

Sonoraville Baptist Church
Sunday, January 15, 2012 – 11:00 AM
Rev. Steve Skates, Pastor

What's in a Word? - John 1:1-18

Introduction: John was written by John in about 85 AD. It was the last of the four Gospels to be written. By the time this book was circulated among the Christian community, the other Gospels as recorded by Matthew, Mark and Luke, were fairly well known. The first three Gospels are called the Synoptic Gospels. "*Synoptic*" means "*to see together.*" meaning that the first three Gospels contain many of the same stories and teachings, but told from a different angle. Yet, each fully inspired by the Lord.

John's Gospel is different! In the pages of this wonderful book, John portrays a side of Christ that the other Gospel writers do not touch on. John was part of the inner circle. He was one of the handful of disciples who were with Jesus during some of His most private moments. In these 21 chapters, John presents facets of His divine character, and in chapter 1, he paints a unique picture of Jesus as the Word of God. What's in a Word? Well, this morning, let's look at what all the Word of God entails. The first truth that is revealed about the Word of God is.

1. The Preexistent Word (1-3)

Look at verse 1. The word "*was*" means "*always has been*" so according to this verse, Jesus didn't just come into being when He was born in Bethlehem. Rather, Jesus has been in existence throughout eternity. He's always existed. Now contrast this with the word "*was*" in verse 6. There the word used concerning John the Baptist means "*to become.*" John became, but Jesus always has been! Thank God He is the constant, unchanging Word of God - Heb. 13:8 (HCSB) says, "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever!*" That is why you can depend on Jesus. He said, "*I will never leave you, or forsake you.*" Heb. 13:5 (HCSB).

Vs. 1 also says that Jesus "*was with God.*" That is, He was always present with God, yet He was as a distinct person. When this phrase is taken alongside the other 2 in this verse, the reality of the Trinity is on display. This verse teaches us that Jesus is God, yet He is still a unique being.

Aren't you glad Jesus Christ wasn't an afterthought with God? God didn't just conjure up Jesus and frantically send Him to the earth when things got out of control. According to Gen. 1:26, Jesus was present when God moved to make man in His image – God said, "*Let Us make man in Our image...*" According to Scripture, Jesus was present with God before the foundation of the world, and before time began (Rev. 13:8; Eph. 1:4; Titus 1:2; 1 Pet. 1:19-20). He was part of God's redemption plan from the get-go!

Now, I know these things are hard to understand with our finite minds. We're used to thinking with limited knowledge, so terms such as "*eternity*" and "*forever*" and "*preexistent*" don't fully register with us. This is why Jesus wasn't fully accepted when He came on the scene. When Jesus came preaching repentance, people thought He was strange. When He began to heal and perform miracles, people began to open up a little and they thought He was a prophet of God. When He spoke the Word of God with power, people thought He was amazing. However, when Jesus claimed equality with God, people thought He was crazy. That is when Jesus became less and less a blessing to some and more of a controversy. In fact, once, Jesus was talking to His disciples about His relationship with God the Father, and Philip asked Jesus to show them the Father. Jesus looked at Philip and said, "*...Have I been among you all this time without you knowing me Philip? The one who has seen me has seen the Father; how do you say, Show us the Father?*" John 14:9 (HCSB).

People still struggle with these truths. Some will believe in Jesus the carpenter's son. They'll accept the humble Jesus. They'll listen to the teaching Jesus. And some will go to their grave believing in the dead Jesus, but they won't acknowledge the Jesus who is God in the flesh. That is too much for them to take. That's too unbelievable! Oh, they'll believe in a big-bang theory of creation where everything somehow formed out of a universal explosion. They'll believe that man evolved from a fish that dropped its fins and gills and grew arms and legs and lungs. But don't give me this preexistent Jesus stuff – that's just crazy!

Perhaps we need to go to one of the best passages of Scripture here to find the basis of one's belief in Jesus as the preexistent God - 100 % God and 100% man all wrapped up in one. Paul wrote in **Philippians 2:5-8 (HCSB)** "*Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be used for His own advantage. Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave,*

taking on the likeness of men. And when He had come as a man in His external form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross.”

I have no trouble believing in this Jesus. This Jesus is my God; my personal God; my redeeming God; my saving God. And I can know this God up close and personal through His Son Jesus. In Jesus I can find forgiveness from sin and freedom from the penalty of sin. And the best part is, it is all under His control. I don't have to worry about losing it or about my salvation losing its effectiveness.

These truths give us a clear teaching of Jesus as the pre-existent Word of God. He has always been and He always will be! There will never be a day that doesn't include Jesus! No matter where we wind up, or what we have to face as in life, Jesus will always be there for us. But that's not all, at the same time, Jesus is:

2. The Personal Word (14)

John 1:14 (HCSB) says, *“The Word became flesh and took up residence among us. We observed His glory, the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”* We talked about this verse last Sunday, but I want to reiterate that this is one of the clearest passages in all the Bible regarding the incarnation of Jesus Christ. *“The Word became flesh”* simply means that God's divine expression (*“the Word”*) became a human being.

How could God become a man? As I said last week, I don't know. It's a mystery to me. Just like electricity is a mystery to me, but I don't reject electricity just because I don't understand it. I don't have to know all about electricity to believe in it or reap the benefits of it do I? The same is true with God becoming a man. I don't understand it but I believe He did.

You see, all of that stuff lies in the mind of God alone. All we know is that God chose a virgin named Mary and caused her to miraculously conceive and bring forth a baby, and in Jesus, God's Word became flesh! While Jesus Himself had existed from all eternity, In Bethlehem, He took up on Himself a robe of flesh and began to live among us. And as Jesus grew, He worked among us; He prayed among us; He suffered among us, and He died among us. In fact, Jesus was so personally human, that His divinity was unrecognized by many. What a tragedy that men came in contact with the Savior and still failed to recognize Him, but it's still happening today. Even though Jesus was and still is literally the face of God, in many circles, He is unrecognizable. That just goes to show you how little people really know about God.

But thankfully some recognized Jesus as God in the flesh. When John declared in vs. 14 that *“We observed His glory,”* he was saying that he along with others actually saw the magnificent deity of Jesus. In Mt. 17, we read of the time when John, along with James and Peter accompanied Jesus upon a mountain. There Jesus allowed the veil of His flesh to be pulled aside and He revealed the glory that was behind it. That must have been some scene!

However, His greatest glory was revealed the day He allowed Himself to be nailed to a cross and died for sinners. On Calvary, the glory of God was really in focus! After all, that was the reason Jesus left Heaven and came to live among men. He took upon Himself a robe of flesh so that He might be able to die for man. That's what He did for every one of us. To me the greatest evidence of the glory of God is found in the words of Paul in **Romans 5:8 (HCSB)** *“But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us!”* The broken body and the shed blood of Jesus demonstrated His love for me in unmistakable terms. Jesus is the Pre-existent Word. He is the Personal Word and finally, He is:

3. The Proclaiming Word (18)

John 1:18 (HCSB) *“No one has ever seen God. The One and Only Son—the One who is at the Father's side— He has revealed Him.”* Your translation may say *“explained him”* or *“declared him”* or *“made him known”* but the word used here literally means *“to unfold.”* John is saying here that Jesus came to unfold God to man. In fact, everything Jesus did was an effort to unfold more of the revelation of God to man. Men needed to see God not just as a Lawgiver, but also as a lover. We needed to see Him not only as a judge, but as a justifier. We needed to see Him not in terms of a stern and unyielding dictator, but as a saving, caring God. Jesus did this by His life. Jesus came to put who God was on display before men and He did this in two primary ways. First, in vs. 4-9. We see:

A. He Came To Proclaim Light (4-9) – John 1:4-9 (HCSB) *Life was in Him, and that life was the light of men. That light shines in the darkness, yet the darkness did not overcome it. There was a man named John who was sent from God. He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. He was*

not the light, but he came to testify about the light. The true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.”

John was saying that Jesus came to a world that was wandering in spiritual darkness and was able to open up the curtains of God’s grace revealing the truth of God to men. Jesus came to shed light on the pathway of men toward God. And that pathway is found in Jesus Himself. Secondly, we see in vs. 10-13 that:

B. He Came To Proclaim Life (10-13) – John 1:10-13 (HCSB) *“He was in the world, and the world was created through Him, yet the world did not recognize Him. He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.”*

Jesus came to His people who were supposed to have His Word, but they weren’t acting like it. They were living in His promised land, but they were living like they were lost. Jesus came to tell them that there was a way to come to the Father and to experience the eternal life they should have already found. However, in what may be the saddest verse in the Bible, (vs. 11) they refused this call from the sinner's friend to come to Him. However, verses 12-13 make it clear that anyone who will respond positively to the light of God and will come to Jesus and receive Him into their heart and life, they will experience the new birth and will enter into eternal life.

John makes it clear in verse 13 that this life doesn’t come by natural birth (*of blood*), or not by our own good works (*the will of the flesh*), or not the work of another, (*the will of man*), but only through the will of God. And, just what is the will of the Father?

Jesus said in **John 6:39-40** that His father’s will was that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have eternal life, and that He would not lose any that His Father gave Him. I don’t know about you, but that’s the kind of Father I want to have a relationship with – one that will give me something I don’t even deserve, and one that will keep His promise, no matter what.

Conclusion: I can't say that I understand all these truths we’ve talked about this morning, but I sure do like them. I’m glad Jesus came to show me who God was. I’m glad that a sinner like me can come to Jesus by simple faith and can be saved forever by His grace. I may not know a lot about this Book, but I am glad I know the Word of God personally today. How about you? If you have never met this Jesus we’ve talked about today, now is your time. Jesus wants to reveal the Father to you. He waits for you to respond to His light so He can give you of His life. Will you do what you need to do and come to Jesus?