

The Light of the World

John 1:1-18

If God exists, and if he loves his chosen people, why doesn't he just say so? Why doesn't he speak to us directly? Why does he not treat us as he did prophets of old? Why would he not come and speak to us as he did to Abraham when he warned him of the impending doom to be directed at Sodom and Gomorrah?

The truth is that he has done this, but in a way that is more useful for our salvation than mere words spoken to men of old. He has spoken a "word" that is better than ordinary speech. That word is Jesus Christ.

The gospel of John begins with several great statements about Jesus Christ, the Word of God. We are taught that he already existed when all things were made. *In the beginning was the Word...* (John 1:1a) The Bible reveals that the one true and living God made us and all things. He is the source and the sustainer of everything that has life. This truth is found in many passages of scripture in both the testaments. Our lives begin here in this world, but Jesus of Nazareth was the one human being who is different from everyone else in this respect. He existed long before any of us. In fact he was there when the worlds were fashioned.

William Wordsworth wrote, "Trailing clouds of glory we come from God who is our home." It is true that we are creatures of God. But if Wordsworth meant that we came from heaven, the dwelling place of God to earth when we were born, he was quite wrong. Our lives begin at conception, and they begin here in this world.

But Jesus was the great exception to this rule. He existed when all things were made. John considered this truth to be important and he restates it in verse two, He *was in the beginning with God.* (John 1:2) What an audacious beginning for John's great tract about the person and work of the Savior!

John also taught that when all things were made, Jesus lived in loving fellowship with the Father and the Holy Spirit. *...the Word was with God...* " (John 1:1b) The Bible teaches us that the Father is God, that the Son is God, and that the Holy Spirit is God. And yet there are not three Gods but only one. The one God who is without beginning or ending is tri-personal. We are uni-personal. I can talk to myself, but I understand that I am not talking to another person. When I start thinking that I am, something will be very wrong.

But the one God is not like us. He, from eternity, was able to have fellowship within himself that is personal. He does not need anyone and never did. He is all sufficient within himself. He is love, and that perfect love was experienced among the persons of the Godhead. John makes this astounding statement. One of those "persons" came to earth and was born of woman. We know him as Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus the Christ, which is the Messiah.

This leads us to another great truth. Jesus is himself God. There seems to be a certain discomfort that many people have in making such a direct statement. Jesus is the "Messiah" is not a problem. Jesus is the "Son of God" is not a problem. But to assert that he is God, in such a direct manner is more difficult for many. It should not be so. John knew that Isaiah had long ago prophesied that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would one day come to earth and visit his people. Isaiah said, a voice cries: *In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD: make straight in the desert a highway for our God.* (Isaiah 40:3) The word translated "LORD" is the Hebrew word "Yahweh." This

is the sacred name of God. When Moses asked what he should tell the Hebrews in Egypt about the name of their forgotten God, he was told to tell them that “I Am” had sent him. This is the verbal form of “Yahweh.” This is the true and living God and cannot be understood to be merely one of the “gods” of human construction. The God who made all things was to come to earth and bring in a new era of righteousness and blessing.

John the apostle knew that John the Baptist was the “voice” that Isaiah had prophesied about, and he knew that he had been the “forerunner” of the Lord Jesus Christ. The God of Israel had come to his people. It is no wonder that John is bold to say...the *Word was God*.

by Joe Nesom

