

TWO GREAT NAMES

Scripture reading: Luke 2:1-20.

Texts: John 1:1, 2, 14; Matt. 1:21.

Intro: We have read this morning in our Scripture reading from the Gospel of Luke. I want to speak to you from four verses in two other Gospels: the Gospels of John and Matthew.

Please turn to John chapter 1 first--verses 1, 2, and 14.

It is interesting to compare the four Gospels in connection with the record of the birth of Christ:

- 1) Mark says nothing about it.
- 2) Luke says the most, concentrating especially on the revelations that were given to the virgin Mary and her family.
- 3) Matthew, as we shall see in a few moments, is the second after Luke in the amount of space given to the birth of Christ, but his emphasis is with Joseph.
- 4) John is different from all of them. He does not pass it by like Mark does. Nor does he concentrate on the historical details like Luke and Matthew do. But he focuses attention primarily on our Lord as a Person, and gives us the first, basic reason for His coming into the world. Matthew, as we shall see, gives us the second major reason.

Both Matthew and John give us these two main reasons for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in connection with two of His names. They are:

- 1) "The Word."
- 2) "Jesus."

I. "The Word." Cf. John 1:1, 2, 14.

A. Why is our Lord called, "The Word"?

Note that John does not explain it even though he is the only one in the NT who uses this term of our Lord. He assumes that they know what it means.

How can we find out?

Let us not bother ourselves this morning with the possible philosophical background that this term, Logos, might have. There are two special ways in which we can understand why John spoke of our Lord as, "The Word."

1. Its use in the Old Testament.

Over and over again we have references to the word of God:

- a) Gen. 15:1, "After these things ~~came~~ the word of the Lord came unto Abram in a vision . . ."
- b) Gen. 15:4, "And, behold, the word of the Lord came unto him . . ."
- c) Ex. 4:28, 30, "And Moses told Aaron all the words of the Lord who had sent him . . . And Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses . . ."
- d) Isa. 1:10, "Hear the word of the Lord . . ."
- e) Isa. 55:11, "So shall my word be that goeth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."
- f) Many times in the prophecy of Jeremiah and other prophets, too: "Then the word of the Lord came unto me, saying . . ." (Jer. 1:4).

THUS, WE HAVE
ESTABLISHED A
CONNECTION BETWEEN
O.T. SCRIPTURE
AND OUR LORD.

Think of the hundreds of times we have the expression, "Thus saith the Lord."

ALL OF THESE MEAN THAT GOD WAS CONVEYING A MESSAGE TO MEN BY MEANS OF WORDS!

2. The basic meaning, even as we use it today.

A word is a means of communication. It would be impossible for me to speak to you this morning if I could not use words. And I am using words because I have a message that I want to get across to you. AND SO WE CAN SAY THAT, JUST AS THE WORD OF GOD IS A TERM USED FOR THE MESSAGES THAT GOD GAVE IN OLD TESTAMENT TIMES, AND SINCE WE ALSO USE WORDS TO CONVEY MESSAGES, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS CALLED "THE WORD" BECAUSE HE IN HIMSELF IS A MESSAGE FROM GOD TO US.

- B. What are we to know about Christ, "the Word"?

There are four things:

1. "In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1).

John wants us to know that if you go back to creation itself you already find "the Word" as a Person in continuous existence. There is an intended similarity between John 1:1 and Gen. 1:1, "In the beginning God created . . ."

There is no attempt to prove the existence of God in Gen. 1:1, and there is no attempt to prove the existence of the Word here. It is simply and emphatically stated, and we are to believe it. Remember that this is also the Word of God.

Jesus Christ as the Word is eternal.

2. "And the Word was with God" (John 1:1).

This lit. means to or toward God, facing Him.

It means, first of all, that God and Christ, the Word, are separate Persons.

It means also that between them there is:

- 1) Fellowship, intimacy.
- 2) Favor.
- 3) Equality.

Ill. Gen. 31:2, "And Jacob beheld the countenance of Laban, and, behold, it was not toward him as before."

So John is not talking about God, the Father, but he is talking about another member of the Godhead, Christ, the Word, and he is claiming that the two are separate but equal and that there is nothing and never has been anything but the most perfect fellowship between the two. This is what our Lord was saying when He spoke these words from heaven,

"This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matt. 3:17).

And to emphasize this here in John 1, John records in v. 2,

"And the same was in the beginning with God."

There must be no mistake about ~~what~~ he is saying!

3. "And the Word was God." Cf. John 1:1.

We could almost have said this ourselves from what has preceded. But John gives us THIS UNQUALIFIED STATEMENT OF THE DEITY OF THE WORD!

But there is one more thing that we need to know.

We must now take all that we have learned from verses 1 and 2 with us as we go into verse 14.

4. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

Vv. 1, 2 tell us what the Lord Jesus Christ as the Word always has been; v. 14 tells what He became on that day when Jesus Christ was born: He "became flesh"! And when He became a man there is nothing in vv. 1 and 2 that was changed! THAT IS ONE OF THE REASONS HE IS CALLED "THE WORD" IN VERSE 14 JUST LIKE HE IS IN VERSE 1.

You will never understand the first reason for His coming, nor will you fully appreciate the second reason for His coming, unless these truths are fully established in your mind and heart.

- C. What was the first reason for His coming?

If you were to sum up the most important thing that the writers of the Old Testament were called to do, what would you say?

There is just one answer: THEY WERE CALLED TO WRITE THE OLD TESTAMENT TO TELL US ABOUT GOD... THE BIBLE FIRST AND FOREMOST IS A REVELATION OF GOD!

BUT you could take all of the Old Testament, learn it thoroughly, and still not have a complete picture of God. NO ONE COULD GIVE US THAT BUT GOD HIMSELF, OR SOMEONE ELSE WHO IS JUST EXACTLY LIKE HE IS! Jesus Christ, the Word, was that Person. And so John writes,

"And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

You see, Jesus Christ is uniquely the Son of God. God has no other Son like He is. And the glory which He displayed while He was here on earth showed beyond any doubt that He was the Son of God, and therefore a final and complete revelation of God Himself.

John is probably talking about the Transfiguration, but see John 2:11 also.

THIS IS WHY HE IS CALLED, "THE WORD."

But now we want to look at a second name, used in Matt. 1:21.

II. "Jesus." Cf. Matt. 1:21.

An angel spoke these words to Joseph. He is giving us the second major reason (and there are only two) for the coming of Jesus Christ into the world:

"Thou shalt call his name JESUS; for he shall save his people from their sins."

"JESUS" means Jehovah is salvation. It means that salvation is not a work that man does for God, but a work that God does for man. The word, "he," is emphatic, and can be translated:

- 1) He alone, or,
- 2) It is He.

"His people" would obviously mean Israel to Joseph, but a study of the Scriptures shows that this applies to all from Israel and from the Gentiles who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Cf. Rom. 9:25, 26,

"As he saith also in Hosea, I will call them my people, who were not my people; and her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass that, in the place where it was said unto them Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the sons of the living God."

"Save" from what? Rome? No. Poverty? No. War? No. "He shall save His people from their sins." This is why He was called, "Jesus."

This obviously includes the eternal punishment for our sins, but Dean Alford says that the plural emphasizes being saved from the present practice and misery which is caused by our sins.

This is what every person needs more than he needs anything else, and the only One who can give it to you is "Jesus," the Lord Jesus Christ." But you will never come to Him unless you have already seen that, though He became a man, He has always been and always will continue to be more than a man, "the Word," One who is to be worshiped as God just as much as the Father is.

Concl: How rich the Scriptures are! All that we need to know is bound up in these two great names of the Son of God: "The Word" and "Jesus." If you know Him as your Savior, worship Him anew this morning. If you do not know Him, you can. (Quote John 3:16, 17.)