

Jesus is the Word

(John 1:1-2)

INTRODUCTION:

1. I want to return to the gospel of John today but do so by going to its beginning.
2. John's gospel is unique compared to the others because of its beginning, or its introduction (1:1-18).
 - A. John's introduction...
 - i. Is said to be like a foyer in a movie theater, where you get a glimpse of various scenes from the drama that you are about to see inside (Colin Kruse, John, IVP, pp. 59-60).
 - ii. It precisely and dramatically presents the themes that will appear throughout the Gospel — (1:1) Jesus' pre-existence and union with God, (1:4) the coming life and light found in Jesus, (1:5) the conflict between light and darkness, (1:7) the need for faith in Jesus, (1:10) the rejection of Jesus, (1:13) the divine regeneration Jesus gives, (1:14) the grace and truth of God seen in Jesus, and (1:18) how only Jesus has seen the Father and revealed Him.
 - B. What I want to consider today is verses 1 and 2 of this introduction where John gets right to the point about Jesus' pre-existence and union with God (Jn. 1:1-2 – “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.”).
 - i. I want to address how John describes **Jesus** as “*the Word*,” “*the Logos*,” as well as the characteristics he connects to that description.
 - ii. We know that John is describing Jesus as *the Word* because John 1:14 says, “And the **Word became flesh**, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the **only begotten from the Father**, full of grace and truth.”
3. My hope is that by considering Jesus as *the Word* we will come to a better understanding of both who Jesus is and His nature and that this will ultimately help us each of us as John 20:31 says, to “believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.”

BODY:

I. “In the beginning was” the Word:

- A. “In the beginning was” is intended to echo Genesis 1:1 which state, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”
 1. That this resemblance is no mere coincidence is seen in a comparison of the description of *the Word* here in John 1 with Genesis 1.
 2. In Genesis 1 God by His **word** created “light” in the midst of “the darkness” and “life” in the midst of lifelessness. And John 1:3-5 Jesus is said to be the source of creation and uses light, life, and darkness in describing Jesus and his work.
- B. “In the beginning was” is also meant to help us grasp that...
 1. As *God was in the beginning* (Gen. 1), so *was the Word*.
 - a. As God *pre-existed in eternity* before creation, *the Word* also pre-existed in *eternity* before creation.
 - b. To truly know Jesus, *the Word*, we must believe that *He existed eternally* before creation just as God the Father *existed eternally* before creation.
 2. Jesus was *before everything created*, being its *origin*, its *source of being* (Greek term **archē**, rendered “beginning,” also means *origin*, or *cause*).
 - a. As God was the *cause* of all things at the beginning, so *the Word* was the *cause* of all things at the beginning!
 - b. This is the very point of John's words in 1:3 that states, “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.”
 - c. To truly know Jesus, the Word, is to believe He is the origin of creation, that creation [which includes our lives] owes its existence to Jesus as God's agent of creation.

3. Side note/interesting: John’s use of **archē**, or beginning, here is also interesting because it can be translated “ruler” as it is in Lk. 12:11. (*Mounce’s Complete Expository Dict.*)
 - a. This meaning was derived from the Greek idea that something/one *put the world into motion* and *established the rules* by which it functions—something *rules* the world.
 - b. If this meaning is hinted at here, it presents Jesus as that power at the beginning that established the rules governing creation and is, therefore, the *ruler of creation*.

II. “The Word” (*the Logos*):

- A. Though John’s use of “the Word” sounds strange to us, it would have resonated with ancient readers because of its use in Greek and Jewish thought and language.
 1. In Greek philosophical thought **logos** was used to describe the **eternal principle of order**, or the **divine reason** pervading and bringing order **in the cosmos**
 2. Jewish philosophical thought used **logos** for the **intangible/spiritual mind of God**, the **agent of creation**, the **mediator** between God and the creation.
 3. But on a more practical note is the OT ideas, read by the Jews daily, of God’s **creative and sustaining word** and the **word** of God **spoken through the prophets**.
 4. John presenting Jesus as *the Logos*, “the Word,” means that what the Gentiles and Jews speculated about, and the Jews read about in the OT, **came to be in human form** though **Jesus**—He is the agent of creation, the eternal order and reason directing creation, the mind and word of God personified, and the mediator between God and man.
- B. Defined:
 1. **BDAG** (477-478) Speaking [spoken]...[a] word, statement, proclamation (2) the independent, personified ‘Word’...the divine ‘Word’ [that] took on human form...in Jesus
 2. **Thayer’s** (380-382) word uttered by a living voice, a decree...or discourse of God, instruction or doctrine (2) the personal wisdom and power in union with God,...which for... man’s salvation put on human nature in the person of Jesus the Messiah”
 3. **Vine’s** (683) the expression of thought...as embodying a conception or idea, statement, message from God, discourse, speech, instruction...(2) The personal Word,...the personal manifestation, not of a part of the divine nature, but of the whole deity”
 4. Jesus as *the Word* means...
 - a. Jesus is the voice, thought, discourse, instruction, wisdom, power, and deity of God **manifested in human form**.
 - b. God has spoken to us “in His Son,” or by the manifestation of God in human form, in the person of Jesus (Heb. 1:1-3 – “God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways,² in these last days **has spoken to us in His Son**, whom He appointed heir of all things, **through whom also He made the world**.³ And **He is the radiance of His glory** and **the exact representation of His nature**, and **upholds all things by the word of His power...**”).
 - i. We must think beyond just the idea of the words Jesus spoke.
 - ii. For, He is the radiance of His glory, the exact representation of His glory.
 - c. To fully know and appreciate Jesus is to grasp that the fullness of God and His will has been revealed in the form of a man, in Jesus (Jn. 14:9 – “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”).

III. “The Word was with God” (1:1b-2):

- A. The Word being “with God” expresses both Jesus’ *accompaniment* and *relationship* with God.
 1. “With” is not expressing simple co-existence, as of two persons being together, but also speaks of the Word being *directed towards*, or *faced towards* God, in intimate relationship with God. (Tynd.)

- a. The Spirit wants us to understand that Jesus, the Word, existed in the closest possible relationship and connection with the Father before creation came to be.
- b. We are not to see God without seeing Jesus.
- 2. Also, that *the Word* is said to be “with God” indicates that *the Word* is not an impersonal idea or philosophy revealed by God, but a Person!
 - a. Jesus exists as a distinct person from the Father—one that can accompany the Father.
 - b. Thus, the Pentecostals who falsely claim Jesus is the same person as the Father ignore the clear teaching of this verse and many others.
- B. “He was in the beginning with God” (1:2) is intended to amplify that if we know *the Word*, we must believe that...
 - 1. Jesus is *eternal* as is God that existed before creation.
 - 2. Jesus is *distinct* from God the Father, being both *present with* and *having an intimate relationship with* God in eternity!

II. “The Word was God”:

- A. Declares Jesus’ divine nature.
 - 1. John does not say that *the Word* possessed certain divine qualities or characteristics but was partaker of the divine essence—that Jesus was Himself *God!*
 - 2. In other words, John is saying, “what God was the Word also was.”
 - a. Thus, when the Word took upon himself human flesh and blood (1:14), *divinity*, a *member of the Godhead*, took upon himself human flesh and blood!
 - b. This is why it was perplexing for Jesus when Philip asked Him to show them the Father (Jn. 14:8-9 – “Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you **have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father**; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father?’”).
- B. John does not use the article (“the”) before God.
 - 1. In other words, John does not say, “the Word was **the** God.”
 - 2. Some, as in the J.W.’s, have *falsely* taken and used this to mean that Jesus is “a god,” little “g,” not “the God,” big “G.” Yet, this is faulty exegesis for at least two reasons.
 - a. First, it ignores how using “the” before God in Greek or English would have identified *the Word* as the *same Person* as the Father, which would contradict John’s previous statements about how “*the Word* was with God” and their relationship (1:1, 2).
 - b. Second, translating this as “a god” destroys the correct interpretation of the text: in (1:6) was John sent from **a god**, and in (1:12) are we given the right to become children of **a god**, or in (1:13) are we born of **a god**? NO! The absent “the” does not in any way lend itself to the translation of “a god” in this context.
 - 3. If you truly know Jesus the Word, you must believe that He is eternal, that He existed in the beginning before creation, that He is a divine member of the eternal Godhead having a perfect relationship with God, and that He as God took upon Himself human form, **which is nothing short of amazing!**

CONCLUSION:

- 1. As we conclude I want to read to you one more passage (Phil. 2:5-11 – “**Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,**⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but **emptied Himself**, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He **humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death**, even death on a cross.⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,¹⁰ so that **at the name of Jesus every knee will bow**, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the

earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”).

2. Are willing to follow Jesus, to be like the Word, and empty yourself, humble yourself, and to obey Jesus in all that He has commanded, even if like Jesus it means you die in doing so?
 - A. I say this because that was the understanding of those who obeyed the gospel in the 1st Century.
 - B. And, my friends and brethren, that was also the end for many who obeyed the gospel in the 1st Century.
3. aSo, are you willing to live for Jesus in this life, no matter what may come of your life, so as to have true life in the next? If so, will you come to Jesus now, confessing your faith in Him, repenting of your sins, and if you are not a Christian, being baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins?