

The WORD
was in the World.

Anything to Do with

Me ?

John's Gospel, chapter 1, verses 1-13.

Whereas the first three gospels start in "time" and, whereas the things they tell us unfold on earth, the fourth gospel has its beginnings in Eternity. It gives us a glimpse of that eternal dimension of the Son of Man. He is the Son of God, or, in other words, He is the **WORD** of God, the "Logos", the perfect expression. If the 'essence' of the godhead is in the Father, so the 'expression' is in the Son, and the 'energy' in the Holy Spirit.

John shows how heaven simply could not contain itself. God, being God, had to express himself in the only perfect way - the Father gave the Son. The great Creator had to burst on to the scene, so to speak, and become himself a creature. The **WORD** became a man. Since in him was the **LIFE** - God's Life - that Life was now the **LIGHT** of men.

John the Baptist gives the story of how, as he baptized the Messiah of Israel, the Holy Spirit gave solemn witness by descending on him and remaining on him. With the Father speaking from an open heaven, the three persons of the Trinity are acting together in perfect unison, all for the Word to commence his ministry in a creation that is anything but perfect. Sin - man's rebellion against God - was seemingly triumphant... God's "kosmos" was steeped in darkness. 'Kosmos' is the Greek word used for the 'world'. It primarily means "order" or "arrangement", however, God's creation had passed from God's order to Satan's order.

God's **LIGHT** had shun in the darkness of this present kosmos in many ways and through many men in ages gone by. Now, however, with the coming of Christ, it was shining perfectly through HIM. The darkness did not comprehend it, and it could not prevail against it, in spite of all the desperate efforts of the 'Prince of Darkness'.

But we must have a special look at verses 9 to 13 of John 1.

1) The **WORD** and the world.

HE is the only source of true eternal light. A preferred reading of verse 9 goes like this: "*That was the true Light which, coming into the world, gives light to every man*". At this point we read of the different reactions as the Light came into the world. It was seeking to make all things new in the **world**, in God's special people, **Israel**, and in millions of **individuals**.

The kosmos was *his* kosmos, it had been created *by* him and *for* him. John, the author, often refers to the kosmos in reference to the people living in it, or under it, in other words, not living now in God's light, but in the darkness of sin, condemned for all eternity as a result.

How did the kosmos react to the brilliance of the Light of God's Life and Love in Christ, to the One who was now living in their midst, and openly - we might say: 'aggressively' - ministering to it? ***“He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not know him.”***

The fact that He was their Creator, now having come in person to live among them and overcome the total darkness in which they lived, was of no importance, and of no interest to the kosmos.

“The world did not know him”. This becomes especially clear through the exceptions to the rule. During the first two years of his life, no attention was paid to him by the world. Then the exceptions arrived, the magi from the east. They “knew him” and worshipped him, opening their treasures to him. King Herod was the exact opposite. He was not an Israelite, and he simply feared for his throne. He went to great lengths to have the “Light” put out. Having been taken to Egypt, the world still did not know him. Later, seemingly, He is no more than an obscure carpenter in a small town of Galilee.

2) The **WORD** and Israel

When our Lord is thirty, the time has come for his manifestation to Israel. ***“He came to his own”***. In the kosmos, there was this one nation, that was different to all other nations (the gentiles). That became clear when God put his seal on Israel as He redeemed them from Egypt through great signs and wonders, leading them through the desert to the one piece of land, reserved for them since the time of his promises to Abraham. This one nation that had sprung from Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, was his chosen nation; among them God's prophets and God's priests had been active for centuries.

But now, when the Word comes to “his own”, and with all the signs necessary for them to plainly realize who He is, they ***“received him not”***. It is highly significant that of the kosmos it is said that they ***“knew him not”***, whereas that expression is not used for his own, for Israel. They ***did*** know him, witness the words of Nicodemus, who spoke for the nation: ***“We know You have come from God”*** (John 3).

Israel, knowingly, rejected their promised Messiah. Again there are the exceptions, found e.g. at the beginning of Luke's gospel. There are the disciples also, but as a nation they rejected and crucified their Messiah. Even at Pentecost, when 3000 of them did repent and believe, the Nation continued to reject him. They are stuck there **until...**, in the Great Tribulation, the ‘Remnant’ of Israel will “look on him whom they pierced” (Zech. 12-14). They will know him, they will repent, and they will receive him (Rom. 11:26-27)!

Before that, God's sovereign plan is that, through the cross and the subsequent resurrection, the **LIGHT** should shine into the present darkness of the kosmos, i.e., in and through his new people, called "the **EKKLESIA**", the redeemed of the Lord (2 Cor. 5:17). Which is what we come to next.

3) The **WORD** and you

As John sums up these different categories, he comes to the third and last one. After the kosmos, and after Israel, he comes to you and me. He says:

"But as many as received him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in his name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

These are among the most quoted words of Gospel preaching. Yet, sadly, much of the meaning may be lost if the context is not kept in view. After not having been *known* by his estranged kosmos, and after not having been *received* by his very own people, He now turns to you and me! That is, in countless different ways, though always through the Bible, He confronts individuals, whether Jew or Gentile. Once his Light resides in a man's heart, He the Light of the World, emanates through that man. He who is the eternal **WORD**, shines brightly through the 'written Word' as it is heard or read.

The words used by John are "receive", "believe" and "be born of God". The clear implication is that any individual, reacting to the Light, is expected to do *the opposite* to what the kosmos did and to what Israel did.

The kosmos, says John, displays 'ignorance', as regards the **LIGHT**. Now what are *you* expected to do or say? You can say:

"Yes, I **know** who You are; I **know** You are my Creator! You alone have every right to my life. Do with this part of your creation what You wish!"

His own people, says John, display 'hypocrisy', as regards the **LIGHT**. So what does He expect *you* to say?

"Yes, if Israel did not receive you, I do **receive** you, unconditionally; You are my King and my Redeemer! I **believe** that You died for me and my sins, and rose again. I now **repent** of all my sin. Do take my life and make it part of your family and your kingdom! May your **Light** shine through me!"

That is the moment of 'new birth', when a 'new disciple' is born into a 'new family'. Though that 'Family' is situated *in* the kosmos, it is *not of* the kosmos. Which is why it is called the **EKKLESIA**: "the ones *called out* (of the kosmos)". As they are faithful to their Lord, the kosmos will hate them and try to put out the **Light**! But their Lord tells them:

"Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life!" (Ap. 2:10).