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A just weight
and balance

are the
LORD'S:

Thus saith the Lord...

- The Power of Words
- ***“Death and life are in the power of the tongue and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof.”***
(Proverbs 18:21)
- Meaning that those who enjoy talking **must bear the fruit of that talk** whether good or bad.

- "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words can never hurt me."

- How many agree with that statement?

- You may remember things that people said to you in the early years that still bother you today.

- On the other hand you probably also **remember compliments** that people made that have stuck with you all these years.
 - Words like,
“You did a great job!”
 - **You can do it!”**
- These positive statements **probably motivated you** to continue to pursue other goals in your life.

- Scripture says a lot about words and how we use them either for good or for negative consequences.

- Proverbs 12:13

“An evil man is trapped by his sinful talk, but a righteous man escapes trouble.”

- Proverbs 12:18

“the tongue of the wise brings healing.”

• James 3:5

*Even so the tongue is
a little member,
and boast great things.
Behold, how great a matter
a little fire kindleth!*

3:6 *And the tongue is a fire, a world of
iniquity: so is the tongue among our
members, that it defiles the whole body,
and sets on fire the course of nature;
and it is set on fire of hell.*

- What was John seeking to say when he described Jesus as *The Word* {Logos}

- **John 1:1**

*In the beginning was
the Word, {Logos}
and the Word {Logos}
was with God,
and the Word {Logos}
was God.*

- **What was John saying?**

- It was not long before the Lord's church was confronted with a very basic problem.
- It had begun in Judaism.
 - In the beginning all its members had been Jews.

- By human descent
Jesus was a Jew,
and, to all intents and purposes,
except for brief visits
to the districts of
Tyre and **Sidon**, and **Decapolis**,
he was never outside Palestine.
- Christianity began amongst the Jews;
and therefore inevitably
it spoke in the Jewish language
and used Jewish categories of thought.¹⁰

- But although it was cradled in Judaism it very soon went out into the wider world.
- Within thirty years of Jesus' death it had traveled all over Asia Minor and Greece and had arrived in Rome.

- By A.D. 60
there were hundreds
of thousands
of Greeks in the church.
- And Jewish ideas were
completely strange
to the Greeks.

- To take but one outstanding example, **the Greeks had never heard of the Messiah.**
- It was an idea that was **quite alien to the Greeks.**
- The very idea in which the Jewish Christians conceived and presented Jesus **meant nothing to them.**

- Here then was the problem.
 - How was Christianity to be presented to the Greek world?

- The problem was how to present Christianity in such a way that a Greek would understand.
- John lived in a Greek city.
 - He dealt with Greeks to whom Jewish ideas were strange and unintelligible.
- How could he find a way to present Christianity to these Greeks?

- In both Greek and Jewish thought there existed the conception of The Word. {Logos}
- Here was something which could be worked out to meet the double world of both Greek and Jew.
 - Here was something that both could understand.¹⁶

- To the Jew
a word {Logos}
was far more
than a mere sound;
- It was something which had
an independent existence
and which actually
did things.

- The spoken word to the Hebrew was fearfully alive....
 - To them words were like bullets.
 - For that very reason the Hebrew was sparing of words.
- Hebrew speech has fewer than 10,000 words;
 - Greek speech has 200,000 words.

- Once when Sir George Adam Smith {Scottish theologian} was traveling in the desert in the East,
 - A group of Muslims gave his party the customary greeting:
"Peace be upon you."

- But, later having perceived that he was of the Christian faith.
 - And that they had spoken a blessing to an infidel,
 - They asked for the blessing back again.

- Will Carleton, the poet,
expresses something like that:
- "Boys flying kites haul in
their white-winged birds;
 - You can't do that way
when you're flying words:
- 'Careful with fire,' is good advice we know,
- 'Careful with words,' is ten times doubly so.
- Thoughts unexpressed may sometimes fall
back dead,
 - But God himself can't kill them
when they're said."

- **Of the power of words, the Old Testament is full.**
- Once **Isaac** had been deceived into blessing **Jacob** instead of Esau,
 - **Nothing he could do** could take that word of blessing back again (**Genesis 27:1-46**).
 - The word had gone out and had begun to act **and nothing could stop it.** (**Hebrews 12:17**)

- We see the word of God in action in the Creation story.
- "And God said..." (Gen 1:3;6;11).
- The word of God is the creating power.

- Again and again
we get this idea of
the creative, acting,
dynamic word of God.

- "*By the word of the Lord
the heavens were made*"
(**Psalms 33:6**).

- "*He sent forth his word
and healed them*"
(**Psalms 107:20**).

- "*His word runs swiftly*"
(**Psalms 147:15**).

- **"Is not my word like fire, and, says the Lord, like a hammer which breaks the rock in pieces?"**
(Jeremiah 23:29).

- Everywhere in the Old Testament there is this idea of the powerful, creative word.

- Even men's words have a dynamic activity;

- How much more must it be so with God?

- For a hundred years and more
before the coming of Jesus
Hebrew was a forgotten language.

- The Old Testament
was written in Hebrew

but the Jews
no longer

knew the language.

- The scholars knew it,
but not the ordinary people.

- They spoke a development of Hebrew **called Aramaic**
- Which is to Hebrew somewhat as modern English is **to Anglo-Saxon.**
 - Since that was so the Scriptures of the Old Testament had to be translated into this language **that the people could understand.**

- And these translations were called the Targums.
- In the synagogue the scriptures were read in the original Hebrew,
- But then they were translated into Aramaic and Targums {an Aramaic translation or paraphrase}
 - Much like ”The Message”

- The Targums were produced in a time when men were fascinated by the supremacy of God
- And could think of nothing but the distance and the difference of God.

- Because of that the men who wrote the Targums were very much afraid of attributing human thoughts and feelings and actions to God.

- So they made every effort to avoid speaking of God in human terms.

- However the Old Testament regularly speaks of God **in a human way;**
- So wherever they met a term like that they substituted ***the word of God*** for ***the name of God.***

- Let us see how this worked.
 - In Exodus 19:17
we read that
*"Moses brought the people
out of the camp
to meet God."*
 - The Targums thought that
was too human a way
to speak of God,
so they said that
*"Moses brought the
people out of the camp
to meet
the word of God."*

- In Exodus 31:13 we read that God said to the people that the Sabbath "is a sign between me and you throughout your generations."
 - That was far too human a way to speak for the Targums, and so they said that the Sabbath is a sign between "my word and you."

- Deuteronomy 9:3

says that

God is

a consuming fire,

- But the Targums translated it that

the word of God

is a consuming fire.

- John's problem was not only that of presenting Christianity to the Jewish world, but of presenting it to the Greek world.
- How then did this idea of “the word” {Logos} fit into Greek thought?

- Logos
is a term
derived from
a Greek word
variously meaning:

- “word”
- “speech”,
- “reason”.

- In 560 B.C.

there was an Ephesian philosopher called Heraclitus (Hera-clyde-a-us)

- Whose basic idea was that everything is in a state of flux.
- Everything was changing from day to day and from moment to moment.
- His famous illustration was that it was impossible to step twice into the same river.

- You step into a river;
 - you step out;
 - you step in again;
- but you do not step into the same river,
- for the water has flowed on
 - and it is a different river.

- To Heraclitus
everything was like that,
- Everything was in a constantly changing
state of flux.
- But if that be so,
why was life not complete chaos?
- How can there be any sense
in a world where there was
constant flux and change?

- **The answer of Heraclitus was:**
 - All this change and flux **was not haphazard;**
 - It was **controlled** and **ordered,**
 - And that which controlled the pattern was the **Logos** the word of god.
 - But **NOT** the God **of Genesis 1**
 - But the god of **the Greek world.**

- To Heraclitus
The Logos
was nothing less
than the mind of a god
controlling the world
and every man in it.

- This idea also fascinated the Stoics.
 - Stoicism is a school of Hellenistic philosophy founded by Zeno of Citium in Athens in the early 3rd century BC.
 - It is a philosophy of personal ethics informed by its system of logic and its views on the natural world.

- The Stoics were always left in wondering amazement at the order of the world.
- Order always implies a mind.

- The Stoics asked:
"What keeps the stars
in their courses?
- What makes the tides
ebb and flow?
- What makes day and night
come in unalterable order?
- What brings the seasons round
at their appointed times?"

- And they answered;
"All things are controlled by
the Logos of god."
- The Logos is the power
which puts sense into the world,
- The power which makes the world
an order instead of a chaos,
- The power which keeps it
going in its perfect order.
- "The Logos" said the Stoics,
"pervades all things."

- In Alexandria there was a Jew named Philo

- Who had made it his life to study to know

the wisdom of two worlds,
the Jewish and the Greek.

- No man ever knew the Jewish scriptures as Philo knew them;
 - And no Jew ever knew the greatness of Greek thought as he knew it.
 - He was like the Hermit on the mountain who had all wisdom.

- He too knew and used and loved this idea

of the Logos,

The word.

- He held that the Logos **was the oldest thing in the world** and the instrument through which God had made the world.
- He said that the Logos **was the thought of God** stamped upon the universe.

- He talked about the Logos which made the world and all things;

- He said that God, the pilot of the universe, steered all things.

- He said that man's mind was stamped also with the Logos.

- That the Logos was what gave a man reason, the power to think and the power to know.

- He said that the Logos was the intermediary between the world and Gods
- And that the Logos was the priest who set the soul before God.

- The Greek was all about the Logos.
- So John came to the Greeks and said:
- "*For centuries you have been thinking and writing and dreaming about the Logos,*
 - The power which made the world,
- The power which keeps the order of the world,
 - The power by which men think and reason and know,
 - The power by which men come into contact with God.

- Jesus is that Logos,
- Come down to earth."
 - "The word,"
said John,
"became flesh."
- We could put it another way
 - **"The Mind of God
became a person."**

- Slowly the Greeks had thought their way to the conception of a Logos.
- The Mind of God which made the world and makes sense of it.
- So John is delving into their world of thought and reason.

- So John tells both the Jews and Greeks about Jesus Christ
- He came to tell them that men need no longer to guess and grope;
- All that they had to do was to look at Jesus and see the Mind of God.

- So, now we find Paul preaching in Athens,

- A Greek city, and he uses this idea
in his words
to the Greek thinkers
of the day.

- **Act 17:22** And Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus, and said,
Ye men of Athens, in all things,
I perceive that ye are very religious.

17:23 For as I passed along, and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription,
TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.

What therefore you worship in ignorance,
this I set forth unto you.

- **Act 17:24**

- **The God that made the world**

and all things therein,
he, being Lord of heaven and earth,
dwells not in temples made with hands;

17:25 neither is he served

by men's hands,
as though he needed anything,
seeing he himself

gives to all life, and breath, and all things;⁵⁸

- Acts 17:26

and he made of one every nation

of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed seasons, and the bounds of their habitation;

17:27 that they should seek God,

if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us:

- Acts 17:28

for in him we live, and move,
and have our being;

- as certain even of

your own poets have said,

For we are also his offspring.

(These words are from Aratus,
a Cecilian poet,
whose poem antedates Christ
some 270 years.)

(Alexander Campbell, op. cit., p. 120).

- It is John's great thought that Jesus is none other than God's creative and life-giving and light-giving word,

- Here at the beginning **John says three things** about the word;
- Which is to say that **he says three things** **about Jesus.**
- And what might those **three things be?**

- **# 1** The word {**Logos**} was already there at the very beginning things. (**Genesis 1:1**)

- The word is not one of the created things; the word was there **before creation.**

- If the word was with God before time began,
 - It means that God was always like Jesus.
 - What Jesus did was to open a window that we might see the eternal and unchanging love of God.

- This *Word*
(***logos***),
which John introduces
without explanation,
is not used in the sense
of **Philo** and the **Gnostics,**
or the philosophers
of Jon's day.

- He is not only the Word, {Logos} but the Light and Life.

- It is because he is the Light that he has filled the world with light;

- It is because **He is the Life** that the **spiritually dead** hear his voice, **become new creatures,** and have hope of eternal life.

- It is because
he is the Word
**that he spoke as
never man spoke.**
(**John 7:46**)

- He spoke to the dead
and they rose from the tomb.

- He shall speak to those that are in their
graves and they shall hear his voice
and come forth in the resurrection.
(**1 Thessalonians 4:16**)

- # 2 John goes on to say that *the word was with God*
 - John means that no one can tell us what God is like,
 - What God's will is for us,
 - What God's heart and mind are like,
 - as Jesus can.

- # 3 Finally John says

that the

Logos was God

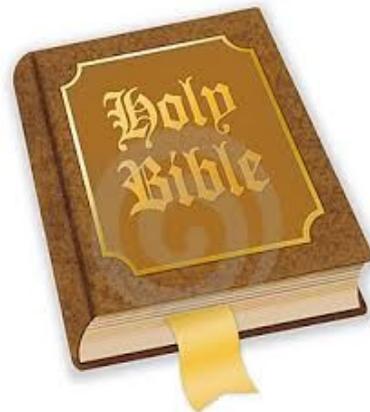
- He was saying that Jesus was so perfectly the same as God.
- That to see Jesus *was to see God.*

- **Think on these things**
- **Philippians 4:8**

**The doors of the church
are open.**

**The Spirit and the Bride
Say
“Come”.**

Revelation 22:17



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