

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### **The Word and God**

#### **John 1:1-2**

#### **Part 1**

What have we learned so far about the fourth Gospel? We have learned that the Apostle John wrote the fourth Gospel. But he was more than just an apostle. He was the disciple that Jesus loved, a member of Christ's inner circle. Hopefully this information has become so significant to you that if you were asked, "Who wrote the Gospel of John?" you would not simply say, "John" but hopefully you would rather say, "The Apostle John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, a member of Christ's inner circle, wrote the fourth Gospel." There was no one in a better position to write about the life and ministry of Jesus than John.

What else did we learn? We have also learned why he wrote the fourth Gospel. He was not primarily concerned with supplementing the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke when he wrote the fourth Gospel, even though his Gospel did in fact do this. He was not primarily concerned with providing biblical truths to combat Gnosticism or other doctrinal heresies when he wrote the fourth Gospel, even though his Gospel did in fact do this. The Apostle John wrote the fourth Gospel in order that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and be saved. What did John say in **John 20:30-31**? "**Many other signs therefore Jesus also performed in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; (31) but these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.**"

This is why this particular Gospel is passed out during evangelistic efforts. It is passed out to bring people to faith in Christ and to life. But you may say, "But I have already come to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, how can the study of this Gospel help me?"

I believe in light of John's purpose that the study of this Gospel will not only be used by the Spirit of God to bring people to salvation but will continue to be used by the Spirit of God to maintain and strengthen our faith in Christ; improving our lives and increasing our fruitfulness.

But in order for John to accomplish this purpose he apparently felt that the deity of Christ needed to be emphasized. We saw this emphasis manifesting itself in John's purpose statement in **John 20:31** when he says, "**these have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ,**" and then what did he say? "**The Son of God.**"

Why would John choose this particular emphasis? For us to deny the deity of Christ is to reject the Christ of the Bible and to reject the Christ of the Bible is to reject the gospel making it impossible for us to be saved.

John throughout his Gospel consistently presents Jesus as the wonderful, magnificent, Creator God of the universe hoping to bring his readers to a point of faith and ultimately to life itself. John has a massive vision of Christ and he consistently presents that vision to his readers. And hopefully as we are consistently confronted with this massive vision of Christ it will have a dramatic impact on how we view Him.

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Kent Hughes in his commentary on the Gospel of John compares the experience of the serious student of this Gospel with Lucy's experience with Aslan in C.S. Lewis's book, "*The Chronicles of Narnia*." Of course, as most of you know, Aslan was a lion and a symbol of Christ.

What exactly was Lucy's experience with Aslan? Each time Lucy would meet Aslan he would always seem from Lucy's perspective to be getting bigger. Was this true? Was Aslan actually getting bigger? Listen to an exchange between Lucy and Aslan, the symbol of Christ, in C.S. Lewis's "*The Chronicles of Narnia*."

"Welcome, child," he said

"Aslan," said Lucy, "You're bigger."

"That is because you are older, little one," answered he.

"Not because you are?"

"I am not. But every year you grow, you will find me bigger."

That is my hope and prayer for our study of the Gospel of John. Hopefully as we work our way through this wonderful Gospel and become spiritually more mature and better acquainted with the person and the work of Christ we will experience the same phenomenon as Lucy. Though Christ cannot get any bigger or more magnificent than He already is; hopefully, from our perspective through our study of this wonderful Gospel, He will seem to us to be getting bigger and bigger and bigger. Hopefully Jesus will become more and more and more magnificent to us with every chapter. The Gospel opens up with an epilogue that consists of 18 verses. Let us read this section of Scripture.

**"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 by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. (4) In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (5) And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. (6) There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. (7) He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. (8) He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. (9) There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. (10) He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. (11) He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. (12) But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name. (13) who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (14) And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. (15) John bore witness of Him, and cried out, saying, 'This was He of whom I said, "He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me."' (16) For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. (17) For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. (18) No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten of God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him."** The verses that we have just read are John's introduction to the fourth Gospel.

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A title for Jesus that leaps out at us from these verses is the title, "The Word". The use of this title is unique to John.

What is the significance of Jesus being referred to as "The Word". The answer I believe is rather obvious. Words are what we use to reveal what is on our minds and in our hearts to others. Words are all about communication.

But what is Jesus communicating? Jesus is referred to as the Word because Jesus reveals God to mankind (John 1:18). This thought is reinforced in **John 1:18, "No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him."** If people want to get to know God then they need to get to know Jesus. Why? Because He is "The Word."

We now most likely know why John refers to Jesus as the Word, but what makes Jesus so qualified for this monumental task? We learn what makes Jesus so qualified in communicating God to man in the Gospel's introduction. And as we learn the things that John reveals to us about the Word that makes Him so qualified to reveal God, He is going to get bigger and bigger and bigger to our eyes; and we will by default get to know God better and better and better. What is the first thing that we learn?

Jesus is qualified in communicating God to Man because of what John tells us about the Word and God in John 1:1-2. What exactly do we learn about the Word and God in John's introduction? Let me read for you **John 1:1-2. "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."**

What a grand way to start a Gospel and certainly much different than how the other Gospels start. The Gospel of Matthew begins with the words, "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ." The Gospel of Mark begins with the words, "The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." The Gospel of Luke begins with the words "Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us." The choice of these particular words by the various writers of the synoptic Gospels to begin their accounts of the life and ministry of Jesus stand in stark contrast with the first words of the Gospel of John. How did John begin his Gospel? **"In the beginning."** Do these words, though dissimilar from the other Gospels, strike you as somewhat familiar to another Bible book? I would think that your answer would be, "Yes!"

The first book of the Bible begins with the words "In the beginning God created the heavens and earth." The first readers would naturally have linked the phrase "in the beginning" of John 1:1 with Genesis 1:1.

When John says "In the beginning," he is linking the Word to the first creative act of God and the beginning of time (Genesis 1:1). This linking by John was intentional and certainly begins to set the tone for the entire Gospel. John is all about declaring the magnificence of Christ and certainly we would have to say that he is off to a good start.

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This parallel with Moses, no doubt, was intentional on John's part. The phrase points to the instant when time first began or in other words to the first creative act of God. But John is not satisfied in his introductory phrase in simply linking Christ with God at the beginning of time, he also wants to link Christ with God before time. How does he do this? Let us continue to read **John 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word."**

The verb "was" is a durative imperfect which reaches back indefinitely beyond the instant of the beginning. It could be translated "In the beginning was continuing the Word." At the beginning of time the Word was there as the Word has always been there.

"In the beginning was the Word" is placing Christ into eternity past in the same way as **John 8:58** or **John 17:5** place Christ into eternity past.

What did **John 8:58** say? In **John 8** Jesus was in a dialogue with the Jews and when they felt that He was exalting Himself above Abraham they said in **John 8:53 "Surely You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died? The prophets died too; whom do you make Yourself out to be?"** In response to this line of questioning He eventually says to them in **John 8:58, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am."** Jesus chose to identify Himself with the name of God which emphasized His eternity.

What did **John 17:5** say? In **John 17** we find Christ praying to His father and in the midst of His prayer He says in **verse 5, "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."** Christ is once again bearing witness to His own eternity.

What do we learn about Jesus' relationship with God in John 1:1-2? First of all we learn that Jesus is linked with God both in time and eternity by the phrase, "In the beginning was the Word." If you project yourself all the way back to the very beginning of time you will find not only God but the Word. And if you would project yourself even further back, as far as your mind could possibly extend itself, you will continue to find God and the Word. What John has shared with his readers about the Word's relationship with God is pretty amazing. The Word has been around as long as God has been around. But this is not all we learn about the Word and God John 1:1.

But how did the Word and God relate with each other as they shared eternity? This leads us to a second thing we learn about the Word and God.

The Word is linked with God relationally by the phrase "and the Word was with God." The preposition "with" conveys the idea of nearness, along with a sense of movement toward God.

The Word, or in other words Jesus was in the beginning but how did they relate with each other in time and eternity. Did they see each other only occasionally and on a casual basis or was their relationship closer? John's choice of the preposition "with" answers that question.

A.T. Robertson, a Greek scholar, paraphrasing this phrase translates it "And the Word was face to face with God." Lenski in his commentary on the Gospel of John says, "The idea is that of presence and communion with a strong note of reciprocity" The Logos," then, is not an attribute inhering in God, or a power emanating from Him, but a person in the presence of God and turned in loving,

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inseparable communion toward God, and God turned equally toward Him.

What a wonderful picture is being presented to us by John of the perfect joyous intimacy that Jesus eternally enjoyed with God. This perhaps helps to make **Genesis 1:26** come alive for us. God is coming to the end of His creative activity and says in **Genesis 1:26**, "**Let us make man in our image, after our likeness**"; Who exactly is the "our" referring to? Some people might suggest it is referring to the angels who were ministering spirits created by God. But what would seem far more reasonable in light of the face to face relationship Jesus enjoyed with God according to **John 1:1** would be to conclude that the "our" was not at all about the angels but far more to do with the special relationship that Jesus enjoyed with God.

John in the first eighteen verses of this wonderful Gospel is outlining for us the reasons why Christ is fully qualified to reveal God to man. He starts with describing Christ's relationship with God. What have we learned so far from John 1:1? We have learned that the Word or Christ is linked with God both in time and eternity by the phrase "in the beginning was the Word." We have also learned that the Word and God were relationally linked with God by the phrase, "and the Word was with God."

John certainly is not shortchanging us. We are not even fully one verse into this wonderful Gospel and John is already powerfully declaring the greatness and magnificence of Christ.

You might think that there is nowhere for John to go from here, but this is certainly not true. Let us continue to read **John 1:1**. "**In the beginning (at the beginning of time) was the Word (or better said "was continuing the word") and the Word was with God (or in other words "and the Word was face to face with God") and (finally) the word was God.**"

What is the last thing we learn about Christ's relationship with God in **John 1:1**? We learn that Christ was linked with God because He was God. This is a truth that many people have choked on and have been unable to swallow. But for us hopefully this is not true. Why? Because seeing Jesus as God or as John 20:31 tells us as the "son of God" is a necessary first step to believing and having life in His name. Next week we will consider the feeble attempt of a certain cult to retranslate the verse, "**and the word was God**" to make it "**and the word was a God.**" But that is next week. There is something more important at hand this morning.

### CONCLUSION

We will shortly be celebrating communion. We are not simply remembering the death of a man this morning. We are remembering the death of the infinite God man the Lord Jesus Christ. Let me ask you a question? When you recognize that it was not simply Christ the man that died for you but Christ the infinite God Man does that make Christ bigger to you and greater and even more magnificent? Accepting the deity of Christ by faith is not the last step in appreciating the greatness and magnificence of Christ, it is actually a part of the first step.