
In the Beginning was the Word

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5 February 2014

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

— **John 1:1**

The verse consists of three clauses:

1. “In (the) beginning was the Word,” (John 1:1a);
2. “and the Word was with (the) God,” (1b); and
3. “and God(ly) was the Word.” (1c)

In clause 1a, ‘the Word’ refers to Yeshua the Anointed (see verse 14). In 1b, John asserts that Messiah was with God (the Father) from the beginning, so Messiah is not only eternal (1a), but also with the Father from eternity.

We now have three possible interpretations among which to choose:

1. Yeshua is the Father;
2. Yeshua is another co-eternal god with the Father; or
3. Yeshua is of the same godly, divine essence as the Father, but is not identified with the person of the Father.

Clause 1c removes the options and affirms the third interpretation. Let’s have a closer look to see why.

The word ‘God’ in clause 1c (‘θεός’, which is in the “nominative” case) is not in the most usual position, but is brought forward before the verb (‘ἦν’, ‘was’), and furthermore the definite article (‘ὁ’, ‘the’) is omitted.

The technical term for that construction is, “anarthrous pre-verbal predicate nominative.”

anarthrous without article

pre-verbal before the verb

predicate verb phrase

nominative the grammatical form taken by the noun which is the subject of a verb

That’s a mouthful but doesn’t really explain much, so here are the important points about what the effects of this are.

- Bringing the word ‘θεός’ (‘theos’, ‘God’) forward creates an emphasis on that word. It becomes the focus, if you like, of the clause.

- Omitting the article 'ὁ' ('ho', 'the') in front of 'θεός' avoids saying that the Word (Messiah) is the Father. They are not the same person. The Word is not *the* God.
- The word 'ἦν' ('en', 'was') goes with 'ὁ λόγος' ('ho logos', 'the Word'), as in, "the Word was", and not with 'θεός' ('theos', 'God'), as in, "God was." So, it says, "the Word was God," or, "the Word was being God," and not the other way around.
- Omitting the article from the front of 'θεός' also has the effect of making the noun 'God' take on a qualitative sense, as in 'divine' or 'godly'; i.e., the text really means something like, "and Godly was the Word," or, "and Divine was the Word," or even, "and Almighty was the Word." The latter is particularly apt, because it is both a noun and an adjective, just as the 'θεός' is in the Greek.

John

1	ΕΝ	ΑΡΧΗ	ΗΝ	Ο	ΛΟΓΟΣ	ΚΑΙ	Ο	ΛΟΓΟΣ	ΗΝ	ΠΡΟΣ	ΤΟΝ	ΘΕΟΝ	ΚΑΙ
	IN	ORIGINAL	WAS	THE	saying	AND	THE	saying	WAS	TOWARD	THE	God	AND
		beginning			word			word					
2	ΘΕΟΣ	ΗΝ	Ο	ΛΟΓΟΣ									
	God	WAS	THE	saying									
				word									

Figure 1: John 1:1 in Greek Uncial Script.