

INTRODUCTION

No other book in world literature, with the possible exception of the opening of the book of Genesis, has such a breath-taking opening as the gospel of John. In some ways it is more like a piece of lofty music than of literature. It stirs strange feelings and emotions in us that surge up out of the depths of our being. We are face to face with something truly awe-inspiring, tremendous, and without limit, leaving an indellible impression upon most readers' minds, with a sense of something very big and very real, but completely indescribable.

This prologue begins with the key idea and word "Logos," a technical term, borrowed from the language of the Stoic philosophers, representing the divine reason which is immanent in nature and in man. It is close to the O.T. concept of wisdom, but it has a wide variety of meanings, often blending the ideas of wisdom and torah, or Law, or Teaching. The O.T. uses the thought of the word of God as an expression of God's creative energy. John uses the word in the N.T. as a personal reference for Jesus Christ. Jesus is not to be interpreted by Logos; Logos is intelligible only as we think of Jesus. He describes the Logos as light and life. I invite you to study seriously this concept as applied to Christ The Word of God.

I. He is called the Word in respect to his Person.

A. He is the express image of the Father, as our words are images of our thoughts (Heb. 1:3).

B. Deity is positively ascribed to the Word (Jn. 1:1). "The Word was God" clearly expresses his divine nature. Christ is the true light (vs. 9), underived light, not merely a lamp (5:36).

C. Just as a word is a thought or concept, so in Christ the word are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge (Col. 2:3).

D. The opening phrase "In the beginning" expresses his eternity. Only God is eternal. (Compare Gen. 1:1).

II. He is called the Word in respect to his Office.

A. Just as we declare our minds one to another by our words, so the Father made known His will to the church in all ages by Jesus Christ.

1. In Christ God has expressed his desire to save all who will trust Him (Jn. 1:14).

2. In Christ God has provided "the way" of salvation (Jn. 14:6-10).

B. The Word was the manifestation of God in the Old Testament. (See Amos 3:7-8, God as Revealer)

1. This was the opinion some of the old Jewish commentators on the Heb. O.T.

2. They used the Aramaic word "Memra" where Moses wrote the word "Jehovah."

3. They believed it was this Word, or "Memra," which appeared to Moses on Sinai, to Abram in the plains of Mamre, to Jacob at Bethel, to Joshua as captain of the Host of the Lord, and to Gideon on the threshing floor of Joash.

C. This "Word" was the Creator of all (Jn. 1:3).

1. If God is Good, and He is the Creator, then the creation must be good.

That is exactly what Genesis says.

Yet there are those who say that some of creation or material things are evil. That is heresy.

That is Gnosticism, not Christianity.

Because the gnostics believed matter was evil, they interposed a long series of aeons, or intermediaries, between the supreme God and the creation. We don't need to do that to account for evil in the world. God's original creation may have been a chaos before he completed it, but it was not evil.

It is a modern scientific and philosophical heresy that insists on putting an almost infinite period of time or primeval evolutionary aeons between our time and world and its beginning, almost as if we were embarrassed to suppose that all this may have been created by the hand of a divine being.

So God is not only directly and immediately involved in the creative process; he does not only SPEAK; He is ACTION through his word, Gen. 1:3.

Christ is the sole agent of creation, Col. 1:16-17 and Heb. 1:2.

We must remember that Jesus Christ did not always have a physical body.

He was not always "flesh."

He was "made flesh" at a certain point in time.

He was not flesh, when he was in the beginning with God and was God.

These words teach his eternity and preexistence.

But this pre-existent Christ Jesus was not flesh back yonder when the morning stars serenaded the advent of our infant earth as it lay, "wrapped in swaddling clothes of light," in the arms of the great Jehovah, for "all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (Jn. 1:3).

He was not flesh back in creation days when there was the gathering together of the waters called the seas, for "the world was made by him" (Jan 1:10).

He was NOT FLESH when the first ray of light shone, when the first bird sang, when the first lion "panted in the jungles of roses,"

when the first flower bloomed,

when the first fire burned,

when the first river flowed,

when the first rose opened wide its rubied heart,

when the first wind blew,

when the first lily bared its (white) bosom to the sun. "For by him were all things created, that are

in heaven, and that are in earth...and he is before all things and by him all things consist" (or stick together, Col. 1:16-17).

Then, in Bethlehem, he became flesh, as Milton said:

"That glorious form, that light insufferable,

And that far-beaming blaze of majesty,

Wherewith He wont at heaven's high council table

To sit the midst of Tribal Unity,

He laid aside; and here with us to be,

Forsook the courts of everlasting day,

And chose with us a darksome house of clay!"

2. He was the Creator, yet he was rejected (Jn. 1:10-11).

3. Yet he saved all who received him.

He is "The Incarnate Word" our Redeemer. This is the most exciting event and the most wonderful story in the world.

Dorothy Sayers, author of a brilliant translation of Dante's Divine Comedy, is bewildered at people who tell her blandly that Christianity leaves them cold, as being a dull affair that bores them. She says she is confident that if they would only read the gospel through just once with an open mind and let it have its chance with them, that they would be forced to admit, whatever attitude they might take up about it, that this is the most exciting and tremendous and amazing story that the world can ever hear (The Greatest Drama Ever Staged; London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1938).

Ps. 107:19-20 tells us that God is Redeemer, and his Word is a word of deliverance.

4. ~~Skeptics~~ and the scholars of modern ~~Biblical~~ Criticism ask too much of us when they expect us to give up our faith in Christ as the divine Word, backed by the Bible and the accumulated knowledge and experience of the early church, the Church Fathers, the Middle Ages, the Reformers, and the centuries since then.

The Modern Critics claim that the early followers of Jesus, and the first and second generation of Christians misunderstood and misinterpreted the teachings of Jesus. I ask, where is the documentary evidence that they did any such thing? We have no early versions of the Gospels with a purely human Jesus and with no miracles to place beside later versions with those things added.

C.S. Lewis said it is preposterous that Jesus should be totally misunderstood by those who lived in the same culture, spoke the same language, shared the same habitual imagery and unconscious assumptions, and yet be perfectly understood by modern critics who have none of these advantages. ("Modern Theology

and Biblical Criticism," in Christian Reflections, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Brace Jovanovich, 1966), p. 280.)

D. He is also the "Word" of God who is the Judge of all (Rev. 19:13)

The rider on the white horse, leader of the armies of heaven, whose name is "The Word of God," is clearly meant to represent the Christ.

Compare Rev. 19:11-16 with the vision of the "one like a son of man" in Rev. 1:13-16.

Here we see the exalted Christ as the Word of God, as in the Gospel of John we see the Christ on earth as the Word of God, coexistent and coequal with God the Father from all eternity.

As he is the Word of God in Creation of the heavens and earth, so is he the Word of God in the New Creation, the Redemption.

CONCLUSION:

Have you met this Creator Christ as your Savior and Lord? Have you made Him the Master of your life?

Down from his splendor in glory He came

Into a world of Woe,

Took on Himself our sin and our shame,

How could He love us so?

How shall we celebrate the day

When God appeared in mortal clay?...

How shall we celebrate His name,

Who groaned beneath a life of shame,

In all afflictions tried!

My soul, exert thy powers--adore;

Upon devotion's plumage soar

to celebrate the day;

The God from creation sprung

Shall animate my grateful tongue;

~~From him i'll catch the lay!~~

Thomas Chatterton, 1752-70

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