

The Story of Christmas through the Eyes of John
John 1:1-18

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Introduction: This month we have considered the Christmas story as told by the authors of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Today, we complete our study by considering John's account. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all give us a little bit different version. This is not contradictory, understand, but complementary. We have learned something different from each one. I trust that today will be no different.

Text: ¹ In the beginning was the Word,
and the Word was with God,
and the Word was God.
² He was with God in the beginning.
³ All things were created through Him,
and apart from Him not one thing was created
that has been created.
⁴ Life was in Him,
and that life was the light of men.
⁵ That light shines in the darkness,
yet the darkness did not overcome it.
⁶ There was a man named John
who was sent from God.
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 The true light, who gives light to everyone,
was coming into the world.
¹⁰ He was in the world,
and the world was created through Him,
yet the world did not recognize Him.
¹¹ He came to His own,
and His own people did not receive Him.
¹² But to all who did receive Him,
He gave them the right to be children of God,
to those who believe in His name,
¹³ who were born,
not of blood,
or of the will of the flesh,
or of the will of man,
but of God.
¹⁴ The Word became flesh
and took up residence among us.

We observed His glory,
the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father,
full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ (John testified concerning Him and exclaimed,
"This was the One of whom I said,
'The One coming after me has surpassed me,
because He existed before me. ' ")

¹⁶ Indeed, we have all received grace after grace
from His fullness,

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

¹⁸ No one has ever seen God.

The One and Only Son —
the One who is at the Father's side —
He has revealed Him.

John is strangely different from the other three Gospels. Material that was in the other Gospels is now absent. On the other hand, John includes other stories and sayings that are absent in the other three. We should understand at least several reasons for these differences. First, John's purpose is more theological than chronological. The stories and sayings that John includes have a specific theological purpose. Specifically, John's aim is to point people toward belief in Jesus Christ (John 20:31). Second, John tells us himself that containing all that Jesus did and said is impossible (John 21:25).

Biblical students usually refer to the first eighteen verses of John as the Prologue. These verses serve as an introduction to the whole gospel. John did not begin with the birth account as does Matthew and Luke or the preaching of John the Baptist as does Mark, he began with Jesus' pre-existence with God, the Father. In these first eighteen verses, John got right to the point about the true identification of Jesus—which is the heart of the Christmas story.

The Reality of His Coming

The word "incarnation" is a theological term that means that God became man and entered human history. The importance of the incarnation is crucial to orthodox Christianity. The incarnation says to us that Jesus is both wholly God and wholly human. Where do we get such a view? We get it right here in John 1. To John, it is even more important than the birth narrative.

The Progression of Thought in this Passage

1. 1:14—The Word became flesh. This is an obvious reference to Jesus.
2. 1:1—The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

So, Jesus is God!

The Supporting Facts in this Passage

1. The eternal nature of Jesus (1:2)

2. Jesus doing things we know God did (1:3)

Listen to Colossians 3:15-20

- ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn over all creation;
¹⁶ because by Him everything was created,
in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible,
whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—
all things have been created through Him and for Him.
¹⁷ He is before all things, and by Him all things hold together.
¹⁸ He is also the head of the body, the church;
He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead,
so that He might come to have first place in everything.
¹⁹ For God was pleased [to have] all His fullness dwell in Him,
²⁰ and through Him to reconcile everything to Himself
by making peace through the blood of His cross —
whether things on earth or things in heaven.

John 1:14 says that “He took up residence among us.” This is an important idea. The idea literally is that Jesus “tabernacled” among us. The Old Testament revealed that God’s presence dwelt in the tabernacle. Now, God is revealing that His presence is upon us. Just as Jesus took up residence in the earth through a baby, He takes up residence in our lives through the Holy Spirit. So, here is the Christmas question: Has Jesus taken up residence in you?

The Reason for His Coming

- He came to give life.

He gives us our very breath of life. Linking Jesus to creation causes us to remember that Jesus is the reason for our life. According to John 10:10, He also came to give us abundant life here on earth. Ultimately, He gives us eternal life. (John 3:16)

- He came to give light.

We cannot escape in our thinking what has occurred this year in places like Aurora, Colorado, and Newtown, CT. After last week’s shootings, author and pastor, Max Lucado, in prayer form gives us this idea about Jesus coming as light into the darkness.

Dear Jesus,

It's a good thing you were born at night. This world sure seems dark. I have a good eye for silver linings. But they seem dimmer lately.

These killings, Lord. These children, Lord. Innocence violated. Raw evil demonstrated.

The whole world seems on edge. Trigger-happy. Ticked off. We hear threats of chemical weapons and nuclear bombs. Are we one button-push away from annihilation?

Your world seems a bit darker this Christmas. But you were born in the dark, right? You came at night. The shepherds were nightshift workers. The Wise Men followed a star. Your first cries were heard in the shadows. To see your face, Mary and Joseph needed a candle flame. It was dark. Dark with Herod's jealousy. Dark with Roman oppression. Dark with poverty. Dark with violence.

Herod went on a rampage, killing babies. Joseph took you and your mom into Egypt. You were an immigrant before you were a Nazarene.

Oh, Lord Jesus, you entered the dark world of your day. Won't you enter ours? We are weary of bloodshed. We, like the wise men, are looking for a star. We, like the shepherds, are kneeling at a manger.

This Christmas, we ask you, heal us, help us, be born anew in us.

Hopefully,
Your Children

The Reaction to His Coming

Some will believe; some will not.

The impact of John 1:10-13 is that in Christ, God did all that is necessary for our salvation. He was in the world. He came to His own, but not all believed. It was the reaction to His coming then, and sadly it is the reaction to His coming now.

I found myself struggling a bit with something this week as I prepared this message. Today's message sounds a lot like last week's message when we considered the Christmas story from Luke. And that message sounded an awful lot like the one before that when we considered the Christmas story from the Gospel of Mark. And, the truth is, that message sounded a lot like the one before that—when we considered the account from the Gospel of Matthew. As I struggled with my own desire to not be repetitive, I took great joy in the truth that the Gospels are consistent in what they tell us about who Jesus is and what He came to do.

So, will you allow Him to do in your life what He came to do?