

Jesus: The Eternal Word

How are we to regard Jesus Christ? Are we simply to admire him as the best of men or may he also be worshipped and trusted as God incarnate? Does it really matter what we think of him, or how we regard him?

It is with these great questions that the Gospel of John is continually concerned. In the first 18 verses John sums up his entire thesis. This is known as “the Prologue” to his account of Christ’s ministry. The whole truth of what John regarded Jesus Christ to be is found in these verses. They are profound and the depths of which have never been plumbed. Yet they are simple and essential declarations concerning the person and work of Jesus Christ. The whole argument is compacted in verses 1, 14, and 18.

The first three verses are primarily concerned with the relation of Christ to time, and to the triune Godhead, and to creation. *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* ² *He was in the beginning with God.* ³ *All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.* John, thus, affirms that Jesus Christ is the eternal Word.

We know that the Word is Jesus because John deals with the historicity of Jesus Christ. In verse 14 John tells us the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

Notice the essential teaching of these first 3 verses: the 1st statement is that Jesus existed “in the beginning.” What beginning? The beginning of time, of creation itself. John is saying that you can go back as far as possible and whenever the beginning began, the Word was. In other words, Jesus Christ is pre-existent. **If he was “in the beginning,” then he was himself *without beginning*. This is **another way of saying he is eternal.****

Jesus of Nazareth was born of Mary in Bethlehem of Judea some 2,000 years ago. John is saying this is not the beginning of his existence. Rather we must understand that he has always existed. On that day that he became flesh and dwelt among us, he took up a new mode of existence,

but he remained the eternal Word. The Word, the Son, added humanity to his eternal person and was born a male human from Mary.

The author of Hebrews echoes this same truth in his opening remarks: “God, after he spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the world. And he is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of his nature and upholds all things by the word of his power” (Heb. 1:1-3a, NASB).

Paul wrote that Jesus before he became a man was in the form of God and was God’s equal. Jesus himself declared, “I am Alpha and Omega (the first and the last letters of the Greek alphabet), the first and the last.”

There is a very interesting word used to describe Jesus – it is the word “word” itself, which is “*logos*” in Greek. “In the beginning was the Word.” This noun has both Greek and Hebrew ideas behind it. The term means, first of all, “speech,” and second, the thought behind the utterance. The Hebrew idea is found in the verse from Proverbs, “The fear of Yahweh is the beginning of wisdom.” God was the original thinker – all things came into being by his creative word.

So John is saying Jesus is God’s Speech or Discourse to man. He is the speech of God. He is God’s final Spokesman, the one who spells out Deity, the one who utters in his person, in his work and his teaching all that God has to say to us.

**As the Word he makes manifest or visible the invisible God and he communicates to us the life and love of God. In Christ God is fully and finally revealed.*

In John’s gospel narrative the term “Word” [“*logos*”] becomes a technical term for the Second Person of the eternal triune Godhead. He is the Word of revelation and the Word of salvation. *There is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved* (Acts 4:12).

The second thing John says is that Jesus Christ, the Word, was with God. This is an affirmation of the separate personality of Christ. The Word

was and is, continuously with God. The Greek preposition used is that of “pros” meaning “towards” or “face to face.”

In other words, he was in the closest possible connection with God the Father and the Spirit from all eternity. There is a differentiation between the two – the Son or the Word, and the Father eternally existed together in a living and constant relationship of fellowship. There are two equal personalities mentioned in this verse within the one eternal infinite Being of God. Before time began the Word, the Logos, was with God in an eternal fellowship of love.

The third affirmation is that Jesus, the Word is fully divine, for the Word was God, or literally “and God was the Word.” Who could express God, but God himself! The Word is not an emanation of God, but God himself made manifest – God himself revealed. This is a clear and emphatic declaration of the absolute deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are not two gods, nor three gods but only one eternal Jehovah (or Yahweh) God. Yet there are separate and distinct personalities within God’s infinite Being. Jesus Christ is the Word - as such, he is one with the very being and mind of God. He also is the expression of the intelligence and will and power of God. As to his Person, he is identified with God, as to his office, his work is to reveal God.

The fourth thing John says is that the Word is the agent of the Father in creation – all things were made by him. The Bible does not say the Word was created first, and then he created all other things. No, the Word eternally was and the Word created everything that is created. Here creation is ascribed to him and none but God can create from nothing. Moreover, He is the fountain of life and by him all things are continuously upheld.

In these first five verse John tells us about Jesus Christ – he is eternal and therefore pre-existed; he is a personality in distinction from the Father, and he is fully God, so much so that he is the Creator and he continues to be the Source of all life.

*What does all of this mean to you? **What does it matter to say Jesus Christ is God, the Eternal Word?***

First of all, **it means that you can only know the truth about God by knowing Jesus Christ.** Apart from Jesus, the Word, we do not know what God is like. There is no knowledge of God apart from a knowledge of the Lord Jesus and that knowledge is communicated to us by means of the Holy Spirit through the prophetic and apostolic Words of witness to the revelation of the Son in the Bible.

Philip asked this question for all ages, on the night in which Jesus was betrayed, “Lord, show the Father and that will be enough for us. Jesus answered him, “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I’ve been among you such a long time? *Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.*” Jesus is the Revelation, the telling forth of the invisible God.

There is a second truth: Jesus Christ is **God and that means God was always like Jesus.**

He reveals God to us from the Father’s very bosom – he tells forth the heart of God. In him we see the eternal and unchangeable love of God for sinners so much so that the Son became incarnate to make an atonement for our sin.

One last application and there are many more because this is an inexhaustible topic, **Jesus Christ is able to satisfy your longings;** he as the infinite God is able to meet all the needs of your heart. O, that you and I might come to know the length, breath, the depth, and the height of the love of Christ and have our lives filled with the fullness of God.

What do you think of Jesus Christ? Who is he? Can you make that earth-shattering confession with Thomas of old, “*My Lord and my God!*” To believe that – to truly and honestly believe and thus yield to him your total allegiance is to enter into eternal life.

John 17:3 relates these words from the lips of Jesus to his Father in prayer- *This is life eternal: to know you the only true God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.* Jesus is the Eternal Word, the Lord of glory himself! Amen.

Wayne Conrad
Dallas, Texas 75228
September 5, 2022