

The Gospel of John

Lesson 2

I. The Incarnation of The Son of God (1:1-18)

"These first verses of the gospel according to the apostle John are among the most elegant & profound that may be found in the Word of God. They take us before the beginning of creation & move us into the time & space of human history. They reveal, like no other portion of Scripture, that the Jesus who came into human history (1:14) was the Creator God of Gen.1:1. These verses identify the eternal relation of the Father & the Son & reveal that we may have light & life through our reception of Him – the One who is ultimate revelation of the Father. Earl Radmacher, 'Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Commentary,' p.1309"

(1:1) In the beginning was the Word, - Right away we are reminded of Genesis 1:1, the beginning of creation & that is no accident. John wants to take us back to the beginning of all things to see that Jesus Christ is already there. He will then demonstrate that it is Christ Himself who is the Creator of all things. As someone well said when asked what beginning did John mean here, *'Any beginning you want to make it Jesus Christ is already there.'* & Morris, *'This means He was before all else.'* This is the doctrine of Christ's pre-existence as also expressed in Micah 5:2, *'His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.'* Literally, 'the Word continually was' speaking of His eternal existence. (Morris) John also refers to Him as 'the Word' literally 'the Logos,' meaning 'word, thought, concept & the expression thereof. (Ryrie)' It means that He is the revealer of, the exact expression of, the essence of God Himself (1:18). If you want to know what God is like take a look at Jesus Christ (v.14 identifies the Word as Christ). **& the Word was with God,** - Before the beginning we learn that the Word was continuously in the presence of & by implication in communion with God yet also separate from God in some way. **& the Word was God.** - To further clarify the previous statement & His distinction from God we learn that He is God Himself as well. *'Nothing higher could be said. (Morris)'* Notice that the idea of the Triunity develops naturally in the Scriptures. Notice also that the definite article 'the' before the word 'God' is not found here in the Greek & its absence is significant. When the article is missing it can mean, & that is the case here, that the quality of the thing is being stressed. Therefore John is not saying that Jesus is a God (one among many as the cultist wants to say, see the New World Translation of the Bible) but that Jesus is God Himself, He has that intrinsic quality. This then becomes one of the strongest passages in all the Bible as to the absolute, unequivocal deity of Jesus Christ & so we can say with Thomas, *'My Lord & my God!'* **(1:2) He was in the beginning with God.** - Here John combines parts of the first two phrases above to say categorically that He *'did not come to have a relationship with God but was with God from the beginning. (Laney)'* **(1:3) All things came into being through Him,** - This categorically states that everything separate from our transcendent God is of the creation & came by means of His creative hand (See Colossians 1:16,17). The Psalms tell us that He merely spoke & it was done & it was done out of complete nothingness & out of infinite power. Notice that it was through Him indicating that the Father was working through the Son, He was the source of creation. (Morris) **& apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.** - There are no exceptions to this previous statement. As such Jesus Christ is the ultimate scientist, the ultimate engineer, the ultimate architect, words fail to describe what is being said here & He dwells within us & He is ready, willing & able to handle our problems if only we will give them over to Him. Do we have a good idea of whom we are really dealing with? **See article on last page.** **(1:4) In Him was life,** - One of the essential attributes of God is that He is the self-existent One (Hebrews 11:6, where it says that God simply 'is,' a statement of essence). What it means is that He has life within Himself & it is impossible for Him to not exist. A manifestation of this essential trait is that He is the source of life, all life. **& the life was the Light of men.** - That is the meaning here, He is the source of physical life for all men (John 5:25; 11:25). They exist solely because of Him. Paul expresses this idea while addressing the Athenians on his second missionary journey,

"So Paul stood in the midst of the Areopagus & said, 'Men of Athens, I observe that you are very religious in all respects. For while I was passing through & examining the objects of your worship, I also found an altar with this inscription, 'TO AN UNKNOWN GOD.' Therefore what you worship in ignorance, this I proclaim to you. The God who made the world & all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven & earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything since He Himself gives to all people life & breath & all things; & He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times & the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him & find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; for in Him we live & move & exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children (offspring).' Being then the children (offspring) of God, we ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art & thought of man. Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead.' Acts 17:22-31"

He of course is also the source of all spiritual life (Jn.14:26), as we see in John's stated purpose for his gospel.

"but these have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; & that believing you may have life in His name. Jn.20:31"

(1:5) The Light shines in the darkness, - This is one of the key contrasts in the book. Christ is the light who shines in & illuminates the darkness. The darkness is the fallen world that lies in 'in the power of the evil one.' Light is a metaphor for life & truth & Christ is both. Darkness is the environment that the unsaved find themselves. (Morris)

"This is the message we have heard from Him & announce to you, that God is Light, & in Him there is no darkness at all. 1Je.1:5"

& the darkness did not comprehend it. - This should be literally translated, 'the darkness has not overcome (or overtaken) it' (Morris, Laney). In other words as much as Satan & his world system seeks to extinguish Christ & Christianity they cannot accomplish it because Christ Himself is the source of the light. Those who set out to disprove the Bible are often converted by it.

(1:6) There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. - This of course is a reference to John the Baptist the forerunner of the Messiah as prophesied in Malachi 4:5. Jesus said that had Israel accepted Him as their king that John would have been the fulfillment of the Elijah prophesy (Matt.11:14). Since they rejected Him Elijah must still come. **(1:7) He came as a witness,** - The word witness is the word from which we get the English 'martyr.' A witness simply testifies to what he knows is true & the ultimate witness in that regard is of course the martyr. **to testify about the Light,** - John's purpose was to declare that the arrival of the Messiah was imminent. He was building the case for the Messiah. so **that all might believe through him.** - This was John's purpose, to so clearly & powerfully prepare the way for Christ that anyone in their right mind would believe in Him. Belief in Christ is the major theme of John's gospel as he uses the word 98 times. It begs the question can you lead someone to Christ from the content of John alone? How you answer that question reveals a lot about your answer to the question, 'What must I do to be saved?' **(1:8) He was not the Light,** - John clearly understood his role & purpose. Christ alone is the light in the world, John is his opener.

"Believe' is not in the continuous tense, & this is perhaps significant. John came to bring men to decide, to make the definitive act of faith. Leon Morris, 'The Gospel According to John,' p.91"

but he came to testify about the Light. - He again recognized that he was a witness & not the light himself. 'He fully recognizes the greatness of the forerunner.' (Morris)

'John is concerned that we should miss neither the good news of the incarnation of God, nor the tragedy of man's rejection of God. Morris, p.93':

(1:9) There was the true Light which, - Christ is the true light in contrast to every false light or messiah & there are many. Christ is the way, the truth & the life, no one comes to the Father but through Him. **coming into the world,** - Probably a reference to Christ's incarnation as He entered in the world system (the kosmos). **enlightens every man.** - Probably a reference to Christ giving physical life to all men (Jn.1:4). There is also the truth that every man has the witness of God through the creation & is held accountable for this information (Rom.1:18-20). This information cannot save but it can condemn for the unsaved will be judged for the light of God that they have rejected. **(1:10) He was in the world,** - 'World' here & in the next phrase refers to the earth & all it contains. (Morris) He came & dwelt in the world system that He originally Himself created. He did not just pay a visit but was here continuously. (Morris) **& the world was made through Him,** - Again nothing that was made was made without Him. He is the Creator at (probably) the atomic level. Therefore He made the building blocks with which the Spirit fashioned the universe as planned by the Father (remember that the Father created through Him). **& the world did not know Him.** - The great paradox is that He came into the world that He had made yet the people in general (the meaning of world here), particularly the Jews, did not recognize Him for who & what He is. An amazing statement. **(1:11) He came to His own,** - He came to the Jews of whom He was one & of whom the Messiah would come. As Messiah He had a right *'to possess - a land, a people, a throne - all that was His by covenant promise (cf. 2Sam.7:12-16).'* (Laney) **& those who were His own did not receive Him.** - Even worse than the reaction of the world was the reaction of His own people (a decisive act). To 'receive' implies a relationship through faith but they would not embrace Him. This is the greatest missed opportunity in history. **(1:12) But as many as received Him,** - Some did embrace Him & His claims by faith, *'even to those who believe in His name.'* **to them He gave the right to become children of God,** - An inestimable result of believing in Christ is that we are designated (they have the right to be called) the children of God (i.e. God is our parent & we are in His parentage, 2Pet.1:4; 1Jn.3:1-3). As we have seen above God, particularly Christ, gives life to all men. It cannot be said however, in any meaningful way, that mankind constitute the children of God (John uses the regular word for children here, 'a child,' tekna). Only those who receive Him have the genuine right to claim this for themselves, Jesus said, *'I am the way, & the truth & the life, no one comes to the Father but through Me.'* **even to those who believe in His name,** - To believe in Christ (here His name stands for His Person & work, the Gospel, 1Cor.15:1-8) in a saving way involves a fundamental change of mind concerning our sin & the Savior. It is a change of mind concerning whatever we have been trusting in to the Person & work of Christ alone, it is a transfer of trust. This is biblical repentance/faith. **(1:13) who were born,** - 'Born' here, in John, means to be born again, born from above, born spiritually, born twice. **not of blood** - Literally 'bloods.' It was not through the process of human reproduction or 'natural descent.' **nor of the will of the flesh** - This was also not the result of a natural sexual attraction between the husband & wife that results in a baby. **nor of the will of man,** - Nor was this a human decision as two human parents (the word 'man' here may be a reference to the human father - Morris), might decide to have a baby. **but of God.** - In contrast these three possibilities we become the children of God as God pursues us through initial sanctification bringing us to the point where we can & do believe (2Thess.2:13,14; 1Pet.1:1,2, Acts 16:14; Gal.1:11-17).

"God alone can perform this feat, & He has offered to provide this new birth to all who will receive the revelation given by his Son & entrust themselves to him for eternal life. Homer Rent, 'Light in the Darkness,' p.33"

(1:14) And the Word became flesh, - This is a clear statement of the incarnation. The eternal Word took on humanity, at a point in time (Gal.4:4) without giving up any of His deity (Phil.2:6-8). & **dwelt among us,** - He literally lived among humans as a genuine human (literally He tabernacled with us). & **we saw His glory,** - To glory has the idea of truly manifesting the nature of the thing. In this case Jesus w; the glory of God because He was the exact representation of God's invisible essence. Th_ word used for 'dwelt' here reminds us of the shekinah glory in Israel's tabernacle in the wilderness. It speaks of God's presence among the people. **glory as of the only begotten from the Father,** - The word 'only begotten' has the idea of unique, one of a kind (Heb.11:17) & together with Jesus' self-designation as the Son of God it reveals His unique relationship to the Father as God to God (Ps.45:6,7). **full of grace & truth.** - Two things are mentioned that comprise the content of Christ glorifying God the Father, grace & truth. Grace is the bestowing of favor that is not deserved or earned & truth is that which continually conforms to reality. Jesus is full (there is a generous supply) of these characteristics of God. He accurately (truthfully) revealed what God is like to us & graciously gave His life that we too might have a relationship with God through Him.

'He is clear on the deity of the Word. But he is just as clear on the genuineness of His humanity. Morris, p.102'

(1:15) John testified about Him & cried out, - The reference again is to John the Baptist & his role as witness to the Person of Christ. **saying, 'This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before** - Here John reiterates his role in the process of announcing the Messiah. He existed before John as the eternal Son of God (see above) even though John was physically born before Him (by 6 months). John was a humble man. **(1:16) For of His fullness** - Again there is a generous, abundant supply. **we have all received,** That is for those who have believed in Him & thus received Him & these blessings. We are joint heirs with Christ.

"For all things belong to you, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you, & you belong to Christ; & Christ belongs to God. 1Cor.3:21 -23"

& grace upon grace. - Literally, 'grace in place of grace' speaking of 'an unending supply of God's grace.' This is why Paul challenges us to stand firm in God's grace (Heb.4:16). **(1:17) For the Law was given through Moses;** - A reference to the previous dispensation under which the Christ lived in the Gospels. John is trying to set up a contrast here. There was grace & truth under the Law too but a full revelation has come through the incarnation of Christ. **grace & truth were realized through Jesus Christ.** - The full meaning of God's grace & truth comes through Jesus Christ as He teaches the true meaning of the Law to the Jews & reveals the church as a new thing coming. **(1:18) No one has seen God at any time;** - That is in His essence. **the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.** - Literally, 'He has made Him known.' Jesus is the expression of God's invisible essence so that if you want to know what God is like you look at Jesus as He is found in the Scriptures. Remember what Jesus said to doubting Thomas, 'He who has seen Me has (already) seen the Father.' Notice also the change here from 'only begotten' in verse 14 to 'only begotten God' here. The best manuscripts include the word 'God' reinforcing His deity while maintaining a distinction from God the Father (& the Spirit), both are God, *'I & My Father are one.'*

"The emphasis of the Prologue, then, is on the revelation of the Word as the ultimate disclosure of God Himself. That theme is dramatically reinforced by the remarkable parallels between v.1 & v.18, constituting an inclusio, a kind of literary envelope that subtly clasps all of 1:1-18 in its embrace. Thus 'in the bosom of the Father' is parallel to 'with God; "the unique one, (himself) God,' is parallel to 'was God;' & to say that this unique & beloved person has made God known is to say the he is 'the Word,' God's Self-expression. D. A. Carson, 'The Gospel According John,' p.135"

The Astounding Truth About the Hubble Space Telescope's Most Famous Image

Posted by **Ross Pomeroy**



The Hubble Space Telescope is humanity's portal to the universe. For more than twenty-five years its gaze has darted across the sky, returning images beyond our wildest dreams, sights of unimaginable beauty, radiant majesty, and awesome stellar violence.

One of Hubble's most iconic images is famous for transcending stars, planets, and nebulae, for peering beyond our galaxy to view space on a truly cosmic scale. That image -- seen above -- is the Hubble Ultra-Deep Field. The specks of color and light you see are not stars; they are galaxies -10,000 of them in fact! It is the deepest image of the sky ever obtained, gazing back approximately 13 billion years.

Yet the immense scope of the Hubble Ultra-Deep Field conceals an astounding truth. As all-encompassing and far-reaching as the image seems, it is much, much closer to nothing than it is to everything.

"The image is only **one-forty millionth** of the sky. In other words, it would take **40 million** Hubble Ultra-Deep Fields to cover the entire sky," Dr. Edward J. Weiler, former Chief Scientist for the Hubble Space Telescope, recently revealed in a presentation at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Washington, D.C. "If you wanted a human analogy, go out on a clear night, get a standard sewing needle, hold it up at arms' length and look at the hole in the sewing needle. That's the size of the sky you're seeing portrayed here."

(Image **NASA, ESA** H. Teplitz and M. Rafelski (IPAC/Caltech), A. Koekoemer (STScI), R. Windhorst (Arizona State University), and Z. Levay (STScI))

http://www.realclearscience.com/blog/2015/12/the_astounding_truth_about_the_hubble_telescopes_most_famous_image.html