

Jesus, the Word of God

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[0 : 0 0] We'll delve a little into verse 4. Jesus, the Word of God. The Word in the beginning, the Word was with God. The Word was God.

Jesus, the Word of God. And in our evening services, God willing, as God leads, I'd like to focus our thoughts on the person of Jesus.

Of course, we should do this in every service, whether an evening service such as this or a morning service, whether we're preaching from the Old Testament, whether we're preaching from the New Testament.

Every sermon, every address should point to the Lord Jesus. We have to say this. We have to be honest and say that any preacher who preaches a sermon without Jesus at the centre, without pointing you to the Lord Jesus, that preacher failing in his call to direct you to the Saviour.

Remember what Jesus said to the two followers on the Emmaus Road after Jesus' resurrection. Remember when he told them that in all the Scriptures were things concerning himself.

[1 : 1 3] Of course, that is the case. Well, that is the case. Because we do need to continue to explore these key aspects of Jesus' life that tell us of his identity, who Jesus is.

And we do so, yes, to worship God, to call upon his name, to honour and glorify our Saviour. We do so remember to grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus.

And if we're going to be, and those of you who are joining us this evening, if you're going to be part of a Christ-centred church, if you're going to be a Christ-centred believer, you'll want to spend time just dwelling on the Lord Jesus, just dwelling on Christ.

You know, getting to know him more deeply and doing so by being guided by Scripture as you worship him, as you meditate upon our Saviour, as you consider the Lord Jesus as he's made known to us, as he's revealed in Scripture.

And so I pray that the times that we have and in these evening services, certainly, and indeed in all services, will be times that are well spent in the presence of God as we seek to honour him, even through these times of worship, as we turn to Scripture and learn more about our Lord and Saviour Jesus.

[2 : 4 1] We can never tire of this act of worship, never tire of this time of learning, learning of Jesus and giving him the glory.

And as we read there in these first few verses of John's Gospel, we've read them so often, we've heard them so often, maybe even you've heard them preached on on many occasions.

That can never detract from the importance of continuing to hear these words again, to receive them again, to dwell on them again, and yes, to use them to come before God in worship and to apply what we read here in Scripture, to apply the Word of God in your daily walk with God as you seek to serve him, as you seek to honour him, as you seek to follow the Lord Jesus.

So what do we find then in these verses, these words? Well, we see, first of all, the Word in the beginning. What did we read in Scripture?

We read, in the beginning was the Word. We read in verse 2, he was in the beginning with God. We read in verse 3, all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

[4 : 04] And however many times you read these words, these opening words, this prologue, if you like, this introduction to John's Gospel, how many times you read them, surely they should never cease to make you stop in your tracks and really pause at the majesty, at the beauty, the depth, the wonder of these simple and yet profound words of Scripture.

These are utterly profound words of truth. These are utterly profound words concerning our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I mean, even though John actually doesn't mention the name of Jesus until much further on in this prologue, in this introduction, you know that he's referring to Jesus when he mentions, when he speaks of the Word.

Then he goes on to speak about the Word in terms of using the masculine pronouns, he or him, when he's indicating the Word's humanity. This opening then, this opening introduction, as we know, is so different to the other Gospels.

There's a very good reason why John has done this, why John has introduced Jesus in this way. He's introduced Jesus as the Word. I mean, John, in his brilliance as an author, obviously, through divine inspiration, John, certainly in the first instance, was writing to to both Jewish and non-Jewish readers.

And to his Jewish readers, they would connect with the Word, the Word that was in the beginning, they would connect that right back to Genesis chapter 1, in their scripture, the Old Testament.

[5 : 54] The very first words of scripture, as you know, were, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and creation being described as having been spoken. You know, in Genesis 1, and God said, and God said, God spoke the Word, and creation came into being, and creation in all its glorious splendor.

So to the Jewish readers, they would connect with the Word in the beginning, in relation to God, in his glory, in his power. But then to non-Jewish readers, to the Gentiles, John's addressing them to their understanding of the Word.

You all know that the Greek word for Word is logos. And for those Greek speakers who heard and who read of the logos, they connect that word in their philosophical concept of reason, the cause of all that exists.

But of course, John is going way beyond even a philosophical understanding of the Word. He's pointing us to the true source of all that exists. And so we can bring all this forward logically.

If John's saying that in the beginning was the Word, and the Word's that which form the universe, the Word from which all exists, and that Word, this person, was in the beginning, he's telling us something monumental about this person who's the Word.

[7 : 28] John's telling us that this person's eternal. This person doesn't derive his existence within time as we derive our existences within time.

John's telling us that this person is beyond time, he's beyond time and space. That this person has timeless existence. We might put it like this, that in the beginning there was a person who had no beginning.

When time began, when God created the heavens and the earth, when he created time itself, there was someone who was eternal.

That someone whom John is going to tell us about who came into this world of space and time is this Word. The Word is Jesus. And that the Word was in the beginning and that creation came into being by the Word of God.

Again, we have to just pause and reflect on what truly is wonderful in this reality. Because what John's telling us here, he's telling us that the world that we live in, the world that has existed since creation itself, this world is no accident.

[8 : 44] This world that we live in, the universe that we live within, is no, some kind of, you know, transformation, chance occurrences.

We don't exist in some kind of impersonal universe. No, because we live in a universe behind which is a person. A person who's created meaning and purpose and love and fellowship, relationships, because the Word was in the beginning.

The Word who existed from all eternity, from all eternity, had that eternal relationship with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

The Word who had that eternal relationship and eternal love, and eternal fellowship, eternal being, the Word was in the beginning.

this tells us of the greatness of the Word, the greatness of Jesus through whom all things were created. And so when we grasp what John is telling us here, then this isn't the gentle Jesus, meek and wild, that so often we confine simply to a manger.

[10 : 04] This isn't a merely good man confined to the pages of ancient history. the Word is no created being. The Word, Jesus, is the uncreated eternal Word of God.

And as John describes the Word in these opening words of his Gospel, we have to say for ourselves, for yourself as a Christian, this isn't the Jesus whom so often we limit in our own thinking, even as Christians.

because so often if we're to be utterly honest with ourselves, so often we limit Jesus. Even in our thinking we limit him. So often we simply confine Jesus to 33 years on earth.

And in fact, as Scripture tells us here, he's the eternal one. He's the one who was in the beginning. And, you know, we have to make our confession.

We confess that, you know, we can even limit his love for his own if we're failing to perceive his eternal being. Because his eternal being includes his eternal love for you.

[11 : 22] Jesus, the Word, has an eternal being. He, the Word, is your Savior. This is the eternal Word of God who existed before God created the heavens and the earth.

and the mystery of that truth that's been revealed by Jesus through his speech, through the Word of God.

This is the same Jesus who walked the earth. The same Jesus who walked the earth traversed eternity before time was created.

These are just mind-blowing words, but words of truth. Before even the universe was created, the Word was. This is the same Jesus who spoke with men while on earth.

The same Jesus, the same Word, communicated eternally within the Trinity. The same Jesus whom you follow by faith. He knew you from all eternity.

[12 : 25] So let's never ever limit Jesus as to who he is. So you follow Jesus who was in the beginning. You continue to know him and trust in him and deepen your knowledge of the Savior, the Word who was in the beginning.

Secondly, the Word was with God. As we read in verse one, the Word was with God. When we speak of somebody being with someone, it usually suggests a coming alongside the person or some kind of relationship and certainly a close intimate relationship with another person.

And so when we see here Jesus, the Word being described as being with God, that certainly indicates that aspect of his relationship with the Father, with the Spirit.

The eternal relationship that the Word has with God, with God, certainly in relation to the Father, the Son to God the Father.

But I think we can also say this, that when Jesus, or when John, rather, speaks of the Word being with God, we've got to look at obviously the original language in which this was first written.

[13 : 45] And the sense of what we have here is that the Word was towards God. In other words, the Word, Jesus, the Word is a distinct person.

He's distinct. But the Word who's distinct comes, or eternally comes towards God the Father, and that eternal bond of love between the Son and the Father.

You can put it like this, that Jesus, the Son, the Word, was eternally face-to-face with God in that eternal union with God. And so we really do have to explore this a little more freely, that what these words convey concerning that the Word was with God.

It tells us, as we said, it tells us of Jesus as a distinct person in the Godhead. That's something we really do have to ponder on and to grasp in all its magnitude.

It was the Word, Jesus, who came from heaven to earth and became flesh, the distinct person.

[14 : 53] God the Father, it wasn't God the Holy Spirit who came from heaven to earth in human form. It was the Word. It was the Word, it was Jesus who prayed to his Father.

It was the Word, as Paul tells us, it was the Word who, being in the form of God, made himself nothing. It was the Word, it was Jesus, in whom the Holy Spirit came in the form of a dove, Jesus' baptism.

is the Word, the distinct person within the God name. And we can say further, we can say this, that there was never a time when the Word was not with God.

There was never a time when Jesus, the Son of God, didn't enjoy that relationship, that eternal relationship with God. And really this brings us surely to the wonder of Jesus' love for sinners, that Jesus, as the Word was prepared to go to the cross and, yes, suffer the dereliction of his Father.

Remember when Jesus cried out, my God, my God, why have you persecuted me? Why are you forsaking me rather? This is the one who had been with God, in love, had been eternally towards God.

[16 : 15] And in that moment of his sin bearing, aware of his being bereft of God, all because of his love for you, meant that he must give his life for you, that he must be made sin, so that you might not face the punishment that sin deserves.

So Jesus being with God, Jesus being towards God, meant that his love for his Father, his eternal love for his Father, would mean that he didn't disobey his Father's will, didn't disobey his Father when Jesus came to be our representative and take our place in the cross.

And that's the eternal love of Jesus, the love of Jesus for his Father, and indeed the love of Jesus for all who are his, for all for whom Jesus came to give his life.

Next week we think that Jesus isn't divine. John goes on to tell us of the eternal truth of the word. the word was God.

Again, we read in verse 1, and the word was with God. And I think we have to say this, that it's that statement, it's in the statement that you'll either rise or fall with Jesus.

[17 : 37] It's this statement that has caused so many people to stumble at these words and, well, these words that tell us quite unequivocally quite clearly that Jesus was God, that Jesus is God in himself.

The word was God. Four simple words in any language, and yet the depth of these words is, we have to say, is unfathomable. Jesus was God.

And then you might ask, well, why is it was God? Why not is God? Why is it the word was God? Well, surely this, that the word Jesus was God. He never became God because he always was God.

There was never a time when he was not God. So because the word was God, it means that Jesus isn't, you know, subordinate to God, but he's fully God.

Jesus reveals God because he is God. You know, when we think of the history of redemption, the history of salvation, as we find the history recorded in scripture, even that revealing of God in Old Testament times and lead up to the point of Jesus' incarnation, of course, the revealing of God was by angels and prophets.

[18 : 58] When Jesus came in human flesh, the word of God, the word came to reveal God, make God known by his word. God. It's this, that the word was God.

This has so divided humanity, this aspect of the unity of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. It's divided mankind. It's brought the most intense opposition to Jesus, the word.

Even think of the times when Jesus was on earth, when he claimed deity before the religious elite of the day. these religious leaders, they wanted to kill Jesus precisely because Jesus claimed deity, he claimed divinity, he claimed to be divine.

And the claim that Jesus gave was utterly unambiguous. It's that claim that brought men to seek to destroy his life. It's the one whom John tells us in verse 4 that who was life and him was life and the life was the light of men.

And yet his own wouldn't receive him and sought to destroy the one who is the life, the one who is life and the one who is life. And it's the light that so many refused then that continue to refuse now because of the darkness of their souls and refusing to acknowledge Jesus as divine.

[20 : 29] Of course, it's not just when Jesus was on earth that his deity and his claim to deity was caused division and opposition. It's happened through the ages.

It's happening even in our present day. Think of other religions, for example, that will give Jesus some kind of recognition that they won't accept Jesus as divine, as the Son of God, as the eternal word.

Or think of sects such as the Jewish witnesses, Mormons, who refuse to accept the divinity of Jesus and twist scripture to try and prove their views.

Certainly before the pandemic, we saw them at the outside railway stations, appearing so plausible, even appearing as wolves in sheep's clothing, appearing most friendly.

But remember, man looks at the outward appearance, God looks at the heart. And so let's just bring all this together in a short time of worship this evening.

[21 : 36] What have we read? What do these words tell us about Jesus as the eternal word who was with God, who was God? Look at what they tell us about scripture.

It's so utterly reassuring to be introduced to Jesus in the way that John does it here. Because remember that John wasn't there in the beginning, yet John knew of the word who was in the beginning, because God revealed to John this depth of knowledge, this extent of knowledge that could only come from God himself.

We see that, of course, throughout scripture. Think of Moses, when Moses wrote the book of Genesis. Moses wasn't in the beginning when God created the heavens and the air.

God revealed to him that knowledge through divine inspiration. And so we can absolutely and utterly affirm the truth of scripture as being of divine source.

God has directed men of old to write down as God is so inspired. And so even the very words of John chapter 1 about the eternal being of Jesus, about his deity, the deity of Jesus, God has revealed his eternity, the truth.

[22 : 58] Again, we're going to affirm by faith that John is truly conveying truth. It's truth that you can trust. It's truth that drives you to follow the Savior.

It's truth that abides, truth that's eternal, because God is eternal. God's revealed his eternity, even through his word.

God's faith that surely should give you confidence as you read your Bible, even in this year that has begun as you commit to read through scripture. You can trust everything you read in God's word, trusting every aspect of what you learn through reading his word.

That as you're led by his word, as you're guided by his word, then you have that absolute trust and confidence that this is the word of God that direct you, how you might glorify God and enjoy him forever.

And so if the teaching of scripture comes from our eternal God, and since Jesus is eternal, then the Bible's never out of date.

[24 : 08] What you learn of Jesus, well, of course, it has presence, it has eternal significance, eternal importance for you now and for generations to come until the eternal word, eternal Jesus returns to earth when he comes to wind up time and when he comes to bring in the new heavens and new earth.

It will have no end. So what if your approach then to Jesus, the word, what about you and your seeing Jesus and your knowing Jesus, how do you truly grasp the privilege that's yours and being loved by him and you're knowing him and you're serving him?

You know, we live in a world, we live in a society where, you know, so many people make claims, you know, about themselves and somehow boosting themselves and saying that they know somebody, maybe somebody famous, somebody who's got a particular status in society and this kind of reflected glory that comes from saying that you know such and such an individual.

But knowing Jesus is different. Knowing Jesus is this most wonderful privilege that you can have. And it's not for any kind of self-pride, but a humble gratitude you have in knowing him who first loved you and who first knew you from all eternity.

The word who was in the beginning knew you, loved you from all eternity. And if you know Jesus the word, if you know the logos of God, then you know the one who's gone.

[25 : 56] You know the one who's face to face with God. You know the one who's eternal. And in knowing him who's eternal, you have that promise of being face to face with him, knowing Jesus the word.

And so we can rejoice then, rejoice in that joy, that humble joy. And you can make your claim to know that Jesus is Lord and that you know him as your Lord and Savior.

This is the eternal word, the word who was with God, the word who was gone. And that he should so love you. You have that promise of being with him eternally.

Somebody's put it like this, this being with God, knowing him, knowing the word, knowing Jesus. This is the grandest, the greatest, the largest and most mind-stretching experience of human existence.

The grandest, the greatest, the largest and the most mind-stretching experience of human existence. And if that's the case, then not to know Jesus, not to become a Christian, really has to be the complete opposite of the grandest, greatest, largest, most mind-stretching experience of all human existence.

[27 : 15] In fact, not knowing Jesus, we have to say, is the most pitiable, most distressing, most desperate experience of human existence.

if you haven't come yet to know Jesus as Savior, don't put off that moment any longer. Because not knowing the eternal word of God, that will mean an eternity apart from him.

But knowing him, knowing the word of God, knowing the Savior, knowing Jesus, will mean an eternity with him. And with him, and an eternal love, that love, the promise is never to leave you, never to forsake you, but to be with you always.

You who do know Jesus, it's not a passive knowing, it's not a passive knowing, and don't be passive in knowing Jesus. Because in knowing Jesus, you have a responsibility to come before your Savior with, you might put it like this, with fresh love, fresh worship, a renewed understanding of who Jesus is as the eternal word of God.

So don't confine your Savior, don't confine Jesus in any kind of limited way. Yes, see him with new eyes. See him with eyes of faith.

[28 : 40] Look upon him with eyes of adoration. As you live for him. As you live for the one who came for you, who gave himself for you, that you might have, and that you might know eternal life, that you might share in that eternal kingdom, the eternal kingdom of the eternal word, the word who came, or who came to bring you by faith into his kingdom, that eternal kingdom of life, that eternal kingdom of joy, the eternal kingdom of the Lord Jesus.

Amen. May God bless to us these few thoughts on this great, great testimony of the word, the word who was in the beginning, the word who was with God, and the word who was coming.

Amen. Let us pray. Our heavenly Father, as you draw us to yourself by your word, we pray, Lord, that we will truly know you, and follow you, and trust in you, and rely on you, and know that truly you are the one who has loved us from all eternity.

Lord, we can never cease to thank you for that eternal love. May we truly be given the strength to show it, to show our love for you, in service of your name, in doing your will, and taking delight so to do that will.

Hear us, Lord, as we continue in worship before you now. Bless, Lord, all who have been worshipping this evening. Bless, Lord, we pray that they may truly know the one who is, was the word, who was with you, and who is your son, your eternal son, begotten, begotten saviour, begotten Lord.

[30 : 39] We thank you, Lord, for your care over us. Continue with us now, Lord, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.