

John 1:1-18

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

1:2 He was in the beginning with God.

1:3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

1:4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

1:5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

1. Here is where the ancient Hebrew creation narrative and the Greek philosophical quest for ultimate reality [truth] collide in a way that philosophers and Bible students alike marvel at. "In the beginning" is of course familiar to us as it is the first three words of the old testament, but now we are not simply told that God created all things, but the way God worked within himself to create all things.

The Greek philosopher Aristotle [whom John was almost certainly familiar with] explains Logos to be the logic behind an idea or argument. Logic appeals to reason[- what is true] to make a point.

John equates Jesus with the one who is true, in fact he goes even further than that; Jesus is the truth behind everything that is true.

You can build on the truth of Christ and by that truth God built the everything that was built.

Logos = Word of God but also God – ultimate reality – truth behind it all – logic/ reason behind it
Rhema = Word of God but from God – the teachings of Christ and the scripture

The word [teachings] proceeds from the [logic] word, who is revealed to us in the [teachings] word.

Isaiah 55:11 so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

2. The doctrine of the Trinity relies on this text as it is one of the clearest explanations [although mysterious and poetic] of the fact that the Word is God and at the same time the Word is not all that there is to God. There was someone else with the Word in the beginning who was not the Word but was also God. The idea is sown that there is more than one person in the God head, and yet he does not compromise on the Old Testament teaching that there is only one God.

John then answers the question of the Origin of Evil here; God did not make evil- but evil exists in that is a shadow of the things that do exist. Here John is drawing on some of Plato's teachings that the reality behind what we see is so far superior to the reality that we see; that we appear to be in darkness in comparison to reality.

Spiritual Darkness

Sin [other things vs God's will]

Devil

Lies [distortion of truth]

Sickness [includes spiritual blindness]

Poverty

Death [opposite to life]

Hell

What is darkness? Darkness is not equal to light- it is merely the absence of light

Light is measurable it has weight and power and it can travel, Darkness fills the gaps where light is absent.

The only way not to cast a shadow is to emit light.

Let the light dwell within you = become a light bulb

If light is life then darkness is death [and everything that leads to death]

The Bible says God is the source of life and that death:

Is the opposite of life

Is an enemy

Is punishment on mankind for sin

And sin and hell are trying to separate us from the source of life

[physically, spiritually and eternally]

John is written to the church in Ephesus it was the home of the temple of the goddess Diana and a dark place filled with witchcraft. Paul had great struggles and battles here and even although the church was strong there, there were some people within the church spreading false teaching. The authors of the New Testament did not complain that the Romans or Jews killing them for their faith, but they would not tolerate a person claiming to be a believer who was trying to lead people away from the truth of Jesus.

1:6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.

1:7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.

1:8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

1:9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

Here the author is having fun with names.

Clearly and historically he is referring to John the Baptist – we know this as the previous three Gospels have made it clear that John the Baptist [the last of the Prophets] came to prepare the way for the Messiah,

However we cannot help but notice that the author of the Book we are reading also has the name John;

Furthermore the Author does not say John the Baptist but simply John. Suddenly we see that this is not a story about the one who wrote it and or the apostle John but it is about Jesus.

Many scholars believe this introduction and the fact that the disciple John is not referred to by name [or is only called the disciple Jesus loved] is proof of the disciple John's authorship.

There is another great example of the Humility shown By John the Baptist in this book. This was also associated with the first century Christian leadership.

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease."

The job of all followers of Christ is to lead people to the light.

It is the light of the lamp that saves us from darkness not the lamp itself.

1:10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

1:11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

1:12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

1:13 who were born, not of blood nor of **the will** of the flesh nor of **the will** of man, but **of God**.

He came to the Israelites – but the Israelites did not make him their leader collectively. Being a creation does not mean you know your creator. Everything God made has suffered because of sin, but Not everything God made will be redeemed- some will be destroyed. The question a created being ought to ask is not 'why would God do that?' but rather; "am a merely one of God's creations or am I A child of God?"

"You will be children of God [sons of God]" is not equal to "you are a human"

Sons of god was an OT term for angels

So you will be children of God = You will be like the angels dwelling in the presence of God's light, but not only when you die but right now as you live as well.

And so here we see the great sovereignty of God on display, the will of God

Sadly in the past 50 years we have noticed a massive decline in the number of people following Jesus in the west. Studies in the 1990's in America showed that less than 5% of people who had made a choice to follow Jesus could be considered committed Christians within a year of making the choice. In One study of 294,000 only 14,000 were committed to their choice within a year.

There are many people who have apparently chosen to follow Jesus, who fall away. What Johns Gospel is telling us is that the Living Word- the Logos was not in them. The light shone on them and for a while they reflected upon it but the true reason behind all creation [that we know as Jesus] does not indwell them. You are not born of your own decision but by the decision of God. Are you confused about how salvation works?

Confused about being saved?

Is salvation : heaven

Man's choice

Hell

Or



The first and most common mistake people make is adopting the first position- for the purpose of today's sermon I will simply call it a poor understanding of free will.

Sadly far too many evangelical Christians preach that our salvation is essentially up to us making a rationally informed or worse yet an emotionally manipulated choice. [story of conversion of another boy]

They may preach about what Jesus did on the cross but it is only potential salvation until you accept it.

Essentially they are trying to say Jesus potentially died for everyone, by saying he potentially died for no-one.

I have just shown you that the idea that we have an objective choice to follow Christ is clearly rejected in this very passage. We are not saved by a choice we make to follow Jesus, we are saved by what Jesus did for us on the Cross.

Our choice to follow Jesus is merely a natural out working of God's choice to put his Spirit into us.

Let me tell you right now that no matter how persuasive the preacher is or how beautiful the music sounds- there is no salvation without the power of the Holy Spirit at work. The Revelation of Christ may or may not be immediate and it may or may not be dramatic- but every time it is supernatural and every time it is undertaken by God alone.

The rescue helicopter crew do not ask for the person drowning at sea if they want help, nor do they ask for the person to co-operate they do the saving – that is exactly how our salvation works.

Often the “rescue by God position” I am advocating is referred to as predestination. But the theme of God rescuing people who don’t deserve it and can’t save themselves is a theme right throughout the Bible.

But why would God do that? The answer is I don’t know all of God’s purposes, but I have to trust that he knows better than me. Grace itself is wonderfully mysterious and we need to uplift Grace not choice.

People who believe salvation hinges on choice are forced to believe that predestination means God knows the future and chooses to save people whom he sees will choose him. They believe God’s choice is based on his foreknowledge, but the actual truth is his choice is based on love.

Two things are very clear in the Bible – God wants everyone to hear the Gospel message [which is a story not a sales pitch] and those whom he has changed will be saved. How we react to the message of the Gospel reveals how much light or darkness is in us?

Biblical salvation

MAN created by God

Man sins and is stuck in death hell state

God send Jesus to save those he loves and pay the price for their sin

Man with Transformed heart now believes

Reconciliation of Man to Kingdom of God [not just when we die but now]

You see man does have a choice, but man’s choice always gets man in trouble.

Your choice [freewill] as a human is limited by your nature

If sin is in control in your life – you will choose to sin

If God has placed his Spirit within you – your option to not sin is restored

The closer you are to God the more you will choose Holiness

The closer you are to you old sinful nature the more you will sin

The choice of God to change our nature is the key factor in us choosing to follow God

I am not saying “you don’t have a choice”, but rather “your choices reveal whether or not Jesus is your King”.

The closer we get to God the more revelation we receive and the more we understand the reason behind things – that reason is Jesus and Jesus is the only way.

1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

1:16 And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

1:18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Vs 18 ought to read only begotten son and vs 14 also should read only begotten

Grace is about salvation and provision

Truth is about reality

What we think about **Salvation** and **Reality** will affect what we think about God

It is so important that we get a new pastor who has a firm grip on grace and truth.

Grace and Truth are both under attack in a user pays world where nothing is free and a postmodern world where we do what we want rather than trusting God.

This passage is John version of the Christmas story a light came into this dark world and that light was God himself become a man. Can you see God through Jesus if you are born of the fathers will.

And let us all work and pray to extend the grace and truth of God to as many as possible.

1John 5:20 And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.