

No.10, John – Christ the Godman

We have already noted that the first three Gospels view Christ together; and this fact is denoted by the term that is used of Matthew, Mark and Luke -- *The Synoptic Gospels*. While each of the first three Gospels has its own theme, they all come together to present Christ's humanity. This does not mean that they do not present His deity to the reader – for they do. But their emphasis is decidedly on Christ's humanity – viewing Him from the earthly standpoint. And as we have noted also, each of the first three Gospels focuses in a particular way on the offices of Christ as the only Mediator between God and men: Matthew reveals Him as *King*; Mark reveals Him as *Prophet*; and Luke reveals Him as *Priest*.

But Christ could only be Mediator and fulfil these three offices by being related to the two parties whom He came to reconcile – God and men. See 1 Tim 2: 5 – this is the classic NT statement on the mediatorial position of Christ. It emphasises His humanity for it describes Him as “*the man Christ Jesus*.” But it also points to His deity in the title *Christ Jesus* – “the anointed Saviour” – revealing that He was sent by God, that He came from God and is therefore of the same nature as God. He is God, therefore, but man also – He is the Godman.

It is this matter of Christ as the Godman that is so prominent in John's Gospel; and for that reason while His humanity is in view in *John* it is His deity that receives the chief focus, a fact underlined by the very opening verse of this Gospel. The title given to Christ in this verse is *The Word* – a special name that is only ever given to Christ in Scripture. The Greek original for “The Word” is *ho logos*, thus very often in theological terms Christ is called *The Logos*. The name is indicative of the idea of divine revelation. It points to the fact that Christ is the Word sent by the Father to reveal the things of God to men. Christ is God's final word to men, Heb 1: 1-3. He is the epitome of God's revelation to His people. Note some of the details that are revealed here in John 1: 1 and subsequent verses about Christ the Word.

1. **There is the eternity of the Word.** “*In the beginning was the Word.*” The point is that there never was a time when the second person of the trinity *became* the Word. He was present at the beginning as the Word for He always was or always existed. Note the clear connection of language, thought and truth between John 1: 1 & Gen 1: 1. At the beginning was the eternal God in the three divine persons as Genesis 1 proceeds to show. One of those divine persons was the Word, the eternal Logos.

2. **There is the personality of the Word.** V.1 – “*In the beginning...the Word was with God.*” V.2, “*The same was in the beginning with God.*” The words “with God” literally read *face to face with God*. This is distinct personality. Here is language that presents to us the mystery of the trinity – the Word and God (the Father) are separate persons. Both possess true personality as the contextual language proves. Both are the same in essence or nature – yet each is a separate person. They are distinct Trinitarian persons.

3. **There is the deity of the Word.** Again it is vital to underline the opening words which govern the whole text – “*In the beginning...the Word was God.*” Here is language that can mean nothing else except the true deity of Christ. We have already noted that the Word is a distinct personality. The text ensures that we do not confuse Him with the Father. But in the original text the language signifies that from all eternity the Word was truly and essentially God. These are words “*the Word was God...*” that are hated by the cults, especially the Russelites, who will wickedly try to pervert them in order to undermine Christ's deity. But all that such cults accomplish is to display their ignorance of NT Greek as well as their devilish hatred for the person of Christ. Note how v.3 proceeds to reveal His deity by attributing to Him the act of creation. As the Word He simply spoke all things into being and upholds all things in the same fashion, Ps 33: 6 & Heb 1: 3. See also v.4 – this statement could not be made of a creature. It is only God who is the source of life which is the sense of this verse.

4. **There is the identity of the Word.** See v.14 – He who is the Word took a human nature and came into the world to reveal the Father, v.18 and to bring grace to sinners, v.16. This is His identity – as we saw earlier He is Godman; He is the Word of God incarnate, which is essentially the theme of this Gospel so that John 1: 14 is the key verse of the book. In this text in microcosm there is everything that the Gospel of John sets before us and it all revolves around the Word becoming flesh; the incarnation of the Word.

THE MIRACLE OF HIS INCARNATION

The Word becoming flesh was the greatest miracle that has ever taken place, see 1 Tim 3: 16. Being a miraculous event it is beyond the mind of man to comprehend. This truth is revealed in Scripture but not for us to explain. Rather, it is revealed for us to accept and believe – that He who is eternally God took our humanity.

Thus, *John* presents One who is truly man – John 4: 6 & 11: 35. But He also shows us One who is at the same time truly God – and this truth of Christ's person receives tremendous emphasis in this Gospel, as noted already. In many ways the deity of Christ is revealed in John's Gospel; so that the attributes of deity are plainly seen to be His. Omnipotence – there are eight miracles recorded in this book that show absolute power and prove Christ's deity.

1. Turning water into wine, ch. 2: 1-11
2. Healing the nobleman's son, ch.4: 46-54
3. Healing the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, ch.5: 1-9

4. Feeding the 5000, ch.6: 1-14
5. Walking on the sea, ch.6: 16-21
6. Giving sight to the man born blind, ch.9: 1-38
7. Raising Lazarus from the dead, ch.11: 17-45
8. The miraculous draught of fishes, ch.21: 4-11

The word used in John for “miracle” is *sign* – and the significance of the word is that it points to something, namely the deity of Christ. These sign miracles show omnipotence in operation. Note that in a number of them genuine creative power is displayed – the water becoming wine, the feeding of the 5000 and the gift of sight to the blind man. In each case there was an act of creation, demonstrating the true deity of Christ. Thus, the miracle of the incarnation is plain to be seen – the Lord Jesus Christ is truly man and absolutely God; one person but with two distinct natures, able to save sinners to the very uttermost.

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THE MESSAGE OF HIS INCARNATION

It is seen in the words – “and dwelt among us.” The word *dwelt* means “tabernacled” so the message of the incarnation is that Christ is the tabernacle raised up and provided by God on behalf of sinners. The tabernacle of Moses typified Christ very clearly. In the tabernacle of Moses there was everything to bring the Israelite into fellowship and communion with God – and in Christ all typified in the tabernacle was fulfilled; and a study of John’s Gospel will show how the incarnate Godman fulfilled all that was typified in the tabernacle. Christ is our