Tell Me What Is So

What Makes God, God?

Years ago when I was in Graduate School, I took my first class in Biblical Greek. The book we used for learning how to translate was 1 John. That is because the Greek of 1 John is straight forward and relatively simple to translate. After that I took a class on John in Greek, and it was then that I really fell in love with the Bible and acquired a craving to understand the details of the Scripture. I found the book of John to be mesmerizing with its blend of fascinating accounts of Jesus' life and the profound teaching about God and the Christian lifestyle. John continues to be my favorite book in the Bible, and my prayer is that as we go through it together, you will fall in love all over again, or perhaps for the first time, with Jesus and the Bible and the eternal life God offers you. The Gospel of John is a treasure trove of insight into Christianity and why the best decision you will ever make is to follow Jesus. Our Big Idea for today is simple but profound. God has revealed Himself to you.

The Gospel of John begins rather philosophically. **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.** (John 1: 1 NIV) Word is the title of Jesus in the book of John. We know this because later in this chapter, it is made clear. The opening phrase has led to much confusion, but it really is quite understandable what is meant when you consider the details of the phrasing. The Greek word translated beginning can also mean headship or first place. Here it has the idea of the starting point or when everything began. What confuses many is the idea that this may indicate that God, or Jesus Christ has a beginning point, some moment when He started to exist. That is not the idea here at all. In fact, the opposite is the case. The verb translated "was", is in the Greek a description of something that has no beginning point or ending point. It presents the idea of always being. In other words, although there is a beginning, Jesus doesn't have one, He has always been and always will be. So what is it that does have a beginning point, a start to it? It is the universe and matter and energy.

I recently asked someone who professes to be an atheist which is it that is eternal. Is it matter and energy or God? He responded, "Well neither." I told him, "That cannot be so." It is illogical and not reasonable. It is either God or energy and matter that is eternal. You cannot have something like atoms spring up out of nothing, out of absolutely nothing. There is no evidence that such could ever take place nor that it has. With no building blocks, no source for materials and no energy to pull those building blocks together, they cannot simply occur. He told me that perhaps physics will one day reveal how something can come out of nothing. Of course that is an absurdity, a wild confession of faith without evidence of it being possible. Talk about believing in something that cannot be proven! I then asked him which was more reasonable. With one or the other having to be eternal, God or matter and energy, which made more sense based on the evidence of a universe now in place. Intelligence in the form of God or matter and energy which possess no intelligence at all? With the complexity of a universe that we know, is it more reasonable that it all started with not a bit of intelligence putting it together or with absolute intelligence thinking through everything organizing the structure of it and making it come to pass? He had nothing to say. The Bible states unequivocally that it is the fool who says there is no God and simple logic without even an ounce of Bible knowledge can see that. **The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."** (Psalm 14: 1a NIV) John, without a single bit of embarrassment states that before we had what came at the beginning, Jesus Christ was being, He was, always was.

The Bible identifies Jesus Christ, eternal without beginning or end as Word, or to use the Greek original term, Logos. Why John calls Him Logos or Word, is open to speculation. Of course there is an actual reason as to why the Holy Spirit had a specific purpose for inserting the term here but unless it has been revealed somewhere else in the Bible which scholars have failed to discover, we must have great humility in venturing a reasonable explanation. Logos primarily describes communication or getting something across. It is an expression of what is, or has been shared. Logos is the movement of information from one person to another, a sort of revelation. Years ago when I was a child, I took a little test. I did not know it was a test, but it was. I was shown a card with lots of colored dots on it and asked what I saw. I did not see anything, just a bunch of dots and that is how it was discovered I was partly colorblind. I would not have known this unless someone told me and then I had to either accept or reject the revelation or the logos shared with me, this communication. You may or may not receive the logos even if it has been shared with you.

Let me use an example of logos found in the Bible. God became Logos for Pharaoh when the LORD used a variety of signs to communicate with him. Plagues of locusts, water turned to blood and eventually the killing of every Egyptian first born, including his own, led to Pharaoh being convinced that if he did not let the Israelites leave Egypt, it would be

disastrous for him and his country. Yet when it seemed like the revelation from God had been processed and received by Pharaoh, it turned out he really had not changed the way he viewed God or how he would choose to respond to Him. Pharaoh joined his army in chasing down the Israelites as they crossed the Red Sea and he and all his soldiers were drowned by God when the Lord sent the waters back over them. For the Logos to truly be a revelation for you, you must be willing to shift your thinking to accept the new information you have about God and then change the way you live. If you don't, it is not Logos for you. It is merely empty sounds without meaning.

Here is the revelation that John 1 provides. Jesus Christ is God and always has been God. The text reads, **and the Word was with God and the Word was God.** This phrasing is confusing to many. It sounds like in the English translation that two quite different statements are being made about Jesus. One is that Jesus continually is with God and the other is that Jesus is always God. So which is it? You have in John 1: 1 the revelation being presented three times, three different ways. When the Bible states something three times, it is the establishment of an irrefutable fact and that is what we have here. Three different ways John 1: 1 tells you Jesus Christ is God and always has been God. The first, and the declaration grows in strength with each reiteration, is that when there was the beginning, the Word, or Jesus Christ always has been. We know that no one but God has always been and certainly when the beginning started, it was God who made it take place because Genesis 1 makes clear that it was God only who created the heavens and the earth. And here it is the Word, who is Jesus Christ that was always being when the beginning occurred. Second, the Word or Jesus Christ was with God, or as the Greek preposition pros indicates, Jesus Christ has always been equal in rank with God, or to use the euphemism, toward God. This is not a statement that there is God and beside Him, or near Him is Jesus. It is a way of making it clear that Jesus Christ has the same standing as God. And then third, the verse leaves no doubt. The Word has always been God and always will be God. Didn't Jesus Himself make the same point when Philip wanted to see God? **Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?** (John 14: 9 NIV)

With revelation, you must be willing to shift your thinking to accept the new information you have been given. Pharaoh could not but you can. As Christ reveals Himself to you, let Him work out the changes in you the revelation initiates. Be willing to change the way you live and how you see things. I have a friend who is unwilling to change despite the fact that what she is doing is killing her. Her thinking has fossilized and even if Christ came in the flesh to her and told her to stop doing what she is doing, she most likely would not. Today, if you read the Bible, God will show you something. Perhaps it will be something new or else something you have seen before but never taken to heart, never put into practice. Don't be another Pharaoh. Be Peter who when Jesus told him to "Come follow me", he did. When the revelation of Jesus Christ comes to you, don't hesitate. Respond immediately. The Word may come to you to speak to a particular neighbor, to respond in a certain way to a son or daughter, to stop doing something. Letting the Revelation have His way with you may cost you a friendship, may lead to a parent rejecting you, could cost you money or time or even your reputation. My favorite example of this is Zacchaeus, who when he realized Jesus was Jesus Christ, the Messiah and Savior of the world gave half he had to the poor and paid back anyone he cheated in his tax collecting four times what he took from them. I wonder what his wife thought about him throwing away his fortune. How did his parents respond to him becoming a fanatic Jesus freak? Did the Romans, when they observed his newfound honesty cast him aside or even have Zacchaeus killed for not being their ally in cheating the Jews? It may take courage to accept the new revelation Jesus shows you but that is why you are here. To be courageous and stand with Christ no matter what it costs. Keep in mind the big idea. God has revealed Himself to you. Don't let Him down. Each new Word is an opportunity to glorify Jesus and show God you can be trusted with more if He chooses to use you for the Kingdom of God.