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Recap

- We compared *John* to the three (Synoptic) Gospels: 92% of *John* is unique.
- Its purpose: *...these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.* (John 20:30-31)
- Key ideas include the “I am” statements and seven signs that reveal Jesus’ glory.
- Perhaps the key word in *John* is the word “believe.”
- *In the beginning was the Word [Logos]...*
 - *He is eternal*
 - *He is a person*
 - *He is Divine!*

1. John’s careful and poetic teaching about Christ the Word (John 1:1-2)

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

2 He was in the beginning with God.

1.1 Parallelism in the Bible

In Hebrew, one important form of poetry was parallelism: *[Trust in the LORD with all your heart] [and lean not unto your own understanding.]* (Prov. 3:5)

1.2. Chiasms in the Bible and in John

Today we know that *John* is highly sophisticated. John used a literary device called a **chiasm**. A chiasm is like a ladder of thoughts that leads to a main idea: a series of statements that also acts like a mirror. Example from Jesus:

A No one can serve two masters;
B for either he will hate the one
C and love the other,
C' or he will be devoted to one
B' and despise the other.
A' You cannot serve God and wealth.
(Matt 6:24)

Notice how the sets of statements that are marked A, B, and C relate to each other.

Another example, from Joshua 1:

A Just as I have been with Moses, I will be with you; I will not fail you or forsake you.
B Be strong and courageous, for you shall give this people possession of the land which I swore to their fathers to give them. Only be strong and very courageous;
C Be careful to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, so that you may have success wherever you go.
D This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth,
D' But you shall meditate on it day and night,
C' So that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.
B' Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed,
A' For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.
(Joshua 1:5b-9)

A In the beginning

B was

C the word

D and the word

E was

F with God

F' and God

E' was

D' the word

C' This one

B' was

A' in the beginning with God

2. John combats heretical teachings about Christ (John 1:1-3)

*1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (John 1:1-3)*

- John wants to teach us *correct* doctrine and protect us from *false* doctrines about Christ. Jesus said there would be *false prophets and false Christs*. (Matt. 24:24)
- 2 John 9 warns: *Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.*

- One of the most important words in John’s Gospel is the word “to know.”
- Having eternal life means being in relationship with the Father and the Son.
- How well can we say we know Jesus if we’re wrong about who (and what) He is?
- When it comes to the doctrine of Christ, **you must know the true in order not to be deceived by the false!**
- Even now, in 2020, you’ll encounter people with strange beliefs about Jesus.

2.1. Adoptionism: Jesus was made God

- Adoptionism says Jesus was **made** into God at some point in His career.
- Some New Agers have held a belief similar to this, “Christ Consciousness.”
- Jesus said, *“Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am He,’ and will deceive many.”* (Mark 13:5b-6)
- The Word has **always** been God and shared God’s nature.

2.2. Gnosticism: a term that takes in many complex systems

- Gnostics emphasized spiritual knowledge and experiences over Bible doctrine.
- Many Gnostics believed the physical world was evil.
- Many Gnostics believed there was a supreme God who had made some junior gods, and that Christ was a junior god.
- Gnosticism has made a comeback in the modern world.
- Jesus is the Creator, not a created being.

2.3. Arianism: no Trinity, and Christ a subordinate God

- Claims Jesus is not God in the same way the Father is, only a lesser God, subordinate to the Father.

- Ideas similar to this are alive today among groups such as Jehovah’s Witnesses.
- Colossians 2:9 says: “...in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.”
- The Church has **always** believed Jesus to be eternally God. Christians have also always believed Him to be God come in the flesh.

3. Christ The Creator Of All (John 1:3)

All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (John 1:3)

- Some will say that God the Father only **used** Jesus to make things. Indeed, this seems to be the typical way the New Testament expresses it.
- In discussing the Trinity, avoid confusion by remembering that the Persons of the Trinity perform different roles. This doesn’t mean that they are not equally God.
- In salvation, the Father is the source of all authority. The Son, in turn, is the Redeemer, and the Spirit works out the redemption of the Son within us.
- In Creation: we see the Father creating – and we see Him creating through the Son. The Holy Spirit was, of course, also intimately involved in this work. In Psalm 33, we read this: *By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath [spirit] of His mouth. (Psalms 33:6)*

The Persons of the Trinity were all involved together in the great work of Creation! Jesus the Word is responsible for the existence of everything. Hallelujah!

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