

# The Gospel of John

## And We Beheld His Glory

John 1:1-18

### INTRODUCTION

As we enter into this Christmas season we celebrate the birth of Christ just as we celebrate the death, burial, and resurrection on Easter. However, these are not events that we only remember once a year, but the arrival of the Son of God is something that is crucial to our faith and our entire perspective on life. In fact we take communion every week to remind us what Christ did for us.

Christ's coming was the fulfillment of many prophecies made long, long, ago. His coming was in essence a stamp of God's faithfulness to the covenant that He made to Abraham. God does not forget His promises!

### All Stand and Read Scripture

#### **John 1:1-18 (NASB)**

#### **The Deity of Jesus Christ**

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 came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

#### **The Witness John**

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

9 There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. 10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

#### **The Word Made Flesh**

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15 John \*testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" 16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. 17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized

through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained *Him*.

## Prayer

This scripture is the least romantic account of the incarnation (God becoming Man) in the Gospels.

- There is no mention of Mary or Joseph.
- There is no appearance by angels.
- There is no visit by wise men.
- There are no gifts or offerings.
- There is no Bethlehem.
- There is not even a word about a baby.

But what we do have is a description of this entity that John calls "**The Word**".

In other words, throughout this passage there is not a word about what we usually associate with Christmas. As such **John chapter 1** does not make its way onto many Christmas cards does it?

I would be shocked if any of you sent or received a Christmas card this year that had any reference to John 1 at all! And you know what? That is a real shame! It is a real shame when you consider what John was saying here in light of the common opinions that exist in our society today about who Jesus is.

## BODY:

### I. WHO IS JESUS?

If we were to ask people on the street who Jesus is we know the types of answers that we are going to get.

- An incredibly enlightened teacher.
- A good and moral man.
- A political radical.
- A prophet.
- Or that He did not exist at all.

But, for the most part, the majority of people are going to speak of Him in flattering words. The one thing that we rarely find among men today are those who accurately describe Jesus as our creator who was fully God and fully man. He has the very title of God and is the Son of God and the promised Messiah.

This is the title that John is so intent on attaching to Him throughout his Gospel. In every Gospel the writer has a certain **intention**. He has a certain motive. John's motive could not be clearer. He states it for us in Chapter 20 verse 31 in his Gospel.

### **John 20:31 (NASB)**

<sup>31</sup>but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ (the promised Messiah), the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

In other words, his intention is to demonstrate that Jesus Christ is God who has come in the flesh. The reason the John is so intent on demonstrating that Jesus is God is because even in John's day, just as it is in our day, people were already incorrectly interpreting Who Jesus was. They were saying that Jesus was not God, He was just God-like for a season. People today are willing to grant Jesus as anything good as long as they do not have to go so far as to say that He is an eternal God. **Call Him what you want, but do not call Him God!**

For that reason, this passage, while **not** being romantic, is most definitely relevant. Especially for our society today.

With all of that being said, you might ask, "**Where is the Christmas story in it?**" The answer is found in verse 14.

### **John 1:14 (NASB)**

14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

There it is! The HEART of the Christmas story.

## **II. JESUS IS FULLY MAN**

**God becoming a man.** This is where we are going to divert our attention to this morning. In the first verse we saw **1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

There is a whole lot that he says in this statement that is important. But the main point is that the "**Word was God**". Yet it was not merely that He was God, but that He lived in relation to God. So here we have God dwelling with God. What he is doing is setting up the reality of the **TRINITY**.

So this "**Word**" is unique. He is God, but yet He is distinct from God. Then we skip down to **verse 14**. Here we are told that this "**Word became flesh, and dwelt among us**". Literally it means that **He pitched a tent among us**.

Then in verse 15 we are told that "**John (the Baptist) testified about Him and cried out, saying, 'This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'**"

Then finally in **verse 17** we are told Who this Word is. That He is Jesus Christ. **Christ** is the **Greek word** for the **Hebrew word Messiah**.

So the "Word" in verse 1 becomes flesh in **verse 14**. John the Baptist bore witness of Him in **verse 15** and He is identified as Jesus, the Messiah, in **verse 17**.

Having seen this it may natural for us to ask why John would choose to assign the term "**Word**" to Jesus Christ?

Well, Jesus came to this earth to do and teach us about God. Jesus uses words to express the image of God. That is what is meant in **verse 14** where John says "**we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth**".

The glory of God is always the visible manifestation of His presence among His people.

Thus in seeing Jesus, John is saying we have seen the glory of God because Jesus is the manifestation of God among His people. He **IS** God in the flesh.

### **III. JESUS IS FULLY GOD.**

So if we put it all together, what John is saying is that Jesus is the revelation of God. It is just as Paul said to the Colossians.

#### **Colossians 1:15 (NASB)**

<sup>15</sup> He is the image of the invisible God,...

Which means **He is God** which is exactly what John said in **verse 1**. "**The Word was God.**" It cannot be much clearer. And we will find that John repeats it over and over throughout his Gospel to support this initial claim of Jesus' deity.

- In John 10:30 Jesus says "**I and the Father are one.**"
- In John 12:45 Jesus says "**He who sees Me sees the One who sent Me.**"
- In John 14:7 Jesus says "**If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.**"
- In John 14:9 Jesus tells Philip "**Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?**"
- In John 17:22 Jesus prays "**The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one.**"

On and on and on are the examples. John is reiterating that Jesus is God in the flesh. He is wanting to make it as clear as possible because our faith and our salvation depends upon it.

It was crystal clear to the followers in John's day and that is why the Jews wanted to kill Him. Notice the Jews response immediately after Jesus told them in John 10:30 "**I and the Father are one.**"

#### **John 10:31-33 (NASB)**

<sup>31</sup> The Jews picked up stones **again** to stone Him. (This wasn't the first time.) <sup>32</sup> Jesus answered them, "I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?" <sup>33</sup> The Jews answered Him, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for **blasphemy**; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out *to be God.*"

Make no mistake! They knew Who Jesus was claiming to be. He was claiming to be God Almighty, the God in the Flesh.

Jesus was not just an enlightened teacher. He was not just a good and moral man. Jesus was not just a social reformer. He was not just a prophet. **Jesus was God in the flesh!**

Any belief or teaching that falls short of that claim is not scriptural. John later wrote...

#### **1 John 4:2-3 (NASB)**

<sup>2</sup>By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; <sup>3</sup>and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the antichrist, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.

Simply put, John is saying that any declaration that Jesus was not from God is of the Antichrist.

Notice that when we confess that Jesus has come in the flesh, not only are we confessing that **Jesus is God**, but we are also confessing that **Jesus is man**. Fully God and Fully man. It is not "**either or**", it is **both**.

This is inferred in **verse 14** where it tells us that "**The Word became Flesh**". By using the word "**became**", it is not inferring that one ceased to be and another began. It just means that He became something that He was not previously. So in addition to being God, He took on the fullness of humanity.

### **ILLUSTRATION:**

In Mark chapter 1 Jesus walked up to Peter and Andrew and told them "**Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.**" This is the same word that is used in **verse 14**. This does not mean that they were going to lose everything they had learned and experienced previously as fishermen. He is simply saying what else they will become. They will still be men. They will still know how to fish. But now they will also be "fishers of men".

So when the Word becomes flesh, the Word is still God, but now He is also fully man. Believing this is vital to our salvation. Who Jesus **was** and **is** has **everything, everything**, to do with our salvation.

Jesus had to be fully God and fully man at the same time in order for us to be saved. The reason why is because the only type of substitute that could stand in our place as a sacrifice for our sins that would be acceptable to God was one that would be perfect and yet would be human. That presents a real problem for normal humans doesn't it? Because where are we going to find a perfect human?

Any volunteers? We do not find that anywhere except in the person of Jesus Christ! So Who Jesus **was** and Who Jesus **is** lies at the very heart of how we received our salvation.

That is why John says in **verse 14** "**We saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.**"

### **CONCLUSION:**

We celebrate Christ's birth because it brought the manifestation of God's glory to dwell among us. It was the ultimate demonstration of God's grace and truth. **Truth** because there was nothing but **truth** to be found in Him. And **grace** in that He showed us the boundless unmerited favor of God. By allowing His Son to die on the cross for us. It was there that Satan was defeated and God's grace was secured for us.

Although we have sinned, Jesus took that sin upon Himself so we could be found blameless before God on Judgment Day. It was secured by the life, death, and

resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**This is the reason why we celebrate Christmas!**

Hear what the angel announced to the shepherds at the time of Jesus' birth.

**Luke 2:8-11 (NASB)**

<sup>8</sup>In the same region there were *some* shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. <sup>9</sup>And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. <sup>10</sup>But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; <sup>11</sup>for today in the city of David there has been born for you a **Savior**, who is Christ the Lord.

Throughout the entire history of mankind, there has only been one Man Who could say to God, "God accept Me upon the basis of Who I am".

Do you know the Savior?

**This is the Day!**