

## Exegesis of John 1

### Verse 1

(1) The Prologue is summed up in three thoughts, which also determine its plan:  
The Logos; The Logos Disowned; The Logos Acknowledged and Regained.

The Prologue says: By the Incarnation believers are restored to that communion with the Word and that living relation with God, of which man had been deprived by sin.

In the beginning was - with evident allusion to the first word of Genesis. But John elevates the phrase from its reference to a point of time, the beginning of creation, which isn't mentioned till v. 3. This beginning had no beginning. This heightening of the conception, however, appears not so much in beginning, which simply leaves room for it, as in the use of was denoting absolute existence instead of came unto being or began to be, which is used in v.v. 3, 14, of the coming into being of creation and of the Word becoming flesh.

In Genesis 1:1, the sacred historian starts from the beginning and comes downward, thus keeping us in the course of time. Here he starts from the same point, but goes upward, thus taking us into the eternity preceding time.

The was must refer to the creation - the primal beginning of things; but if, in this beginning, the Logos already was, then he belonged to the order of eternity. The Logos was not merely existent, however, in the beginning, but was also the efficient principle, the beginning of the beginning.

Eight times in the narrative of creation (in Genesis) there occur, like the refrain of a hymn, the words, and God said. John gathers up all those sayings of God into a single saying, living and endowed with activity and intelligence, from which all divine orders emanate; he finds as the basis of all spoken words, the speaking Word.

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Verse 1, continued

The Word ( ) - This expression is the keynote and theme of the entire gospel.

Logos is a collecting or collection both of things in the mind, and of the words by which they are expressed. It therefore signifies both the outward form by which the inward thought is expressed, and the inward thought itself.

And the Word - A repetition of the great subject, with solemn emphasis.

Was With God - ( ) - with ( ) doesn't convey the full meaning, that there is no single English word which will give it better. The preposition , which, with the accusative case, denotes motion towards, or direction is also often used in the N.T. in the sense of with; and that nearly as being near or beside, but as a living union and communion; implying the active notion of intercourse.

Thus John's statement is that the divine Word not only abode with the Father from all eternity but was in the living, active relation of communion with Him.

And The Word Was God - Gr. "And God was the Word."

The predicate is emphatically placed in the proposition before the subject, because of the progress of the thought; this being the third and highest statement respecting the Word - the climax of the two preceding propositions. The Word, God, used attributively, maintains the personal distinction between God and the Word, but makes the unity of essence and nature to follow the distinction of person, and ascribes to the Word all the attributes of the divine essence. There is something majestic in the way in which the description of the Logos, in three brief but great propositions of v. 1, is unfolded with increasing fulness. (Vincent)

(2) 1:1-18 forms an introduction to the whole work. The first verse appears to stand by itself: the remaining verses give an outline of the relations of the Word to Creation.

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The first sentence of the Gospel offers a perfect example of the stately symmetry by which the whole narrative is marked.

The symmetry of form corresponds with the exhaustiveness of the thought. The three clauses contain all that it is possible for man to realize as to the essential nature of the Word in relation to time, and mode of being, and character: He was 1 - In the beginning: 2 - With God: 3 - God. At the same time these three clauses answer to the three great moments of the incarnation of the Word declared in v. 14. He who "was God" became flesh: He who was "with God" tabernacled among us: He who "was in the beginning" became (in time).

This revelation is the foundation of the whole Gospel of John.

In the beginning - The force of this is brought out by a comparison with the corresponding phrase in I Jno. 1:1, "from the beginning." The latter marks the activity of the Word in time from the initial point: the former emphasizes the existence of the Word at the initial point, and so before time.

Was - The verb was doesn't express a completed past, but rather a continuous state. The imperfect tense of the original suggests in this relation, as far as human language can do so, the notion of absolute, supra-temporal, existence.

Was With God - The idea conveyed by it is not that of simple coexistence, as of two persons contemplated separately in comparing or in local relation, but of being (in some sense) directed towards and regulated by that with which the relation is fixed. The personal being of the Word was realized in active intercourse with and in perfect communion with God.

The Word "was with God" before He revealed God.

Exegesis of John I

Verse 1, cont'd

The Word was God - God is necessarily without the article inasmuch as it describes the nature of the Word and doesn't identify His Person.

Thus we are led to conceive that the divine nature is essentially in the Son, and at the same time that the Son can be regarded, according to that which is His peculiar characteristic, in relation to God as God. He is the "image of God" and not simply of the Father.

(Westcott)

(3) John wrote to "the world" in order that unbelievers might join believers and have life. He wrote not so much to strengthen faith as to initiate it. It is significant that in modern missionary strategy the portion of the Bible most often selected to win first converts is this "universal" or "spiritual" Gospel.

John indicates the relation of the Word to time, to creation, and to God. He makes it clear that the Word of God has the closest possible connection with the Godhead and yet is distinct from the Father God.

John is saying that The Word is co-eternal with God, that there never was a time when the Son didn't exist.

Jesus is not The Son of God after the human analogy of a parent with an offspring. The term "Son" is only one way of indicating the relationship of Christ to God.

The sentence structure is not unlike that of a first grade reader; it uses the same technique of limited vocabulary, simple sentences, and repetition. Yet this studied simplicity is what gives John's beginnings such an arresting and provocative quality. He makes it clear that the birth of Jesus was an Incarnation. There can be no Incarnation without pre-existence.

A striking contrast is noticeable between the verbs for being and becoming of v. 1-4. The fourfold was (imperfect expressing continuous, timeless existence) is in contrast to the made of v. 3,4 (the aorist denoting a specific event in time). These

Exegesis of John I

Verse 1, cont'd

phenomena highlight the fact that the Logos is eternal while everything created is temporal.

It is the Word which lies at the source of all the particular words of God.

With God - The stress is upon the fellowship within the Godhead.

Was God - God is placed first indicating that the stress is on the deity of the Logos, that the Logos is actually God, yet distinct in person. (Ev. C.)

The first 5 verses describe the pre-existence, the nature, the creative power of the Logos, who in the succeeding verses is spoken of as entering the world, becoming man, and revealing the Father: and this description is given in order that we may at once grasp a continuous history which runs out of an unmeasured past, and the identity of the person who is the subject of that history.

In the first verse three things are stated regarding the Logos, the subject being repeated for impressiveness. (EGT)

(5) The most natural division of the Prolog seems to be 1 - The eternal Word, the Creator of all, is the light and life shining into the sinful world - v. 1-5; 2 - The Word came into the sinful world, awakening faith and arousing unbelief (v. 6-12; 3 - The Word became flesh in the world and brought us grace and truth from the Father. v. 13-18.

John attests the humanity of the Son as fully and as completely as the divinity and the Godhead. The miracle of the ages is that the Word became flesh and dwelt among men.

v. 48 - "you" is plural - This is the typical attitude of the Galileans

Wonders - always plural, 16 times in N.T. ~~What~~

Wonders ~~What~~ always linked to Syria - Signs -  
here means little more than "miracle", far  
sheerly miraculous -  
See p. 4

THE SECOND SIGN

John 4:46-54

INTRO: Sitting in restaurant with doctor, professor at Vanderbilt Medical school. My admiration of specialists, how much they must learn and know to specialize. The doctor disagreed. He said it was the general practitioner -- because they had to stay current on everything, whereas a specialist just had to know one field or area of expertise.

The moment he said it, I knew he was right. Men are skilful in this branch or that, and utterly unskilful in branches which are but a little distance off -- a man make make a study of the eye, but have little knowledge of the ear.

But in the case of Christ, His ability is equal at every point. There was a sense of completeness about the power of Christ. That he had turned water into wine was proof enough to the nobleman that He could turn disease into health.

see text of John 9:23 ff

This second sign is connected to the first sign -- both a Cana. The nobleman had heard. The element of water also joins them -- loosely. Waterpots at Cana -- old wine, new wine; Christ setting aside, fulfilling, superceding, the old covenant, the old religion.

The woman of Samaria -- the insufficient well of Jacob and the everlasting water springing from Jesus.

All the signs are variations on theme -- the theme is Christ as the Master of Life and Death, the One who makes all things new. The different signs reveal the glory of Christ in every nook and cranny of the life.

The theme is struck by the repetition of the words: "Your son lives." Vv. 50, 51, 53.

Notice also the threefold reference to believe: V. 48--belief in signs,, miracles. Jesus uses the strongest possible negation when He says, "Unless you see, you will by no means believe." Here it almost seems that Jesus rejects the use of signs. BUT WHAT JESUS REJECTS IS NOT THE USE OF SIGNS, BUT THE DEMAND FOR SIGNS.

Notice that in response to K's statement in v. 48, the father had no concern in justifying his request. In desperation he repeats the request.

A strange phenomenon: Great people (artists, writers, etc.), are often greatly troubled people. There is a link between genius and insanity -- Ernest Hemingway, John Cheever, Lord Byron, Vincent Van Goth.

The people who write the books, teach the seminars -- they are not better off than you. They are not having any more success with their life than you are. It only appears that way, because we think of them as experts who have arrived and now are gracious enough to tell us how to get there. But all they can offer are the tracks of fellow pilgrim.

## II. JESUS FINDS HIS WAY TO OUR NEED, UNHINDERED BY TIME OR SPACE.

We often try to dictate the time and method. "Come down now, before he dies," the father says. Notice: *Near*  
1. He believes Christ must be in a certain place, ~~near~~ the boy, in the man's house, to heal the boy. He must do it in a certain way -- there is no other way.

2. Christ must act before the boy dies. TIME

3. With Christ, does anyone ever get beyond hope? Does the grave defeat Jesus or mean we died in defeat?

*He comes on imperfect faith - we pray best when we are most helpless\**

## III. WE FIND OUR WAY TO CHRIST AND VICTORY THROUGH FAITH

1. He believed the word Jesus said -- faith to meet God where we find him -- first it may be simply believing what He has said, then coming to full commitment of heart and life.

2. "And he went his way." THINGS THAT ARE UNDERSTOOD SHOULD GIVE US ASSURANCE IN THE PRESENCE OF THINGS YET UNREVEALED.

Act on what we do know. Socrates: "What I know is excellent, therefore, what I do not know is likely to be excellent too."

John Newton: His love is times past, forbids me to think He will me in trouble at last sink."

\* Charles Wesley - Jacob  
"Yield to me now, for I am weak,  
But confident in deep-despair"

The Three Levels of Faith:

1. General faith that led to his decision to come to Jesus for help.
2. The second was the faith that appropriates the promise for special answers that effect a change.
3. The third was the full assurance of faith, the vindication of the venture of faith. Faith is a venture into the unknown.

Alfred Lord Tennyson had his struggles with faith and doubt.  
From The Ancient Sage:

Cleave ever to the sunnier side of  
doubt,

And cling to Faith beyond the forms  
of Faith!

She reels not in the storm of warring  
words,

She brightens at the clash of 'Yes'  
and 'No.'  
She sees the best that glimmers  
through the worst,  
She feels the sun is hid but for a night,  
She spies the summer through the  
winter bud,  
She tastes the fruit before the blossom  
falls,  
She hears the lark within the songless  
egg,  
She finds the fountain where they  
wailed 'Mirage.'

Wonders = the word denotes a portent, something beyond explanation,  
at which man can but marvel - Jesus is saying that people  
like noblemen were lacking in that deep trustful attachment  
which is the essence of faith. They looked for the spectacular,  
& were linked to him only by a love for the sensational.



Sermon-4

## THE THIRD SIGN

Text: John 5:1-15

INTRO: Chester at Valley View -- jumped into bed when I rang doorbell, to look sick. I would have been justified in asking, "Do you really want to get well?"

It is this question,, asked of the lame man, that gives this work of healing its peculiar feature. It seems to be a foolish question, almost insulting.

But Jesus knows this man -- his life was open to Jesus, just as was the life of the woman of Samaria. Just as our lives are also open to Jesus.

This is the third sign. Why did John choose this particular sign? Two possible reasons:

1. In the Old Testament the leaping of lame men is sometimes associated with the end time when the Messiah comes (Isa.35:6). This miracle would help bring out the messiahship of Jesus.

2. First formal opposition to Jesus. Here the basic theme of unbelief is developed. Here the Light of the world encounters the increasing hostility of the world of Darkness.

This chapter sets forth in detail an analysis of the nature of and basis for the hostility of the Jewish leaders to Jesus and sets the stage for ensuing debates. This sign shows for the first time how Jesus provoked open hostility from the Jewish leaders.

We are introduced to a theme which is important in the rest of John. Instead of faith, strenuous opposition is aroused among the national religious leaders. the conflict grows and intensifies. Eventually as a result of it, Jesus will meet His death. This has been foreshadowed in the Prolouge (1:11).

Note the last sentence in verse 9, almost an afterthought, but not. "And that day was the Sabbath." This man's illness called for no emergency. There's no urgency to the man's cure. After all, he had been crippled for 38 years, what's another day?

This could have been postponed till after the Sabbath, but Jesus deliberately works on the Sabbath, to provoke the Jewish leaders, to lead to a deeper truth.

It is extraordinary that the Jews had no regard for a man made whole. Verse 10, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed." Now notice the answer, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'" "

But when the Jews reply, they ask, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk?'" Notice that didn't ask, Who was the man who healed you? Only who was the Man who told you to carry your bed? They ignored the fact that the man had been healed.

The whole point of verse 9b is to represent the man doing something that is forbidden on the Sabbath. The actual law of the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11; Deut. 5:12-15) does not specify the carrying of burdens, but by Jeremiah's day it was in place -- couldn't even carry a dead body out of the house.

Some of the regulations: A man may borrow jars of wine or jars of oil, provided he doesn't say, "Lend me them," for this would imply a transaction that might involve writing, and writing was forbidden.

Or, "If a man put out the lamp (on the night of the Sabbath) from fear of the gentiles or of thieves or of an evil spirit, or to allow a sick person to sleep, he is not guilty. But if he did in order to spare the lamp or save fuel, or wick, he is guilty.

Or, the attitude to healing on the Sabbath is illustrated by the curious provision that a man may not put vinegar on his teeth to alleviate toothache, but he may take vinegar with his food in the ordinary course of affairs, and the Rabbis philosophically concluded, "if he is healed, he is healed."

SO HERE JESUS MEETS THIS MAN: Note the marked contrast between the great multitude of verse 3 and "a certain man" of verse 5. JESUS SINGLES HIM OUT, as though he were the only one there.

God still works that way. Jesus singles us out; deals on a personal and individual level.

HERE IS A PICTURE: Lame, impostent, no dynamic. He had life but not health, legs but they wouldn't support him, the blind had eyes but couldn't see.

This man is utterly friendless and helpless.

JESUS MOVES INTO THE SITUATION to make a man whole. here is the method of the Great Physician.

He speaks THREE TIMES: A Question, A Command, A Warning (exhortation): vv. 6,8,14.

I. THE QUESTION CHRIST ASKS OF US. "Do you want to be made well?"

Is this a foolish question?

1. the emphasis here is on desire. This is the starting place? If we are content to stay the way we are, there is no miracle for us. An eastern beggar often loses a good living by being cured of his disease.

Inactivity can become attractive.  
As long as we can't, someone else will.  
We can always blame others for our failure.

2. What is it Christ is asking? Not, do you want to walk? the word here is "wholeness," "soundness", "healthy." We get our word hygiene from this Greek word. Jesus doesn't deal in partial cures -- he's not a specialist.

Jesus deals only with WHOLENESS. "Lord, fix my legs, but leave my life alone.

3. Calvin Miller: Many Christians live in search of an emotionnal high. faith to them is God's gift to the nervous system. They go to church seeking feeling. Usually there has been little spiritual discipline in their lives. They go to church with their emotional antennae raised to receive the group ecstasy.

Calvin Miller's term: "Christoholic." The disciple is a cross-bearer, the Christoholic seeks happiness above all. A disciple dares to discipline himself, the Christoholic is an escapist. The way to the Father is not a carnival ride inn which we sit and do nothing while we are whisked through various spiritual sensations.

II. THE COMMAND CHRIST GIVES TO ALL OF US. "Rise, take up your bed and walk."

The man does not regard Jesus as a possible Healer. He is mistaken as to what his real need is. His thoughts are on the curative powers of the pool. The reason he is not healed is because he can't get to the water. It's amazing that in 38 years this man hasn't got to the water. What about the people who carried him to the pool every day? What about those who were healed? Would they not help another get into the pool?

Like this man, we often are deceived as to why we are sick. What we need, we think, is some way to get into the pool. But what we really need is to obey Jesus.

1. There is something to ABANDON . "Take up your bed," fold it up. Abandon that which is incapable of helping. Jesus made both the pool and the bed unnecessary. Christ makes a lot of things unnecessary when He breaks into our lives.

CHRIST MAKES MANY THINGS UNNECESSARY WHEN HE COMES INTO OUR LIFE. Drink, drugs, revenge, selfishness.

2. There is something to ATTEMPT.

(1) The command is IMPOSSIBLE. After the man confesses his inability to walk, Jesus tells him to get up and walk. He command him to do the very thing he cannot do.

(2) the response was IMMEDIATE. "And immediately the man was made well."

Jesus told him to do three things: Rise, pick up your bed, walk.

The response was he was healed immediately, took up his bed and walked. He was healed immediately because he obeyed immediately.

Sermon-5

## THE FOURTH SIGN

Text: John 6:1-15

INTRO: Many claim the greatest novel ever written is The Brothers Karamazov (kahr-uh-MAHT-sawf) by Feodor Dostoevsky (dos-tuh-YEV-skee).

The most famous section is "The Grand Inquisitor." Two brothers, one an agnostic, the other a devoted Christian debate religion. Ivan the agnostic tells the story of the Second Coming of Christ in 1000 AD in the city of Madrid. Jesus immediately sets about healing the sick and raising the dead. The Catholic Cardinal of Madrid, the Grand Inquisitor has Jesus arrested, knowing who He is. He proceeds to tell Jesus that He is a failure and made a big mistake. The people wanted bread but He insisted on giving them freedom also.

According to the Grand Inquisitor, if Jesus had turned the stones into bread, hungry people would have had to become His disciples because their physical survival required it. Jesus could have bought their allegiance at the price of bread -- and that was something Jesus refused to do -- when was a mistake.

Miracle and wonders would leave people with no option but to acknowledge His lordship -- but that is not His way.

The masses much prefer miracles and the hopes that miracles generate within their hearts to the freedom that Jesus offers.

People are not sinners, criminals -- there are only hungry people. "Feed us first, then ask for virtue."

THE SIGNIFICANCE TO THIS SIGN CAN BE SEEN IF WE BEAR IN MIND that the figure of eating and drinking is widely used in the Old testament. It is a figure of prosperity (Ecc. 8:15), it is often used of the blessings the people of God would enjoy in the Promised land (Deut. 8:9). The figure of eating is used also of spiritual blessings. Some refer to eating God's word (Jer. 15:16; Ezek. 2:8).

Isa. 1:19, "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land."

Isa. 55:1f, "Come ye, buy and eat . . . Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is nnot bread ...hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good."

Psa. 22:26, "The meek shall eat and be satisfied."

I. JESUS IS THE SUPPLIER OF MAN'S NEED. GOD IS CONCERNED WITH THE PHYSICAL NEEDS OF MEN.

1. Later in chapter, references to Christ as "living bread," "the true bread out of heaven," "the bread of God."

What the manna in the widerness foreshadowed is perfectly given to us in Jesus Christ.

2. But at the same time, Jesus is saying, while man needs bread to leave, "he does nott live by bread alone." Satisfying the physical and material needs is not sufficient. The church should be concerned with the social issues and the need to feed and clothe the hungry and the poor. BUT

3. Jesus makes a protest against the political philosophies that assume man's only or greatest need is physical -- an economic interpretation of history.

VERSES 14,15--The people want to make Him king. this sounds like the same bunch in 2:23. they were impressed by the signs they saw, but they gave to Jesus an adherence which was only superficial because they did not appreciate the meaning of those signs.

Tony Compolo: well-known sociologist -- "My priority is not getting people into heaven. I'm just not into that." he gives an economoic (Marxist) interpretation to history.

BUT JESUS IN VS. 14,15 refused to allow the people to make Him king because food was not the greatest need or first priority.

GOING BACK TO the Grand Inquisitor -- he appears to be more compassionate than Christ, because he isn't concerned with principle, morals or virtues -- let's just feed the hungry -- don't bother about those other things. SOME PEOPLE MAY APPEAR TO LOVE PEOPLE MORE, HAVE GREATER COMPASSION, because they don't give a hoot about doctrine, or virtue or freedom from sin -- they just want to feed the hungry.

II. DON'T MEASURE, SIZE UP, EVALUATE A SITUATION BY OUR OWN RESOURCES.

1. Jesus asked Philip what to do. This is a TEST, for Jesus knew what he would do. Philip was the logical one to ask because he was a native of nearby Bethsaida.

2. Philip did what all of us usually do -- he dug deep into his pockets and came up empty.

3. Andrew does better. He finds a boy with a small lunch and brings him to Jesus. But he loses points when he asks, "But what are they among so many?"

III.

Just as 38 years prove the gravity of the disease, so the carrying of the bed and the walking prove the completeness of the cure.

Jesus' word was literally, "Get up and WALK ABOUT." Like trying on a new pair of shoes; get up and walk about.

III. THE WARNING CHRIST GIVES -- this might be called an exhortation, or an obligation we have once we're healed.

1. In verse 13, Jesus had withdrawn. He had slipped away, turned aside, dodged the crowd. Strange. He didn't hang around for the adulation of the people.

2. Verse 14, "Afterward Jesus found him..." This was no chance meeting, running into him accidentally. The word "found" means to find after searching. We get "Eureka!" from this word. It is a Greek word meaning, "I have found it!"

ARCHIMEDES, an ancient Greek scientist, who shouted "Eureka!" as he stepped into his bath and realized that the volume of an object can be measured by seeing how much water it displaces.

3. Don't continue in sin -- does this mean he was lame because of specific sin? Not in the light of John 9. But there is an obligation to live right if Jesus has healed you.

4. Just as the command to walk enabled the man to walk, so this command to stop sinning will enable him to do that if he obeys. Jesus is not referring here to sin in general but specific sin.

5. "Lest a worse thing come upon you." Can there be something worse than 38 years of paralysis? Obviously.

God has not done His worst, sin has not done its worst. You can always get worse.

WHAT'S WORSE? Sinning after being made whole is worse. SAMSON'S FIGURE IS ALL THE MORE PITIFUL BECAUSE OF WHAT HE HAD BEEN.

It's better to have not known the life of fulness, than to have known it and abandoned it. Better not to have been at the top, than to have been there and fall.

"I miss the trumpets every morning."

*The Healing is incomplete till its spiritual significance is brought out clearly*