

# Jesus the Word

from Alistair Begg

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. John 1:1-4

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

Jesus is the Word. In today's religious and political climate this statement from the gospel of John undoubtedly challenges the very thought forms of many who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ. It challenges Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses and others, and yet the truth contained in that simple statement is vital and necessary for true Christian belief.

The Bible teaches more about the person and work of Jesus than I can adequately convey in this article, but we may begin to scratch the surface with this one concept that John declares.

When we think of Jesus being the Word we first need to know that the Word is eternal. Many of us think immediately and instinctively about Bethlehem as the beginning of his existence because this was Jesus' entry point into the world.

However, if we do so, then we think wrongly. The existence of the Word did not begin in Bethlehem. theologians throughout history have said, "here was never a time when he was not."

## **Jesus—the Word—is the Creator**

John 1:3 says, "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." We were purposefully fashioned by a creator God, and the Word was there in the act of creation. The Lord Jesus Christ—the Word—did it. Everything in the universe is ultimately a coherent expression of the Word's creative power. That's what this phrase means: "through him all things were made." There is nothing beyond the control and creative distinctiveness of the Word.

## **Jesus—the Word—was and is God**

"...and the Word was God." This is the baseline, the core of Christian faith; any other notion is a deviation from Christian truth. To say less than this is to move beyond the realm of historic Christian orthodoxy.

Growing up as a boy in Scotland, I can still remember singing a song around Christmas time, standing in a vast congregation with my tiny voice mingling with others. I held the page with my father and sang:

"Who is he in yonder stall at whose feet the shepherds fall? Who is he who stands and weeps at the grave where Lazarus sleeps? Who is he who from the grave comes to suffer, help and save?"

I said to myself, "God cries? God weeps?" I can still remember the feeling of the resounding response of the men's voices affirming in the refrain,

"'tis the Lord, oh wondrous story, 'tis the Lord the Kind of glory. And at his feet we humbly fall a crown him, crown him Lord of all."

I wasn't able to process all of the theology, but I had a sneaking suspicion that those around me had determined that what they were giving voice to in their songs was that which had taken hold in their minds, transformed their hearts, and filled their lives. "'Tis the Lord, oh wondrous story."

**Jesus—the Word—is eternal God and far vaster than a Jesus we can hook into and put in our hip pocket, a Jesus who exists to add to the sum of our total happiness.**

Sadly, many have rejected Christianity because they have been offered a different god, a small god, a god who does not demand our intellectual persuasion and submission, nor the extent of our thought, nor the crushing of our pride.

Modern Christianity often seems so trivial, so irrelevant, so extraneous because, frankly, so much of it is. But when we allow the Bible to be the source of our discovery, then our minds must bow before its immensity.

Jesus—the Word—is Elohim, the God whose name expresses the most intense and exclusive deity. John is assigning this, the greatest title of God in the Old Testament, to Jesus in the opening words of his gospel. He is the summation of the Godhead, the one who makes all other gods not only superfluous but impossible.

That is a very exclusive claim, and it affects how we deal with our Islamic, Jewish, Buddhist and Hindu friends. As I stated earlier, it also challenges our Mormon neighbors and the Jehovah's Witnesses that come to our door. In a world full of tolerance we must be ready and willing to say what the Bible makes clear: Jesus, the Word, is God.

### **The Word is God**

**Because He is God, this means that he also possesses all the attributes of God. What an immense statement! Jesus is eternal, omniscient, unchanging, omnipresent, omnipotent, and holy in his mercy, righteousness and love. The Word performs all of the functions of deity. The Word enjoys every divine prerogative.**

The glory due to the Word is precisely the glory that is due to God. That's why Paul wrote, "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11)

Jesus—the Word—and the Father are one and the same being. Jesus himself said, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30).

What does that mean? It means that Jesus is not a second God. He is not an addition to the original. He is Jehovah, the only God, the God who was and is and is to come. The first few centuries of orthodox Christianity saw intense and purposeful discussions over simple and yet important words, even letters, which could have changed the definition and truth of Jesus the Word. They repudiated the idea that Jesus was "like" God. No, they said Jesus—the Word—is one and the same being as God, the Father.

You may find this intense look at the Word insignificant. After all, why can't the message just be reduced to love? We hear everywhere that "all we need is love." But that was the Beatles, not the Bible, and the Bible itself leads us to these conclusions. Yet we also must recognize that the Bible gives us not an explanation of the truth, but rather an extrapolation of the truth. The Bible works the truth out so the concept of God being three in one, or triune, is not explained, but it is worked out in its pages.

Therefore, it is absolutely vital that we understand that Jesus—the Word—does not derive his being from his Father. He is God in his own right, co-equal, co-eternal, possessing the very deity of the Father, including the attribute of self-existence. If that were not so, then he could not be the Lord Jehovah.

**Lastly, and in a similar vein will you notice in John 1:1 that it subtly says that Jesus—the Word—is WITH God.**

You have God with God. Christ is unreservedly God, but he is not the totality of God. The Father, who is God, and the Spirit, who is God, along with the Son, who is God, make up the totality of God. Each member is unreservedly God; no one member is the totality of God. Father, Son and Spirit are not just different names for the same person, nor are they merely different faces of the same person.

God is not one being wearing three masks. He is not one being who simply has three different names. If it were, then you could not have the Word being with God. If it were, then you could not have the Word sent from God. If it were, then you could not have God forsaken by God. (Mark 15:34)

**In order to fix what seems an insurmountable dilemma, people default to thinking that there are actually three different beings, three distinct Gods.**

But that too is wrong. Rather, there are three eternal distinctions within the one God, distinctions of such an intensely personal nature that each loves the other. Together they constitute a triune life of which the very essence is love.

John 3:16 will help bring home the point: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” When God makes this truth known to us we discover that God the Father planned our salvation; he loved you and me before we loved him. God the Son procured our salvation; he died in our place and bore our sins. And finally, God the Holy Spirit applies that salvation to our hearts and to your lives.

Show me a different worldview that possesses even the smallest percentage of this profundity! Jesus is the Word and in him was life and that life was the light of men. These are thoughts that challenge the very world in which we live, and I challenge all of us to make use of them in this coming holiday season.

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