

“In The Beginning Was The Word”

John 1:1 states, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” This verse has been compromised by Jehovah’s Witnesses to make it teach that Jesus was nothing more than a created Being. However, when we look at the original language, we will see the force of the argumentation used by John to show that Jesus was God. The word order of these two phrases are subject-verb and subject-verb, respectively. These terms are arranged to show the strong relationship of the Word to God and of God to the Word. Christ was with God and God was with Christ is emphatically introduced in John’s gospel.

Both of the verbs *en* or “was” in the two clauses are imperfect tenses in the indicative mood. This would refer to continuous or linear action in past time. A. T. Robertson says that the imperfect used here conveys no idea of origin for God or for the Logos, simply continuous existence. He also states that the distinction is sharply drawn in John 8:58: “*Before Abraham was, I am.*”

The use of the preposition *pros* is also noteworthy. Earle states that there are several prepositions that mean “with,” but this is an especially strong one. It suggests “close proximity,” or “in company with.” The significance of this strong preposition is that Christ was in a face-to-face fellowship with God. Robertson says that “*pros* with the accusative represents a plane of equality and intimacy.”

The idea of *pros* with the accusative is reminiscent of a marriage in that two people have agreed to live with one another. Their oath binds them in close proximity for the rest of their lives. They literally embark on a face-to-face fellowship with each other until they die. In 1 John 2:1, *pros* is used in a very similar way when it says that “*we have an advocate with the Father.*”

Much material has been produced concerning the absence of the definite article “the” before *theos*. This is particularly significant because Jehovah’s Witnesses base a large part of their core teaching on the interpretation of this clause. Because there is no definite article before *theos*, they have contended that the Word was “a god,” thus removing the concept of Jesus’ eternal existence as God.

On this point, Earle states that the absence of the definite article emphasizes quality rather than individuality. Rienecker adds that the Word had the same nature as God and that the predicate emphasizes quality. Earle continues and says that the “Logos is not equivalent to ‘God;’ there is also God the Fa-

ther and God the Holy Spirit. But He is fully divine." John constructs the verse so as to unequivocally prove Jesus' deity and place in the Godhead.

Dana and Mantey state that *theos* occurs without the article when the essential attributes of Deity are spoken of. They further say that "the phrase *proton theon* ["with God"] points to Christ's fellowship with the person of the Father; while *theos en ho logos* ["the Word was God"] emphasizes Christ's participation in the essence of the divine nature. The former clearly applies to personality, while the latter applies to character. This distinction is in line with the general force of the article." No article is used because it was generally acceptable not to use one in these circumstances.

The International Critical Commentary states, "the third clause of the majestic proclamation with which the Gospel opens, asserts uncompromisingly the Divinity of the Logos, His Preexistence and Personality having been first stated."

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