

JOHN

John: The Gospel of Gospels

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John 1:1

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Lesson 5: The Deity of Jesus Christ, Part 3

Why are we spending so much time in John 1:1? The answer is simple, it holds the key to our understanding of Jesus Christ and His relation to the Father. We cannot understand God until we understand Jesus Christ.

What's more, our understanding of the Bible weighs heavily on our understanding of John 1:1. Biblical truth has three dimensions according to Ezra 7:10, perception, application, and dissemination. We learn, we apply, and we share. We must endeavor to share the truth that has impacted us with others.

Finally, we have come to the heart of John 1:1 in our Biblical exposition. We have a threefold task as we weave through this section: **1.** to demonstrate that 'the Word is God,' **2.** that He is God's Son, and **3.** that He is the creator of all things.

Here is the truth: you cannot utterly understand the deity of Jesus Christ until you understand the origin and the Deity of 'the Word' in John 1:1. Hence, to weave the thread of the origin of 'the Word' through the fabric of His incarnation is the tapestry of the deity of Jesus Christ.

Before we begin the first task, let us re-examine the origin of the Word.

The Origin of "The Word"

Keep in mind, word or thought is an integral part of a person. It is what defines a living soul. Word and thought are inseparably united. One scholar rightly said,

word is “A means of communication, the expression of what is in one’s mind.”¹ Leon Morris an authority on the Gospels said, “a man’s word is the means whereby he reveals what he is thinking.”² Another scholar nails it, “The Word of God [in John 1:1] is His thoughts uttered so that men can understand it.”³ Take note, the Word of God is God’s thoughts. Always remember that.

We can correctly say that “the Word” in John 1:1 is God’s eternal thoughts, which coexisted with Him. In Isaiah 55:8 we read, “My thoughts are not your thoughts.” God’s thoughts are divine; ours are human. You may have heard the silly question, “Which comes first chicken or the egg.” In the same way we ask: Which comes first a person or his thoughts? The right answer to both questions is that they come together. Simply, you cannot have one and not the other and be a whole being.

You cannot have one without the other and be a whole being. Hence, ‘the Word’ in John 1:1 is as old as God; they co-existed. “In the beginning was the Word and the Word was [always] with God.” Keep in mind that the pronoun ‘*with*’ means that the Word was always there with God. Consequently, God is the origin of ‘the Word’ or “the Word originates from God.” John 14:10; 12:49, 50.

- a. The Word is God’s eternal thoughts.
- b. The Word has always been in the bosom of God the Father.
- c. The Word is known in Scripture as:
 - i. The Angel of the Lord (Ex. 3:2; cf. v. 6; Gen. 22:15-17).
 - ii. I am (Ex. 3:14; cf. John 8:58).
 - iii. God’s Servant (Acts 3:26).
 - iv. God’s Messenger (Mal. 3:1b).
 - v. An Apostle (Heb. 3:1 (“one sent as a messenger.” Cf. John 3:17).
 - vi. God’s eternal Son (Ps. 2:7; Mk. 15:39 cf. Lk. 23:46; Ps. 31:5).

When you examine all these passages, you see that what stands out is *service*. Jesus Christ, God’s Servant declares in John 14:24b, “The word that you hear is

¹ F. F. Bruce, The Gospel of John, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company (Grand Rapids: Michigan, 1983) p.29

² Leon Morris, The International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Michigan 1987), p. 74

³ C. H. Dodd, How to Read the Gospels (London, 1949), p. 29

not My own, but it is from the Father who sent Me.” Jesus Christ, is the intermediary between the Father and His creatures. He made it abundantly clear in Matt. 20:28, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many” (BSB). Jesus is God’s servant bar none!

In the Old Testament, ‘the Word’ acted as a messenger. Isa. 38:4, “Then the word of the LORD came to Isaiah, saying.” Also, in Ps. 107:20: “He sent His word and healed them.” ‘The Word’ is personified in both passages. Therefore, ‘The Word’ is God’s messenger in the flesh.

D. A. Carson, a renowned scholar, put it succinctly, “God’s ‘Word’ ...is his powerful self-expression in creation, revelation and salvation.”⁴ Who can argue that?

1. The Deity of the Word

John 1:1c says that ‘the Word is God.’ The Word has divine attributes of deity. The Word is God, not “a god,” one among other gods, but God with divine attributes. John argues against multiple gods. In 5:44, he said “only [one] God.” In 17:3, Jesus calls the Father, “the only true God.” Therefore ‘The Word is God’ in John 1:1 means that ‘the Word’ has divine essence.

This brings us to the second task, which is to demonstrate that the Word is God’s Son.

2. The Word in John 1:1 is God’s Son

- Scripture declares that the Word is God (John 1:1).
- The Word became flesh as the only begotten Son of God (John 1:14).
- God’s Son coexisted with the Father (John 1:1; 17:5).

There never was a time when God’s Son did not reside in God’s bosom. He is a unique Messenger of God, whom the Father sent to communicate His thoughts to man. In his gospel Matthew recorded God the Father saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased” (Matt. 3:17).

Let the truth sink deep. Jesus Christ is the expression of God’s thoughts. One can sense Paul’s overwhelming excitement and happiness as he wrote Colossians 2:2-3, 9: “attaining to all the wealth that comes from the full assurance of understanding, resulting in a true knowledge of God's mystery, that is, Christ Himself, in whom

⁴ Carson, p. 116

are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”... “In Him dwells the fullness of God.” Incredible!

Christ Himself is the true knowledge of God’s mystery. Listen: wrapped around Him is God’s eternal blueprint, consisting of all the wisdom and knowledge, God’s plan and purpose, revelation, and salvation for man. Wow! He is the Son of God, who “existed in the form of God.”

Oscar Cullmann, a brilliant scholar, called Jesus Christ, “The Self-communication of God.”⁵ He echoes the Word of Christ in John 1:18, “No one has ever seen God. The only one, himself God, who is in closest fellowship with the Father, has made God known” (Net Bible). What a revelation! Do you really want to know God? Know Jesus Christ intimately. Your knowledge of God is directly proportional to your knowledge of Jesus Christ, God’s Son.

This is remarkable! This explains why Jesus Christ is called, “the image of the invisible God” in Col. 1:15; and “the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being” in Heb. 1:3. This is why Jesus said in John 14:10, “Who has seen Me has seen the Father” and in 1:18 that He “has made God known” to men.

We come to the third and final task.

3. The Word as the Creator

I can hardly wait until next time to examine in detail the Word in action. “The Word,” God’s Son, or God’s Messenger was totally involved in creation. By God’s performative words of creation, everything came into being. We read in Hebrews 11:3, “By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.” (ESV). Ps. 33:6, “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”

The Word of God in creation is God’s Son. He said in Gen. 1, “Let there be light and it was so....Let the water bring forth swarms of living creature...let birds fly over the earth and so on and so forth and they were so. That was Jesus Christ in action. No wonder why John plainly stated, “All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being (John 1:3).

⁵ Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (London, 1959), p. 267

In summary:

1. Word is used to communicate thoughts from one person to another.
2. Jesus Christ existed eternally as the ‘Word of God.’
3. ‘The Word’ in John 1:1 is God’s thoughts.
4. ‘The Word’ in John 1:1 is God.
5. God’s Word is God’s Son.
6. ‘The Word’ is the second member of the Trinity.
7. ‘The Word’ is God incarnate in the Person of Jesus Christ (John 1:14)
8. Jesus Christ is the expression of God’s thoughts Col. 2:2-3.
9. He is the Servant and Messenger of God Acts 3:26.

