**Jesus the Son of God** 31/12/23dkm

Read: Genesis 1:26-2:7, John 1:1-14,

Text: John 1:1

Psalms: 100old, 110, 49:8-15, 117

Hinduism, the majority religion of India, makes claim to fame by virtue of being an ancient religion. The religious books of Hinduism, the Vedas, date back to c.1500BC; this is around the time of Moses, who wrote the Pentateuch. The Bible in fact, takes us back to the very beginning of this world and time as we know it. The first words of the Bible are, ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth’, and part of this creation was the making of man, male and female in the image of God on the sixth day (Gen 1:1, 27).

While many think Genesis 1 is only myth, we believe it is true because the God of creation and redemption is truth. ‘God is not a man that he should lie’. If Genesis 1 is only myth then the writers of the Bible, and Jesus himself got it wrong. John begins his gospel declaring, ‘In the beginning was the word’, a deliberate echo of the first words of the Bible. He begins his first letter in the same way: ‘That which was from the beginning’. In these declarations he is referring to Jesus of Nazareth, ‘the Word became flesh’ (1:14).

John was probably the last gospel to be written. The church had been around for some years, and because of John’s emphasis on the humanity of Jesus some think the seeds of Gnosticism were germinating (cf. 1John 1:1). John may also have been mindful of Greek philosophies which spoke about the ‘*Logos*’. Yet his gospel is firmly based in the OT law and prophets and psalms which he, like all the disciples and Luke saw as being fulfilled in Jesus Christ (Luke 24:44). Jesus did not suddenly appear from nowhere; he was sent by God the Father, God his Father (3:34). John the Baptist testified to Jesus being the Son of God (1:34). Jesus was born of a woman into a people group expecting Messiah. Our subheadings are: ‘The Word in the beginning’, ‘The Word was with God, and was God’, ‘The Word made known’.

**1. The Word in the beginning**

Where did I come from and where am I going, or what is my destiny? The Bible tells us that God made us in his image; he did not make any other creature in his image. And God breathed into man the breath of life (Gen 2:7). The life that we have in us is from God, the very breath of God. Being made in the image of God we can relate to God; we were made to relate to God and to worship God. God walked in the garden and spoke with Adam, in the beginning. But sin cut us off from God and rendered us blind to him and his purposes. People around the world are searching, searching for God. In their blindness they make their own gods, or tell themselves they are god, at least of their own life. But all this searching and reasoning is futile because of blindness.

God in his grace has come to us; he has spoken to us and will open our eyes to the truth when we humbly ask him. All of us, like Pontus Pilate, are searching for truth, truth about life and death. Pilate was asking the very person who is truth, namely Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of David and the Son of God. Pilate was a Roman who worshipped idols, but the culture of his day was largely Greek. The Greeks had their idols, but they also had philosophers who came up with theories about how the world works.

We still have philosophers in men like Charles Darwin and Al Gore, even if we call their theories ‘science’. Paul saw philosophers in Athens, along with an altar to an unknown god (Acts 17:18, 23). Greeks philosophers used the term ‘*Logos*’ to refer to the rational principle by which anything exists, much as the term ‘science’ is used nowadays. Plato is reputed to have said, ‘It may be that someday there will come forth from God a Word, a Logos, who will reveal all mysteries and make everything plain’.

*‘Logos*’ is translated ‘Word’. Words are what we use to command and communicate. God ‘commanded’ everything into existence during the six days that he created the universe: “God said, ‘Let there be light’ and there was light” (Gen 1:3). This was the beginning of everything, apart from God who is eternal. John was reflecting on this word of God because he uses the same words, ‘In the beginning’ (John 1:1 cf. Gen 1:1). But although God spoke everything into existence he is not himself seen in the creation. The creation reveals his power and glory but not his person.

God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness’ (Gen 1:27). John understood the ‘us’ as the Godhead, as three persons in one God. And because Jesus was God the Son come into the world, he tells us that Jesus was with God in the beginning (1:1). We can say this because in verse 14 he tells us that the Word is Jesus.

Why does John speak of Jesus as ‘the Word’? Was it to connect with the Greeks, the students of Plato, saying, ‘Yes, Plato, the *Logos* has come in Jesus of Nazareth; now God is revealed to us perfectly’? Maybe, but he was also connecting with the Jews who knew from Scripture that God ‘worded’ the world into existence, and also spoke through the prophets, men like Moses and David. This same God has now spoken to us by his Son, ‘whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he made the worlds. Who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of His person, upholding all things by the word of his power’ (Heb 1:2, 3). Paul speaks of Jesus as ‘the image of the invisible God’ in whom dwells ‘all the fullness of the Godhead bodily’ (Col 1:15, 2:9). In verse 14 John speaks of the Word being, ‘The glory of the Father, full of grace and truth’. Jesus is so much like God he is actually God! Sure he took on flesh and blood, but the image or radiance of God was not diminished.

**2. The Word was with God, and was God**

Jesus, or the Word, was with God in the beginning. Jesus is eternal just like God the Father. Jesus is powerful just like God; ‘All things were made through Him’ (1:3). His glory is the glory of God (1:14). When Phillip asked, ‘Show us the Father’, Jesus said, ‘He who has seen me has seen the Father’ (14:9). ‘No one has ever seen God at any time, but, ‘The only begotten Son has made him known’ (1:18). The Son came from the bosom of the Father’ or from the Father’s side. All the attributes of the Father are present in the Son because the Son is of the same substance, equal in power and glory (Shorter Catechism Q6). Jesus is in truth God; ‘The Word was God’. Jesus is the living word. He is God speaking to the world in these last days (Heb 1:1).

John denounced as heretics those who denied that Jesus has come in the flesh (1John 4:3). He similarly denounces as heretics those who deny that Jesus is God’s Son in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily. In fact, it is Jesus who denounces such people; he denounced the Jews, his own people, who rejected him as Messiah, as the One sent by God to save them (1:11). John records seven ‘I am’ declarations made by Jesus, words like, ‘I am the light of the world’, ‘I am the bread of life’, and ‘I am the way, the truth and the life’.

When Jesus declared, “I say to you, before Abraham was ‘I AM’”, the Jews tried to stone him because they knew God as Yahweh or ‘I AM’ (8:58). When Jesus said, ‘I and the Father are one’ the Jews again tried to stone him (9:30). The Jews accused Jesus of blasphemy when he did not deny being the Son of God (Luke 22:70). If Jesus claimed to be no more than a teacher or a prophet, the Jews would not have opposed him as they did, and indeed crucified him as they did.

‘The Word was God’ (1:1). Clearly Jesus claimed to be God the Son and equal with God. He claimed to speak and act as God’s only begotten Son; ‘Whatever He [the Father] does, the Son does in like manner’ (5:19). It is difficult to understand why some who call themselves Christians refuse to acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God and God the Son, the second person of the Trinity. Sure, it is not easy to comprehend the Trinity, but it is unbiblical and heretical to deny the Trinity. You know of the Jehovah Witnesses sect that denies the divinity of Jesus. They try to translate verse 1 as, ‘The Word was a god’ rather than, ‘The Word was God’. Other sects like the Mormons also reject the divinity of Jesus, as do Christadelphians and some Seventh Day Adventists. Humanists also reject the divinity of Jesus; some even reject Jesus as an historical figure- but they do not claim to be Christians.

As believers we need to be alert to doctrines that deny or detract from the divinity or humanity of Jesus Christ. We also need to be balanced in our worship, acknowledging and worshipping the Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Some churches focus only on the Holy Spirit and neglect the power and goodness of God the creator, as well as the centrality of the atoning death of Jesus in the gospel. Peter Adam reminds us that, ‘God the Son reveals his Father to us, and brings us into His presence and sends the Holy Spirit to us’.

Jesus as both God and man is at the centre of our salvation because without his death on the cross we would not be saved. Jesus died as a man, a flesh and blood person like you and me; he had to be a man to represent us and bear our sin- and also ‘destroy him who has the power of death, that is the devil’ (Heb 2:14,17,18). Jesus died as God. On the cross God was offering himself for the propitiation of our sins; he was propitiating himself. Every other human being in the history of humanity has been a sinner. If Jesus was only a man he would have been born in sin and his death would have been for his own sin.

If you do not believe in Jesus you will die for your own sin. It is not possible for you to take the sin of another, despite the teaching (false) of the Roman Catholic Church regarding saints (cf. Ps 49:7). Jesus as the Son of God was born without sin and he committed no sin. He made this claim himself and no one ever accused him of sin, apart from his claiming to be sent by God and his being one with the Father (8:46).

**3. The Word made known**

The almighty and eternal God has revealed himself in his creation. When he spoke, things came into existence out of nothing or *ex nihilo*. We believe this by faith (Heb 11:3). We also believe that God the Son, or Jesus, was with God in the beginning and indeed, that all things were made through him (1:3, Col 1:16). You must reject any other explanation or theory for the creation if you believe in Jesus. Charles Darwin came up with the theory of evolution one hundred and fifty years ago, knowing that it was contrary to the truth of the Bible. This so-called science continues to be propagated, but much of it, like the survival of the fittest, is now rejected. So let us believe the truth as found in the Bible, and in Jesus Christ: God created us, and he did so that we might worship him because our life is from him and in him.

The almighty and eternal God has also revealed himself to us in his Son (1:18) because the creation does not speak of atonement for sin. It is the living word, Jesus, and the cross, which reveal the truth and grace of God by which we must be saved. The law of God given through Moses tells us we are sinners cut off from God, while grace and truth came through Jesus Christ (1:17).

The word of God is a word of power; when God speaks it is done. But atonement for sin requires a sacrifice, a blood sacrifice. The penalty for sin cannot be dismissed with a spoken word; it requires a living word, the ‘word became flesh’, offering himself on the cross as a sacrifice for your sin and mine. This is the truth and this is the grace of God, grace for you and me and for all who will receive this wonderful gift of God.