

Who Is this Jesus?
John 1:1-5

September 13, 2015

A. Introduction

1. Zaccheus

2. A Question Deserving an Answer ^A.

B. The Person and Nature of the Word John 1:1-2

1. "The Word"

2. "Was"

3. "The Beginning" ^B.

4. "In the Beginning was the Word" ^C.

5. "and the Word was with God" ^D.

6. "and the Word was God"

7. "He was in the beginning with God"

C. The Word and Creation John 1:3

1. "All things came into being through Him" ^E.

2. "Apart from Him nothing came into being ..."

D. The Word at Work John 1:4-5

1. "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men" ^F.

2. "The Light shines ... and the darkness did not comprehend it"

E. Conclusion

1. The Question Answered ^G.

2. A Responsibility ^H.

^A Matthew 16:13-14

^B Genesis 1:1

^C Isaiah 55:11; Hebrews 13:8

^D John 17:5, 24

^E Genesis 1:2; Colossians 1:16-17; 1 Corinthians 8:6

^F John 5:26

^G Matthew 16:16-17

^H John 12:46; Matthew 5:14-16

A. Introduction

1. Zaccheus

- a. we have just read the story of this 'wee little man' from Luke 19:1-10
- b. Zaccheus, that chief tax-collector, lived in Jericho – a city through which goods would pass on their way to Jerusalem, and upon which he would exact taxes for the hated Roman government
- c. this was a city that Jesus would have passed through a number of times in His itinerant ministry – it lay in the natural route between Jerusalem and Galilee – but to this point Zaccheus had never seen him
- d. oh, he would have heard about this travelling teacher from Galilee – that despised section of Palestine – home to farmers and fishermen
- e. look again at Luke 19:3 **"He was trying to see who Jesus was ..."**
- f. certainly not which one of the crowd he was, and not simply what sort of man this Jesus was
- g. but who was this man, without a theological degree as it were, who could attract such attention and do such great works?
- h. "Who is this Jesus?" was the question on Zaccheus' heart

2. A Question Deserving an Answer

- a. in Matthew 16 we find the Jewish religious rulers – Pharisees and Sadducees – trying to find out who Jesus is
 - (A) but theirs was a search based upon unbelief
 - (B) they sought a sign from heaven so that in His failing to produce that they might disparage him as a teacher
- b. then, after Jesus warns His disciples about the teaching of those rulers, we read in verses 13-14: **"Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.""**
- c. those were just a few of the opinions about Jesus by the people of His own day
- d. the people of our day have many opinions about Jesus, too:
 - (A) a good man
 - (B) a misguided man
 - (C) a controversial Jewish rabbi
 - (D) a mythical person
 - (E) a cause of all the fighting in the world

B. The Person and Nature of the Word

1. "1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God."
 - a. and, in case there should be any question as to whom "the Word" makes reference, verse 14 tells us: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."
 - b. it is the man about whom John the Baptist came to bear witness
 - c. it is Jesus, the One about whom this Gospel of John was written
 - d. let us dismantle some of the expressions used in these verses

2. "The Word"
 - a. but why does John refer to Jesus as "the Word"
 - b. in English, of course, we all know its meaning – words are a way of expressing our thoughts or ideas, of communicating with others
 - c. but the Greek word that John uses, Logos, meant more than that to the people who were reading this Gospel
 - d. to the Jews it was the word of the Lord
 - (A) not only as was communicated to the prophets
 - (B) but the very expression of God's power and purpose
 - e. to the Gentiles, the term was used in reference to the very source and cause of the universe
 - f. to both, John's use of this word, would capture their attention – for this is the gospel of salvation made know to the world

3. "Was"
 - a. the English word "was" does not do full justice to the original which conveys the idea of a continuing being or existence
 - b. clumsy in English, but means "was being" or "was existing"
 - c. and this word is repeated 4 times in these first two verses

4. "The Beginning"
 - a. in English we have to put that little word "the" in the sentence, but the Greek is actually indefinite
 - b. of course, the beginning that comes to mind and which is the primary reference is that of Genesis 1:1, "In the

beginning (also indefinite in the Hebrew) God created the heavens and the earth.”

- c. but, if it were possible to conceive of a beginning prior to that time then what is being said still applies: “in any beginning that you can think of” these statements hold true.
- d. so let us examine and enlarge upon the statements in these two verses in the light of these comments

5. “In the beginning was the Word”

- a. name any point in the dim, distant past – and particularly that point at which the universe came into being
 - (A) when God said “Let there be light, and there was light”
 - (B) when God spoke his powerful word, which is described to us later in Isaiah 55:11 – “So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.”
- b. at that point, the Word was existing
- c. we could phrase it, “whenever beginning began the Word was already in existence”
- d. so the first thing that this teaches is that the Word is Eternal
 - (A) so that Jesus could rightly say, “Before Abraham became, I AM”
 - (B) and Hebrews 13:8 can assure us, “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”

6. “and the Word was with God”

- a. now “God” in this place is definite – it is literally “with the God”
- b. in the NT, whenever God is spoken of in this fashion in a context which mentions either Jesus or the Holy Spirit, it is to be understood that the reference is to God the Father, or, sometimes to the Godhead or Trinity
 - (A) the Word was, then, with God the Father
 - (B) it “was” – a continuing, existing situation
- c. there are (at least) three words in Greek that can be translated “with”
 - (A) one simply means ‘alongside’, in the same general location
 - (B) another means ‘accompanying’, in the same general group
 - (C) but the one used here, has a root meaning of “toward” or “facing” and describes a relationship – the Word was face to face with God
 - (D) the Word is not a concept or idea but a distinct Person having an ongoing, continuing relationship with the Father: He is the Son
- d. Jesus said in praying to the to the Father in John 17:5, “Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”

- (A) (That is a different “was” than is used in John 1:1-2)
- (B) and later He also prayed, in verse 24, “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.”
- (C) the Word – Jesus, the Son of God – was in continuing existence as a distinct Person in loving relationship with God the Father

7. “and the Word was God.”

- a. in this phrase, the word “God” is indefinite; it is not “the God”; it is not a reference to the Father, nor to the Trinity
- b. rather it is a description of the nature and being of the Word which is the subject under consideration
- c. the Word is God in every sense – any attribute that can be used in speaking of God can be used in speaking of the Word
 - (A) He is holy, righteous, true, perfect in all His ways
 - (B) He is merciful, gracious, full of lovingkindness
 - (C) that is the theme of Isaac Watts’ great hymn that we sang to open this service in praise

Join all the glorious names
Of wisdom, love and pow'r
That ever mortals knew,
That angels ever bore:
All are too poor to speak His worth,
Too poor to set my Saviour forth. –{2}.
- d. the Word – Jesus, the Son of God – then, is Deity; He is God in every proper sense of that word – He is very God of very God where that word ‘very’ has its older sense or “truly” or “indeed”.

8. “He was in the beginning with God.”

- a. you might take this to be merely a summary or restatement of what has just been said in verse 1, but it is an important addition
- b. the word “He” is emphatic, not just the simple pronoun, but making a definite and pointed reference: “this same Word”
- c. and it counters any possibility that there was any point in eternity at which the Word was not enjoying a Son relationship with the Father

- d. that is another reason the term, "Word", has been used, to refute the idea that at some point the Father created the Son
- e. whenever beginning began the Word was already a distinct Person enjoying a love relationship with God the Father
- f. Jesus, the Word, is the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father
- g. now, as though that wasn't already too much for us to take in, John continues:

C. The Word and Creation

John 1:3

1. "All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being."
 - a. if, then as is the case, the Word – Jesus the Son of God – is not a created being, what is His relationship to creation?
 - b. the answer to that question is stated in both a positive and negative fashion
2. "All things came into being through Him"
 - a. with this verse, the verb changes from "was", a form of "to be", to the verb "to become" – the start of existence of something that was not at one time in existence
 - b. the teaching of the Bible is very clear: this universe did not once exist; it came into being at the direct fiat and command of God
 - c. matter is not eternal; it was called into being by the word of God
 - d. a study of this subject through the Bible reveals that each Person in the Godhead – the Trinity – had a distinct activity in creation
 - e. here are some verses on this subject
 - (A) "The earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters." (Genesis 1:2)
 - (B) "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." (Colossians 1:16-17), and
 - (C) "yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him." (1 Corinthians 8:6)
3. "apart from Him nothing came into being ..."

- a. of this fact that the Word was involved in all creation, it is now stated: there are no exceptions
- b. everything that exists, exists through the Word – Jesus, Son of God
- c. but this Word – Almighty God the Son – was made flesh and dwelt among us – the incarnation took place ... why?

D. The Word at Work

John 1:4-5

1. "4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."
 - a. Adam was warned concerning the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden of Eden, "... in the day that you from it you shall surely die."
 - b. but Eve ate, and Adam with her – and Eve didn't drop down dead, no Adam, and Satan could argue that God's words were untrue
 - c. but they did die at that instant – not physically; that would come later – but spiritually, because separation took place between them and the living God
 - d. so also in this verse, what is primarily in mind is spiritual life
2. "In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men."
 - a. the Gospel (and the Epistle) of John has a lot to say about life
 - (A) particularly spiritual life, everlasting life, eternal life
 - (B) and we shall find this matter explained in page after page as we consider this gospel of John
 - b. for the Word entered this world as a life-giver and light-bearer
 - (A) Jesus claimed, "For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself;" (John 5:26)
 - (B) and the "light of men" was the gospel that Jesus proclaimed which could bring eternal life to those believing in His name
 - (C) Jesus, the Word, is Himself the Good News that brings life
3. "The Light shines ... nd the darkness did not comprehend it."
 - a. that word, "comprehend", is one of those broad words which can be rendered into a number of English words, including "take possession" on the one hand, and "conquer" on the other
 - b. but upon due consideration of the immediate context
 - (A) in verse 10, still talking of this Word, it says, "the world did not know Him."

- (B) and the next verse, "His own did not receive Him.'
- (C) it is clear that the sense in verse 5 is that "the darkness" – this world of men enslaved by sin – did not understand nor recognise this Son of God who came to bring light into the world.
- c. and on this subject, Lord willing, we shall resume another day

E. Conclusion

1. That Question Answered

- a. Matthew 16:16-17: 'Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.'"
- b. that is the answer, and in John 1:1-5, we have filled in just a little further what it means for Jesus to be the Son of the living God
 - (A) He, the Word, is eternal
 - (B) He, the Word, is a distinct Person: the Son of God
 - (C) He, the Word, is Deity
 - (D) He, the Word, is eternal Son of the eternal Father
- c. and this Son of God came into the world to give life and light to a mankind who is lost in the darkness of sin

2. A Responsibility

- a. the Jesus who said, "I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness." (John 12:46)
- b. also instructed us: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:14-16)
- c. let us declare to our world, in deed and in word, that we are His, and He is ours

1. © 2015 by Garth Hutchinson, Faith Fellowship Baptist Church of Aurora (Ontario): may be distributed or quoted freely, only let this be done to the glory “of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus ii.13). Except as noted otherwise, quotations are from the New American Standard version, used by permission. Various other English versions of the Holy Bible may be used in this sermon. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in (*braces*). Version identifiers are:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version of 1769
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation (usually the 1995 edition)
NEB	New English Bible © 1961, 1970 Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NLT	New Living Translation © 1996 Tyndale Charitable Trust
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 National Council of Churches of Christ
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 National Council of Churches of Christ; Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Some of the commentaries and resources used in the preparation of this message are identified as follow:

- Barnes – *Notes on the New Testament, et alia*, by Rev Albert Barnes, Gall & Inglis, Edinburgh
- Bruce -- *The Gospel & Epistles of John*, by F. F. Bruce, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; 1983
- BM – *Biblical Museum*, Editor James Comper Gray, ca 1870
- EBC – *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, © 1986 Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 49530, MI:
John, by Merrill C. Tenney
- EGT – *The Expositor’s Greek Testament*, Hodder & Stoughton; 1903
John, by Marcus Dods
- Gill – *Exposition of the Old Testament, Exposition of the New Testament*, by John Gill, D.D.
- Kerux – The sermon & illustration data base compiled by Rev. David Holwick at the web-site, www.holwick.com.
- LBBC -- *Layman’s Bible Book Commentary, Volume 18: John*, by James E. Carter; Broadman Press, Nashville, TE; 1984
- NICNT – *The New International Commentary on the New Testament*
The Gospel according to John, by Leon Morris
- NTC – *New Testament Commentary*, by William Hendriksen; Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI; 1954
- RWP – *Robertson’s Word Pictures of the New Testament*, by Dr. A. T. Robertson
- TEC -- *The Gospel according to John*, by George Allen Turner & Julius R. Mantey, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, MI; ca 1965
- TTBC – Thru the Bible Commentary Series, by J. Vernon McGee; John 11-21; Thomas Nelson Publishers; 1991

2. 'Join All the Glorious Names,' by Isaac Watts, 1674-1748