

DATE: May 3, 2009

TEXT: John 1:1-18

TITLE: "John II: The Word of God"



This morning we are launching into the Book of John. John does not waste any time. He begins his book with one of the greatest theological statements ever made. John, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, is not content to begin with the story of John the Baptist, as Mark does. He is not content to begin with the genealogies as Matthew does. He is not even content to begin with the divine birth of Jesus, as Luke does. He doesn't even begin with the creation of the universe, as the book of Genesis does. No, John begins even further back. John begins with God. God is the beginning. Nothing is before God. We have in the Prologue of John the greatest theological statement about Jesus anywhere in scripture.

John Begins his gospel with statements of contrast. In reading these first 18 verses John gives us 6 contrasts. I want to share 2 this morning and 4 next week.

Contrast # 1 John contrasts the divine Word versus the incarnate, present Word. We begin our study with *verse 1 of John 1*

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was with God in the beginning.

John, led by the Holy Spirit, desired to begin with a great statement about Jesus. He clearly wanted to state the divinity of Jesus. At the same time, he did not want to fall into a trap by saying Jesus was the totality of God. John was also trying to communicate with both the Jewish world and the Roman world. John settled on an idea that would be understood by both Jew and Roman. He settled on the Idea of the “Logos” Translated into English by the word, Word. The problem is this... 1st century jews would understand this idea.... 1st century Romans would understand this idea... it is more difficult for 21st century Americans.

Allow me to briefly explain the Hebrew understanding of the word. One of the most common expressions throughout the Old Testament is “The word of the Lord.” For the Hebrew, “Word” meant more than the vocalized expression of God. The “word” was the power of God. Genesis 1 again and again uses the expression “God said.... and it was created.” When the “Word of the Lord” came upon the prophets it meant more than they heard the whisperings of God. “Word” in Hebrew means presence and power. REPEAT When the Word of God is

present, God is present.... Gods power is evident. Here is the idea of Word in scripture.

Hebrews 4 gives this idea

For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Notice the power of the Word.... it cuts.... it is living... it judges.

But John was also writing to the Roman/Greek population. They also used the term logos or Word. In 560 B.C. a Greek philosopher named Herclatus lived in Ephesus.... the same city

John was writing from, so he was very well known. He was trying to find the base principal of life. His conclusion was this... the world is in complete and total chaos. It is constantly changing.

But there was a divine force holding the world together. This force was the only thing that prevented the world from spinning into complete destruction. The name of that force was logos.... Word. Truthfully, as I was reading about this idea it almost sounded like the idea that was in the Star War movies... "The Force." It sounds like George Lucus stole the idea from Greek Philosophy.

What I am saying is this... the idea of the Logos had a deep history for both the Jews and

for the Romans. John decided to take that idea and move it one step forward and to apply that idea to Jesus. Jesus is the Logos. And notice how John expands the idea... the Logos was not only with God.... the Logos was God. Jesus did not only have the presence of God... Jesus did not only have the characteristics of God... Jesus was God. Not the Totality of God..... but Jesus is God. Jesus fulfills both the Hebrew idea of Logos and the Greek idea of Logos. He is the power of God. He is the presence of God. He is the power that holds all things together... he is God. I believe it is very possible that John was aware of Paul's letter written to the Colossians.

Colossians 1:15 states....

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. 18And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. 19For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him

Again notice both the Greek and the Hebrew ideas interwoven into this text. "In him all things hold together." ... very, very Greek. "He is the head of the body, the church." Very, very Hebrew. Jesus is God.... the creator... the sustainer.... the one and only true God.

But there is a contrast in this text. Truthfully, an amazing, miraculous contrast. Jesus is

the God of the universe... and Jesus is the man who walked on this earth. *John 1:14 states...*

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Logos.... this divine part of God.... became human and made his dwelling among us.

This is the Good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God came to this planet and revealed

Himself to you and me. The *New American Commentary* states this truth this way...

Now here the Prologue reaches its climactic assertion the Logos is announced as fully participating in the realm of creation The NIV translation says he “made his dwelling among us.” (The Greek word) used here, however, is speaking of the divine presence on earth and is best rendered by “tabernacled”, or “tented,” which reminds us of Israel’s wilderness experience of God’s presence in the tabernacle.

The meaning of the text here then should be: “And the word became flesh and tented in our midst.” Jesus, as did the tent of meeting in the wilderness, moved with the disciples as their first Paraclete or Counselor. But he told his troubled disciples that when we would depart he would send another Paraclete (the Holy Spirit) to be with them to the end of time. The personal reality of divine presence is the key in this Gospel to a vital Christian life.

As I read these words in my Study, shivers went down my back. Do you see the power of these words? Do you see the amazing truth revealed in this text? The God who created the universe.... the God who holds the universe together... is present and will always be present.

Whether it was in the wilderness with the Israelites.... or walking with Jesus 2000 years ago.....

or being indwelt with the Holy Spirit today in this place.... the Lord is present. He is here! This

is the great contrast..... The Word is God....and the Word is Present. hallelujah and Amen

Contrast # 2 Jesus was the creator... but was not created himself. *John 1:3 states....*

“Through Him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made”

First, look at the idea that Christ is the Creator. Remember this truth....God has always been one God with three expressions or persons. These persons are called Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Remember, the second person of God did not come into existence at the birth of Jesus. The Triune God existed at creation. It is the second person of God who is the active Creator.

Allow me to again refer to Paul’s letter to the Colosians

16For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

The Logos, who became Jesus, was never made. The Logos, who became Jesus, was never created. This became the great controversy of the early church... and truthfully continues to be the controversy today. Many in the 1st to the 4th century wanted to honor Jesus but were not willing to deify Jesus. They wanted to make him the first created being. They wanted to make him the greatest of all angels. They wanted to make him the sub-god who was part of

creation. The early church fought this heresy for centuries. Finally in 325 A.D. a great council of the church was called at a place called Nicea, and a confession was drawn up that had to be adopted in order to be called Christian. The Nicene Creed is still the most universally used Creed in the church today.... more so than the Apostles Creed. *The Nicene Creed* states....

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man;

This statement is the very foundation of Christianity. “God of God, Light of light, very God of Very God,... not made... one substance with the Father.” Jesus is God.

This is why Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons are not considered Christian in the traditional definition. They do not believe this. They will not accept the Apostles or the Nicene Creed. They have the exact same heresy that spread in the early church. They believe Jesus was created.... a special creation.... an honored creation.... but not God.

Jehovah Witnesses and Mormons twist text like John 1 and Colosians 1 to make them read

what they want them to read. They add words to redefine the texts.

If Jesus is not God, then the death of Jesus on the cross is meaningless. It would be just another man... an innocent man but a man none the less, dying on the cross. The truth is this....

God himself came to this earth and took the punishment we deserved. The creator of the

universe came to his creation and give us a path back to God. Jesus did indeed say in *John 14*

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well

To know the son is to know the Father. They are one... they are both God. Jesus is the path to the Father.... 2000 years ago and today.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was with God in the beginning.

3Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made

AMEN