.

John 8:55

Understanding John's Prologue



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