

Sermon Outline

“LIFE IN HIS NAME”: THE PURSUIT OF WHOLENESS AND THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

GOD IS THE FIRST WORD (JOHN 1:1)

I. Introduction

II. The Word and God Are Distinct

- A. However we understand what John means, we cannot contradict what has been suggested earlier, namely, that both *the Word and God are two distinct persons*.
- B. The Word and God may share an intimacy no other will ever know. Yet, for all that, the Word and God are two different persons.

III. As Much God as God!

- A. What does it mean when John says that “the Word was God”? In what sense was the Word *God*?
- B. The word “God” may be used in two senses.
 - 1. In the first instance (“the Word was with *God*”), the word “God” refers to the One who initiated the creation of the universe in Genesis 1.
 - 2. In the second instance (“the Word was *God*,” or more literally, “*God* was the Word”), “God” describes the nature (and points to the identity) of the Word (Craig Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary, Vol. 1*, 374; Gary Burge, *John*, 55; D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, 117).
 - a. The Word is of the same nature/species as the God who initiated the creation of the universe—the species of God.
 - b. Since God is of a class of his own, God is his own species. God is his own God.

- c. To say that the “the Word was God” is to say that the Word was as much *God* as the creator God himself.
- C. Since the Word was with God from the very beginning, all this makes perfect sense. After all...
1. Who or what else could have dwelled with God in such close proximity?
 2. Who or what else could have been with God as long as God has lived?
 3. Who else could be called the Word of God if not the One who shares the same nature as God himself?
- D. So we are led to acknowledge that, in some mysterious way, in a way that we don't fully understand and yet is fully true, “the Word was God” or “God was the Word.”

IV. Our Triune God

- A. We are ready to tie three important strands of truth together.
- B. First: There is only one Lord God YHWH who created the heavens and the earth.
1. The most basic principle in Judaism is monotheism, the belief that there is only one true God whose name is YHWH, and that YHWH deserves our absolute devotion and dependence.
 2. Key monotheistic texts of Israel:
 - Exodus 20:2-3: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ‘You shall have no other gods before me.’”
 - Deuteronomy 6:4-5: “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. ⁵You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”
- C. Second: The one Lord God YHWH is Father, Word/Son, and Holy Spirit.
1. These are three distinct persons.
 - The Father is not the Word; the Word is not the Holy Spirit; the Holy Spirit is not the Father.

2. If we say that God is all one person, we contradict “the Word was *with* God.”
- D. Third: Each of these persons in the one YHWH is fully God in nature.
1. John 1:1: “the Word was God” or “God was the Word.”
 2. When we take other passages in Scripture into consideration, we have to come to the same conclusion about the Holy Spirit.
 - Acts 5:3, 4: “But Peter said, ‘Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land? ⁴ While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not at your disposal? Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to man but to God.”
 3. The Holy Spirit is as much God as the Word and as the Father.
- E. Those are three strands of truth that come together around John 1:1.
1. Once again, here they are:
 - a. There was and is and will always be only one God.
 - b. This one God whom we call “Lord” contains three distinct persons, Father, Son/Word, and the Holy Spirit.
 - c. Each of these persons is as much God in substance/essence as the others.
 2. Together, these three truths form the doctrine of the Trinity, one of the most central doctrines of the Christian Faith.
 - a. The one true Lord God comes to us in three persons.
 - b. 2 Corinthians 13:14: “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

V. The Lord God—the All-Powerful, All-Dependable Word

- A. Because the Word is God, the Word is nothing less than a full God-person with all the attributes and powers of God in himself.

1. Like God the Ordainer, the Word is infinite in his being.
 2. Like God the Ordainer, the Word is eternal in duration.
 3. Like God the Ordainer, the Word is unchangeable in his perfection.
- B. Because the Word is God and shares in the identity of the one true God of Israel, the Lord YHWH, the Word of God deserves and requires our absolute adoration, devotion, and obedience.
1. The Word deserves our full worship.
 2. The Word is the Lord God in Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Exodus 20:2-3.
- C. Because the Word is God, the Word will succeed in everything that he has been sent to do.
1. The Word is the all-powerful, all-competent Agent of God the Ordainer.
 2. Where he goes, God goes. What he does, God does.
 3. When the Word assumes human form in Jesus, he says to us:

All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. ⁴⁰ For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.” (Jn 6:37-40 ESV)

- D. Conclusion: Because the Word is God, we can trust in him for wholeness and eternal life.

VI. Why Must All People Trust and Obey Jesus?

The bold and shocking answer, based on John 1:1, is that this Jewish rabbi Jesus—who spoke Hebrew and Aramaic, who wore sandals, attended synagogue, ate fish, cut wood, performed

miracles, and lived his whole life as one seamless act of obedience to God—was none other than the physical manifestation of the eternal and everlasting Word of God. He was the eternal Word who was with God from the very beginning. He was the Word who witnessed the birth of the very first stars, who called them out of nothing. He was the eternal Word who is God in himself. And who better to reveal the mind of God than Jesus who is the Lord GOD himself? And from Jesus, we learn what God's will for each human being is—that everyone who looks to Jesus and believes in him will have eternal life and be raised up on the last day (Jn 6:40). Why does the world need to take the Lord Jesus Christ seriously? Because he is the Lord our God. Because he is our only Hope for the future (Jn 6:40). Let us trust in him.