

The Word of God

John 1:1

¹ In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

RECOVERY OF THE WORD

Tomorrow is Reformation Day. Oct. 31, 1517, some 494 years ago, **Dr. Martin Luther** nailed 95 theses to the door of the Wittenburg church in Germany. In those thesis he wrote (among other things), “Those are enemies of Christ and the pope who forbid the word of God to be preached at all in some churches, in order that indulgences may be preached in others;” and “The word of God suffers injury if, in the same sermon, an equal or longer time is devoted to indulgences than to the word” (Martin Luther, *95 Theses* #53, 54). Luther was supremely concerned about God’s word, its neglect, its confusion in his day, and its power to save. Thus, the Reformation recovered as its first and chief article something they called *Sola Scriptura* or Scripture Alone as our final arbiter of all matters of faith and duty towards God. Today, in honor of this great recovery of the church, I want to help us recover the Word personified by trying to understand properly the word written.

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN: INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE

Today I begin a series on the Gospel of John. This Gospel might be titled: **The Gospel of Belief.**¹ **John 20:31** tells us why the book was written, “**These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his Name.**” Evangelicals have always emphasized personal belief, denying that being born into a Christian family or gathering together corporately in church, or being labeled a Christian else is enough. We do this because we desperately want to be saved. We want to spend eternity with God. I

¹ This is the title of a commentary by Merrill Tenney for example. Merrill C. Tenney, *John: The Gospel of Belief*, The New International Commentary on the Old and New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI; Cambridge, U.K.: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1976).

wonder, do you? I want eternal life. We are not to be thinking only of the here and now. In this we are to share the passion of John.

AUTHOR

The John we are speaking of is the Apostle John, one of the twelve. Reading the first few verses of the book you can easily get confused. I did as a child. The beginning of the book starts with a different John: John the Baptist. He did not write this book. He is merely an actor.

John the Apostle was called by Jesus along with his brother James one day when they were fishing in the Sea of Galilee. This is recorded in the Synoptic Gospels ([Matt 4:21-22](#); [Mark 1:19-20](#); [Luke 5:10-11](#)), but our Gospel does not record this event. In fact, it never even speaks the name of this Apostle in the first person, and it never calls him “John.” He only refers to himself as “[the disciple whom Jesus loved.](#)”

The book is actually [anonymous](#), though this disciple whom Jesus loved says he wrote the book ([John 21:20, 24](#)). We get the title “Gospel of John” from very early tradition, as soon as the four gospels began to circulate together as “the fourfold gospel.”² Believe it or not, this actually helps us confirm the *authenticity* of the book! F.F. Bruce says, “[It is noteworthy that, while the four canonical Gospels could afford to be published anonymously, the apocryphal Gospels which began to appear from the mid-second century onwards claimed \(falsely\) to be written by apostles or other persons associated with the Lord.](#)”³ You are familiar with at least one of these false gospels: Thomas. But there are many others.⁴ Helping confirm the tradition, [Irenaeus](#), a student of [Polycarp](#) who was himself a personal friend of the Apostle John, says that this Gospel was written by John ([Against Heresies 2.1.2](#)), and that he remembers vividly the days when Polycarp used to talk with him as a young boy about his discussions about Jesus with John (Eusebius, [Histories 5.20.5-6](#)).

DATE

Dating the Gospel of John is tricky. Our earliest fragment is from a piece of papyri called P⁵² (scholars have very creative names for such important pieces of history). It also happens to be the oldest known fragment of the New Testament! It is dated to 130 A.D, and perhaps as early as 117. Most conservative scholars today opt for a date after the death of Peter, since John seems

² Carson, Moo, Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 138.

³ F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John* (Basingstoke: Pickering & Inglis, 1983), 1.

⁴ The NT Apocrypha includes: Gospel of Peter, Gospel of Nicodemus, and Gospel of Bartholomew. Gnostic gospels include: Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Judas, Gospel of Mary, and Gospel of Philip.

to know about Peter's death (21:19). It also seems that John is an old man when he wrote the book, because of something Peter had once asked Jesus concerning John where the now very old age of John made it appear to some people that he was not going to die until Jesus came back (see 21:23). So, a date between 65-95 A.D. is appropriate.



P⁵² papyri

OUTLINE

The structure of this Gospel differs considerably from the three Synoptics. It has a basic four part outline:

1. Prologue (1:1-18).
2. Public Ministry of Jesus (1:19-11:57)
3. Passion Week (12:1-20:29)
4. Purpose and Epilogue (20:30-21:25)

THEMES

Finally a word is in order on the themes of this book. First, and perhaps most important are the names and titles that John gives to Jesus. These titles include the Word, Name, Glory as well as Lamb, I Am, Door, Son of God and many more. Each of these attributions are incredibly important. Many lay people and not a few scholars miss a main reason. These are all terms that derive from the OT. John's approach is different than, say, Matthew's. Rather than use extensive quotations of prophecy/fulfillment (though there is some of that), John makes correlations through things like Jesus' many names. This means, John sees Jesus everywhere in the OT and that his Gospel is full of the OT! But you have to be more familiar with your OT in order to realize it. We will see this right away in the very first words of this Gospel.

One of the works of Jesus in this book is to reveal the Father. But unlike a secret knowledge (*gnosis*) of later Gnostics, Jesus reveals the Father through his acts in history! In fact, he is the exact image of the Father and tells Philip, "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father" (John 14:9), language that is itself taken from the episode where Moses asks to see God's glory.⁵ This revelation culminates in his death on the cross and resurrection from the dead.

John focuses a good deal of time on eschatology, particularly in the phrase "the hour" or "the time." Unlike the other gospels, nearly half of this gospel is taken up with the last week of

⁵ Compare Exodus 33:18 ("show me your glory") with John 14:8 ("show us the Father").

our Lord in his pre-resurrected body. For John, the last days begin with this event! He was living in the last days. But we should not think of all eschatology as beginning here. In fact, the entire thrust of history from [the moment of creation onward](#) has been eschatological in nature.⁶ It had been anticipating this moment when the Word became flesh. Thus, John begins his Gospel in the same way that Moses begins his works: at creation! The entire first chapter is describes a new creation week.

These last days, for John, were here with Christ in the flesh, but carried on through the [Holy Spirit](#) whom Jesus sends to be with us. So, the Holy Spirit takes up a good deal of room in this Gospel. This emphasis, says D.A. Carson, gives us one of the clearest articulations of the Trinity in the NT.⁷

John's Gospel also gives us a lot of different [ways that people misunderstood Jesus](#). Think about the woman at the well or Nicodemus as examples. Everyone seems baffled by Jesus in this book, even the disciples. John also devotes much to [what it means to be a Christian](#). There is much here about election, life, suffering, fruit-bearing, prayer, love, unity and other parts of the Christian experience and life. This will give us a lot to think about in the weeks and months to come. May God be pleased to use this book to further our salvation and his glory in our church.

THE WORD

I have debated how to begin this the actual study of John. Should I take the entire prologue? Should I take us directly to Genesis? I have decided to begin by focusing [on verse 1](#) and the peculiar title that John gives to Jesus: "[The Word](#)." "[In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God](#)."

When most of us think of this verse, we think [apologetics](#); that is defending our faith against the cult called the [Jehovah's Witnesses](#). JW's in the minority of cults in that they actually have their own peculiar translation of the Bible.⁸ It is called the New World Translation and it is riddled with theologically biased translations which are actually mistranslations and often very grievous errors.⁹ Its most famous error is in [John 1:1](#) and its rendering unique among the scores

⁶ A great introduction to this is John Fesko, *Last Things First: Unlocking Genesis 1-3 with the Christ of Eschatology* (Rearn, Great Britain: Mentor, 2007).

⁷ Carson, Moo, Morris, 175.

⁸ Mormons, for instance, use the KJV Bible. Like most other cults, they add to the Bible with other so-called inspired Scriptures. JW's only have the Bible, but it is a strange cultic translation.

⁹ A secret translation committee of "experts" worked on the NWT between the mid 40s – 60s. Renowned cult expert Walter Martin writes that they were able to discover 5 of the 7 translators of this committee actually had no formal training in Greek. Walter Martin, *Jehovah of the Watchtower* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1974), 129, 175-78. An excellent online article citing many more translations errors and filled with good footnotes is John Ankerberg and John Weldon, "The New World Translation of the Jehovah's Witnesses,"

of English translations beginning in 1388 all the way to today. They say, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was *a god*.”

Since we all run into JW's, and since we are here, I'm going to jog through this with you. It is difficult to do this in a sermon (it is better suited for a classroom), but I'll try to make it brief. What they do is commit a classic first year Greek blunder. There are actually two difficulties with the grammar. **First**, Greek is often more precise than English. In this case, however, English wins on precision. English has a helpful little thing called **an indefinite article** (“a”): “A ball,” “a dog,” “a god.” This letter lets you know that the thing is one among many. Greek does not have the indefinite article. It does have the definite article (“the”). The problem comes at the end of our sentence. The Greek is literally: “... and God/god was the Word” (*kai theos ēn o logos*).

Your Bible says, “... and the Word was God.” The NWT says, “... and the Word was a god.” The Greek word order is different. It has “God” first and “Word” second. This is the **second problem**. English sentences almost always put the subject of the sentence first in the word order: “Pastor is boring us with a Greek lesson.” The subject of my sentence is “Pastor.” Everything that follows it is called the **predicate**. Subjects and predicates. We all learned this stuff in about fourth grade, which is why most of us have forgotten it, but all sentences are basically a subject + a predicate (Sentence = Subject + Predicate).

Greek is the same way, except that it can change the word order and put the subject of the sentence at the end if it wants to emphasize some part of the predicate. As I said, in English we know the subject by *its place in the sentence*; it comes first. The way you tell what is the subject is in Greek is by *the definite article*.¹⁰ In our biblical sentence, “the Word” is the subject. JW's get that part correct.¹¹ Their problem is with the lack of the article or the first difficulty.

It is by no means necessary to insert the English “a” into a Greek word that does not have the article. Not all Greek words left without a definite article are in fact indefinite. Even in English, I do not need a definite article to refer to a specific thing. If I point at a dog and say,

Fall Bible School, 2003. <http://www.johnankenberg.org/Articles/ATRI-Bible-School/Fall-Bible-School/fall-bible-school-jw-new-world-translation.htm>

¹⁰ There is a Rule for this called “Colwell’s Rule.” It states, “In sentences in which a copula is expressed, a definite predicate nominative has the article when it follows the verb; it does not have the article when it precedes the verb.” E. C. Colwell, “A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 52 (1933): 12-21.

<http://www.theologue.org/downloads/colwell.pdf>

¹¹ Early English Bibles like The Wycliffe Middle English Bible (WYC) of 1388 and the Miles-Coverdale (COV) English Bible of 1535 both give the Greek word order in the translation (“God was the Word”). This is incorrect, but not theologically destructive. The Tyndale NT (TNT) of 1534, Bishops Bible (BSP) of 1568 and Geneva Bible (GNV) of 1599 and all subsequent English Bibles have the correct word order.

“Dog,” you know that I have one specific dog in mind without ever saying “the.” In fact, there is a Greek Rule called the “[Granville Sharpe Rule](#)” that explains that when two nouns are in a relationship like this (connected with “and” and the verb “to be”), both words always relate to the same person.¹² That is, the rules of Greek show you that the Word and God are one and the same. And so it violates the grammar to translate this as “a god.”

That’s all interesting, but sadly, it will do absolutely nothing to convince a JW to believe the truth. JWs simply claim infallible authority at this point over the rules of the language. What is funny about that is how we do not really even need to get into the grammar with them to prove our theology. John does a perfectly fine job of getting the point that the Word is not “a god” at “the beginning” of the verse. This is where we should focus our attention, though even here, unless God opens their eyes, they will not believe what I will show you.¹³ But to me, this is much more interesting than the grammar.

John says “[In the beginning was the Word.](#)” There are [two questions](#) to ask. 1. The beginning of what? 2. Why “the Word?” Where does this title originate? Let’s look at the first question. The answer to this question must be found by going to [Genesis 1:1](#), the place that John clearly has in mind throughout this entire chapter. Let’s compare the two:

John 1:1	In the beginning was the Word ... and the word was God.
Gen 1:1	In the beginning God created ...

JW want to argue their theology based on a [word study](#) of “beginning.” They would tell you that the word “beginning” might refer to the beginning of some person’s creation or to some event in that created person’s life. I think of another passage written by this same Apostle where he says, “[The devil has been sinning from the beginning](#)” ([1 John 3:8](#)). They would tell you that the same word is being used of the devil, and it clearly refers to some point after creation, because Satan was a created being. Likewise, the Word was a created being and John 1:1 refers to some point in time after his creation. That’s what they would tell you.

¹² The rule states, “When the copulative $\kappa\alpha\iota$ connects two nouns of the same case, if the article $\delta\epsilon$, or any of its cases, precedes the first of the said nouns or participles, and is not repeated before the second noun or participle, the latter always relates to the same person that is expressed or described by the first noun or participle.” Granville Sharp, *Remarks on the Uses of the Definitive Article in the Greek Text of the New Testament: Containing many New Proofs of the Divinity of Christ, from Passages which are wrongly Translated in the Common English Version*, 1st American ed. from the 3d London ed. (Philadelphia: Hopkins, 1807), 3. Cited in Bruce A. Baker, “Granville Sharp’s Rule,” http://www.bbc.edu/journal/volume1_2/granville_sharp-baker.pdf

¹³ A justification they can give here is that “beginning” may refer to the beginning of creation, not to eternity past. See below.

What is remarkable is that they are not the first to think such thoughts about the Word. A long time ago there was a heresy called [Arianism](#). In some ways, Arianism is the ancient ancestor of the JW's. Arians believed many wrong things, but the one to focus on here is that they believed that Jesus Christ was not divine. Instead, he was the first of God's creation, created before all ages. The Father *exists* prior to the Son. The Son is not eternal, not "timelessly self-subsistent."¹⁴ JW's share this view in common with Arians.

The curious thing is, Arians did not originate this view. You find something similar in ancient Gnosticism, in Greek Philosophy, and in some Jewish traditions. Here is where I want to introduce the second question. [Where did John get this idea of the Word anyway?](#) What a strange way to begin a book on Jesus? What a strange title to give to him. The other Gospels have nothing comparative to this. Here is where things get absolutely fascinating and exciting. What I will share with you next should do nothing less than cultivate your affections for our incredible Messiah, whom we have come to take for granted. This, after all, is what preaching should do. He is the focus of our word, because he is the incarnate *Word*. May God be pleased to begin a wonderful work of transformation in our souls as we come to understand this better.

THE LOGOS

The Greek word for "Word" is *logos*. The typical answer to this question about the origin of John's *logos* is to say that he [borrowed it from Greek philosophy](#). To the Greeks, the *logos* was an impersonal principle of reason. It is most definitely *not* a person, although the principle is to be found in the Greek conception of God. Listen to a couple of choice selections. [Heraclitus](#) (6th cent. B.C.), "[Although this Logos is eternally valid, yet men are unable to understand it](#)" (Heraclitus, *Frag.* 1).¹⁵ Even more interesting for our discussion of John 1:1 is [Diogenes Laertius](#) (4th – 3rd cent. B.C.). "[In the beginning \[God\] was by himself; he transformed the whole of substance through air into water, and just as in animal generation the seed has a moist vehicle, so in cosmic moisture, God, who is the seminal reason \[logos\] of the universe remains behind in the moisture.](#)"¹⁶

Study Bibles often note this Greek idea, but are also careful to add that there is some kind of conception of the Word in the OT. The NIV Study Bible, for example, says that "[Jews ...](#)

¹⁴ See Rowan Williams, *Arius: Heresy and Tradition* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), 98.

¹⁵ In P. Wheelwright, *Heraclitus* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1959), 19.

¹⁶ Diogenes Laertius, in *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* in 2 vols., trans. R.D. Hicks (London: William Heinemann Ltd., 1931), 2:240-41. An interesting compilation of these and other sources on their use of the *logos*, including Philo is "Concerning the Logos" (Dec, 1996): <http://web.engr.oregonstate.edu/~funkk/Personal/logos.html>

used [the Word], as a way of referring to God. Thus John used a term that was meaningful to both Jews and Gentiles.”¹⁷ This is undoubtedly true. But the NIV is vague in the way it talks about the relationship of the Word and God. What is that relationship exactly? It does not elaborate. The ESV Study Bible is worse. It says, “The term ‘the Word’ conveys the notion of divine self-expression or speech and has a rich OT background. God’s Word is effective: God speaks, and things come into being, and by speech he relates personally to his people.”¹⁸ By “worse,” I do not mean “wrong.” It is certainly true in how it relates the Word to God’s speech.

The problem is, John does not relate the Word to speech, but to a person ... to Christ. He actually calls Christ the Word. The Study Bibles do not go far enough, for just because God speaks something, it does not make it Jesus. The question should now be, [where does John get this correlation between the word and Christ?](#) Is he making it all up on the fly? Ask yourself a question. If he is making it up, how would this help his point in any way with either a Jew or a Gentile as we have discussed it thus far? Maybe he is simply getting it from a private telephone line he has with God, or maybe Jesus told this to him while he was still on the earth. I suppose that either is possible, but I want you to consider something else.

[Philo](#) (20 B.C. – 50 A.D.) was a Jewish philosopher and theologian who lived in Alexandria, Egypt. He was not from Israel and shows no familiarity with Jesus in his writings. Nevertheless, what he says about the *logos* is most incredible. For example, citing [Gen 31:13 LXX](#) and its apparent two Gods (“[I am the God who appeared to you in the place of God](#)”, i.e. beth-el) he writes, “Examine it accurately, and see whether there are really two Gods ... There is one true God only ... and what he here calls God (not ‘the God’ but ‘of God’) is his most ancient *logos*” (*Dreams* 1.228-230). Philo knows the context and that at this place Jacob wrestled with a man/angel he called God. Thus he writes later that while no man can look upon the sun, one can look upon rays of the sun; in the same way we may not look upon the sight of God so we “[look upon his image, his angel *logos*, as himself](#)” (*Dreams* 1.239).

Though he is a monotheist and affirms that there is only one God, yet in other places he calls the *logos* “[second God](#)” (*deuteros theos*). Commenting on [Genesis 9:6](#) he asks, “[Why is it that he speaks as if of some other god, saying that he made man after the image of God, and not that he made him after his own image?](#)” You might think Philo off his rocker, but listen to his

¹⁷ NIV Study Bible, John 1:1.

¹⁸ ESV Study Bible, John 1:1.

explanation. “No mortal thing could have been formed on the similitude of the supreme Father of the universe, but only after the pattern of the second deity, who is the *logos* of the supreme Being” (*Questions on Genesis* 2.62). He sums this up in another place saying, “And even if there be not as yet any one who is worthy to be called a son of God, nevertheless let him labour earnestly to be adorned according to his first-born logos, the eldest of his angels, as the great archangel of many names; for he is called, the authority, and the name of God, and the Word [*logos*], and man according to God’s image, and he who sees Israel ... Even if we are not yet suitable to be called the sons of God, still we may deserve to be called the children of his eternal image, of his most sacred logos; for the image of God is his most ancient word [*logos*]” (*Confusion of Tongues* 146).¹⁹ For Philo, the logos is “neither uncreated as God, nor yet created as you, but between these two extremities” (*Heir of Divine Things* 206). He could have been at Nicea, had he lived later and trusted in Christ. The creed seems similar, “Begotten, not made.”

This is all incredible when you hear it for the first time, but it is hardly unique. The book of **Wisdom**, in the Catholic Apocrypha, is ascribed to Solomon, but it believed to have been penned between the first and second centuries B.C. Still, it puts its date well before the birth of Jesus. It says, “Your all-powerful *logos* leaped from heaven, from the royal throne, into the midst of the land that was doomed, a stern warrior” (Wis 18:15). **Ezekiel the Tragedian** is a second century B.C. drama centering on the Exodus. It was sort of the Shakespeare of the day. At one point he writes, “From this bush God’s *logos* shines forth to you” (*Ezek Trag* 99). Of course, in the Bible we know that the one in the bush was the Angel of the LORD.

THE MEMRA

The Jewish targums have different word. Since they are written in Aramaic, they use the word *memra*. *Memra* is the Aramaic equivalent of the Greek *logos*. In the targums, the Memra becomes a divine person.²⁰ “The Memra of the Lord said to Mosheh, He who spake to the world, Be, and it was” (Jerusalem Targum Ex 3:14); “I have been revealed in my Memra to deliver them” (Tg Neofiti Ex 3:8); “I, in my Word, will be with you, and this will be a sign that my Word has

¹⁹ A nice summary of this can be found in Ken Penner and Michael S. Heiser, *Old Testament Greek Pseudepigrapha With Morphology* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 2008). A more detailed examination is Margaret Barker, “Temple Imagery In Philo: An Indication Of The Origin Of The Logos?,” Originally published in W. Horbury, ed, *Templum Amicitiae: Essays on the Second Temple Presented to Ernst Bammel* (JSOT Press: Sheffield, 1991), pp. 70-102., http://jbburnett.com/resources/barker/barker_logos%20in%20philo.pdf

²⁰ See Daniel Boyarin, “The Gospel of the Memra: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue to John,” *Harvard Theological Review* 94:3 (2001): 243-84. <http://www.michaelsheiser.com/TwoPowersInHeaven/Boyarin%20Memra.pdf>

sent you” (Tg. Neof. Ex 3:12); and so on. The targums were written after Christ, yet they are fully Jewish and clearly reflect theology that existed prior to the NT.²¹

The point of telling you about Philo, Wisdom, Ezekiel the Tragedian, and the targums is to show you that John’s *logos* did not arise in a Jewish vacuum. Whether Jesus explained this to John or not, John was certainly reflecting on the common Jewish thinking of his day. He writes his book as much to them—and perhaps more so—than even to us Gentiles. John wants Jews to know that Jesus is the incarnated *logos* they had so often spoken about.

John likewise wants you to know that [the Word of God is found everywhere in the OT](#). You may be asking where in the world these Jews got the idea of a personal *logos*? The texts they are commenting on may seem like a stretch to you. So let’s go to actual texts with actual references to the Word. The Scripture says, “[After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision](#)” ([Genesis 15:1](#)).” [Words come through sound, not visions](#). How about this one, “[For who among them has stood in the council of the LORD to see and to hear his word](#)” ([Jer 23:18](#))? [Seeing words?](#) Or how about this one, “[Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel, saying ...](#)” ([1 Sam 15:10](#) NAS). It would be bad grammar to say, “[Then the LORD said to Samuel, he said ...](#)” That would be redundant. No, in the Hebrew [the Word says something](#) (The ESV destroys this by omitting the “redundancy” of the verb *amar* [“saying”] at the end of the verse). Or how about this one, “[The word of the LORD is upright, and all his work is done in faithfulness](#)” ([Ps 33:4](#)). “His” refers to the “Word” not the LORD (“Word” is the subject. “Of the LORD is the prepositional phrase). [Why didn’t the Psalmist say “its work ...?”](#) After a few of these, you start to understand why the Jews saw what they saw.

HIS IDENTITY

This Word is presented in the Scripture not only as the voice of God (it is that), but sometimes as a second deity, distinct from God, yet identified as God. Now, the full verse of [John 1:1](#) starts to make sense. “[In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.](#)” [The Word is distinct from God](#); he is with God. [The Word is identical with God](#); the Word was God. Heretics always go astray at the most basic points of theology though they have the plainest of texts. Some deny that the Word is [eternal](#); they teach that he was created. Others think that the Word is [impersonal](#); they teach that it is a mere thing. Others

²¹ An important article comparing John’s Gospel to the Targums is John L. Ronning, “The Targum of Isaiah and the Johannine Literature,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 69:2 (2007): 247-78.

teach that the Word is **not God**; they teach that the word is merely a god. Still others teach that God is **one person** and merely identifies himself in different modes; they teach that Father, Word, and Spirit are different masks that God wears at different times. All four of these heresies are cut off in the very first verse of John's Gospel.

Rather than heresy, we delight in orthodoxy. We believe that the **Word is eternally begotten, not made** (see **John 1:14, 18**). We believe that the **Word is personal**. Not merely that it comes from a person; but that He is a unique person that takes form and shape in the OT and NT. We believe that **God is one**. We do not believe he is one person, but one being (or better, essence/*ousia*). There is one God unique in his Being, Wisdom, Power, Holiness, Justice, Goodness, and Truth (*Westminster Shorter Catechism Q. 4; LBC 1689 2.1*). We also believe that **God is three**. He is not three beings, but three simultaneously eternally existing persons (or better, existences/*hypostases*). We believe this, because the Bible teaches this.

More to the point, we believe it because we delight not in pure doctrine or in winning arguments, but in Christ who saved us. We love him, because he first loved us. It is essential to better understand these things and to speak properly about God, so that we do not go astray in our thinking, so that we can properly understand John's Gospel. But we also want to believe in him and to **believe** the right things about a God who has manifested himself to us through Christ lest we ask with Philip, "**Lord, show us the Father,**" and he reply, "**Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father ... Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me**" (**John 14:8-11**). As the prologue concludes, Christ is the only-begotten God, in the bosom of the Father, and he has explained the Father to us perfectly, as the exact image of God, the exact representation of his being, the Word of God, full of truth and light. See the Word today and believe in him.