

And the Word was God

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[0 : 00] I should like us to read God's Word this morning from the Gospel according to John. We read in chapter 1, John's Gospel, chapter 1, and we can read from the beginning of the chapter down to the verse 18.

Gospel of John, chapter 1, and at verse 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.

He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world.

[1 : 17] He was in the world, and the world was made through him. Yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the world became flesh, and dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory, glorious of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John bore witness about him, and cried out, This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.

And from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

[2 : 25] No one has ever seen God, the only God, who is at the Father's side. He has made him known. Amen.

We trust that God will bless the public reading of his own holy and inspired word, and to his name be the praise and the glory.

Now, I should like us this morning for a wee while together to turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, a familiar portion of God's word to us.

And I just want to read again the verse 1. John's Gospel, chapter 1 and verse 1. Verse 1.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[3 : 32] it is really with maybe a feeling of awe that one comes to a text such as this one and maybe too with a sense of insignificance that one comes and approaches this kind of text of scripture it would seem at the outset when you read the text itself that there is a maybe that it is simple but there is and are depths in that text that people and men and women just cannot really grasp a hundred percent and fully but we come to it today and we pray that the Lord would maybe teach us something from it for our edification and for and to the glory of his own name when you read the first book of the kings we are told that that when king Solomon dedicated the temple at that time he asked a question and the question he asked was but will God indeed dwell on the earth a good question

God's glory had dwelt in the tabernacle in the holy of holies in the Shekinah glory and indeed God's glory had also dwelt as well in the temple but then as we know that glory had departed from a disobedient Israel God's glory had departed from them but then this marvelous thing comes about here and the glory of God comes again to his people in the person of his son the Lord Jesus Christ and it was given to John the apostle to write a book for both Jews and Gentiles presenting Jesus as

the son of God and the verses 1 to 18 in the first chapter of John are often

I suppose as you know well they are called the prologue they are an introduction to the entire gospel of John itself but let me suggest as well that it is also like an overture in the sense that it introduces key themes and words which John will use over and over again in the course of his gospel in relation to who the Lord Jesus Christ is and the work that the Lord Jesus Christ has come to do you have words there like the light you have words like truth and all these different concepts light and darkness you have truth you have life you have eternal life you have all of these different words and different key themes that John is introducing as an overture to the gospel itself

Jesus Christ is the truth he is going to be the truth and the truth is going to be revealed in his person about who God really is John speaks at length here as Jesus being the light as well what does he mean by saying that Jesus is the light well there are many things that you could say around that but surely as the light Jesus displays the attributes of almighty God in his own person the light of God is seen in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ the truth is revealed in the life of the Lord Jesus Christ the truth is about who God is and all these things are revealed by Jesus as the truth and as the light he displays the attributes of God in his person there is also the theme there of life of eternal life the Lord Jesus Christ comes to give life he comes to give eternal life he comes to give the life of God to those who come to believe in his name and so he is the truth about who God really is because he is himself God he is the light and he displays the attributes of God in his own person because he is God and he gives life he gives eternal life he gives the life of God to those who come to believe in his name because he is himself God and when you look at this gospel closely you find that the gospel itself it has within it and it contains many things that the other three gospels omit but yet at the same time it omits many things which the other three gospels contain the other gospels or the other gospel writers have as much to say about the divinity of Christ about justification by faith about the offices of Christ and about the work of God the Holy Spirit and even about the privileges of the people of God as John has in his gospel

[9 : 45] I'm not saying that the other three gospels are silent on these things of course they're not but in John's gospel these things they stand out prominently they stand out like beacons the divinity of Christ justification by faith the offices of Christ the work of God the Holy Spirit and the very privileges that are enjoyed by the people of God these things stand out like beacons on these verses at the beginning of chapter one contain what can only be described as a sublime statement concerning the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ and of who the Lord Jesus Christ really is in the beginning was the Christ and the Christ was with

God and the Christ was God so what can we say firstly of this one who chapter verse 14 tells us who became flesh of this one who came to save us from our sins what can we say firstly here about him well the Lord Jesus Christ firstly is the eternal word he is the eternal word John tells us that in the beginning was the word the word is none other than Jesus before his incarnation incarnation means enfleshment before he came in the flesh the word is none other than Jesus before his enfleshment and the very very first doctrine that

John reveals to us in his gospel is that Jesus Christ is God that is his first teaching it is his first doctrine Jesus is the eternal word Jesus is co-equal with God the Father and Jesus is truly God so in his introduction John takes us right back to the very beginning of the Bible and to the opening verses of the book of Genesis in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and he wants us to know that in the beginning was the word the word was there at the beginning the word was there even before the beginning the word has always been there in the eternity of God and in the circle of that eternity there has never been a time when the word has not been he has always been he was there before anything was made he was there before anything was created before anything else existed the word the son of God was he was there existing as the second person of the trinity he was and is the eternal son of God there is not a

Christmas card or a nativity scene that can portray and picture this aspect of the Lord Jesus Christ he had no origin or cause no rather he was himself the origin and the cause of everything he had no beginning rather all things have their beginning in him and he was not created rather he was the one who himself created all things what does John say through him all things were made without him nothing was made that has been made in the beginning was the word you know

Christ the word is the image of the father's mind he is the image of the father's mind he is the express image of the father's person he is to ask the word the eternal wisdom and will of God you know my friends when you think and I think of our own words if our words are honest and if our

words are sincere they are the image and they are the representation of our minds Christ was and is the image and representation of the father's mind and this Jesus communicates the mind of God and he communicates the wisdom of God and the will of

[15 : 42] God to us as the human race because he is the son of God who took out flesh and lived among us he became flesh and he dwelt among us one author says Jesus is the eternal word precisely because he eternally reflects the mind of God and in time and history reveals that mind to humanity he is the person in whom the wisdom of God is preeminently revealed now my friends when you and I when we read and when we absorb these great truths concerning the Lord

Jesus Christ that he is the eternal word that this is God manifest in human flesh it does bring to us that sense of awe as to who he is to what he is to what he has always been but it does something else surely as well doesn't it surely it brings to our minds something else surely when we look at this and we look at this Christ and that this Christ had to come into this world surely we cannot but realize as we do the incredible sinfulness and the depravity of our sin the sins that he came to rescue us from how can we see all of this in this well do we not see even in this verse the kind of being that the redeemer of mankind needs to be in order to provide eternal redemption for sinners no one less than the eternal

God the creator and the preserver of all things could take away the sins of his people and blot the sins of his people out and so sin my friends must be far more must be a far more abominable thing in the sight of the Lord than we really suppose the correct measure of what sin really is and the correct measure of sin's sinfulness can be gauged by looking at the very dignity of him who came to save these sinners sinners if Christ is so great then sin must indeed be very sinful and so it is the Lord Jesus Christ the eternal word who had to come to rescue sinners such as we are and he is the eternal word but I want to say that this eternal word the Lord Jesus Christ that he is distinct from God the Father and yet at the same time he is one with him distinct from the Father but at the same time he is one with him what does John say John says the word was with God he was with God and that means that from all eternity there was this most intimate union between the first and the second persons of the

Trinity between Christ the word and God the Father and yet although they were inseparably united the word and the Father from all eternity were two very distinct persons they existed in the closest possible union and with the closest possible connection it is implied that they were towards each other that they were facing each other throughout the ages of eternity he was with the Father but he was a distinct personality from the Father it was to the word that the Father had said let us make man in our own image and you know the nature of this union between the

[21 : 16] Father and the Son it is beyond our understanding but yet it brings to my mind the way in which Augustine tried to simply explain this and Augustine said it's like the sun and its rays or it's like the fire and the light of the fire which though two distinct things are yet inseparably united so that where the one is the other is also you see like the fire and the light and the sun and its rays where God the Father was from all eternity there was also the word there was also the Son their glory was co-equal their majesty was co-eternal but yet their

God head was one Jesus himself said I am in the Father and the Father in me I and the Father are one he that has seen me has seen the Father we need to fully understand that the Father and the Son are two distinct persons in the Trinity that they are co-equal and co-eternal and yet they are one in substance and they are inseparably united and they are undivided it's interesting to remember as well how carefully John writes that and how he puts it where he writes that the word was with God he doesn't say God was with

God he says the word was with God and and he did that because he would wish for us to remember that there are not two gods but one there is only one God but yet the word was with God and the word was God he was with him and was him at the same time he was with him and was him at the same time distinct from God the father and yet one with him oh how deep these mysteries really are aren't they but again this is an emblem this is a picture of the one who had to come into this world to redeem us from our sins he was with

God God and at the same time he was God and that is what we learn here thirdly that the eternal word is God John makes that quite clear he tells us the word was God this would all seem to mean that the Lord Jesus Christ the eternal word that he was in nature and in essence and substance that he was very God and that as the father is God so also the son is God you know the word my friends is not some kind of created angel or something or he is not some kind of being who is inferior to

God the father or some kind of inferior being who has been invested by God the father with power to redeem sinners that is not who the word is he is nothing less than perfect God equal to the father as touching his God head he who is here called God is uncreated and is eternal there is no inferiority in the word to God the father no inferiority whatsoever not at all the God head of the father and the son and the holy spirit is all one but they are distinct persons they have distinct functions they have distinct offices yes there are all these distinctions but they are one and they are

[26 : 31] God they are one God they think the same they act the same they will the same they cannot differ in any thought they cannot differ in any action this is where the sameness comes from as God they are all knowing and so there is no reason for there to be any kind of dichotomy within the God head they all know the end from the beginning the God head is not tainted by sin and so there is no dichotomy there can be no dichotomy so they are all one he was God he was not our God he was God but he was not God the Father and he was not

God the Spirit but he was God the Son the eternal word as we said he was distinct in personality in his office but he was yet God they are distinct in their offices but yet they are one and as I said they are one because they are all the same in mind in purpose in will in their thoughts in every action in every single conceivable way they think the same they will the same they act the same if it was to be any other way then the Godhead would fall apart it would not be one God this is what makes them one and there has been and never will be anything in the

Godhead that will alter that oneness you know when you consider that I could sit with one of yourselves and we could sit and we could discuss theology we can discuss the Bible and we can go for a half an hour to an hour and we will agree we will be of one mind but eventually there will come some kind of disagreement there will be something on which we will not see eye to eye even in the manner in which we apply scripture or whatever there will be some kind of disagreement maybe after half an hour maybe after an hour imagine an eternity with three very distinct persons and never a dichotomy never a difference of opinion all willing and thinking the same always pointing in the same direction never questioning one another from eternity to eternity without dichotomy no wonder it is one they are eternally in one mind they are one and so because of that John can say the word was God he was very God what are we to take from all of this for ourselves how can we in our own modern day and in our own lives today how can we take any kind of application out of all of this for ourselves is there any kind of comfort is there any kind of instruction is there anything that we can take from all of these things for our souls well surely when we consider who this Jesus really is we are reminded about the Christian's foundation and strength and hope aren't we we are not resting our hopes today on any but on the one who was and is God we learn that the saviour in whom we trust is nothing less than eternal God one who is able to save to the uttermost all who come to the father by him he that is the eternal word and who was with God and who was God is also while Emmanuel is also the God that is with us today with his people and the truth that Jesus Christ is God surely means that his death on the cross that it was something that was significant it means that in this way he himself became the one sufficient and acceptable sacrifice for man's sins he died in our place in my room and in my place he died nothing less than this was going to do any other man would have been a sinner by nature we are all sinners every single one of us who has come from

[32 : 48] Adam and Eve are sinners and the only sin that a human being could die for would be his own or her own sins no human natural human being could die for the sins of anyone else they could only die for their own sin but this is what sets him apart in his perfection and in his holiness in that he is God he is sinless and so when he died he died for the sins of his people he died in their place and he removed forever the burden of sin for those who believe on his name nothing else was going to do no one else could have stood in that place but only he who is the second person of the trinity only he who was with

God and only he who is God only he who is eternal and who is sinless taking upon himself our flesh dwelling among us and then dying for us as an acceptable sacrifice only that sacrifice would appease the father's anger and justice only him bearing shame and scoffing rude in my place condemned he stood sealed my pardon with his blood hallelujah what a savior as the eternal word who took upon himself flesh dies on the cross my goodness isn't this again as I said earlier an emblem and a picture of what our sin cost and what it cost to redeem us from our sins what a cost and you know my friends just in closing because because

Jesus Christ our savior because he is the eternal word because he is God it means that today whatever is in your experience he is able to satisfy all the needs of your heart God is infinite but Jesus is also infinite and because of that he is able to satisfy you and me out of that inexhaustible immensity he is able to satisfy our hearts what about you in here today maybe who are as yet without Christ what of you take a look today at this and look at what it cost that a savior come into the world to save you from your sins and you look at this cost and you look at this Christ how can you walk through that door today and not consider what the Lord has done for you and not do something about it and I say respectfully throwing it back in his face that that the one who was the eternal word and who was eternally with God and who was God himself taking upon himself our nature laying aside his glory and pulling upon himself the coat and the robes of our nature so that he could come into this world and offer his life as a sacrifice to save us from our sins it was none less than God himself who came none less than God himself who in human flesh died on the cross but that death could only be efficacious that death could only work this great work for sinners because in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God only he was sufficient and only his death would be efficient in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God praise the Lord praise the Lord that he came praise the Lord that he took upon himself our nature our flesh that he dwelt among us and that he died for helpless souls such as we are so that we could be reunited and have communion and fellowship with God restored through him who is the way the truth and the life we'll leave it there let us pray