

Having finished our exposition of Romans a few weeks ago—it's my hope for the next few years—to expound the gospel according to John—the first thing I want to do, very briefly and byway of introduction—suggest three introductory points—[1] Its author, [2] Its relation, and [2] Its purpose...

[1] Its author—historically, the first four books of the NT are called "gospels" as they recount the basic historical facts of the gospel—that is—the person and work of Jesus Christ—while each of these gospels are anonymous—traditionally—the first is attributed to Matthew, the second to Mark, the third Luke, and the fourth to John...

Now—there are several very good reasons to retain this traditional view—but for various reasons I'm going to forgo giving them to you—but instead I simply want to suggest a few things true of John that qualified him to write this gospel...

[a] He was humble—throughout the gospel record John rarely mentioned his own name—but refers to himself in the abstract—thus at least 4 times he refers to himself as—"the disciple whom Jesus loved", for example, Jn.19:26—"when Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, Woman, behold your son" (20:2; 21:7, 20; 13:23)...

[b] He was an eyewitness—that is—having been converted early on—he witnessed almost the entirety of Christ's earthly ministry first hand, 1Jn.1:1-3—"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, concerning the Word of life -- 2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us -- 3 that which we have seen and heard we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ..."

[c] He was a part of Christ's inner circle—that is—not only was he a disciple and apostle, but a part of that inner circles which afforded him peculiar privileges not shared by the other apostles—for example, only John, James, and Peter beheld the transfiguration (Mk.9:2), and only these three were witnessed our Lord's distress in Gethsemane (Mk.14:33)...

[2] Its relation—that is—the relationship that the fourth gospel contains with the previous three is one of [a] similarity and [b] difference—[a] similarity—that is—there's obvious similarities between John and the other three gospels—they all intend to recount Jesus' earthly ministry, His teaching, and His crucifixion and resurrection...

But—there's differences as well—Mathew portrays Him as the Son of David, King of the Jews, no doubt, largely, though not exclusively, writing to Jews—Mark seems to write for the Gentiles, portraying Christ as the Servant of Jehovah—Luke intends to underscore Christ's humanity, and thus beings with the fullest account of Christ's incarnation—but John portrays Christ largely as the Son of God, come down from heaven to earth...

Pink—"The theme of John's Gospel is *the Deity of the Savior*. Here, as nowhere else in Scripture so fully, the Godhood of Christ is presented to our view. That which is outstanding in this fourth Gospel is the Divine Sonship of the Lord Jesus. In this Book we are shown that the One who was heralded by the angles to the Bethlehem shepherds, who walked this earth for thirty-three years, who was crucified at Calvary who rose in triumph from the grave, and who forty days later departed from these scenes, was none other than the Lord of Glory..."

[3] Its purpose—that is—what is John's fundamental purpose in writing this book—well this can be suggested by remembering the major theme—if Mr. Pink is correct to assert that the major theme is Christ's glory as the eternal Son of God—then the goal or purpose of the book would be twofold—[a] that sinners, Jews and

Greeks, would believe on Christ as the Son of God incarnate, who lived, died, and rose again on their behalf, and [b] that Christians would be fortified from the many errors that began to circulate even towards the end of the first century...

Jn.20:30-31—"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name..."

- I. His Unique Relation to God—vv1-2
- II. His Powerful Action as God—v3
- III. His Possession of Life with God—vv4-5

I. His Unique Relation to God—vv1-2

1. V1-2—"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..."
2. Now—central to our text—is this Greek word *logos* translated "the Word"—which simply means—"word or speech..."
3. Some of the commentators point out—that Greek philosophers associated this word with the supreme deity...
4. Thus—some have suggested that John borrows this concept from the Greeks to capture the Greeks interest...
5. But personally—I think it's ridiculous to assume that John would borrow something like this from the Greeks...
6. It's far more probable or likely—that John simply took the idea or concept of "the Word" from the OT Scriptures...
7. For example, throughout the OT we find "the Word of the Lord" communicating to people the will of God...
8. Gen.15:1—"After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, Do not be afraid, Abram. *I am* your shield, your exceedingly great reward..."
9. 2San.7:4-5—"the word of the LORD came to Nathan, saying, 5 Go and tell My servant David, 'Thus says the LORD: Would you build a house for Me to dwell in...'"
10. 1Ki.18:1—"the word of the LORD came to Elijah, in the third year, saying, Go, present yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain on the earth..."
11. Jer.1:4-5—"the word of the LORD came to me, saying: Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you..."
12. In all of these examples—the Word of the Lord speaks as the Lord and yet as one who comes from the Lord...
13. That is—the word within these passages is a reference to the second person of the Godhead—the Son of God...
14. Thus—throughout the OT we learn—that the word of the Lord is equal and yet distinct from God the Father...
15. Now—it's obvious that Scripture uses this phrase "the word"—as a formal title that underscores His divinity...
16. Primarily—I suggest this title underscores His unique relation to the Father—as words reveal and make known...
17. The only way to learn about another person is through words—I learn about you as you tell me through words...
18. The word of man reveals, expresses, declares, discloses, or makes known—what's within the heart of a person...
19. Now—this doesn't deny that man can reveal himself through various expressions of face without using a word...
20. But—that revelation is not clear and certain—it can be misunderstood and misread—it's unreliable revelation...

21. Thus—because God is a Spirit and has no body—can only express Himself to others through words or the word...
22. Now—let me briefly point out the evident relation and connection between God's written and living Word...
23. The written word reveals God—it makes known God's mind, will, character, and nature—it declares God to man...
24. So too—the living word reveals God—He makes God known—He reveals to man the will and nature of God...
25. [1] He eternally existed WITH God—the preposition "with" literally means—near or toward—face to face...
26. Fundamentally—it here refers to close union and communion—it describes an affectionate and mutual intimacy...
27. William Hendriksen—"The meaning is that the Word existed in the closest possible fellowship with the Father, and that he took supreme delight in this communion..."
28. Jn.1:18—"No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him..."
29. No man has seen God—because God is eternal, spiritual, and beyond us—He's transcendent, infinite, and eternal...
30. Nobody knows the Father like the Son—the Son knows the Father in a unique and perfect way from eternity...
31. The phrase—"is in the bosom of the Father"—refers to the intimate and affectionate relationship that exists between them...
32. Jn.13:23—"Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom [chest or middle section] one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved..."
33. To lean upon Jesus' bosom was a sign of mural love—the Lord Jesus loved John and John loved the Lord Jesus...
34. Jn.17:24—"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world..."
35. The phrase—"before the foundation of the world" is synonymous with—"in the beginning"—that is from eternity past...
36. The Father always loved the Son—they existed in the most intimate of relationships—the word was with God...
37. Prov.8:30-31—"Then I was beside Him *as* a master craftsman; and I was daily *His* delight, rejoicing always before Him, 31 rejoicing in His inhabited world, and my delight *was* with the sons of men..."
38. The similarities between this passage to John 1:1 are obvious—let me simply suggest a few of the most important...
39. [a] Here "wisdom" is used in a way very similar to "word"—the Son is "the wisdom" and "the word" of God...
40. [b] Wisdom is eternally begotten from God, v23—"I have been established from everlasting, from the beginning, before there was ever an earth..."
41. [c] Wisdom was involved in creation, v30—"then I was beside Him as a master craftsman [workman or architect]..."
42. [d] Wisdom is the source of life, v35—"for whoever finds me finds life, and obtains favor from the LORD..."
43. [e] Wisdom was "beside" and "before" God, v30—"then I was beside Him...and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him..."
44. [2] He eternally existed AS God—"the word was God"—not "a god" but God—He's eternally equal with the Father...
45. Now—let me simply state—that this text clearly and simply reads—"the word was with God and the word was God..."
46. This means—He is eternally and fully equal with the Father in every sense—He shares the divine essence or being...
47. Thus—while the word is distinct from the Father He is equally to the Father—He was with God and He is God...

48. [3] He eternally existed OF God—that is—He doesn't exist as the word apart from God—He is the word of God...
49. Now admittedly this isn't expressly stated in this passage—but it's something we've seen throughout the OT...
50. Rev.19:13—"He *was* clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God"—the word out from God...
51. Thus—I suggest—the title "the word of God" is very similar to "the Son of God"—which underscores His eternal begottenness...
52. Thus—we learn something very important—the Word while with God is nevertheless, in some sense distinct from God...
53. That is—while the Son and Father are equally God, they possess unique properties as distinct persons of the Trinity...
54. The Son is begotten of the Father and the Father begets the Son—the Father is not begotten nor does the Son beget...
55. These are eternal distinctions that always existed—the Father never existed without His Son nor the Son without the Father...
56. Arrowsmith—"Ask the sun, if ever it were without its beams. Ask the fountain, if ever it were without its streams. So God was never without His Son..."

II. His Powerful Action as God—v3

1. V3—"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made"—notice two things...
2. [1] All things were made THROUGH HIM—that is—the Word of God, was the direct agent through which creation came...
3. Gen.1:1-3—"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light..."
4. Ps.33:6—"By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth..."
5. Here we find a great Trinitarian text on creation—the LORD created by His word (son) and through His breath (spirit)...
6. [2] ALL THINGS were made through Him—that is—everything that created, was created by and through the Word...
7. Col.1:16—"For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him..."
8. [a] All physical things—that is—the heavens and the earth—everything that lives on the earth and in the water...
9. [b] All spiritual things—that is—the angels both good and bad—"the invisible"—thrones, dominions, powers...
10. [c] All moral things—that is—mankind—the greatest of God's creation—heaven's favorite—man and woman...

III. His Possession of Life with God—vv4-5

1. V4-5—"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it..."
2. The way I want to explain these two verses—is simply explain each phrase individually and then summarize them all...
3. [1] In Him was life—that is—physical, but especially spiritual life—is found in the Word and that in two ways...
4. [a] All life is found in Christ as God—God, and God alone, is the creator and sustainer of physical and spiritual life...

5. [b] All life is found in Christ as Mediator—that is—God has deposited in Christ—spiritual and eternal life...
6. This is the "life" that John refers to—LIFE—spiritual and eternal—is found in none other than Jesus Christ...
7. Jn.3:36—"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him..."
8. [2] The life was the light of men—here John makes a comparison or connection between spiritual life and light...
9. Now the primary point of similarity is knowledge—those in darkness have no spiritual understanding of God...
10. Light—that is—spiritual understanding or illumination—brings life to the dead soul—for to know God is life...
11. 2Cor.4:6—"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ..."
12. [3] The light shines in the darkness—this refers to the incarnation and earthly ministry of the word of God...
13. Jn.1:10—"He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him [darkness]..."
14. Jn.8:12—"Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life..."
15. [4] The darkness did not comprehend it—that is—fallen and foolish man did not understand or believe the light...
16. Jn.3:19—"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil..."

IV. Observations

A. We behold good news for saints

1. I think it's very instructive to notice—that all of the four gospels—begin by pointing their readers to Jesus Christ...
2. Yet—there is an evident difference in John—for he begins not with the incarnation—but with eternity past...
3. That is—John's primary or at least initial goal is to point his readers to the unique and divine nature of Christ...
4. Jn.20:30-31—"And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; 31 but these are written that you may believe [continue to believe] that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing [continuing to believe] you may have life in His name..."
5. Let me suggest three reasons why this book was written for Christians—protection, consolation, and sanctification...
6. [1] For protection from errors—this as I mentioned, was likely the original or primary purpose for John's book...
7. Throughout the history of the church—I don't think any doctrine has been more attached than the person of Christ...
8. Thus—throughout the church's history—fewer texts have been used to defend the church from three errors...
9. [a] Arianism—Arian was a 3rd century Egyptian theologian—who taught that Christ was a divine created being...
10. In other words—he denied the eternity of Christ—he taught there was a time when Christ did NOT exist...
11. Now—this heresy has been resurrected in a modified form—in the Jehovah Witnesses and in the Mormons...
12. These both believe and teach that Christ was a created being—a divine being of some sorts, yes—but created...

13. In contrast to this, John teaches us—"in the beginning was the Word...He was in the beginning with God..."
14. That is—from all eternity the Word of God existed—furthermore, far from being created—He is the Creator...
15. [b] Modalism—also called Sabellianism, was a 3rd century heresy that denied the distinct persons of the Trinity...
16. A popular modern-day exponent of this heresy would be T.D. Jakes—and the United Pentecostal Church (UPCI)...
17. Simply put—this heresy believes and teaches—there is one God who manifests Himself in three different modes...
18. Thus—at times He's the Father, at other times He's the Son, and at other times He's the Spirit—one God in three modes...
19. In contrast to this—John teaches us that while the Word was with God and was God—there's a necessary distinction...
20. [c] Socinianism—this is a later heresy, formally originating around the 15th century—which denied Christ's divinity...
21. The Socinians simply believed—that Christ was a righteous man—but was only a man and not the Godman...
22. [2] For consolation in trouble—that is—knowing—"Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God"—comforts the troubled soul...
23. [3] For sanctification of souls—that is—to believingly and lovingly look to Christ has a sanctifying effect upon the soul...
24. 2Cor.3:18—"but we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, and bring transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord..."

B. We behold good news for sinners

1. Most of you will know that the Scriptures speak of two creations—the first creation and the NEW creation...
2. [a] First creation, vv1-3—"in the beginning was the Word...He was in the beginning with God...All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made..."
3. This sounds like Gen.1:1—"in the beginning God made the heavens and the earth"—this is the first creation...
4. [b] Second creation, vv4-5—"in Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness..."
5. Gen.1:2-4—"The earth was without form, and void; and darkness *was* on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. 3 Then God said, Let there be light; and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that *it was* good; and God divided the light from the darkness..."
6. Isa.65:17-18—"For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. 18 But be glad and rejoice forever in what I create; For behold, I create Jerusalem *as* a rejoicing, And her people a joy..."
7. 2Cor.5:17—"Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new..."
8. Gal.6:15—"For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation..."
9. Matt.1:23—"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which is translated, *God with us*..."
10. The second or new creation—begins with the Second Man the Last Adam—who comes from God to be WITH us...