

John 1:1-3 "The Living Word, God"

JOH 1:1-3 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."

We begin a new study this morning in one of the most read and investigated portions of Scripture. The gospel according to John is a unique account of the life and ministry of Jesus Christ as seen through the eyes of a man who spent some three plus years at the feet of His Lord and Savior.

He was a witness to the one who not only claimed to be the Son of God, but proved it with signs and miracles, not the least of which was His bodily resurrection from the dead three days after He was placed in the tomb, after having suffered and died at the hands of Roman soldiers as He was crucified on the cross for the penalty of our sins.

This is John's account of the one he loved. In John's own words:

JOH 21:24 "This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true."

The apostle John is a faithful eye witness of those actual events surrounding our Messiah which took place some 2,000 years ago in the area of Palestine. We can be sure that what we read and study in this book is true and accurate.

John, who wrote this book is also referred to as one of the sons of Zebedee.

MAT 4:21-22 "Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, 22 and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him."

John and his brother are also given a new name by Jesus Himself who was accustomed to renaming some of His disciples. Mark records this for us in his gospel.

MAR 3:16-19 "These are the twelve he [Jesus] appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); 17 James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which

means Sons of Thunder); 18 Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him."

But it seems that, from among the twelve, Jesus had a special relationship with John that is portrayed by John himself in this gospel. At the last supper with their Lord, John was sitting next to Jesus and paints this picture of that event.

JOH 13:23 "One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him."

The phrase "reclining next to Jesus" really doesn't adequately describe what was happening there at that table. The original Greek is much more instructive in that it conveys John actually leaning on the Lord, as if to bury his head on Christ's chest.

This is why the KJV, along with the NKJV and the NASB put it this way.

"There was reclining on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved." NASB

After our Lord's resurrection there was that incident where the disciples were out fishing and couldn't catch anything. From the shore Jesus called out to them, and again notice how John refers to himself in relationship to Jesus.

JOH 21:5-7 "He [Jesus] called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. 6 He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. 7 Then *the disciple whom Jesus loved* said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water."

Now we might ask the question, how can John consider himself as the disciple whom Jesus loved when Jesus loved them all? Well, apart from the obvious that John gloried in the fact that Jesus could love any sinful human being, including himself, who was previously bent on going his own way, there is another way of looking at this.

It would appear that just as with any of us there are certain people in this world who we just click with on a human level. It's usually these people we end up being best friends with for a variety of

reasons; shared interests, shared philosophies, similar personalities and temperaments and so on.

In John's case he may have also been one of the younger disciples and Jesus may have taken a special interest in him for that reason. And so, from John's perspective, he just liked Jesus as a man and enjoyed being around Him as he got along with the Lord, and it seems to have been mutual.

I don't think Jesus loved the other disciples any less, but in John's case there was a special human relationship which he enjoyed with the Lord and this is why he expresses it the way he does; the disciple whom Jesus loved.

But, it is this disciple who also saw the Lord as much more than a special human friend. In fact, this gospel is different from the rest of the gospels in a very significant way. It is this gospel which emphatically points out the divine nature of our Lord Jesus.

The other gospels certainly make the case for the divinity of Jesus Christ, but John's gospel spends the bulk of its message on this vital truth. This doesn't mean the other gospels lack anything it just means that the Holy Spirit decided to use John in this particular way.

In fact, each of the other gospels were inspired by the Spirit for a little different role. "The gospel of Matthew presents Jesus as the King. Mark presents him as the Servant. Luke presents him as the perfect Man, whereas John presents him as God." (Dr. Alfred Martin)

But John wasn't simply interested in doing a treatise on the divinity of Jesus Christ, but rather, because Jesus is fully God and fully man, He is the only one who can stand in our place and take our penalty for sin. And this is really where John is going in this gospel according to his own words.

JOH 20:30-31 "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name."

And so, as we come to the gospel of John this is the very first thing he points out as he takes us on his personal journey with this Jesus who is none other the Creator God and Savior of this world, whom

he not only bears personal witness to, but encourages all men to embrace as the only Lord and Savior.

JOH 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

"In the beginning." If you're going to start somewhere the beginning is a good place. But John has a reason for using this expression. This is the same language of the book of Genesis. And since John is going to make the case for the divinity of Jesus Christ he really needs to go back to Genesis as the starting point.

GEN 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Now, how is this related to Jesus? Well, we're going to see as we go through this portion but let's start with the beginning aspect first. In Genesis the word beginning actually is not the starting point as it relates to God.

And the obvious reason is that God has no beginning; He always was and is. David expresses it this way.

PSA 90:2 "Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God."

PSA 93:2 "Your throne was established long ago; you are from all eternity."

And so, for John to make this statement, "in the beginning," he is setting the stage for who was there before the beginning of time and creation, as well as who was there when the beginning had its beginning.

As to who was there in the beginning John calls this person the Word. In Greek it is the word <I>logos</I>. "In the beginning was the **Logos**."

Now this sounds like an odd expression at first. But it's actually the only word which makes any sense as to who this person must be.

But without getting into too much minutia we still need to look at another word here in verse one because it answers the question as to how long this Word or Logos has been around.

"In the beginning **was**." The word "was" is described with two different Greek words throughout the N.T. One means "to exist, while the other means to come into being." (Arthur W. Pink)

In verse three of our text the word "was" is the Greek word *egeneto* which [when plugged back into verse three] literally reads, "all things through him **came into being**, and without him **came into being** not even one thing which has **come into being**."

"But here in verse one and two it is the word *ito, with* God. [And as such], the Word did not come into being, or begin to be, but was **with** God from all eternity." (Pink)

This is essential for us to understand. If the *Logos* came into being at the beginning, then the Word is not eternal. Many cults use this reasoning to deny that Jesus Christ is God. They contend that the Son of God had a beginning and use this portion of Scripture, with others, to deny His deity.

But why does John use the word Logos in the opening part of this gospel? Well, he does this by design as the Holy Spirit has inspired him.

The word Logos simply means word, but it infers much more. As Arthur W. Pink points out in his commentary, "the reference here is to the second Person in the Holy Trinity, the Son of God. But why is Jesus Christ designated the Word? The first passage which occurs to our minds as throwing light on this question is the opening statement in the epistle to the Hebrews...

HEB 1:1-2 "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe."

Pink says, "here we learn that Christ is the final spokesman of God. Closely connected with this is the Savior's title found in Rev.1:8 -- I am the Alpha and the Omega, which intimates that He is God's alphabet, the One who spells out Deity, the One who utters all God has to say."

But "even clearer is the testimony of Joh.1:18 which says, "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."

"Christ, then, is the One who has made the incomprehensible God intelligible." (Pink)

This, by the way, is the reason we know that all of the appearances of God in the Old Testament, whether as the angel of the Lord; one of the three men who appeared to Abraham before the deliverance of Lot; God as seen in the burning bush before Moses; the fourth person in the blazing furnace along with Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, were all pre-incarnate appearances of Jesus Christ Himself, the Word; the One who makes God known, being God Himself.

In other words, God declares Himself. This is why Jesus can declare the Father. This is what Jesus told Phillip.

JOH 14:8-10 "Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." 9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work."

In other words, what Jesus was saying is that just as the Father is God Almighty, I too am God Almighty in your midst. Isn't that the very title of Jesus that was told to Joseph in a dream?

MAT 1:23 "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" -which means, "God with us."

And so, what John is saying in our text is that the Word, or Jesus Christ, was with God in the beginning, which means that the Word, or Jesus Christ, like God, is eternal, because Jesus is God.

This dispels the myth that Jesus Christ came into existence only after He was born of a virgin in Bethlehem. It's true that the man Christ Jesus didn't come into existence until He was actually born as any other man, but Jesus is not just man. He is also God.

This is why we refer to those appearances of Jesus in the O.T. as pre-incarnate appearances. When Jesus appeared to the O.T. saints He was not truly a man when He appeared as such. He did not truly become a man until He was born into this world, which is what the word incarnate means; taking on flesh.

This is why John adds to the last part of verse one that this Word, who was with God in the beginning of creation, was none other than God Himself.

Well, we ask, how can this be? Very simply. Though the eternal God is one in being, He is not one in person.

This is why we refer to Jesus Christ as the second person of the Godhead, or trinity. Now, it must be pointed out that the word trinity appears nowhere in the bible to describe God. But this doesn't mean that God hasn't revealed Himself in a plurality of persons.

We can go right back to Genesis to see this.

GEN 1:26 "Then God said, "Let *us* make man in *our* image, in *our* likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Though at this point in Genesis no mention is made of how many persons make up God's description of Himself when He uses the word *our*, we are given more information about this in other portions of the bible.

But what is interesting in this passage in Genesis is that right after He makes the declaration of making man in *our* image, He then immediately goes back to using the singular pronoun in describing Himself as Creator.

GEN 1:27 "So God created man in *his* own image, in the image of God *he* created him; male and female *he* created them."

And so, right in the beginning God has declared Himself as being one God in more than one person. Now, some people say it isn't until we get to the N.T. that we see the three persons of the Godhead clearly described. And passages like the one we find in Matthew is the one usually pointed to.

MAT 3:16-17 "As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Here we have all three persons of the Godhead in one place. The Son of God having the Spirit of God come upon Him and the Father speaking His approval.

Thus the concept of the trinity. But the N.T. is not where we first encounter the trinity, or all three persons of the Godhead being described. And for this we'll all need to turn to Isaiah 48:12-16.

ISA 48:12 "Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: ..."

Let's stop right there. We can all agree that it is God Himself speaking to Israel in this passage. It is God who has called out Israel. Okay, let's continue.

ISA 48:12-15 "Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel, whom I have called: I am he; I am the first and I am the last. 13 My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they all stand up together. 14 "Come together, all of you, and listen: Which of the idols has foretold these things? The LORD'S chosen ally will carry out his purpose against Babylon; his arm will be against the Babylonians. 15 I, even I, have spoken; yes, I have called him. I will bring him, and he will succeed in his mission.

Now, it is the next verse I want you to take special note of. And keep in mind that it is the God of Israel who is speaking here.

ISA 48:16 "Come near me and listen to this: "From the first announcement I have not spoken in secret; at the time it happens, I am there." And now the Sovereign LORD has sent me, with his Spirit."

The Sovereign Lord, has sent me, [the one speaking, who is God], with His Spirit. How can God be sent by the Sovereign Lord along with His Spirit who is also God? The Sovereign Lord is the Father, and the God of Israel. But the One being sent by the Sovereign Lord, who is described earlier in Isaiah 48 as the first and the last, is Jesus Christ. And Christ, along with the Spirit, whom we're told in Isaiah, will be sent with Him.

All three persons of the Godhead are clearly described here in Isaiah. Though it may be a mystery as to how One God is three distinct persons, it is clear that all three persons are God, equal in power and glory. And yet, this in no way diminishes the fact that there is only one God and Creator.

DEU 6:4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one."

DEU 4:35 "You were shown these things so that you might know that the LORD is God; besides him there is no other."

ISA 45:18 "For this is what the LORD says - he who created the heavens, he is God; he who fashioned and made the earth, he founded it; he did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited - he says: "I am the LORD, and there is no other."

And yet, this One God tells us that He made man in our image, the image of God. In the beginning the Word was with God. And so, from all of eternity the Word has existed with God. And the only way that can be is if the Word is God Himself.

This is why John writes in verse two, "He was with God in the beginning." Notice how John goes from what might appear to be an impersonal description in the word Logos, to where he now uses the pronoun "He". He, that is the Word, was with God in the beginning.

God is a personal God and from all of eternity He has had fellowship with Himself. It couldn't be any other way. It would be impossible for God to be lonely since the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have had perfect fellowship with each other from eternity past.

Now, it's true that God created man to have fellowship with Himself, but it had nothing to do with God needing to have company, or needing to have someone else around to share in His eternity. If He needed anything or anybody other than Himself He would cease to be the all sufficient God He is.

And this makes our creation even more amazing. Despite the fact that He is perfectly content to be who He is with Himself for all of eternity without needing us, He still chose to create us, with the express purpose of allowing us to know Him and share in His eternity.

We were created for His benefit and pleasure, but we were created to share in His love. By this I don't mean we were created because God wanted pets. We were created for only one reason. It was God's desire to create us. He wanted mankind to be able to know Him and to love Him and to bring glory to Him through our lives.

We added nothing to His ego or His self-esteem, or some apparent need. But we added everything in the way of joy and delight as He is pleased to invite us to share in His eternity and to accept that invitation found in His beloved Son who died for us.

This is the Son who not only died for us that we might be new creations in Him, this also the Son who was a major part of the original creation.

JOH 1:3 "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made."

When we think of the creator of the universe we usually associate that creation process to the Father. And we would be right.

DEU 32:6 "Is this the way you repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is he not your Father, your Creator, who made you and formed you?"

And yet, our text clearly tells us that the Word is none other than the creator. And it's no coincidence that when God created all things He spoke them into existence out of nothing; ex nihilo.

PSA 33:6 "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth."

PSA 148:1-5 "Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD from the heavens, praise him in the heights above. 2 Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his heavenly hosts. 3 Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars. 4 Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above the skies. 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created."

The apostle Peter bears witness to this as well.

2PE 3:5 "But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water."

God spoke and the universe leaped into existence. The Word spoke and it was so. And this Word, this Logos, is none other than the Son of God, Jesus Christ who created all things, as the writer of Hebrews makes clear.

HEB 3:3-4 "Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the

house itself. 4 For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything."

What the writer of Hebrews just said is that Jesus has greater honor than Moses just as the builder has greater honor than the house, and then he goes on to say who that builder is; it's God. And so, the builder who is Jesus Christ, is none other than God, who is creator.

HEB 1:2-3 "but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by [the] word [of His power]."

Not only is Jesus the creator, He also sustains all things so that they don't go flying off into the outermost parts of the universe.

Scientists have recently been able to measure the smallest parts of the atom and yet after having gotten down to such small parts they are baffled at the glue that holds them in place without having their different parts flying out in all directions. And yet, in Heb.1:3 we're told that Jesus sustains all things by the word of His power.

The Word, the Logos, spoke all things into existence and by His word, His power, He sustains the universe as well. In fact, Paul reiterates this same truth.

COL 1:15-17 "He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. 16 For 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. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

This is the Savior you and I serve and love. This Word is the King of kings and the Lord of Lords. This Word is the One who is all powerful and He is the One we can depend on as our Rock and our salvation. We don't serve a wimpy Savior, we serve the Lion of Judah, the One who conquered the grave and sin on our behalf.

This should cause us to raise our voices in praise and adoration as the host of heaven who surround His throne.

REV 4:11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

We have our being in the Word who said come unto Me all you who are burdened and heavy laden and I will give you rest. Jesus Christ is our rest and peace and life eternal and He wants us to proclaim this message to the world.

Jesus Christ, the living Word. Praise God!