

Focus on the Kingdom

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A Chronological Conspectus of the Opening Verses of the Gospel of John in Various Editions of the English Bible

The opening verses of the Gospel of John have proven to be, unfortunately, a veritable battleground and storm center of theological argument. Translators have often edited John to make him fit much later systems of theology. John had never heard of the "Trinity," the mystifying proposition that God is one and yet three. Jesus knew nothing of that teaching. Jesus was a Jew and he publicly affirmed, as the greatest of all the commandments, the central, cardinal creed of his Jewish heritage. Every Jew was required to recite daily the immortal words of Deuteronomy 6:4: "Hear, Israel, the Lord your God is one Lord." Jesus never departed one iota from that Jewish creed. Judaism has always had a unitarian creed (unitarian means that God is one Person only) and Jesus made that creed the basis of his own teaching. He repeated the words of Deuteronomy 6:4 in conversation with a colleague Jew who had asked him about the rock-foundation of true religion. You will find this interchange between Jesus and a theologian in Mark 12:28-34.

Since Jesus believed in the One Person who is God, as prescribed by the Hebrew Bible and affirmed in the New Testament, it would make sense that followers of Jesus would join him in confessing the creed which Jesus confessed.

It is a tragedy of our times that churchgoers have been taught a different creed. And they have been catechized to recite this different creed on pain of excommunication and various "anathemas." The so-called Trinitarian creed which underlies, as a sort of constitution, the work of most Protestant churches proposes that God is Three-in-One. Church members have often not given this creed much attention. If anyone challenges it, they will tend to become defensive, not because they really know what it says or how it developed, but because the massive weight of tradition backs it.

Jesus delivered stern warnings to the churches of his day, the synagogues of Judaism, that tradition learned by heart can be a menace to real spirituality. Protestants ostensibly stand for the principle of

private investigation and for Scripture as being the only binding power for the believer.

One of the most illuminating exercises a churchgoer can carry out is a personal search for the God of the Bible and a biblical definition of Jesus. It was not until the 4th century, at the council of Nicea, that a number of bishops convened and decided on the creed held by Roman Catholic and many Protestant churches to this day. That creed of Nicea declared that Jesus was "very God of very God," begotten before all ages. In a very fierce postscript to the creed, the bishops "anathematized," i.e. pronounced a sentence of damnation on anyone who did not agree to the formula of "orthodox" belief.

They seemed not too troubled that Jesus could not have signed that creed. Jesus was a unitarian, reciting the unitarian creed of Judaism. Jesus never made the claim to *be* God Himself, but always deferred to his Father as the One God of Israel and of all creation. Jesus' confession ruled out any hint of God being Three in One. When uttering a solemn prayer towards the close of his ministry he referred to the essence of salvation as knowing "You, Father, the only One who is truly God, and Jesus Christ whom You commissioned."

Matthew and Luke provide crystal clear accounts of the origin of the Son of God. Luke and Matthew could not by any stretch of imagination have underwritten the creed hammered out at Nicea in 325 AD. Luke reports the words of Gabriel who announced the basis on which the title Son of God was to be applied to Jesus. It was "for that reason expressly (*dio kai*) that the holy one being begotten will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35). For what reason? The miracle of new creation by which the One God fashioned and formed in Mary His own uniquely begotten Son. Matthew speaks with equally transparent words of the genesis or origin of Jesus: "That which is begotten in her will be from holy spirit" (Matt. 1:20). It is a creative act of God which brings into existence the Son of God, a unique human being without a human father.

The creed of Nicea had long lost the simplicity of the original faith. After centuries of futile argumentation, and borrowing heavily on alien philosophical language and categories to express themselves (Why was not the language of Scripture adequate?), the "fathers" of the church pushed back

the origin of the Son into pre-historic times and thus fashioned an essentially non-human person, who did not originate in the womb of his mother as all real human beings do (Adam and Eve were necessary exceptions).

At the end of their official declaration the bishops at Nicea declared as “beyond the pale” and unfit for salvation any who would say that the Son did *not* exist before he came into existence. To be “right” one had to agree that the Son existed before he came into existence. What this means exactly, let every church member ponder deeply. There is everything to be gained by examining why we believe the things we believe. Do you think that the Son “existed before he came into existence”? Can you explain why you do or don’t? These are reasonable questions since the witness and confession of Matthew and Luke have declared with simplicity that the Son did *not* exist before he was brought into existence in the womb of a virgin. To beget is to “cause to come into existence.” Since the Son was begotten, it is impossible for him not to have a beginning of existence. Yet the creed said otherwise. It forced on an unsuspecting public the impossible notion that one can exist and still come into existence.

Overlooking the plain accounts of the origin of the Son in history, the churches made an appeal to the opening verses of John. They managed there to contradict the witness of Matthew and Luke and present the reader apparently with a Second Eternal Person alongside the Father — which of course makes two Gods. This fatal move was achieved by first putting, incorrectly, a capital letter on word (*logos*) making it look like a Second Person, Word. Having altered the meaning of “word,” the next move was to refer to the word not as “it,” but as “Him.” The Greek word *logos* had appeared in the Old Testament some 1500 times and never was “word” a person, but always an utterance, command, promise, decree, etc. This is also its meaning at the opening of John’s Gospel, where he draws a parallel between the Genesis creation through the word and the New Creation which occurred when God’s word, promise, design, intention and plan became a human being, Jesus Christ. There was no Son of God until he began to exist in the womb of Mary.

Happily there are some 40 translations of the Bible which reflect the original meaning of the text either by not capitalizing “word” as Word to turn it into a second divine Person, or by using the pronoun “it” for the word, rather than “Him.”

Others have creative paraphrases for “word” and suggest the Intelligent Design of God one day to produce a Son who would be the center of God’s immortality program.

If you had been reading the English Bibles which appeared before the King James version of 1611 you would have been introduced to God’s grand design, or word, His master-plan which later in history became the man Jesus Christ, Son of God.

We begin with the translation of William Tyndale, martyred for his efforts to get the Bible to the public.

“In the begynnyge was the **worde**, and the worde was with God, and the worde was god. The same was in the begynnyge with god. All thinges were made **by it**, and **without it**, was made nothings that was made. **In it** was lyfe, and the lyfe was the lyght of men, and the lyght shyneth in the darcknes but the darcknes comprehended it not” (**William Tyndale**, *The New Testament*, 1534).

“In the begynnyge was the **worde**, and the **worde** was wyth God; and God was the **worde**. The same was in the begynnyng wyth God. All thinges were made **by it**, and **wythout it**, was made nothyng that was made. **In it** was lyfe, and the lyfe was the lyght of men, and the lyght shyneth in darcknes, and the darcknes comprehended it not” (**Great Bible**, *The Byble in Englyshe, that is to saye the Content of al the holy Scrypture, both of the olde, and newe Testament*, London: Edward **Whitchurche**, 1539).

“In the beginning was the Worde, and the Worde was with God and that Worde was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made **by it**, and **without it** was made nothing that was made. **In it** was lif, and the lif was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkenes, and the darkenes comprehended it not” (**Geneva Bible**, *The Bible and Holy Scriptures conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament*, Geneva: Rouland Hall, 1560).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was that Word. **The same** was in the beginning with God. All things were made **by it**, and **without it**, was made nothing that was made. **In it** was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darknesse, and the darknesse comprehendeth it not” (**Bishops’ Bible**, *The Holie Bible*, London: Richard Juge, 1568).

“In the beginning was that Word, and that Word was with God, and that Word was God. This same was in the beginning with God. All things were made **by it**, and **without it** was made nothing that was made. **In it** was life, and that life was the light of men.

And that light shineth in the darknes, and the darknesse comprehended it not” (Lawrence **Tomson**, *The New Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Translated out of Greeke by Theod. Beza*, London: Robert Barker, 1607).

“Before the Creation of the World, **Reason** did exist, for **Reason was then in God**; indeed was God himself, it not being possible for God to be without it. Reason, I say, did exist in God before the Creation of the World, every portion of which was created with the greatest Reason; nor can any thing be produc’d that has been made **without it**. In this Reason alone, formerly resided the perfect Knowledg of the way that leads to everlasting Life; which it was impossible for men to find out otherways than as enlighten’d by this knowledg, made in some measure partakers of it, and under the guidance of it, as it had been a most glorious Light preceding, and pointing out the way they were to follow. But this Light has since been brought down to men, has shin’d among ’em many Years, and continues to direct the Ignorant in the way to Life, tho’ most neglect the use of it, and chuse to wander on still in the darkness of their Ignorance” (John LeClerc, *The Harmony of the Evangelists*, London: Samuel Buckley, 1701).

“The **word** was in the beginning; and the word was with God, and the word was God; (the word was with God in the beginning). Through **the same** all things were made, and **without the same** was not made even one thing that was made. **In the same** was life, and that life was the light of human beings; and the light shineth on the darkness, yet the darkness apprehended it not” (Mortimer, *Divers Parts of the Holy Scriptures Done into English*, London: T. Piety, 1761).

“In the beginning was **Wisdom**, and Wisdom was with God, and Wisdom was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made **by it**, and **without it** was nothing made. What was made, had life in it, and this life was the light of men; and this light shineth in darkness, and the darkness hindered it not” (Gilbert Wakefield, *A Translation of the New Testament*, London: Philanthropic Press, 1791).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God. All things were made **by it**, and **without it** not a single creature was made. **In it** was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shone in darkness; but the darkness admitted it not” (Alexander Campbell, *The Sacred Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists of Jesus Christ, Commonly Styled the New Testament, Translated*

from the Original Greek, Buffaloe, Brooke County, VA: Alexander Campbell, 1826).

“In the beginning existed the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the commencement with God. All things were formed **by it**, and **without it** not even one thing was made, which has existed. **In it** was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shone in darkness, and the darkness did not overpower it” (Rodolphus Dickinson, *A New and Corrected Version of the New Testament; or, a Minute Revision, and Professed Translation of the Original Histories, Memoirs, Letters, Prophecies, and Other Productions of the Evangelists and Apostles*, Boston: Lilly, Wait, Colman and Holden, 1833).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God. All things were made **by it**; and **without it** nothing was made that was made. **In it** was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shone in the darkness; and the darkness did not admit it” (David Barnard, *The Holy Bible; Being the English Version of the Old and New Testaments, Made by Order of King James I, Carefully Revised and Amended, by Several Biblical Scholars*. Mannsville, NY: D.S. Dean and Rhodes Barker, 1847).

“In the Beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. This was in the Beginning with God. **Through it** every thing was done; and **without it** not even one thing was done, which has been done. **In it** was life; and the Life was the Light of Men. And the Light shone in the Darkness, and the Darkness apprehended it not” (Benjamin Wilson, *The Emphatic Diaglott: Containing the Original Greek Text of What Is Commonly Styled the New Testament*, New York: Fowler and Wells, 1864).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. This was in the beginning with God. All things **through it** arose into being, and **without it** arose not even one thing which has arisen. **In it** is Life, and the Life was the Light of men. And the Light shines on, in the Darkness; and the Darkness did not apprehend it” (Nathaniel S. Folsom, *The Four Gospels: Translated from the Greek Text of Tischendorf*, Boston: A. Williams, 1869).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was with God in the (first) beginning. All things were made **through it**, and **without it** was not any one

thing made. What hath been made **by means of it** was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness perceived it not” (Samuel Sharpe, *The Holy Bible, Being a Revision of the Authorised English Version*, London: Williams and Norgate, 1898).

“**The Love Thought** was the beginning. In the very beginning **it** was with the Father of Love and **it** was the Father of Love. All things were made **by the Love Thought** and **without it** was not anything made that ever was made. **In it** was Life and the Life was the Light of men. The Light shone in darkness and the darkness has never been able to overcome it, or even to comprehend it” (Dwight Goddard, *The Good News of a Spiritual Realm*, New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1916).

“In original being the Word, or **GOD-Idea** existed; and the GOD-Idea existed in at-one-ment with GOD; and the GOD-Idea was GOD-manifest. The same existed in original being, at-one with GOD. All things came into being in this **GOD-conception**, and **apart from it** came not anything into being that came into being. In the GOD-Idea Life, GOD, was manifest, and Life, GOD, was the Light of men. And the Light shineth in darkness; but the darkness comprehendeth it not” (Arthur E. Overbury, *The People’s New Testament (New Covenant) Scriptural Writings Translated from the Meta-Physical Standpoint*, Monrovia, CA: Arthur E. Overbury, 1925).

“In the beginning was **the word**, and the word was toward God, and God was the word. This was in the beginning toward God. All came into being **through it**, and **apart from it** not even one thing came into being which has come into being. **In it** was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light is appearing in the darkness, and the darkness grasped it not” (A.E. Knoch, *The Sacred Scriptures: Concordant Literal New Testament*, Canyon Country, CA: Concordant Publishing Concern, 1926).

“In the beginning of all things, when God first created heaven and earth, the Word, or **living expression of the Father’s thought**, already was in being; and the Word was with, nay, was comprised within the one Godhead, within the being that alone is God, and the Word was himself truly God. When, therefore, with the creation of the universe there was a beginning of time, this divine person already was, God with God [*this part of the translation we think disturbs what was earlier well-expressed*]. God in closest relation and intimate union with God. And inasmuch as from all eternity God the Word is the

distinct utterance of the divine idea which is reflected exteriorly in created things, all things came into being through him, and without him there came into being nothing that has ever been brought about. In him with all perfection of causality, efficient and exemplar, was life; and this life, as imparting to men true intellectual activity, was light; and throughout the long ages that followed upon man’s fall, this light was shining in the darkness, emitting whatever there was of natural and supernatural illumination, and the darkness never altogether overcame the light” (Charles F. Blount, *Half-Hours with S. John’s Gospel*, London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1930).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word **was god** [*this is of interest in excluding a second coequal God*]. When he was in the beginning with God all things were created through him; without him came no created thing into being. In him was life, and the life was the light of men; and the light shone on in the darkness, and the darkness overcame it not” (Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Four Gospels: A New Translation*, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1933).

“In the Beginning there existed the **Divine Reason**, and the **Divine Reason** was with God, and the **Divine Reason** was God. This **Divine Reason** at the Beginning was in closest relation with God. Through the Divine Reason all things came into being; and **apart therefrom** there was not brought into being even a single thing which has come to exist. **In the Divine Reason** there subsisted Life; and that Life was the spiritual Light of mankind. And the Light shone, and still shines, in the spiritual Darkness, and the Darkness has not overpowered it” (G.W. Wade, *The Documents of the New Testament Translated and Historically Arranged with Critical Introductions*, London: Thomas Murby, 1934).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was a god [*this translation is incorrect*]. This was with God in the beginning. Everything came into being through the Word, and **without it** nothing created sprang into existence. **In it** is life, and that life was the light of mankind. The light shines in the realm of darkness, but the darkness would have not of it” (Johannes Greber, *The New Testament: A New Translation and Explanation Based on the Oldest Manuscripts*, New York: John Felsberg, 1937).

“In the beginning was the everlasting Word, and the everlasting Word was with God, and of godlike nature was the everlasting Word. Hence **it** was in the beginning with God. By **its** activity all things came

into being and naught that exists came apart from **its** activity” (Martin Dibelius, *The Message of Jesus Christ, Translated by Frederick C. Grant*, New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1939).

“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. Through **its** agency all things came to be, and **apart from it** hath not one thing come to be. What came to be **in it** was Life, and the Life was the light of men, and the light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness did not absorb it” (William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, *Readings in St. John’s Gospel*, London: Macmillan, 1939).

“The **Energising Mind** was in existence from the very beginning; the **Energising Mind** was in communion with God; **the Energising Mind** was divine. He was with God from all eternity. Everything was brought into existence through him, and apart from him no single entity came into being. He was the spring of life and his life was the Light for mankind. This Light shines in moral and spiritual darkness, and the darkness has never quenched it” (Freeman Wills Crofts, *The Four Gospels in One Story, Written as a Modern Biography*, London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1949).

“First there was **the Thought**, and **the Thought** was in God; the Thought was God. He was in God from the first. It was through him that everything came into being; not one thing came into being without him. As for that which has come into being in union with him, it was life, and that life was the Light of mankind. The Light is shining in the darkness and the darkness does not overpower it” (F.R. Hoare, *A Translation from the Greek into Current English of the Gospel According to John, Arranged in its Conjectured Original Order*, London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1949).

“At the beginning **God expressed himself**. That **personal expression, that word**, was with God and was God, and he existed with God from the beginning. All creation took place through him, and none took place without him. In him appeared life and this life was the light of mankind. The light still shines in the darkness, and the darkness has never put it out” (J.B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English*, New York: Macmillan, 1958).

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a God. In the beginning This Word was with God. All was done **through It**, and **without It** not even one thing was done. **In It** was life, and the life was the light of men.

And the Light shone in darkness, and darkness apprehended It not” (James L. Tomanek, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Anointed*. Pocatello, ID: 1958).

“When the world began, the Word was already there. The Word was with God, and the nature of the Word was the same as the nature of God. The Word was there in the beginning with God. It was through the agency of the Word that everything else came into being. Without the Word not one single thing came into being. As for the whole creation, **the Word was the life principle in it**, and that life was the light of men. The light continues to shine in the darkness, and the darkness has never extinguished it” (William Barclay, *The New Testament: A New Translation*. London: Collins, 1969).

“When time began, **the Idea** already was. **The Idea** was at home with God, and **the Idea** and God were one. This same Idea was at home with God when time began. Through him the universe was made, and apart from him not one thing came to be. In him was life, and the life was humanity’s light. And the light shines on in the darkness, and the darkness never quenched it” (Clarence Jordan, *The Cotton Patch Version of Matthew and John*, New Win, AL: Association Press, 1970).

“At the very beginning of all things – the Word. God and the Word, God himself. At the beginning of all things, the Word and God. All things became what they are **through the Word**; without the Word nothing ever became anything. It was the Word that made everything alive; and it was this ‘being alive’ that has been the Light by which men have found their way. The Light is still shining in the Darkness; the Darkness has never put it out” (Alan T. Dale, *New World: The Heart of the New Testament in Plain English*, New York: Morehouse-Barlow, 1973).

“In the very beginning was the Word. God made all things, nothing has ever existed, or will ever exist, except it be made by God. **Within the Word** was life and this life became the Light for man. The Light shone, but man, in his ignorance, would not fully understand it” (Andrew Edington, *The Word Made Fresh*, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976).

“Before God did owt else e ad summat ter say. It wus is last werd. Ony **it come first**. An **it summed up** is ole attitude to evrythink. Now dis werd wus wid God. Fact **it wus** part’n parcil uv im. So at start uv evrythink an a long time fore man was akshully made, God’s werd to men wus ready an waitin. Evrythink there is wus made by this werd. E wus God’s one an ony contractor for de ole Universe job. Nowt at all

was ever got made sept through this d'partm'nt uv God, wot we call is 'werd.' Now just becus dis werd is part uv God issel, all God's life is in im. An dis life is de light what shines on evrybody. Dis is de light wot evrybody needs. So one day dis light come an shone in de dark around ere. An it proved summat fer keeps. Dare just isn't enough darkness in de world ter put it out" (Dick Williams and Frank Shaw, *The Gospels in Scouse*, London: White Lion, 1977).

"In the Beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God. So the Word was divine. It was in the Beginning with God. **By it** everything had being. And **without it** nothing had being. What had being **by it** was Life. And Life was the Light of men. And the Light shines in the Darkness. And the Darkness could not suppress it" (Hugh J. Schonfield, *The Original New Testament, Edited and Translated from the Greek by the Jewish Historian of Christian Beginnings*, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was in the beginning with God; all things were made through the Word, and without the Word was not anything made that was made. In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all. The light shines in the deepest night, and the night has not overcome it" (Inclusive-Language Lectionary Committee, *An Inclusive-Language Lectionary*, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1986).

"In the beginning was **the plan of Yahweh**, and the plan was with Yahweh, and the plan was Yahweh's. The same plan was in the beginning with Yahweh. All things were done **according to it**, and **without it** nothing was done, that was done. **In this plan** was life, and that life was the light to mankind. Now that light shines in the darkness, but the darkness does not take hold of it" (Yisrayl Hawkins, *The Book of Yahweh: The Holy Scriptures*, Abilene: House of Yahweh, 1987).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was toward God, and God was what the Word was. It was with God in the beginning. All things happened **through it**, and not one thing that has happened, happened **without it**. **Within it** there was Life, and the Life was the light of the world. And in the darkness the light is shining, and the darkness never got hold of it" (Andy Gaus, *The Unvarnished New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1991).

"In the beginning there was **the divine word and wisdom**. **The divine word and wisdom** was there with God, and **it was what God was**. **It was** there with God, from the beginning. Everything came to be

by means of it; nothing that exists came to be without **its agency**. **In it** was life, and this life was the light of humanity. Light was shining in darkness, and darkness did not master it" (Robert J. Miller, *The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version*, Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1992).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was in the beginning with God; all things were made **through the Word**, and without the Word was not anything made that was made. In the Word was life, and the life was the light of all. The light shines in the deepest night, and the night has not overcome it" (Burton H. Throckmorton, Jr., *The Gospels and the Letters of Paul: An Inclusive Language Edition*, Cleveland: Pilgrim Press, 1992).

"In the beginning there was the divine word and wisdom. The divine word and wisdom was there with God, and it was what God was. It was there with God from the beginning. Everything came to be by means of it; nothing that exists came to be without its agency. In it was life, and this life was the light of humanity. Light was shining in darkness, and darkness did not master it" (Robert W. Funk, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*, New York: Macmillan, 1993).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was with God in the beginning. All things were made **by the Word**, and apart from the Word nothing came into being. In the Word was life, and that life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not grasped it" (*The New Testament of the Inclusive Language Bible*. Notre Dame, IN: Cross Cultural Publications, 1994).

"In the beginning there was the Word; the Word was in God's presence, and the Word was God. The Word was present to God from the beginning. **Through the Word** all things came into being, and apart from the Word nothing came into being that has come into being. In the Word was life, and that life was humanity's light – a Light that shines in the darkness, a Light that the darkness has never overtaken" (*The Inclusive New Testament*, Brentwood, MD: Priests for Equality, 1994).

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was in the beginning with God. All things came into being **through the Word**, and without the Word not one thing came into being. What has come into being in the Word was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the deepest night, and the

night did not overcome it” (Victor Roland Gold, *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

“In the beginning was **the message**, and the message was directed toward God, and ‘God’ the message was. The same one was directed toward God in the beginning. **Through it**, all things were done. And **without it** nothing was done. What has been done **in it** was life. And the life was the Light of humanity. And the light shone in the darkness. But the darkness did not understand it” (Frank Daniels, *The Four Gospels: A Non-Ecclesiastical New Testament*, 1996).

“In the beginning was the Word,
The Word that was with God,
God in the beginning was,
All things **through God** were made.
Without God was not any thing
Made that yet was made.
In God was life, and life was light,
And light all things displayed.
And the life that was the light
Shines in the darkness yet;
And darkness has not overcome
What the light has lit.”

(Jabez L. VanCleeef, *Gospels in Verse*, Xlibris, 1999).

“We believe that the Word of God existed already in the beginning. And we believe that already in the beginning the Word of God was proximate, face to face, to God, and that the **word of God** was God. This Word of God was, as we have said, proximate to God, **God’s way of speaking and acting**. We believe that by means of the Word of God, all things came into being, and that apart from the Word of God not even one thing came into being. We believe that in the Word of God all Life was focused, and this Life was the Light of God for the illumination of all people. And the Light of God shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not diminished it” (Norman A. Beck, *The New Testament: A New Translation and Redaction*, Lima, OH: Fairway Press, 2001).

“In the beginning was the Word, (**or, the Expression of (divine) Logic**) and the Word was with (or, in communion with) God, and the Word was God (or, was as to His essence God). This One [*here the translator reverts to a Second Person*] was in the beginning with God. All (things) came to be through Him, and without Him not even one thing came to be which has come to be. In Him was life, and the life was the light of the people. And the Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not apprehend it” (Gary F. Zeolla, *Analytical-Literal Translation of the*

New Testament of the Holy Bible, Darkness to Light Ministry, 2001).

“Nothing but God, and **all that He means**, existed in the beginning of absolutely everything. There was no possible way to separate God from **His meaning, for only by His meaning can He be identified as God. God’s intentions and purposes existed with Him from the very beginning of everything**. God, through **His intentions and purposes**, created everything that has, or has had, existence in all of time. The essence and meaning of life, itself, was in God, and in all that He means and intends. Out of all that makes Him God, and gives Him meaning, came the gift of enlightenment to the human beings that He created. Into the lonely world, where God had never shown Himself to His creation, He projected Himself in human form, to be the light to humanity that no one could extinguish” (B.E. Junkins, *A Fresh Parenthetical Version of the New Testament*, New York: University Press of America, 2002).

The evidence of some forty translations and paraphrases will show that it is an imposition on Scripture to insist that John wrote, “In the beginning was **the Son of God**, Jesus.” John was thinking of the Son as promised but not yet in existence. If the Son existed from eternity, that turns God into two and undermines the “Hear O Israel, the Lord our God is One Lord,” and the first commandment. If the Son was in existence before he came into existence, this makes no logical sense and contradicts the accounts of Matthew and Luke. If the Son of God is pre-human he cannot be human. If the Son is God, he cannot die, since God cannot die. ✧

Comment

“What is Atlanta Bible College for me? You have thought about God and Jesus and you encourage people to go directly to the Word and depend on God for all their understanding. You are even open to receive what God might reveal through the students.

“Atlanta Bible College for me is a refreshing corner of paradise in these ‘last days’ of corruption and overall decay of the religious and political system. I think of it as a mine where I found the most beautiful, brilliant, valuable and precious Stone, brought out, chiseled and polished into the biggest, multi-faceted, colorful Diamond — ‘The Truth of God’ — that truth that for 2000 years was buried under layers of different philosophical and pagan currents, hidden under coatings of lies and deceit.”