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The Word

John 1:1

Intro: Last week we looked at Solomon, King David's son & royal successor. Solomon's greatest achievement as Israel's king was the building of the temple. During his prayer of dedication, he asked a very appropriate question: “**But will God indeed dwell on the earth?**” (**1 Kings 8:27a**). A good question indeed! God's glory had previously dwelt in the tabernacle from the time of Moses & it would likewise dwell in the temple. But, during the days of Ezekiel, that glory had departed from Israel because of their continued disobedience to God's law & God's will. But then a wonderful thing happened: *the glory of God came to His people again in the person of His Son, Jesus Christ.*

The gospel writers have each given us the equivalent of a snapshot of Jesus' life on earth. I say that because it would be impossible for a complete account to ever be written (**Jn 21:25**). While each author wrote from his own perspective, they also wrote their accounts in such a way as to present specific characteristics of the life & ministry of Jesus to a specific audience. Matthew wrote his gospel with the Jews in mind & he presents Jesus as the **King of Israel** – their long-awaited Messiah. Mark wrote with the busy Romans in mind & he presents Jesus as the Servant, ministering to the needy people. Luke, the only Gentile author, wrote with the Greeks in mind & presents Jesus to them as the sympathetic Son of Man. These 3 cover a lot of similar material & thus are referred to as the Synoptic gospels.

The Gospel of John stands apart! John writes to both Jew & Gentile for the express purpose of presenting Jesus as the Son of God! John's gospel is unique in other areas. He gives no account of Christ's birth or His baptism. There's also no mention of the institution of the Lord's Supper & no record of the ascension. Also, there are no parables! But, John does include a lot of things that the other gospel writers omit: the early Judean ministry of Jesus; changing water into wine at Cana; Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, the raising of Lazarus. John alone records the great discourses Jesus gave to His disciples during the final week in Jerusalem.

Needless to say, the Gospel of John has blessed the hearts of God's people

all thru the centuries. It has been called “[God’s love letter to the world](#).” Some of the most widely-known & best-loved texts in the Bible are from the Book of John: [3:16](#) or [6:35](#) “*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger & he who believes in Me shall never thirst*” or “*I am the good Shepherd*” ([10:11](#)) or “*I am the resurrection & the life*” ([11:25](#)) or “*I am the true vine*” ([15:1](#)); or what about the amazing statements Jesus made in the beloved 14th chapter ([1-4, 6](#)). It’s no wonder this book has been the source of much encouragement & blessing to untold generations of God’s people. Not only that, but John’s gospel has probably been the means where by most people have come to know Jesus as their Savior & Lord more than any other single portion of Scripture.

The majority of John’s Gospel is narrative: specific & precise excerpts from the life & ministry of Jesus interspersed with His teachings & discourses. That is true of the entire book except for the first 18 verses; what is referred to as the [prologue](#). This remarkable passage of Scripture is **not** just a [preface](#) or even an [introduction](#); it’s the [summation](#) of the entire book! In his prologue, John introduces all the major themes of his Gospel: the identity of the Word, life, light, regeneration, witness, grace, truth & the revelation of God the Father in & thru His Son Jesus. The narrative that follows [vs18](#) merely spells out all these themes in sharp detail. Of course, we’re not here today to talk about the Book of John; we’re here to study it. So let’s dive right in & see what God has to say for Himself.

1-18- There’s a lot of meat on them bones! Since the prologue sets the tone for the rest of the book, I think it is imperative for us to take our time as we make our way thru [vs1-18](#). Here, John lays out the thesis that he wants to prove, then spends the rest of the book proving it. What is John’s main thesis? That Jesus Christ is God.

What do you think of Jesus Christ? Who is He? According to Christianity (& the Bible) this is the most important question you or anyone else will ever have to answer. It’s the most important for 2 reasons: **1)** its [inescapable](#) – you will have to answer it sooner or later, in this world or the world to come; **2)** because the [quality of your life](#) here on earth & your eternal destiny depends on how you answer. Who is Jesus Christ? If He was only a good man then you can safely forget Him. But, if He is God, as John declares Him to be, as He claimed to be, as all Christians believe Him to be then you should surrender your life to Him completely. You should worship & serve

Him faithfully.

If you've never been confronted with that question or if you've always assumed that Jesus was just a man then this book was written particularly for you! It was written for those who do not yet believe that Jesus is God; it was written to lead them to that conclusion (**20:30-31**). John's purpose is to reveal Jesus as the preexisting Son of God who became man in order to reveal the Father & to bring men access into eternal life thru His death & resurrection.

1-2- Word- logos. John uses an interesting term to identify Jesus. We know **the Word** is Jesus because he tells us as much in **vs14**. But why use such an enigmatic term? John wants to draw a word picture of the person, work & purpose of Jesus. Greek scholars generally agree that the English term "Word" is an inadequate translation of the Greek term logos. Problem is it's impossible to find another English word that's less inadequate. What is a word? It's simply a **means of communication**; it's the **verbal expression of thought**. Just as our words reveal to others our hearts & minds, so Jesus Christ is God's "**Word**" that reveals His heart & mind to us. A word is made up of letters & Jesus is called "**the Alpha & Omega**" (**Rev 1:11**), the 1st & last letters of the Greek alphabet. Not only is Jesus the complete revelation of God the Father, He is also God's last Word to mankind, the climax of divine revelation (**Heb 1:1-3**). So, John is talking about Jesus here but what is he saying about Him? He's teaching 3 things about the divinity of Christ.

1) Jesus was **preexistent** – He existed "**in the beginning**." This phrase is used in several ways in the Bible. In 1John it's used to designate the start of Christ's earthly ministry (**vs1**); in Gen 1:1 it's used for the beginning of creation. But, the use of the phrase here goes beyond even that. John's saying that if you want to start talking about Jesus, you can only do so correctly when you go back beyond His earthly life, back beyond even the beginning of creation, you must go back into eternity. That's where Jesus is found. This truth is confirmed by the rest of Scripture: **Heb 1:2**. In **Phil 2:6**, Paul says that Jesus was **in the form of God** (having the very nature of) & He was also **equal with God**. All of these (& many more) point to the fact of the **preexistence** of Jesus Christ; an important aspect of His divinity.

Now, it's not by accident that John's Gospel begins with the same phrase as the Genesis account. In **Gen 1:1** "**In the beginning**" introduces the story of

the old creation; while here, it introduces the story of the new creation. But, in both works of creation the agent that accomplishes it is the Word of God. So the phrase “**word in action**” may begin to do justice to the term **logos** as it was originally intended to be used by John in this prologue.

2) Jesus was **with God** – this affirms Jesus as a separate personality, distinct from the Father. Jesus, as God, possessed the very nature & essence of God, so much so that He could declare to Philip in **14:9**, “**He who has seen Me has seen the Father**” & yet, Jesus was **not** the Father. John knows the Trinity is involved here. He understands that there is a diversity in the Godhead of Father, Son & Spirit. Clearly, Jesus is **not** the Father. You can’t be **with** yourself; you can only be **by** yourself. It may only be semantics but it points to an obvious distinction.

3) Jesus **was** (is) **God** – literally: “& **God was the Word**.” This means that everything that can be said of God the Father can be said of God the Son. In Jesus dwells all the **wisdom, glory, power, love, holiness, justice, goodness & truth** of the Father. Thru Jesus, God the Father is made known, is revealed. John sums up & reiterates his lesson in **vs2**. Jesus Christ is eternal, He is separate from the Father, He is God. John is highly emphatic & unequivocal in declaring the full divinity of Jesus Christ. These verses can only mean this – they cannot mean anything else.

But, what does it matter to say that Jesus Christ is God? What does it mean to us in our modern advanced society?

1) **We can now know the truth about God!** We can know what God is like. The flip side of that is: apart from Jesus, we cannot know God. Everybody has a concept of God & they’re all different but which is correct? Apart from Jesus we don’t know what God is like. But, if Jesus is God then we do know because to know Jesus Christ is to know God. There’s no knowledge of God apart from Jesus Christ & there’s no knowledge of Jesus Christ apart from the Bible.

2) **God was always like Jesus**. “Duh!” But, some folks tend to think only of God as being holy, stern & avenging & somehow, Jesus did something to change God’s anger into love, altering God’s attitude towards men. This idea is foreign to NT thought & teaching. Everywhere & especially here, the NT teaches that God has always been like Jesus. Does Jesus hate sin?

Yes! So does God. Does Jesus love sinners? Yes! But God loves sinners too & always has. Jesus merely opened a window in time so that we might see the eternal & unchanging love of God for us.

3) **His death was significant.** As God, by His death on the cross, Jesus became the only sufficient & acceptable sacrifice for the sins of the world. If any of us were to agree to sacrifice our lives for the sins of another, or even our own, in terms of sin our death would be pointless. We're sinners & death is just the natural result of sin, it cannot be the payment of sin. But as God, Jesus had no sin. So, when He died, He died for the sins of others, in their place as their substitute. His death made possible the removal of the burden of sin forever for those who believe on Him.

4) **He can satisfy all the needs of your heart.** After salvation, this is the most significant aspect of Christ's divinity. God is infinite. Jesus is also infinite! Therefore, He is able to satisfy you every need out of that inexhaustible immensity. There's no limit to what Jesus can do for us other than our own lack of faith or lack of obedience.

John's thesis is that Jesus Christ is God & we're going to see evidence for this as we move forward thru the book. We know what John thinks of Jesus is but the original question still stands: What do you think of Jesus? Who is He?

This same question was asked all thru His earthly ministry. When Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey on the 1st Palm Sunday, everybody asked, "**Who is this?**" (Mt 21:10). His own disciples asked this question when Jesus calmed the storm on the Sea of Galilee, "**Who can this be, that even the wind & the sea obey Him.**" (Mk 4:41). Even wicked king Herod asked, "**John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?**" (Lk 9:9). When Jesus forgave the sins of a paralyzed man, the scribes & Pharisees began to ask, "**Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?**" (Lk 5:21). Oddly enough, they answered their own question but they were just too spiritually blind to see it. What a shame it was that they could be in the very presence of their long awaited Messiah & not even know it. They knew what God could do & they could see what Jesus could do but they were unable or unwilling to make the logical connection. Because of this, they missed out on the joy on salvation & the glory of God.

Who is Jesus? Is He only a man? Then you can afford to forget Him, in fact, you should because if He's just a man, then He's also a lunatic, this Bible is a bunch of nonsense & we're all wasting our time here. But, if Jesus is what John says He is; if He is God, then He deserve your full belief & your total allegiance, in fact, He demands it! Jesus is God; that much is clear. The only question is: do you believe it? To reject this truth is to perish but to believe it & accept is to enter into eternal life. The choice is your – for now. 😊