

John 1:1-5
The Eternal Son of God

Introduction:

1) We must embrace the eternal pre-existence of Jesus—1:1-2

- a) **Eternal** preexistence: ¹ *In the beginning* [evn avrch,] *was* [impf. act. ind. eivmi,] *the Word* [o` lo,goj],
 - i) This is a deliberate echo of Gen. 1:1.
 - (1) “In the beginning” highlights the beginning of history but also the root of the universe. (Edward Klink)
 - ii) The Word is the eternal, accurate self-disclosure of God.
- b) **Distinct yet intimate** co-existence: *and the Word* [o` lo,goj] *was* [impf. act. ind. eivmi,] *with* [pro,j] *God* [o` qeo,j]
 - i) There was an intimate personal relationship between the Father and the Son.
- c) **Divine** preexistence: *and the Word* [o` lo,goj] *was* [impf. act. ind. eivmi,] **God** [qeo,j]. (emphatic)
 - i) The Word possesses all the qualities of God (Phil. 2:6). He is not equated with the Father, but fully participates in the same essence and attributes as the Father. And though they are distinct, there is no disharmony between them.
 - ii) For a Jewish man like John, who was a monotheist, to make this statement is astonishing.
 - iii) “What God was the Word was” or “the Word was fully God” are helpful renderings.
- d) **Distinct yet intimate** co-existence: ² *He* (this One) [ou[toj] *was* [impf. act. ind. eivmi,] *in the beginning* [evn avrch,] *with* [pro,j] *God* [qeo,j].
 - i) Jesus did not come to be God at some point, but He was God before the very beginning.
 - ii) While these two are not the same, they belong together. (L. Morris)
- e) Murray Harris paraphrases this: “At the very beginning of creation and time, the Word as the perfect expression of God the Father had already always existed, and this Word was in active communion with God, and this Word inherently shared the same nature as God.”

2) We need to embrace Jesus’ eternal sovereign role in creation—1:3

- Philosophers still ask the question: why is there something rather than nothing?
 - This creation “in time” stands in the contrast to the continuous preexistence mentioned in vv. 1-2.
- a) **POSITIVELY:** He is the **supreme direct agent** in the act of creation: ³ *All things* [pa/j] *came into being* [aor. mid. ind. gi,nomai] *through* [dia,] *Him*,
 - i) The universe did not and could not come into existence in any other way.

- ii) Matter is NOT eternal. Jesus did not use pre-existing materials or chaos.
 - iii) Cf. 1 Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16-17; Heb. 1:2
 - b) **NEGATIVELY:** He is the **supreme sustainer** of the state of creation: *and apart from [cwri,j] Him nothing* (lit. “not even one thing”) [ouvde, ei[j] *came into being* [aor. mid. ind. gi,nomai] *that has come* (and remains) *into being* [pf. act. ind. gi,nomai].
 - i) The universe is not independent from God.
- 3) We need to embrace our desperate need for Jesus as the Light—1:4-5**
- a) He is the self-existing source of all life, physical and spiritual, temporary and eternal: ⁴ *In [evn] Him was [impf. act. ind. eivmi,] life [zwh,], and the life [zwh,] was [impf. act. ind. eivmi,] the Light [fw/j] of men/humanity.*
 - i) The word “life” is used @ 35x in John.
 - ii) Creation owes its existence entirely to Christ. (M. Harris)
 - iii) As A. T. Robertson said, “There is spiritual behind the physical.”
 - b) He is supreme over the hostile intentions of the darkness: ⁵ *And the Light [fw/j] shines [pres. act. ind. fai,nw] in the darkness [skoti,a], and the darkness [skoti,a] did not overtake [aor. act. ind. katalamba,nw] (eclipse or extinguish) it.*
 - There is a shift to the present aspect.
 - i) **Light**
 - (1) Light does not exist independently of Christ; it exists only because of Him—Gen. 1:3
 - (2) The very nature of light is that it continues to shine. Light and darkness are not equally matched forces. Light is always supreme.
 - ii) **Darkness**
 - (1) Darkness in the moral environment is that self-inflicted isolation from the light. Darkness never refers to people themselves, but to the spiritual sphere in which people function. (NET Bible)
- 4) Things I need to remember:**
- a) The Word already existed in eternity past before Creation began. There was never a time when the Word was not. He has no origin.
 - b) Before what happened **in the beginning**, God was all that there was—and the Word was there personally with God. (MBC)
 - c) He possesses the authority and power to make alive at creation and to keep alive through eternity. Thus, life does not exist independently; it exists only “in Him.”

John 1:6-13
The Light and His Witness

Introduction:

1) God limits John's role—1:6-8

- a) His God-given **AUTHORITY**—1:6 ⁶ *There was* [gi,nomai] *a man sent* [pf. pass. ptc. avposte,llw] *from God, whose name was John.*
- i) John the Baptizer was God's fully authorized personal representative.
- b) His God-given **PURPOSE**—1:7-8 ⁷ *He came* [aor. act. ind. e;rcomai] *as* [eivj] *a witness* [marturi,a],
- John's ministry began about 29 AD in his early-mid-30's. He ministered primarily east of Jerusalem near the Jordan River. He was eventually killed by King Herod Antipas in the early summer of 32 AD.
- i) **Stated positively:**
- (1) *to* [i[na] *bear witness* [aor. act. subj. marture,w] *about* [peri,] *the light,*
- (2) *that* [i[na] *all might believe* [aor. act. subj. pisteu,w] *through* [dia,] *him.*
- (a) John never uses the noun "faith," only the verb "believe."
- ii) **Stated negatively:** ⁸ *He was not the light,*
- (1) *but* [avlla,] *came to* [i[na] *bear witness* [aor. act. subj. marture,w] *about* [peri,] *the light.*
- (2) John was a lamp (cf. 5:35) (or a candle) rather than the light itself.
- iii) John's role was to legally testify of the Light, i.e., to present the objective evidence about the Christ.

2) God limits Jesus' reception—1:9-13

- a) God's grace is on display—1:9
- i) ⁹ *The true* [avlhqino,j] (genuine, authentic) *light, which gives light* [pres. act. ind. fwti,zw] *to everyone, was coming* [pres. ptc. e;rcomai] *into* [eivj] *the world* [ko,smoj].
- (1) The Father provides the light for all humanity in Jesus' incarnation. (C. Keener)
- (2) As Harris says, this refers not to every person without **exception** but to everyone without **distinction**, whether Jew or Gentile.
- ii) The term "world" is used nearly 80x in John's book.
- b) Three important truths about Jesus—1:10
- i) He real presence in the world: ¹⁰ *He was in* [evn] *the world* [ko,smoj],
- (1) His entrance (1:9) was successful!
- ii) The Creator of the world: *and the world* [ko,smoj] *was made* [gi,nomai] *through* [dia,] *him,*
- iii) The ignorance of the world: *yet the world* [ko,smoj] *did not know* [ginw,skw] *him.*
- c) His rejection by the Jews—1:11

- i) A gracious offer at the incarnation: ¹¹ *He came* [aor. ptc. e;rcomai] *to his own* [neuter],
- ii) An ungrateful rejection: *and his own people* [masculine] *did not receive* (welcome) [aor. act. ind. paralamba,nw] *him*.
- d) His limited reception—1:12-13
 - i) The gracious gift of spiritual birth—1:12
 - (1) Saving faith: ¹² *But to all who did receive* [aor. act. ind. lamba,nw] *him*,
 - (a) Explained: *who believed* [pres. act. ptc. pisteu,w] *in his name*,
 - (i) John’s characteristic use of pres. ptc. for genuine faith.
 - (b) This involves a recognition of the deity/Godness of Christ.
 - (2) Gracious gift: *he gave* [di,dwmi] *the right* [evxousi,a] *to become* [aor. mid. inf. gi,nomai] *children* [te,knon] *of God*,
 - (a) Jesus is the Son of God by His nature; we are children of God by grace.
 - ii) The Source of spiritual birth—1:13 ¹³ *who were born* [aor. pass. ind. genna,w],
 - (1) **Negatively**: three invalid sources or points of origin
 - (a) Not through violent force: *not of* [evk] *blood* (plural) [ai[ma]]
 - (i) Use of “bloods” (plural) in OT indicates violent bloodshed.
 - (ii) Seems to emphasize not through extreme human effort.
 - (b) Not from a mere human decision: *nor of* [evk] *the will* [qe,lhma] *of the flesh* [sa,rx]
 - (c) Not from human initiative: *nor of* [evk] *the will* [qe,lhma] *of man* [avnh,r],
 - (i) God has no grandchildren; we don’t inherit salvation from our fathers.
 - (2) **Positively**, strong contrast: *but* [avlla,] ...
 - (a) *of* [evk] *God*.
 - (3) Remember James 1:18.

3) Things I need to remember:

- a) Harris writes: For John, belief involves not only recognition and acceptance of the truth but also adherence and allegiance to Jesus as the Truth (14:6).

John 1:14-18
Both God and Man

Introduction:

1) The authentic humanity of Jesus Christ—1:14-17

- a) A four-fold description of the incarnation—1:14 ¹⁴ *And the Word ...* (cf. 1:1)
 - i) Added without changing: *became* (took on) [aor. mid. ind. gi,nomai] *flesh*
 - (1) The Logos became what he was not (σάρξ) without ceasing to be what he was (θεός, [v. 1](#)). ... John is not affirming that an impersonal universal Logos became incarnate in the person of Jesus Christ, but rather that the personal, individualized Logos assumed a complete and genuine human existence. (Murray J. Harris)
 - (a) John Owen (in the 1700's) said it this way: Christ remained what he was, and became what he was not.
 - (2) The flesh, with all its humility and weaknesses, but not sinfulness.
 - (a) He became tired and sleepy, hungry and thirsty, wet his diaper, learned how to walk, etc.
 - ii) Temporarily lived on earth: *and dwelt* [aor. act. ind. skhno,w] *among* [evn] *us*,
 - (1) He temporarily sojourned here for over 30 years.
 - (2) Like the OT tabernacle and the Shekinah glory.
 - (3) God reveals His glory as He dwells among His people.
 - iii) Observed by eyewitnesses: *and we have seen* [aor. mid. ind. qea,omai] (with the human eye) *his glory, glory as of the only* [monogenh,j] *Son from* [para,] *the Father*,
 - (1) “Seen” [qea,omai] is the root of our English word “theater”
 - (2) Is this limited only to the Transfiguration?
 - iv) Displays the attributes of God:
 - (1) (He was) *full* [plh,rn,j] *of grace*
 - (2) *and* (He was full of) *truth*.
 - b) A parenthesis about John's humble work—1:15 ¹⁵ (*John ...* (cf. 1:6-8)
 - i) *bore witness* [pres. act. ind. marture,w] *about him*,
 - ii) *and cried out* [pf. act. ind. kra,zw + pres. act. ptc. le,gw], (a two-fold message)
 - (1) The preeminence of Christ: *“This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me,*
 - (2) The preexistence of Christ: *because [o[ti] he was before me.”*)
 - c) The impact of Christ being full of grace and truth—1:16-17
 - i) ¹⁶ *For [o[ti] from [evk] his fullness [plh,rwma] we have all received, grace upon [avnti,] grace*.
 - (1) Grace is the sum total of all the spiritual favors God gives to people. (Ed Blum)
 - (2) Grace arrives in perpetual succession like the waves upon the shore.

- ii) Why did we all receive?—1:17
 - (1) OT Jews: ¹⁷ *For [o[ti] the law was given [di,dwmi] (by God the Father) through [dia,] Moses;*
 - (2) NT saints: *grace and truth came [gi,nomai] through [dia,] Jesus Christ.*
 - (a) This is the first use of His historical name in the book.
 - (b) This is also the last use of the word “grace” in the book.
 - (3) This is similar to Heb. 3:5-6.

2) The authentic deity of Jesus Christ—1:18

- a) ¹⁸ *No one has ever seen [pf. act. ind. o`ra,w] God (the Father);*
 - i) Including Moses! (cf. Ex. 33:20)
 - ii) God is invisible (1 Tim. 1:17), not because He is not real, but because human eyes are incapable of detecting Him. (Merrill Tenney)
- b) Three-fold description of Christ:
 - i) Distinctly exists as the Son: *the only [monogenh,j] God* (most MSS “Son”),
 - ii) Intimately affectionate with the Father: *who is at the Father’s side [ko,lpoj],*
 - iii) Perfectly and adequately explains the Father: *he has made him known [aor. mid. ind. evxhge,omai].*
 - (1) The being and nature of God, which cannot be perceived directly by ordinary senses, has been adequately presented to us by the Incarnation. (Tenney)

3) Things I need to remember:

- a) D. A. Carson wrote: If we are to know God, neither rationalism nor irrational mysticism will suffice: the former reduces God to mere object, and the latter abandons all controls.
- b) To Jewish Christians needing to lay even their lives on the line because of their Christology, John reminds them that Christology is at the heart of their faith in Israel’s God. (Craig Keener)