

# The Word of God

*"His Name is called the Word of God"*—Rev. 19:13.

In our reading from John this morning, we are introduced to a deep, but beautiful, subject. He calls our attention to the fountain and origin of life, and to the only begotten of the Father—His beloved Son through whom He manifested Himself to Israel.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

This takes us back a long way—"*In the beginning*." That is, before the record of creation given by Moses. We must bear in mind that in writing these words John was addressing a people who *realized clearly there is but one God*—a fact John well knew.

Our English version was translated from the Greek. The original for "Word" is *Logos*, and the word rendered "God" is *Theos*. The Romans borrowed this word from the Greeks and called it *Deus* from which we derive our word "Deity."

The word *Logos* signifies "the outward form by which the inward thought is expressed and made known; also, the inward thought or reason itself." So that the word comprehends both the idea of reason and speech.

Then we are informed by John that the word (or *Logos*) was with God (or *Theos*). This suggests companionship, and we learn from the book of Proverbs that such was the case. In ch. 8 the *Logos*, or wisdom-energy of the Father, is personified—

"Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.

"Unto you, O men, I call; and my voice is to the sons of man. O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart. Hear; for I will speak of excellent things; and the opening of my lips shall be right things" (vs. 1-6).

"The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths, I was brought forth! when there were no fountains of waters.

"Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

"When He prepared the heavens, I was there; when He set a compass upon the face of the depth: When He established the clouds above; when He strengthened the fountains of the deep:

"When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass His commandment: when He appointed the foundations of the earth:

"Then I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him" (vs. 22-31).

This, we think, makes clear how the *Logos* was with God, but John adds, "The *Logos* was God." Bro. Thomas explains this—

"Without *THEOS*, the *Logos* could have no existence. This may be illustrated by the relation of reason, or intelligence and speech, to brain, as affirmed in the proposition: No brain—no thought, reason, nor intelligence.

Call the brain THEOS; and thought, reason, and understanding intelligently expressed, Logos; and the relation and dependence of THEOS and Logos, in John's use of the terms, may readily be conceived.

"Brain-flesh is substance that underlies thought; so THEOS is substance which constitutes the substratum of Logos. THEOS is the substance called Spirit; as it is written, 'THEOS IS SPIRIT,' and he who uttered these words is declared to be himself both substance and spirit."

Some, however, would have us to believe that as the *Logos* was with God, and the Logos was made flesh, that *Jesus* was with God in the beginning as the second person of a triune God, described as "God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost."

But let us not be mystified by the term *Logos*. The teaching of John is plain. He does not say that in the beginning was the Son, and the Son was with God, and the Son was God. What he *does* say is that the *Logos* was in the beginning (as we read in Proverbs) and that the *Logos* was made flesh. The result of this action was the bringing into existence "the man Christ Jesus," "the Son of God."

By this method God was manifest in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16). The flesh, through which God was manifested, was the son of Mary. It was a flesh identical with that of his mother, being "made of the seed of David according to the flesh" (Rom. 1:3). John brings the subject of manifestation before us in his first epistle,

life      "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; for the was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us" (1 John 1:1-2).

Thus the eternal Father manifested Himself by His Spirit, through the living body of Jesus, who as a child had been developed from his mother Mary, in the same manner as any child is developed. This is further elucidated in Jesus' words—

nothing      "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things" (John 8:28).  
And again (John 14:10)—

"Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but **the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works.**"

In the light of these things, surely it is not hard to understand John as he speaks of the Word, or *Logos*—that great power, energy and wisdom by which all things were made. The declaration in Psa. 139, regarding the eternal power of the Father, is to the effect that—though *centralized* in Him—the Spirit is everywhere present, filling heaven and earth. Therefore the Father, being the center of all power and wisdom, expresses His will and His purpose by, or through, the Spirit which irradiates from His person—

was      "The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him not anything made."

This is taken by many to indicate that Jesus was the Creator, but this impression is to a large extent simply a result of the translators' choice of wording. It is clarified in the Diaglott—

done."      "This (the Logos) was in the beginning with God. Through it (that is the wisdom-energy of God) everything was done; and without **it** not even one thing was done, which has been done."

In verses 6-10, we have a similar case. We know that Jesus was "the light," but v. 10 in the common version states that "the world was made by him." "Made" is not in the original. Again the Diaglott is clearer—

"He was in the world, and the world was (enlightened) through him; and yet the world knew him not."

Jesus was the light of the world, and to that fact the prophets testified. Isaiah spoke of Jesus as the light in 9:1-2, and Matthew quotes this prophecy in the following manner—

"Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet saying,

"The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles—

"The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up" (Matt 4:12-16).

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V. 11—"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."

What a measure of suffering is comprehended in these words! Walk with Jesus as he walked in Judea and listen to the Scribes and Pharisees as they sought to entangle him in his talk. Hear them as they cry out, "Thou hast a devil!" Behold them as they take up stones to cast at him. Listen to them as they accuse him of blasphemy, and take counsel to put him to death.

Go with him to the garden of Gethsemane and see the mob as they take him, bind him and lead him away to the High Priest. Behold him as he is struck in the face by one of the officers. Listen to Pilate as he tries to free Jesus. He pleads with the people, but they cry out, "*Crucify him! Crucify him!*"

Then he was scourged. A Roman soldier picks up a whip of several lashes of leather, to the ends of which were fastened sharp pieces of metal. Then the crown of thorns is crushed upon his head. Then we see him led away to be crucified.

Oh, what torture as he hung on the cross in the hot sun! Death was a great relief. Yes,

*"He came unto his own, and his own received him not."*

But—

"As many as received him, to them gave he power (the right or privilege) to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name" (John 1:12).

To attain unto this, they must first believe the promises made unto the fathers. They must believe in Jesus, the manifestation of the Father, as we have seen, and be immersed into his Name, thereby receiving remission of sins and being united to the body of Christ Jesus, thereby becoming Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise.

Brethren and sisters, we are in that position. There is much to be done to maintain our status as sons of God, but, oh, so little compared to the one who has done so much for us!

V. 15—"John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for He was before me."

Again the Diaglott expresses the meaning more clearly—

"John testified concerning him, and cried, saying, This is he of whom I said, he who comes after me is in advance of me (or as the RSV renders it, 'ranks before me') for he is my superior."

Then in v. 23 he plainly declares his position in relation to Jesus—

"He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias."

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"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. . .

"And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God. Again the next day after John stood, and two of his disciples: And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God. And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus" (vs. 29, 34-37).

John recognized that his work was done when Jesus went forth to preach the Gospel and heal the sick—

*"Behold the Lamb of God."*

"Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him. "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice; this my joy therefore is fulfilled.

"He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:28-30).

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V. 17—"For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

The Law contained the form of the knowledge and of the truth. It was only a shadow of things to come; a figure for the time then present; the pattern of the things in the heavens; the antitype of the true. But the knowledge and the truth, and the heavenly things themselves came through Jesus.

V. 18—"No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him."

Paul confirms this statement of John by saying, "No man hath seen, nor can see Him" (1 Tim. 6:16). The Father was revealed by Jesus because *the truth in its power, wisdom and fulness, was deposited in Jesus*, for said Paul (Col. 1:19)—

"It pleased the Father that in him should **all fulness dwell**."

When John said, "Behold the Lamb of God," two of his disciples heard him and followed Jesus. He turned to them and asked them what they wanted. I suppose they were so surprised that all they could think of was the question, "Where do you live?" Jesus did not answer them but said, "Come and see." They not only saw where he dwelt, but were his guests for the day.

What an honor! Think how we would feel if we had such an opportunity. But he is not here. However, such an opportunity is coming, and it must surely be near. If we meet with the approval of the Lord Jesus at his coming, we, too, shall be his guests as he has promised—

"Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching. Truly I say unto you that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down at a table, and will come forth and serve them" (Luke 12:37).

Whatever form the conversation took, the effect is shown by the action of Andrew the following morning as we see in vs. 41-42—

"He first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, which is, being interpreted the Christ.

"And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him. he said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by, interpretation, A stone."

Can you not picture Jesus looking upon Peter with penetrating eyes and saying these few words? He was no doubt looking past that day and into the future concerning the work of Peter.

V. 43—"The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me."

Philip must have been familiar with the work of Jesus to respond without another word. Of course he lived in the same village as Peter and Andrew, and must have known them. Philip did not waste any time (v. 45)—

"Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Nathanael lived in Cana, a short distance from Bethsaida, and must have been a close friend of Philip. That they had a good knowledge of Moses and the prophets is evident by their conversation. But when Nathanael heard that Jesus came from Nazareth, he was not quite sure. It would be interesting to dwell at length upon this whole incident, but the highlight comes out after his introduction to Jesus.

After meeting him, he was no longer interested about where he came from. Nathanael's chief interest now was wholly in the wonderful man he had met for the first time and so he exclaims,

"Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel!"

The response of Jesus takes us back to Jacob as he rested on his way to Padanaram—

"And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven; and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.

"And Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he was afraid, and said, how dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God" (Gen. 28:12 & 17).

This experience of Jacob's was similar to that of Daniel for they both awoke in a typical resurrection. But when Jacob awakes after his sleep of centuries, he will see in *fact* what he then saw in vision, and will be joined with Nathanael and many others, and will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

The heaven and earth will no longer be separated by the ladder of ages, for when the new heaven and new earth are established—

"The tabernacle of God will be with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.

"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

As it is written,

*"Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."* —G.A.G. May 1955 Berean

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