

Commencing these comments, I soon realized much of this passage is deeper than can be fathomed by mere humans and well beyond my capacity to grasp, much less comment upon. Intellectual analyses are not suited, but reverent meditations upon the Son of God. A few have been published and are available to which I refer you. They will pull you in closer to the One presented to us here by John. Therefore the following comments but skim the surface of what must be a lifetime engagement in the things concerning Himself. May they serve to draw you in to know Him more closely and deeply.

In the Scriptures more than once God takes us back to the beginning and beyond. Together these passages reveal much about the beginning and about Him who was in the beginning.. Genesis begins with the creation. Hebrews refers to that beginning as well. Paul refers to Christ as Creator and sustainer of all things, and as Above all living intelligent beings both visible and invisible (Colossians 1). Mark's gospel begins down to earth with the Lord's public ministry, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." But John's gospel begins before the beginning. It refers to One, The Word, Who simply "WAS" before any beginnings. And this Person was not only with God but He was God. God, Eternal. "The Word," Eternal. Yet The Word is with God, a separate, unique, divine Person. Note that this statement is consistent with the use of God's plural name, Elohim, in Genesis 1:1. This Name reveals Him as more than one and more than two. He opened the truth of the divine Trinity, to the earliest of mankind. The Three (the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, Matthew 28:19) are more fully revealed in John's Gospel than anywhere else in Scripture.

The Word is immediately said to be "with God". This means more one might think at first. He is in the bosom of the Father. Eternally there and continuously there, even while a Man on earth. This truth is confirmed throughout John. We can believe and hold to it even if we can't quite comprehend it.

Next we are told all things were made by Him. To make sure there is no misunderstanding, this fundamental truth is restated: "All things received being through him, and without him not one [thing] received being which has received being" (JND). Skipping ahead we learn in verse 14 the Word became flesh. He became Man, something He had not been before. This Man was God in the flesh. He still is and will be that forever. He then lived, dwelt, "tabernacled," "tented" among us, one of us, yet without sin. And He is One who is full of grace and truth. He is the only begotten of the Father, or "the one and only with the Father." A Man full of grace and truth.

The four Gospels tell His wonderful story. John

commenced his first epistle as one who had heard, seen and handled this unique Man, 1John 1:1- 4.

1John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) 3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

He, being God, became Man. He could do that, being God. No man can become God (though many have tried). His coming was not an aimless adventure into humanity on a whim. It was not an afterthought. His human body was prepared for Him, Hebrews 10:5. It "fit" Him when He put it on, so to speak, when conceived through the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb. It fit because He had made Man in His likeness and His image. Adam's body had been created to suit The Word when He became a Man. The Word was truly divine and became truly human (yet sinless). He came and displayed God's glory to mankind. The rest of His created beings looked on in wonder at their first glimpse of the invisible God. For "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him," 1:18. He is God manifest in the flesh. God, in a form we could comprehend, a Man. The one and only begotten of the Father. A Man **full of grace and truth**. "God is Love," 1John 4:8,16. Grace is the outflow from Love. "God is Light," 1John 1:5. Truth is the outflow from the Light. Finally "in the beginning was the Word." He simply IS. But not merely eternally existent but One eternally alive and living. Life Itself. The I AM, interacting with His creatures. So having come into the world He was there the light of men. He shined in the darkness. And living there He lightened every man. He touched each one in a way best suited to attract them to Himself.

Yet in His wisdom there is a pause before revealing more. We are introduced to John the Baptist. He had a huge impact upon Israel, the little, onetime glorious nation. It had strayed from God who had founded and blessed it. Though under His discipline, chaffing under Roman occupation, it was still God's own. And He had now come to reclaim it, His throne and all that which was rightfully His as Son of David. And the souls in His kingdom. He came unto His own (things) in it. But His own (people) would not receive Him as their Messiah and Deliverer. He came full of light, light that shined in the darkness that pervaded the whole world including Israel. The darkness could not apprehend (stop) the Light. The Israeli leaders could not comprehend (grasp) Who He was and what He

came for. They were “clueless,” self centered, separated from their God. But God had not forsaken His people but sent His one and only Son as a man to save them.

And He even had sent ahead a powerful prophet, John, to announce His coming and prepare them for Him. The Lord later spoke of him as the greatest of the prophets. The last prophet of their Old Testament had prophesied of Him;

Malachi 3:1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: . . .

John the Baptist had actually quoted that to the Jews who asked who he was. They didn't get it.

John was the Lord's forerunner. (A forerunner was a herald sent ahead of an approaching king or other dignitary to alert the people so could they could properly prepare for his arrival.) The other Gospels give the details of his message and of that arrival. John the Baptist was the forerunner for The Word, calling upon any and all who would, to repent. And many did. To do so they went outside the borders of the province of Judah to John who was baptizing on the other side of the Jordan at Bethbara. Symbolically they departed from the iniquity of their native land. When Jesus came the disciples of John were ready for Him spiritually, having repented and been baptized by John

Then one day John saw an ordinary looking man approaching as many had. But John spontaneously cried out “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” Note, not sins as the un-repenting would like it to read, so they wouldn't have to humble themselves and repent. But He said “the sin of the world.” S-I-N. The form of the Greek conveys the thought that Jesus is the Lamb of God, having the title “the bearer away of the sin of the world.” This is the purpose and outcome of God's work though Jesus His Son. He will take away both “sins” and “sin,” the source of sins. Romans chapters 5 though 8 fully explain this. Many die in their sins. Some die in Christ. And some will not die at all but be raptured alive to heaven when He returns for His own. Which will be your destiny? Heaven or Hell? It's your choice, Christ or Self.

John then explained to all around. 30 “*This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. 31 And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with*

water.” Not that John didn't know his cousin, Jesus, but he hadn't known that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ he had been proclaiming as His forerunner. John's spontaneous announcement pointing Jesus out was produced by the Holy Spirit. He had indwelt John before he was even born, Luke 1:15. John had been driven and used by the Spirit all of his life. His preaching had been what the Holy Spirit had said through him.

When John baptized Jesus he saw the Holy Spirit descending as a dove and remaining upon Jesus. It is not clear if all standing there saw the Dove or if it was a sign only to John to trigger his proclamation. John revealed he had been alerted to watch for this sign by the One who had sent him to baptize:

33 Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. 34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.

While not recorded in John, God's public acknowledgment of His good pleasure in His Son after His thirty years in obscurity is recorded in the other gospels. To state it in John would distract from his focus on His divinity. But He is well pleased. It seems probable that the Spirit was not residing in Jesus before this even though He had been in John from birth. If that is true, then there stood a thirty year old man (Jesus) of whom God could publically proclaim “This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased.” He had achieved this remarkable feat on His own without the benefit of the indwelling Spirit. Another proof that He is indeed God.

Who had sent John (v.33 “He who sent me,”)? The Father? the Son? the Spirit? The whole Godhead was there. The Father spoke from above. The Son was standing there. The Spirit descended from the Father to abide in the Son. Typical of John's gospel, when speaking of one's self one didn't use his own name but spoke as a third person. It was probably the Spirit in him who alerted John to His imminent descent as a Dove to light upon Jesus. Jesus was led by the Spirit from then on. He went to heaven with the Lord when He ascended after His death. Ten days after He was sent from heaven to indwell the waiting believers thereby forming the Assembly, the Body of Christ. John 14:16,26; Act's 1:8.

By Ronald Canner, April 13, 2011

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