

The Word – Eternal, Personal, Divine

By Patrick Swayne

In presenting their accounts of the life of Christ, each of the authors of the four gospel accounts was inspired to record from a different starting point. Matthew begins his account with Abraham; Mark, with John the Baptist; Luke, with Zecharias and Elisabeth. John however is unique among the other heralds of the gospel in that his account begins even before the beginning. “In the beginning,” John says, “was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). No less than three truths can be derived from this passage – that the Word, whom the Bible identifies as Jesus Christ after He took upon Him flesh (v. 14, 17), is Eternal, Personal, and Divine.

The Word is Eternal – “In the beginning was the Word.” Human beings find it difficult to consider things without doing so from the standpoint of time; they cannot imagine anything not governed by something that is so dominant in their lives. However, John seeks for his readers to move beyond the scope of time with one powerful word – “was.” You don’t have to be a scholar to know that “was” refers something previous or something prior to something else. By using the word here, John quite boldly presents the fact that Jesus existed prior to the beginning. Time began with God’s creative work; hence Christ existed as the Word prior to time, and therefore the Word is eternal.

The Word is Personal – “And the Word was with God.” Suppose a person were to ask a friend, “Please come with me to the store.” If the friend agreed to the request, how many people would be going to the store? It does not take a mathematician to know that the answer is two. The word “with” is a preposition that denotes a connection of two separate things – a person cannot be “with” himself anymore than he can be above, behind, or below himself. When John says, “The Word was with God,” he demands that the Word and God were two separate entities, and therefore the Word is Personal – He is His own Being.

The Word is Divine – “And the Word was God.” One of the great mysteries in the minds of many theologians is how God can be one, as He is clearly presented in the Bible (Deuteronomy 6:4), and at the same time be three, as He is clearly presented in the Bible (Matthew 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:14). Perhaps to run from the seeming contradictions this demands, some have created doctrines that make God the Father the one and only God and Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit only “mini-gods” or some other type of inferior being. However, these same theologians do not even blink when someone says that there is one mankind, even though there is more than one member of humanity. When the Bible speaks of there being one God, it does not demand that there is only one Being that comprises that one God. John says quite clearly, “The Word was God,” making Him Divine.

When Thomas was finally able to see the resurrected Christ, there was no doubt in his mind as to Who he was seeing. He said without hesitation, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). To receive such a worshipful statement without being the one true God of the Bible would have been blasphemous on Christ’s part were it not the case – faithful men and angels rejected such worship throughout the Bible (Acts 10:26, 14:14-15; Revelation 19:10, 22:9). Even Christ said, “You shall worship the Lord thy God, and Him only you shall serve” (Matthew 4:10). Christ did not reject worship as before He was the Christ, Christ was the Word – and He is, was, and ever will be Eternal, Personal, and Divine (Hebrews 13:8).