

John 1:11: He came unto His own things, His own people received Him not. The word *things* is neuter, including the whole creation and all humanity. Israel is in view only in the second statement that they did not receive Him.

John 1:12: Yet as many as received Him, to them He gives the authority to become the children of God, even those who are believing in His name.

Abel fits here. He came into being as a child of God. He brought a proper sacrifice to Jehovah; his brother Cain did not (Gen. 4:2-7). All a believer can be today is a child of God. When the Kingdom of God rules in the affairs of men, the believer will acquire the additional character necessary to become a son of God.

John 1:13: Which were generated not of bloods, nor of the will of the flesh, not the will of man; but of God.

A child of God is not generated by *bloods* or human ancestors; nor by *flesh*, the birth process, nor of man's will. He is generated solely of God.

John 1:14: And the Word came into being as flesh, and tabernacles among us, and we discerned His glory as an only One from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Greek adjective *monogenes* translated here *the only One* is derived from two words, *mono* meaning *sole, unique, only* and *ginomai* which means *come into being*. *Monogenes* does not refer to *birth*, but to the great truth that the pre-existent Christ, the Word of verse 1, has now come into being as a man in this world, yet He has lost none of His deity.

Hebrews 11:17 declares that Abraham offered up his *only begotten son* (*monogenes*). Abraham had other children by other wives. Isaac came into being of God when Sarah and Abraham were well past child-bearing age. Isaac was an *only, unique son*; God produced him, Sarah bore him.

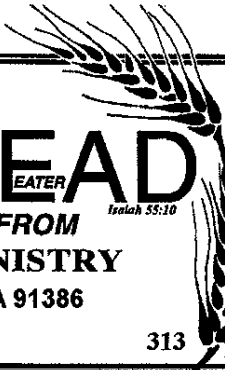
Who is sufficient for these things? We fall down and worship the only One from the Father, and declare with Thomas of old, My Lord and my God (John 20:28).

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THE GOSPEL OF JOHN 1:1-14: A CRITICAL TRANSLATION WITH COMMENTARY

By Alan Conley

This Bible study presents a translation with commentary drawn from the writings of Otis Q. Sellers' 74 years of dedicated searching of the Scriptures in his love of the truth. Some of the greatest truths in all the Bible concerning *who God is* are declared in the first 14 verses of the Gospel of John. This study will be a verse-by-verse exposition.

John 1:1: To begin with was the Word (Gk.-*Logos*), and the Word was toward (Gk.-*pros*, in relation to) God, and the Word was God.

What is a *word*? A *word* is a symbol standing for something else, an expression that transmits an idea. A person who lacks words lacks expression. God has never lacked in His expression, the ability to communicate with mankind, the sons of God and all His creation.

The unknown God absolute has expressed Himself. The pre-existing Word came from God and became a man upon this earth, as we shall see in verse 14. We have the testimony in John 3:13 that this One not only came from God, but He returned to God and made Himself equal with God, even the One called the Lord Jesus Christ (John 5:18).

John 1:2: The same was in the beginning toward (Gk.-*pros*) God.

The idea is that when all things began the Word already existed. A "spoken word" reveals the invisible thought. The Living Word, the pre-existing Word expresses and reveals God to men, the God who is spirit, the invisible God (John 5:37).

John 1:3: All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being which has come into being.

The word *became*, or *came into being*, is from the Greek verb *ginomai*, which occurs 677 times in the New Testament. It appears three times in this verse and once each in verses 6, 10, 12, 14, and 17. All lexicons agree that the fundamental meaning is *come into being* or *existence*. I have so translated all nine occurrences. The three-fold repetition of *ginomai* in this verse exalts *the Word* in verse 1 as the sole creator, and that Word is Christ.

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

Life is best understood by comparing it with idol worship often described in the Old Testament, of which Isaiah 44:9-20 is a good example. An idolater was never an unbeliever or atheist. He believed that above his own being there was a Supreme Being. But he also felt that he needed some image or mediator he could see and touch who would represent and express this Supreme One.

Light is the symbol of God in communication with His creation; clearly money, self, possessions, organizations or other man-made images do not express God. Isaiah 44:18-19 declares idol worshippers to be as dumb as the images they worship.

John 1:5: And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not extinguish it.

The darkness of men and Satan is always operating in the world today, and the darkness cannot extinguish God in expression and in communication with mankind. Do you believe in the universal presence of God in this world, in His never-ending, persistent effort to communicate with each human being? We call this divine generation, which is the term Jesus used in John 3:3 when He said, *Except a man be born again* (generated from above) he cannot see the Kingdom of God.

John 1:6: There came into being a man commissioned by God; his name was John.

The scene now changes. Verses 6, 7 and 8 introduce us to the writer of the Gospel of John—his commission, credentials, his purpose and goal in writing this book.

John 1:7: This one came for a witness that he might witness concerning the Light, in order that all men through it might believe.

The writer of this Gospel is not John the Baptist, but John the evangelist, disciple of Christ, one of the Twelve Disciples, son of Zebedee. John the Baptist does not appear on the scene until verse 15, where he introduces Jesus in the *flesh* (vs. 14), now incarnate, a man in this world.

John the Baptist died in King Herod's prison during the first year of Christ's three-year ministry. He could not have witnessed Christ's death and

resurrection, recorded in John 19:33-37 and 20:1-10. John, the son of Zebedee, was the disciple whom Jesus loved (John 13:23) and did personally witness these events. An examination of John 13:23, 19:26, 21:7, 21:20 and 21:24 reveals the Spirit of God concerning the identity of the writer of the Gospel of John. These seven Scriptures cited actually credential this John as the writer of this gospel.

The Greek verb translated *came* in verse 7 pictures John in the very act of writing the God-breathed words, the text of this book. God is the author; John is the writer. The words he is writing will act as *Light*, witnessing to anyone who reads this salvation-bringing message, which is the whole Gospel of John. John 20:31 testifies to this exact truth, where it says, *But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing, ye might have life in His name.* Obviously, the purpose for which this gospel was written has to be for the *reader to believe* that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, even the Son of God. The goal for which this book was written is . . . *And believing ye might have life in His name.* This life is the *everlasting life* of John 3:16.

The word *it* in John 1:7 is given as *him* in the KJV. We translate the Greek pronoun *autou* by the neuter *it*, rather than the masculine word *him*. The rules of Greek grammar allow this. All Bible versions and commentaries examined translate this as *him*. However, the word *it* will modify the only neuter word in this verse which is *Light*. The Gospel of John is its own *Light*, witnessing to the purpose and goal for which this book was written.

John 1:8: He was not the light, but was commissioned that he might witness concerning the Light.

By means of divine repletion, verse 8 seals in place the great truth that the Gospel of John is the sole witness to which a sinner is shut up to today, and we sinners must read it for ourselves in order to believe and have life in Jesus' name.

John 1:9: That was the true Light, which lighteth every man coming into the world.

The true Light is the *Absolute Light*, that is, God in action causing every human to inherently know that above himself is a *Supreme Being*, and that he should love and revere this One. The man who responds to the True Light will do right and refrain from doing wrong.

John 1:10: In the world he was, and the world came into being through Him, and the world knew him not.

The fifth occurrence of *came into being* (*ginomai*) strongly reasserts the creatorship of the Word, as established in verse 3.