

THE WORD OF GOD.

JOHN 1:1-17.

The Greek word, logos, translated word in vss. 1 and 14 of this chapter, would be properly translated by the words, intention, plan, purpose, or expression. Apply this definition to the following passages where the same word (logos) occurs: Acts 10:29. "I ask therefor for what intent (logos) ye have sent for me." Acts 4:29. "Grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak thy word" – declare thy plan, purpose, or intention. Acts 8:4. "They that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word," plan or purpose of God. Acts 18:11. "Teaching the word (intention, plan or purpose) of God among them." Mark 4:20. "Such as hear the word (intention, plan or purpose of God) and receive it." Matt. 24:35. "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words (plans or purposes) shall not pass away."

With this understanding then, we may thus read John 1:1. "In the beginning," before anything was created, and when none existed, but Jehovah, "was the word" – plan, intention, or purpose of God. Yes, God had a well defined, and matured plan, formed in his own mind before it found expression in the slightest development. The great Architect of the universe and Author of all life, first counted the cost, and reckoned that all should culminate to his honor and glory. (Luke 14:28-31; Rev. 4:11.)

"And the word (plan or purpose) was with God." So far, it existed only in his own conception; it was his own thought, intention, plan, purpose, not yet expressed.

"And the word was God." The term logos, not only applied to the plan existing only in the mind, but also to the expression of that plan. We understand this text then, to mean that the word – plan or purpose of God found its first expression in the creation of him, who

was "The beginning of the creation of God" – "The first born of every creature" (who afterward became the man, Jesus). Rev. 3:14 and 1:5. Col. 1:15; and who is now fully exalted to the divine nature, and still "His name is called the "Word of God." Rev. 19:13.

This being, in whose creation, Jehovah's plan began to find expression, is here called a God – "And the Word [expression of the plan] was God." The word God signifies mighty one; but not always the All-mighty One. It is the translation of each of four Hebrew words – el, elah, elohim, and adonai, all signifying the mighty, or great. It is a general name, often and properly applied to our Heavenly Father, as well as to Jesus, angels, and men. (Deut. 10:17. Gen. 32:24,30; Judges 13:21,22; Jer. 16:13, 10:11; Exod. 7:1.) In Psa. 82 the distinction of beings translated by the word God is very marked: "God (elohim) standeth in the congregation of the mighty (el); he judgeth among the Gods" (elohim). Here the first word, God, evidently refers to Jehovah, the All-mighty one, while the others evidently refer to other mighty ones – the church, the sons of God, of whom Jesus is the head or chief. Again vs. 6, "I have said ye are Gods (elohim); and all of you are children of the Most High (el yon, the highest God), yet ye shall all die like men." We, now, though sons of the Most High die and appear to men nothing more than the others. In us, as in our Leader and Head, God is manifest in our mortal flesh. (See John 10:35 and 2 Cor. 4:11.)

The Hebrew word Jehovah, is the distinctive name of the Almighty Father and is never applied to any other being – "I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac and unto Jacob, as God Almighty, (el – God shaddai – almighty) but by my name JEHOVAH, was I not known to them." Exod. 6:3. In our common version (O.T.) its distinctiveness as a name is lost, being generally rendered the Lord.

"And the word was God." The Son of God (afterward called Jesus,) is here called THE WORD, because Jehovah revealed his word – plan or purpose, through him. It was an eastern custom for kings to

have an officer, called the King's Word or Voice, who stood upon the steps of the throne, at the side of a lattice window, where there was a hole covered with a curtain. Behind this curtain the king sat and expressed his commands to this officer, who communicated them to the officers, judges and attendants. It is from this custom we presume, that the phraseology of the text is derived.

Primarily then, the word refers to the plan of God, and it is afterwards applied to the messenger of that plan – the Son of God.

Vss. 2 and 3, "The same (being) was in the beginning (of creation) with God. All things were made by him, (as the agent of Jehovah) and without him was not anything made that was made." He then, as here plainly stated, being the first and chiefest of Jehovah's creatures, was honored by him, as the agent through whom all things, both animate and inanimate were afterwards created – "Without him was not anything made."

Jehovah had no beginning but is "from everlasting to everlasting;" (Psa. 90:2) hence that which is here called the "beginning" must refer to the beginning of creation.

"In him was life." How brief this expression, and at first sight how simple and seemingly absurd. If the surface meaning were taken, the statement of such a self-evident truth would indeed be absurd – that in the Son of God, who was Jehovah's agent in the works of creation, was life. But let us look deeper, and we will see that it is just like God's grand and eloquent brevity. Since the accomplishment of the work narrated in verse 3, the Son of God had laid aside the glory of his pre-existent condition, and become a man. As a man, he had lived 30 years – the maturity of manhood, and had consecrated his human being to death. Here he received the earnest of his after, high exaltation – the begetting of the Spirit, to the Divine nature, to which he was born in the resurrection, when the consecration of the human being to death, was actually accomplished. In the Son of God – the

Word – Jesus, then, from 30 years of age, was this Divine life which he never before possessed. (See "Narrow way to Life," page 134, of "Food for Thinking Christians.") "And the life (this divine life) was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness apprehendeth it not." (E. Dia.)

Verses 10 and 11. He was in the world and the world was made by him; and the world (of mankind) knew him not. He came unto his own, (people – the Jewish nation) and his own received him not.

But, though the world knew him not, neither did his own receive him, yet, nevertheless – vs. 9, "That was the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." This Light has not yet enlightened every man. It now lights only those referred to in vs. 12 – "as many as received him and believed on his name." To this class – believers – "gave he privilege (margin) to become sons of God" (vs. 13, E. Dia., begotten...of God) – on condition that they follow in his footsteps, sacrificing the human nature. These, throughout the Gospel Age, "walk in the light," and like their Head, Jesus, are "lights in the world." (Phil. 2:15.) But still the world fails to apprehend the light, and will, until Jesus and all the members of his body – followers in his footsteps – constituting the Heavenly City (Rev. 21:2) are as "a city set on a hill (which) cannot be hid." (Matt. 5:14.) Yes, this heavenly city "shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it:" (Isa. 2:2.) "And the nations shall walk in the light of it." (Rev. 21:24.) Then this "true light (shining in its strength, from the exalted Divine Christ – head and body, will) lighten every man that cometh into the world."

[R338 : page 4]

That this interpretation of vss. 4 and 5 is correct, is proven by vss. 6,7,8, and 15. John came six months before Jesus' baptism, and begetting to the divine nature, bearing witness of the coming light, saying, "There cometh one after me, who is preferred before me."

Jesus had already come as a human being, and had, as John declared, existed before him, not as a man, for John was six months older than Jesus; but in his glorious pre-human condition. In what sense, then, did Jesus come after John's preaching? We answer that at the time of his consecration and typical baptism, he came as the Anointed One, the Christ, the divinely begotten Son of God, and consequent light of the world.

Vs. 14. "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us."

As in verse 3, we are informed of the glory and power of the pre-existent Word, and in vs. 4, ignoring the subsequent human nature for which he left that glory, we are informed of that divine life which is ultimately to enlighten every man that cometh into the world; so vs. 14 goes back to tell how he left the glory which he had with the Father, gave up his spiritual being, and became a human being.

"And we beheld his glory (the glory of his perfect humanity), the glory as of the only begotten of a father." His perfect human nature shone with such lustre in contrast with all other imperfect men, that he seemed not to be a son of the fallen race, but the only begotten of some perfect being – and such he was, a new creation of God, the second direct human creation of God, just as Adam was the first, though Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, while Adam was formed from the dust of the earth.

Jesus, because a perfect man, was full of grace (favor) and truth. He lived in full and constant favor with God, and therefore God made known his truth – his plans – to him. **[R339 : page 4]**

Vs. 16. "And of his fullness have all we (believers) received." Yes, of that same fullness of favor with God, which Jesus enjoyed because of his sinless perfection, have all we received because of our justification through faith in his blood. Thus Jesus lifts believers up to

the plane which he occupied, into fullness of favor and communion with God – "justified freely from all things."

"And grace for grace," or favor on account of favor: that is, being lifted from the condition of rebels and sinners to that of justification by faith, was one act of favor; then that favor opened the way for another favor – viz., the call to become partakers of the Divine nature, to become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus by suffering with him.

Yes, with Paul, because of this grace (of justification) wherein we stand, we rejoice in hope of the glory of God (Rom. 5:2); reckoning that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. (Rom. 8:18.)

Vs. 17. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Here a contrast is drawn between the Jewish and Gospel Ages: In the former, only the Law (the shadow of good things to come in and after the Gospel Age) was given. But it could never give life, because none were able to measure up to its requirements. "But grace" – the payment of our ransom price, and not only so, but also the additional favor – "truth," or the knowledge of God's plan, and our high-calling as revealed through it – both these favors came by Jesus Christ. "The appearing of Jesus Christ, our Saviour, brought life (the 'restitution' to perfection of humanity) and immortality (believers' high-calling) to light." (2 Tim. 1:10.) This special favor ("grace"), and this wonderful knowledge ("truth") then, are peculiar only to the Gospel Age.

In the brief space here considered what a glorious biography we have presented to us, of the once glorious spiritual, subsequent perfect human, and now "highly exalted" Divine, Immortal WORD. Here it stands on the sacred page in its simple, eloquent brevity as dictated by the spirit of Jehovah. Behold what grace the Father bestowed upon

him – "That all men (and all created beings) should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father."

"If all the world my Saviour knew,
Then all the world would love Him too."

Thank God the happy day will soon dawn when this knowledge shall fill the whole earth.

Beloved followers in his footsteps, "behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we, (as partakers with him, and joint-heirs of the same things) should (also) be called the sons of God."
