

# SEED & BREAD

FOR THE SOWER      ISA.55:10      FOR THE EATER  
BRIEF BIBLICAL MESSAGES FROM

## THE WORD OF TRUTH MINISTRY

Otis Q. Sellers, Bible Teacher

### WHAT DOES *GINOMAI* MEAN?

The careful study of the meaning of the Greek word **ginomai** becomes a matter of great importance because of its triple occurrence in a passage that is considered to be epigrammatic in its declaration that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Creator of all things that now exist. This passage declares: "**All things were made (ginomai) by Him, and without Him was not any thing made (ginomai) that was made (ginomai).**" This declaration is such a strong affirmation of His deity (for if the Maker of all things is not God, then who is God?) that those who would make Him to be a secondary being who is less than God must find some way to nullify this glorious statement.

This is now being done by presenting us with a new version of this passage, which tells us that the word *ginomai*, which occurs three times in this verse, does not mean "made," but should be understood as meaning "be fulfilled" or "accomplished." Since it is translated "be fulfilled" three times out of its 677 occurrences in the New Testament, one of these (Matt. 5: 18) is brought forth in evidence as a "fit commentary" on John 1 :3. Thus, John 1:3 is, so they say, more accurately translated if we read it:

"Everything was accomplished by means of Him and apart from Him was accomplished not even one thing. What was accomplished was Life in Him and that Life was the light of human beings. The Light shone in the darkness and wasn't understood."

I do not agree with this translation of John 1:3-5. It does not even approach the simple Greek of this passage. Neither do I think that the obviously incorrect translation of Matt. 5: 18 should be used as a guide to the meaning of *ginomai*.

The last part of this passage should read, "until all come into being." The law predicted that many glorious things would come into existence. Not one word will pass from it until all come into being.

I fully agree that John 1:3-5 could be somewhat better translated than what we find in the KJV. But it will be discovered that the moment we set out to provide a more literal version we will find that it speaks an hundredfold more strongly concerning the creation by Jesus Christ concerning all things that are now in existence.

Feeble translations and incorrect interpretations of John 1 :3-5 such as set forth above show us that a careful study of the word *ginomai* is very important, since it is found three times in this passage, a redundancy that is purposed to give emphasis to the truth of this portion.

As stated before, the word *ginomai* is found 677 times in the Greek New Testament. If the meaning of any word is to be found from its usage in the Scripture we should have no trouble in finding the meaning of this one. The one difficulty concerning it is the fact it is translated by about 66 terms in the KJV, and this has led some to select one of these imprecise translations as being its true meaning, then force this idea into other places where this word is found. This should not be done.

However, in searching out meanings that are based upon usage it must ever be kept in mind that any word, the moment it is placed in connection with other words will influence the meaning of the terms with which it has been related, and is often in itself modified in meaning by them.

For example, consider the word *dark*. It means one thing when linked with the word *day*, and it signifies something different when it is connected with *night*. One could read his book while outside on a dark day, but could not do so on a dark night.

When all occurrences (yes, everyone of them) of *ginomai* are considered we find that the simple, basic, and primary meaning of this word is "to come into being." Thus, Arndt and Gingrich in their Lexicon give as its primary definition: "As a verb, with its own meaning, come to be, become, originate," and as its secondary meaning, "be made, created."

Thayer's Lexicon gives as the primary meaning: "to become, i.e. to come into existence, begin to be, receive being." And so, all Lexicons.

In view of this a faithful rendering and accurate translation of John 1:3 should read:  
**"All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him not even one thing came into being which has come into being."**

As to translating this: "Everything was accomplished by means of Him," as some are saying it should be, this cannot be what the Spirit of God was telling us in this passage. John most certainly knew the Greek word that meant "accomplished," and he

would have used it if this were the idea he wanted to convey. He would have used some form of the word *teleo*, just as he did in John 19:28, where *te/eo* is translated "accomplished." Yes, John had this word and he used it when he wanted to say "accomplished" or "fulfilled," but he did not use it in John 1:3. We do violence to the inspired word when we try to rewrite it and bring in this idea.

The word *ginomai* is found seven times in the first fourteen verses of John, and it will be well for us to look at each occurrence. We will find no idea of "being fulfilled" or "accomplishment" in any of these. We have already considered the first three, so we will consider the next. In John 1:6 *ginomai* is translated "was," but to express the exact truth here it should read: "**There came into being a man commissioned by God, His name was John.**" The man John came into being when he was conceived physically. He then grew into manhood and suddenly by an act of God he came to be a man commissioned by God. These facts are true to the Greek and true to the truth.

In John 1:10 *ginomai* is translated "was made," but a more accurate rendering of this passage will read: "**In the world He was, and the world came into being through Him, and the world knew Him not.**" It seems utterly impossible to assert Christ's creatorship more definitely than it is asserted here. This passage presents us with a truth to be believed and the sincerity of our profession of faith may rest upon what we do concerning this important declaration. It is a major revelation in the record God has given of His Son. I believe, it is my faith, that this world came into being through Him.

In John 1:12 *ginomai* is translated "to become," but this leaves it as telling of something to be done rather than stating an accomplished fact. That he is a child of God is a claim that a believer is authorized to make. This passage should read: "**Yet as many as received Him, to them He gives the authority to come into being as the children of God, even to those who are believing in His name.**"

In John 1: 14 *ginomai* is translated "was made," a translation which falls short of the truth declared when it is properly rendered as "came into being." This majestic passage should read: "**And the Word came into being as flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we discerned His glory as an only One from the Father, full of grace and truth.**" (See Issue No. **SB173** for further light on the word *monogenes* found in this passage.)

This passage tells us the Word, to Whom everything owes its existence, Who created us ourselves, became a member of the human race. He became flesh. This is not a figure of speech as has been said. It is a statement of fact, a testimony that is to be believed. It borders on profanation to say: "I do not believe a Logos can literally become flesh." Those who say this are proclaiming themselves as rejectors of one of

the simplest and most forcefull statements to be found in the testimony given by John. "**Kai ho Logos sarx egeneto.**" The Greek here is simple. It says: "**And the Word came into being as flesh.**" This, I believe!

From examining the many passages in the New Testament where *ginomai* is found the student will find that many of these will seem to come alive and speak forth gracious truth when this word is correctly translated "come into being," or by other terms which retain this basic meaning.

For example, if we go beyond the first fourteen verses of John and look at John 1:15 we find that *ginomai* is gratuitously translated "is preferred." This passage should read: "**John is testifying concerning Him and has cried saying, This is He of Whom I said, He Who is coming after me, has come into being before me, for He was first before me.**" The truth declared here is that while John the Baptist came into personal being six months before Jesus, and was in advance of Jesus in order of service, yet the Lord Jesus had existed before him, for He was first. This is one more declaration of the preexistence of the Lord Jesus.

It may help us in our understanding of John 1:1-14 if we note that the word *Theos* (God) is found 1343 times in the New Testament. In many of these occurrences it is preceded by the definite article (the) and in many it is not. *Theos* is found 12 times in the first chapter of John, six times with the article and six times without. In the third chapter we found *Theos* 13 times, 11 times with the article and 2 without. So far, I do not feel that anyone has explained the presence of the article before *Theos*, or its absence in certain occurrences. In its first occurrence in John 1:1 it has the article, and in the second it does not. In John 20:28 it is found both before Lord (**ho Kurios**) and God (**ho Theos**).

It could be that when *Theos* is used without the article it is because it has somewhat the sense of an adjective and designates not the personality but the quality or character of God.

This has led to some trying to give the meaning of "divine" to the second occurrence of *Theos*, but this is a bad mistake. John had the word for "divine," which is *theos* (see this word in 2 Peter 1:3,4 and Acts 17:29), but it is clear that John did not intend to ascribe to the Logos that which this adjective would clearly express, a quasi-divinity, a condition intermediate between God and man, so he did not use this word.

He was testifying to the essential deity of the Logos and declares that "**the word was God.**"

The first fourteen verses of John's Gospel is the most exquisite, explicit, and important passage to be found in the Bible concerning the Lord Jesus Christ as Creator and God. This passage sets out to declare that Jesus of Nazareth is the God of the universe, the very One Who brought it into existence. Little wonder that men who do not believe this record do all they can to negate it and make it meaningless. Such men could make good use of the sign that is said to have hung over the door of New England woodworkers shop: "ALL KINDS OF TWISTING AND TURNING DONE HERE."

**End Issue No. SB188**