A Study on the Word and Words of God

John 1:1 · 1 John 1:1 · Revelation 19:13 · John 17:8

We read three texts together, each using the designation Word in connection with the person of the Lord Jesus:

> *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." — John 1:1*
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> *"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, of the Word of life." — 1 John 1:1*
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> *"And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God." — Revelation 19:13*

The Word — Logos — The Communicator and Revealer

All three passages refer to the same person. The word translated Word is the well-known Greek logos — a term having to do with the communication of what God is, the revelation of His nature. That communication and revelation is embodied in the person of Christ. He is the Logos.

In John 1, He is the Word in connection with the revelation of the Father's name. He is the revealer of the Father. In 1 John 1, He is the Word of life — in His own person that eternal life which was with the Father, revealing and communicating what eternal life is. In Revelation 19, He comes in judgment as the Word of God, communicating what God is as light. His first coming displayed God as love. His second coming displays God as light — coming forth in sovereign judgment, no longer presented to man's responsibility, which has been fully tested and concluded, but now acting in sovereign righteousness.

So the two great divine attributes — light and love — are each expressed in His two comings. He came the first time in sovereign grace as love; He comes the second time in sovereign judgment as light. He is in every aspect the Logos, the communicator and revealer of what God is.

The Words — Rhema — The Exactness of Divine Communication

Beside this great truth of the Word as a person, there is another vital line: the words of God. John 17:8 is decisive:

> *"For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me."*

The word here is a different Greek term — rhema, the words. Every word the Lord Jesus spoke while He was here came to Him from the Father. Not a single one was otherwise. He said of Himself: The Son can do nothing of Himself but what He sees the Father do. There was absolute unity of word and work between the divine persons. The Father gave the words; the Lord Jesus gave them out; the Spirit worked in the hearts of those who received them. And those who truly received those words knew that this One had come out from the Father.

This has direct bearing on the authority of Scripture. The same precision and divine exactness that characterized the words spoken by the Lord while He was here in the flesh is the character of all the words of God — Old Testament and New, including the word of Christ communicated from the glory, which Paul speaks of in Colossians 3:16 as dwelling richly in us. The Lord Jesus is still giving out the words of God from the glory, in accordance with the position He holds as the exalted man before the Father. He never abandoned the servant form; He bears it for all eternity. And the assembly will be eternally distinct before Him, as Ephesians 3:21 declares: To him be glory in the assembly to the ages of ages.

Every Word of God Is Pure

The Psalmist declares: Every word of God is pure — like silver refined in the fire seven times. The number seven speaks of completeness: there is not a spot or a drop of dross in connection with God's word. The very first attack of the enemy was upon this confidence. In the garden the serpent said, Hath God said? And the woman, rather than standing on what God had actually said, added to it: neither shall ye touch it. Scripture warns that adding to God's word makes us a liar, for God had not said that. We do not need to add to the word of God. Its sufficiency is in its excellence as given.

The attack continues today. Objectors raise the number of textual variants in the manuscripts — sometimes as many as 30,000 or 50,000 cited — as though this undermines confidence in Scripture. What is typically not mentioned is that the overwhelming majority of these are simple spelling variations that any reader of Greek recognizes immediately as transcriptional. Textual criticism has been the subject of serious scholarly effort for four or five centuries, with the express purpose of giving us a Greek text as close as possible to the original autographs. These are matters of man's responsibility in copying — failures of human transcription, not failures of divine inspiration.

Mr. Kelly gave excellent counsel: if God has given you the enablement to resolve a particular difficulty another person has raised, very well. But you are not under obligation to be clever enough to answer

every objection. What you are under obligation to do is to have confidence in God's word for yourself. That confidence is what the enemy was after from the beginning, and it is what he is after now. The answer to every such attack is the Psalmist's word: Every word of God is pure.

Receiving the Words

The Lord's word in John 17:8 states not only that He gave out the words but that they received them. That reception is a very important thing. The word of God is not a set of propositions to be debated or dissected — it is to be received into the soul. As Colossians 3:16 says, Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Why richly? Because these words are ultimately from God. They are to take up residence in us with depth and abundance.

We have no obligation to be able to answer every infidel's cleverly constructed objection to Scripture. We have been well reminded by a godly teacher that infidels have harped on certain difficulties for years and years, and many never learn better — while over the years, those who have gone on with the Lord in the word have found that a very great many of those supposed difficulties have been resolved. The word of God is its own best vindication. But what is required of us is to receive the words — to have before our souls the character that the Lord Himself declared in John 17: these are the words which thou gavest me, and they are pure.

May the Lord give us an ever-deepening confidence in His word, and may that word dwell in us richly, to His glory.