

# Word World

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. –Jn 1:1-3

We love words in my family. We play scrabble. We keep buying book case after book case and they keep filling up. Nora's is catching on too, just this morning she asked to watch Word World, an animated show where animals and things look like the letters of their name. "Dog" has a 'D' for its head and an 'O' and 'G' for its body. 'Barn', 'House', 'Jungle', etc, all look like the letters that spell them. This is clever and fun, but also very Biblical as well.

Because in our Scriptures we see that God also loves words, they exist everywhere from all times. That's what is at the heart of today's profound reading from the Gospel of John, which our church values so much that we read it most Sundays also at the end of Badarak; "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God and the word was God" John 1:1 (Ի սկզբանէ Էր Քանն. Եւ Քանն Էր առ Աստուած. Եւ Աստուած Էր Քանն). God seems to love words, they are something fundamental to creation and to this 'Word World' we live in and call home.

To see this, we need to look closely at the term used for word in Greek. Logos. Logos means "word" like I am reading from words written on this page. But logos also means much more than this, it has the most rich and broad meaning perhaps of any word. It is the root word of logic. So logos it's not just about words, it's about all of thinking. And not just abstract thinking, logos is knowledge and wisdom about any and everything. What words have 'logos' or 'ology' in them? All words and endeavors of humankind contain them; zoology, biology, philology, Armenology, to name a few. The world we live in is truly a world of words, thoughts, ideas and symbols that are like a giant puzzle that fits together.

The Armenian language also preserves this divine nature of the word. In classical Armenian the term for word is բան. It means word, but just as in Greek, it encompasses all wisdom and knowledge. And like in Greek, "ban" is as ubiquitous as "ology" Կենդանաբանութիւն/zoology. Կենսաբանութիւն/biology. Բանասիրութիւն/Philology. Moreover, in modern Armenian "ban" has come to simply mean "thing", as in each and every thing "amen ban", and any "thing" you can't think of the name for!

So like a fish, words are the ocean in which we live, move and have our being. Our reading today tells us indirectly why things are this way, why the word, logos, ban shows up literally in everything. John writes; "All things came into being through him (the logos), and without him (the logos) not one thing came into being." The reason that the logos, the ban, the word pops up in everything, every profession, every aspect of life is because God put it there. We really are like that cartoon Nora watches. We are made in God's image, and a huge part of that is being able to see, understand, reflect and grow in his world of words.

God speaks and we get it, no other creature is like this. So when we say in Badarak Աստուած God speaks, it seems like a small thing, but encompasses everything. He speaks in everything all the time, it inheres in creation all around us. But not just that; he didn't just infuse an amazing world with biology and Armenology and pull away, back off. He is not like a force, an idea. He is a living person, a spiritual, awesome one no doubt, but still like a person who speaks, who continues to care, who guides, aids and directs. That he speaks to us is evidence of his love.

That is where the Word of God, Jesus Christ comes in. John continues in his Gospel, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth." In the fullness of time God seems to have said, I am no longer relying on the world of words to guide you, nature, prophets, laws and wisdom so you will see me. Now you are old enough to receive me final Word. I am coming myself, sending my beloved Son, the last word; if you will.

In this way, what God had to say to us with Jesus was not just more words. There are red letter Bibles that highlight in red the words Jesus said, and these are profound. But even more important than what Jesus said, was who Jesus was and what he did. His words clarified himself and his work, but Jesus' self and his work were the main truth God was

revealing. He didn't just speak the word, he is the word. He didn't just speak the truth, "I am the truth," Jesus said (Jn 14:6).

And for this reason, we not only spend time listening to the spoken words of Jesus, but follow the Word which is Jesus. Just again this year, we followed his life, the way of the cross through Holy Week and unto Easter Resurrection, because Jesus reveals the very heart, mind and presence of the invisible God to the world, from the beginning, unto today. True, all things in God's world of words-nature, science and art-reflect the greatness of their creator. But to find ultimate significance in this life, to discover the special, loving words that God uses to call each man and each woman born into this world of words into full stature, we must look to God's final word, Jesus Christ, to admonish, guide, and transform us into words of living truth, now and always; amen.