

Deeper Bible Study on John 1:1–5, 14

John opens his Gospel with a deliberate echo of Genesis 1:1, presenting the Logos as the pre-existent, personal agent of creation and the perfect exegesis of God Himself. Verses 1–5 assert absolute deity and creative mediation; verse 14 declares the hypostatic union—the eternal Son assuming full humanity without diminishing divinity—resulting in the visible manifestation of the Father’s glory in space-time history. This prologue refutes both adoptionism and Docetism while establishing the theological foundation for the signs and discourses that follow.

Discover (Questions to trace the precise theological claims)

1. In verse 1, the three clauses progress from eternity (“in the beginning was”) to relational distinction (“with God”) to essential identity (“was God”). How does the Greek preposition *pros* in “with God” guard against both modalism and subordinationism?
2. Verse 3 uses a double negative (“without him was not anything made that was made”). Why does John phrase it this way, and how does it exclude any possibility that the Logos Himself is a created being?
3. The verb in verse 14 is *egeneto* (“became”) for the incarnation, contrasting with *ēn* (“was”) used for the Logos’ eternal existence. What does this grammatical shift reveal about the nature of the incarnation?

Dig (Questions to probe deeper connections and implications)

1. Read [Colossians 1:15–17](#) and [Hebrews 1:1–3](#) alongside John 1:1–3. How do these parallel passages reinforce and expand John’s claim that the Logos is the active agent of creation and its sustaining power?
2. The statement “the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (v. 5) uses the verb *katalambanō*. Given its possible double meaning (“overcome” or “comprehend”), how does the crucifixion-resurrection event demonstrate both senses of the word?
3. Verse 14 declares that the disciples “beheld his glory...as of the only Son from the Father.” Compare this to the Shekinah glory in the tabernacle. What continuity and escalation in revelation do you observe?

Apply (Questions to translate doctrine into lived obedience)

1. Since the eternal Logos who spoke galaxies into being became flesh, how should the doctrine of the hypostatic union reshape your approach to embodied life—eating, working, suffering, relating?
2. Jesus is “full of grace and truth” (v. 14). In your interactions this week, where are you tempted to separate grace from truth (or truth from grace), and how can beholding Christ’s glory recalibrate your speech and decisions?
3. The light continues to shine unconquered in the darkness (present tense verb). Identify a specific sphere of darkness—personal, cultural, or global—where you are called to bear witness to this light, and what concrete risk or sacrifice might that require of you?

Verse-by-Verse Commentary

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

This verse echoes the very first words of Scripture—“In the beginning”—to show that the Word existed eternally before creation began. The Greek term translated “Word” is [λόγος \(logos\)](#), a word rich with meaning: divine expression, reason, and personal revelation. John declares three vital truths: the Word continually “was” (eternal existence), the Word was “with” God (distinct personhood, face-to-face fellowship implied by the Greek *pros*), and the Word “was God” (full deity, not a lesser being). Conservative voices such as Matthew Henry and Charles Spurgeon stress that this single verse refutes both Arianism (which denies Christ’s deity) and Sabellianism (which denies distinct persons in the Godhead). It is the clearest New Testament affirmation that Jesus Christ is fully God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. See also [Colossians 1:15–17](#) and [Hebrews 1:1–3](#).

John 1:2 *He was in the beginning with God.*

John immediately reinforces verse 1, emphasizing personal distinction within the Godhead. The pronoun “He” makes clear that the Word is not an impersonal force but a person. “With God” again uses *pros ton theon*, conveying intimate, eternal relationship. This repetition guards against any misunderstanding and underscores the truth that the Son has always enjoyed perfect fellowship with the Father. Commentators like John MacArthur note that verse 2 forms a safeguard: the Word who is God has never been separate from God in essence, yet has always been relationally distinct. This lays essential groundwork for the biblical doctrine of the Trinity.

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

Here John asserts Christ's role as the active agent in creation. The Greek verb *egeneto* ("were made") contrasts with *ēn* ("was") in verses 1–2, highlighting that everything created had a beginning, while the Word did not. Nothing exists apart from His creative power. This echoes [Genesis 1:1](#) and [Psalm 33:6](#), and is elaborated in [Colossians 1:16](#) and [Hebrews 1:2](#). Conservative expositors point out that this verse excludes any possibility that Christ Himself is a created being—everything that has been made was made through Him, implying He stands outside the category of created things.

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

Life (*zōē*) resides inherently in the Word, not derived from another source. This is both physical life (as Creator) and, more profoundly, spiritual and eternal life—the life that God possesses and imparts. That life is "the light of men," illuminating truth, holiness, and the knowledge of God in a morally dark world. The definite article ("the light") indicates the one true light, excluding all counterfeit sources. Jesus later declares, "I am the light of the world" . [ζωή \(zōē\)](#) and [φῶς \(phōs\)](#) are key Johannine terms that reveal Christ's exclusive ability to give eternal life and dispel spiritual darkness.

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

The present tense "shines" indicates ongoing, continuous action—the light has never stopped shining. Darkness represents sin, Satan, and spiritual blindness (cf. [John 3:19](#); [Ephesians 6:12](#)). The verb translated "overcome" ([καταλαμβάνω \(katalambanō\)](#)) can also mean "comprehend," but context favors "overcome" or "extinguish." Though darkness fiercely opposes the light (culminating at the cross), it has never succeeded and never will. This gives believers unshakable confidence: the resurrection proves that darkness could not overpower the Light.

John 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.*

The eternal Word did not merely appear human but truly "became flesh"—assuming full humanity without ceasing to be God. The verb "dwelt" is [ἐσκήνωσεν \(eskēnōsen\)](#), literally "tabernacled" or "pitched His tent" among us, deliberately recalling the Old Testament tabernacle where God's glory dwelt . In Jewish thought, the tabernacle and later temple were the place of God's Shekinah presence; now that glory is perfectly revealed in Jesus. "We have seen" refers to the eyewitness testimony of the apostles. The term "only Son" is [μονογενής \(monogenēs\)](#)—unique, one-of-a-kind, beloved. "Full of grace and truth" echoes God's self-description in [Exodus 34:6](#), showing that Jesus is the ultimate revelation of the Father's character. In Him, covenant mercy (grace) and absolute faithfulness (truth) meet perfectly. This verse stands as the heart of the incarnation: God has come near, veiled in human flesh, yet radiating divine glory.