

PART 1: THE COMING OF THE KING

The King Who Has Always Been There

By God's grace, I had the privilege of studying at Dallas Theological Seminary. During our four plus years in Dallas, Cathy and I also had the privilege of serving at Community Bible Chapel of Richardson, Texas. CBC shaped me as much for ministry as the seminary. Life was hectic in those days. Cathy worked full time. I took 15 to 17 units a semester, worked 20 plus hours and we both served at CBC with the youth. There came a point in time when it became too much. I talked it over with my supervisor at the church, Mark. He asked me what I would do if someone provided the salary for me to come on staff to work with the youth and help with music. I was really honored by Mark's offer. But as Mark kept speaking, I was deeply touched. Mark had been observing us seeing what I was doing in seminary; seeing what we were doing with the youth, knowing we were both working. Long before our discussion he saw the potential need and had approached a gentlemen in the church family who had the gift of giving. Unbeknownst to us, Mark had been thinking of us and working on our behalf to provide for us and the church family. I can't tell you how much that meant to me to discover Mark's loving service on our behalf.

As the Apostle John took pen to paper to tell the story of Yeshua Messiah King he revealed to his Jewish brethren that their Messiah King, Yeshua was not a "Johnny come lately". He had, in fact always been there caring for the Jewish people from Abraham to the writing of John's gospel.

In this sermon, I will be referring to Jesus as *Yeshua*. *Yeshua* is Jesus' name in Hebrew. It means "God saves." Referring to Jesus by His Hebrew name will hopefully reinforce the fact that Jesus is a Jew and that He came to the Jews and taught and ministered in a thoroughly Jewish context.

This series, *Yeshua Messiah King* is based on a harmonization of the four Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Each Gospel was written to a specific target audience: Matthew to the Jews; Mark to the Romans, Luke to the Greeks and John to the Church. Each Gospel has a unique focus: Matthew shows Yeshua is the Messiah King; Mark presents Yeshua as the ideal Man, Luke records Yeshua' history in chronological sequence and John emphasizes Yeshua' deity. Understandably then, the Gospels begin Yeshua's story at four different points. Matthew begins with Yeshua's family tree. Mark begins with Yeshua' baptism. Luke begins with the Angel Gabriel's announcement to Zachariah the priest. John, however, begins Yeshua's story not here on earth, but in eternity past.

Yeshua has always existed. He existed before the creation of the universe. John intentionally wrote verse one of his Gospel in a way that brings Genesis 1:1 to our minds:

GENESIS 1:1 (ESV)

1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

See for yourself as we read **John 1:1-18**.

JOHN 1:1-18 (ESV)

1 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. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of

whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") 16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Why did John describe Yeshua as *the Word*? Rather, John referred to Yeshua as *the Word* to show that Yeshua is the fulfillment of something taught by the Jewish rabbis.

We know that the Jews are fiercely monotheistic; they rightly believe there is only one God.

DEUTERONOMY 6:4 (ESV)

4 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Yet when the rabbis studied the Scriptures they saw another entity very closely related to God. In Scripture this entity is variously referred to as

- ▶ *the Angel of the Lord,*
- ▶ *the Word of the Lord,*
- ▶ *the Shechinah.*

They couldn't explain who this entity is but He has many of the same attributes as God. As an example, turn with me to **Genesis 22** verse one.

GENESIS 22:1-3 (ESV)

1 After these things God tested Abraham and said to him, "Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 2 He said, "Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I shall tell you." 3 So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac.

Fast forward to verse nine:

GENESIS 22:9-12 (ESV)

9 When they came to the place of which God had told him, Abraham built the altar there and laid the wood in order and bound Isaac his son and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. 10 Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to slaughter his son. 11 But the angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" And he said, "Here I am." 12 He said, "Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me."

Finally, look at verse fifteen:

GENESIS 22:15-18 (ESV)

15 And the angel of the Lord called to Abraham a second time from heaven 16 and said, "By myself I have sworn, declares the Lord, because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, 17 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, 18 and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

Here in Genesis 22, God and the Angel of the Lord seem to be one and the same. For another example, turn with me to **Exodus 3**.

EXODUS 3:1-6 (ESV)

1 Now Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law, Jethro, the priest of Midian, and he led his flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. He looked, and behold, the bush was burning, yet it was not consumed. 3 And Moses said, "I will turn aside to see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." 4 When the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then he said, "Do not come near; take your sandals off your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 6 And he said, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Here again, the Angel of the Lord and God seem to be one and the same (cf. Exodus 13:17-22 with 14:19-20).

Over and over in their studies, the rabbis encountered this person and He baffled them. In their rabbinic writing, the title by which they referred to this entity was *the Word*.

Three languages were spoken in first century Israel: Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

In order to say or write *Word* in Hebrew you would say or write *Davar*. To say or write *Word* in Aramaic, you would say or write *Memra*. In Greek, *Logos*.

The Word

Hebrew – *davar*

Aramaic – *memra*

Greek - *logos*

In their synagogues, Jewish worshippers would listen to the Scriptures read in Hebrew, which they could understand. But then the “sermon”, the explaining of the Scripture, occurred in Aramaic, their everyday language. It was in their “sermons” that the people were taught about the Memra Who was so much a part of their history.

The Memra was a mystery to the rabbis because they didn’t understand the Trinity. But they believed in the Memra and taught about Him in the synagogues (remember the *Memra* is the same person referred to as the Angel of the Lord, the Word of the Lord and the Shechinah). The rabbis taught that the Memra has six characteristics. As we look at these six characteristics, notice how the Apostle John links these to Yeshua, the *Word*, in John 1:1-18.

The rabbis taught...

The Memra is DISTINCT FROM GOD, but the SAME AS GOD.

The Apostle John reveals...

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The rabbis taught...

The Memra is the AGENT OF CREATION.

The Apostle John reveals...

³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

The rabbis taught...

The Memra is the AGENT OF SALVATION.

The Apostle John reveals...

¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

The rabbis taught...

The Memra is the MEANS BY WHICH GOD TAKES ON VISIBLE FORM.

The Apostle John reveals...

¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The rabbis taught...

The Memra is the MEANS BY WHICH GOD SIGNS HIS COVENANTS.

The Apostle John reveals...

¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

The rabbis taught...

The Memra is the AGENT OF REVELATION.

The Apostle John reveals...

¹⁸No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

John's introduction of Yeshua Messiah King not only emphasizes the deity of Yeshua; that Yeshua is fully God and fully Man. But John is also emphasizing that Yeshua has always been with the Jewish people in the Person of the Memra. As the Angel of the Lord in the Pillar of Fire and the Pillar of Cloud, Yeshua delivered the Israelites from Pharaoh and led the nation forty years in the wilderness. It was Yeshua in the form of the Shekinah Who dwelt in the midst of Israel in the Tabernacle and later the Temple. Yeshua has been caring for and loving the Jewish people all along. And now He has taken the most radical step to reveal God to His Chosen People; He has taken on human flesh.

How precious to learn as a Jew, that your Messiah King has been with you and your people all along.

How awesome for us to learn that our Lord and Savior is the Angel of the Lord, the Word of the Lord and the Shekinah Glory of the Old Testament. This is the Old Testament basis of our belief in the doctrine of the Trinity – that there is one divine nature fully possessed by three distinct persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The One Whom the Jewish rabbis saw in the Scriptures but could not understand, the *Memra*, is none other than our Lord Yeshua.

I trust that as our understanding of Yeshua deepens so also will deepen our love and commitment.