

JESUS CHRIST, THE LIVING WORD

John 1:1-18

Intro: As you all know, we have four Gospels in the NT. They all record the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. And yet none of them, nor all of them put together, really give us what we could call a complete biography of our Lord. And yet we know that the Spirit of God had a real purpose in leading Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John to write as they did.

The Gospel of Luke gives us the most information regarding the circumstances surrounding the birth of our Lord. Next in line for details about our Lord's birth, is Matthew. Mark's Gospel begins, not with the birth of Christ, but with the ministry of John the Baptist. *But when John wrote his Gospel, he began with eternity. And he told his readers toward the end of his Gospel that his objective in writing was to show that Jesus "is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His Name" (John 20:31).*

This does not mean that Matthew, Mark, and Luke ignored His Deity. It is clear in all of the Gospel records that the man Jesus was also the Son of God, that we have in Jesus of Nazareth a Man who was true humanity, but also Deity incarnate, God in human flesh. But it is important to notice that John in his Gospel predated time itself in line with his purpose stated later in his Gospel to show that Jesus was the Messiah, the Son of God. After emphasizing the eternal nature of the Lord Jesus Christ, that He existed eternally before He was born into this world, and speaking of His incarnation in a most unique way without giving us the details which Luke and Matthew have given to us, John, like Mark, went on to speak of the ministry of the John the Baptist.

Incidentally, Matthew and Luke also speak of the ministry of John the Baptist, so all four Gospels emphasize the ministry of John the Baptist as the one who went ahead of the Lord, announcing to the people of Israel that the promised Redeemer had come. After the Lord's ministry began, John the Baptist was removed. His ministry was completed. So this means that John the Baptist died as a very young man, like our Lord was when He died and rose again, both being in their early thirties.

Anyone reading the Gospel of John for the first time, would surely wonder that he was talking about, or who he was talking about, when he

called this Person, “the Word.” But he probably would not wonder very long if he continued to read especially after he got down to verse 14. Let’s think for a few moments about this title, because that is what it is.

I. “THE WORD.”

This title is used only seven times in all of the Bible, and only in the writings of the Apostle John. Cf. John 1:1 (3x), 14; 1 John 1:1; 5:7; Rev. 19:13.

1 John 1:1, reading verses 2 and 3 with it, says:

1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

2(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ (1 John 1:1-3).

Then in 1 John 5:7 we have it again (reading verse 8 with it):

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one (1 John 5:7-8).

As some of you may know there is a question about the integrity of the last part of verse 7 and the first part of verse 8, but I mention this text because it is in the KJV.

The last time this title appears in the NT is in Rev. 19:13 which appears in the description of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ following the Great Tribulation. This is what Rev. 19:13 tells us:

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

So we can actually say that this title belongs to our Lord alone, from eternity past to eternity to come, so to speak. *But what does it mean?*

You can go back through church history and find many suggestions which have been made, but I think that when we think of the title itself, “the Word,” and ask ourselves what a word is, we have to say that it is a means

of communication. Right now as I talk to you I am using words. When God sent His Son into the world He intended that His Son would be a messenger to us. We read, for example, in Hebrews 1:1 and 2,

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son ...

In fact, in the last verse of my text for today, John 1:18, you will find these words:

18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

This means that the Lord Jesus would reveal by teaching, the truth concerning the Father. He revealed Him, first of all, by Who He was. He revealed the Father by his teaching. He revealed the Father in what He did, in His works. So God was communicating to men when the Lord Jesus came into the world. And so He is the Word of God. The prophets have given us much truth concern God the Father, but no one was as qualified to reveal the Father than the Son.

There is a very important passage concerning this in John 14 where the Lord was telling His disciples that He was going to prepare a place for them, and then He would come back to receive them to Himself, so they could be where He was. And after that our Lord said,

4 And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know.

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

10 Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.

11 Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake (John 14:4-11).

Earlier when the Lord took Peter, James, and John, and they went with

Him to the Mount of Transfiguration, you will remember that the Father spoke from heaven, and said to them, “This is my beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased, hear ye Him” (Matt. 17:5b).

There aren't a lot of people in this world who understand this when they talk of Christmas and when we remember the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. God had been silent for 400 years between the completion of the OT and the coming of Christ. Suddenly in the coming of His Son He began to speak again. And, O, the wonderful things that our Lord had to say about His Father!

Now, in looking at the first verse of John chapter 1, let us notice:

II. OUR LORD'S CREDENTIALS AS THE WORD OF GOD (John 1:1-2).

The Apostle John said three things about the Lord:

- 1) “In the beginning was the Word,
- 2) “And the Word was with God.
- 3) “And the Word was God.”

The Greek word for “Word” is Λόγος. It means to put words side by side, and so to speak. It conveys the idea that Christ Who is the Λόγος was a message from God to men.

Note that three times in these statements we have the same English verb: “was.” It is the imperfect form of εἶμί, the word ἦν. It is called by Greek grammarians, “*a verb of existence*” (Green's revised *Greek-English Lexicon to the New Testament*, p. 53). Robertson says, “Three times in this sentence John uses this imperfect of εἶμί, *to be*, which conveys no idea of origin for God, or for the Word, simply continuous existence” (V, 3).

So the first statement means that “in the beginning” when “God created the heaven and the earth” the Word was already in existence. He was not created by God, but He had eternal existence. We have trouble with this concept because everything we see around us had a beginning. We all had a beginning, not at our birth, but at our conception. But the Word had no beginning. He always was. He is beginning-less and ending-less. This idea is present in God's Name, *Jehovah*. And with this idea of the eternal nature of the Word, also is the idea that He is changeless.

The second statement tells us that the Word was with God, was always

with Him. God is eternal, and so is the Word. And this verse also tells us that the Word is distinct from God. We can say that there were two Persons at least Who had no beginning, nor did the One precede the Other. We need to understand this before we go on to the third statement.

The third statement is, “And the Word was God.” This is not a denial of what we have just seen in the second statement, but just added light upon the nature of the Word. “And the Word was God. God was God, and always has been God, but it is also true that the Word was God, that He always has been God and always will be God, not the same Person as God, but Deity like God is.

This is basic Theology 101. These are truths that we all need to have firmly fixed in our minds and hearts. These are statements of eternal truth. The Word has always existed. He has always existed as a Person distinct from God so that they are two Persons. But we need to understand that He has Deity which in every way is equal to that of God.

In John 1:2 we have a repetition for emphasis of the middle statement of verse 1 to show how extremely important that statement is. We don't need to feel that we need to explain this. John did not explain it. He simply stated it as the truth concerning God, and we need to accept it by faith. God is eternal, and the Word is eternal. Both of them have always existed, and both are God. Both are Deity. Both have the same divine attributes and to the same extent, which is perfection: perfect wisdom, perfect power, perfect grace, and on and on.

So you can see that the Word is perfectly and totally qualified to represent God on earth.

But now let us go on to the other statement in our text which speaks of “the Word.” It is found in verse 14. And I am going to call this:

III. THE MISSION OF THE WORD (John 1:14).

Here we read, “And the Word was made flesh.” This is a correct translation, but the NKJV has improved upon it. The NKJV gives this translation: “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.”

First, from this we now realize that “the Word” is our Lord Jesus Christ. And when it says that He “was made,” or “became, flesh,” John was talk-

ing about the incarnation of the Word, the conception of our Lord by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, followed by His birth. The Lord always has been God, but there came the time when He became what He had never been before. He became a Man. He took on a new type of existence. The Creator became like His creatures.

Theologians have debated from that day up until now as to what effect it had upon our Lord to become a Man. We know that God cannot sin, but could the Word sin after He became a Man. All men are sinners, and so if the Word became a Man, He must have become capable to sin. It seems that it was because the Devil was trying to find out the answer to this question that He tempted the Lord three times to see if He could and would sin.

I believe that the Spirit of God has answered that question conclusively for us here in John 1:14 when He said, “And the Word was made flesh. If the Holy Spirit had led the Apostle John to give the Lord a different title from “the Word” when he wrote verse 14, then there might be some basis for saying that becoming a Man did affect our Lord’s Deity, so that He was less than God. But He used the same title, “and the Word became flesh.” So when you read in verse 1 that “the Word was God,” take all of that and put it into verse 14, and understand that *in no way* was the Deity of our Lord changed by becoming a Man. He became a perfect Man while continuing to be God. If our Lord’s Deity had been affected so that He became less than God, then He could not have become our Savior.

The rest of verse 14 also helps us to see that there had been no change in His Deity. The Apostle John went on to say, that “He dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” What was the Lord’s glory? It was His Deity, a Deity just like you would expect “the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” So as Jesus Christ walked the streets of Nazareth and Capernaum and Jerusalem, He was the same Son of God that He had been through the eons of eternity before He became a Man.

But now let me take you to one more passage where our Lord is called, “the Word.” It is Rev. 19:13. I call this:

IV. THE WORD’S GLORIOUS TRIUMPH (Rev. 19:13).

In this the Apostle John was relating the vision he had had of our Lord’s

return in glory at the end of this age. I will just read part of it, beginning with Rev. 19:11:

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God.

16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (Rev. 19:11-16).

Concl: In John 1:1 and 2 we look back at our Lord as He was in eternity past. In John 1:14 we see our Lord as He became a Man, became what He never had been while remaining the same glorious Person He had always been. In Rev. 19:30 we see Him as He comes in glory – after Gethsemane, after Calvary, after the resurrection and ascension, and after this long present age where He is acting as our Intercessor, and what do we find? We see Him as that glorious Person He was before there was any creation, before there was any sin, before He was made sin for us. And what do we see? We see confirmation of the truth of Heb. 13:8 that it is “Jesus Christ the same, yesterday, and today, and forever”! The angels said after the disciples had seen the Lord disappear in the cloud at the time of the ascension, “This same Jesus shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven” (Acts 1:11).

Let us love Him. Let us worship Him. Let us trust Him. And let us tell others that they may learn how gracious this glorious Lord is in the salvation He died to provide for every sinner who will repent of their sins and put their trust in Him.