

“The Word Was God”

It would certainly not be an overstatement to say that John 1:1-18 is one of the greatest adventures in religious thought ever penned. It sets forth both the deity and the humanity of Jesus Christ. All around us, we see human degradation. Is there no help? Humanism says, “We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. No deity will save us.” John says, “There is purpose in our existence; deity has come to save us.” This article will explore John 1:1-8 and how it affirms Jesus’s divinity.

The Eternal Word

The Greek for “Word” is logos which literally means, “to pick words in order to express one’s thoughts.” It speaks of a word uttered by the human voice which embodies a conception or an idea. Greek philosophers spoke of a mediator between God and man as the “Logos.” John tells them that this mediator unknown to them is our Lord. Our Lord is the Logos of God in the sense that He is the total concept of God, deity speaking through the Son of God in the human life of a divine Person.

“With God” indicates friendship and intimacy with the Father, so as to partake of His glory (John 17:5). Lest it be supposed that Jesus was a different and inferior being, John here states that He was God. There is no more unequivocal declaration in the Bible than this, and there could be no stronger proof that the sacred writer meant to affirm that the Son of God was equal with and yet distinct from the Father.

John now carefully states that this close and intimate union existed from all eternity. This explains the plural pronouns used of God in Genesis 1-2 during the creation process. John furthermore states that Jesus is Creator (cf. Colossians 1:16-17; Hebrews 1:2). All things were made by Him, whether spirit or matter, terrestrial or celestial, visible or invisible. Jesus was not only called God, but He did the works of God. There is no higher proof of omnipotence than the work of creation; and God often appeals to that work to prove that He is the true God (Psalm 24:2; 89:11; Proverbs 3:19). Thus the deity of Jesus is affirmed since He is one who possesses omnipotence.

In Jesus there was life and light. God is declared to be life, or the living God, because He is the source or fountain of life. This attribute here is ascribed to Jesus Christ. He not only made the material world, but He also gave it life. John uses this word 35 times in the gospel to denote spiritual life. Thus, He who is the source of all life came into the world to give eternal life to those who believe.

"Light" involves intellect and understanding. The eternal Life that formed and governs the creation enlightens men as to the existence and power of God by that very creation (Acts 14:16-17). The Word is the source of all knowledge, particularly as it relates to man's right relationship with God. In the Bible, darkness commonly denotes ignorance or guilt. Christ's efforts to enlighten and save man have been like light struggling to penetrate a thick, dense cloud. The word "comprehend" means to "receive." The darkness did not receive or admit the rays of light. Sin always blinds the mind to the beauty and excellency of Jesus. It blocks the mind to receive His instructions.

The Role Of John The Baptist

John was sent from God. Jesus' formal ministry was preceded by John the Baptist, who was divinely commissioned by God and who announced the coming Messiah (John 1:20-23). If John the Baptist is the prophesied har-binger (Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:3), and if John pointed out Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God, then it necessarily follows that Jesus is the coming One or the Lord. The connection here yields proof to the deity of Jesus.

John bore witness of the light. John did not bear witness specifically to the facts of Jesus's history, but to the person of Jesus as the Son of God (John 1:15, 34). Thus John the Baptist has come to bear witness to the Word as the light of the world (John 1:8). This was John's purpose and God equipped Him for that task (John 1:31-34). The statement that John was not the light was an explicit declaration designed to satisfy all the disciples of John who wanted to elevate him. This gospel is careful to point out that while John's place in God's plan is high, he is still subordinate to Christ (John 3:25-30).

From the abundant evidence offered in the prologue of John's gospel and in the proofs offered in Jesus's words, titles and works, one cannot conclude anything else but that Jesus is God's Son. In the next article we will study how the Word became flesh and discuss the humanity of Jesus.

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