

Christmas in John's Gospel

John 1:1-1-18

PW Emerson – 12/15/2019 – Ten:27 Ministries

There are 4 gospel accounts of Jesus: they recorded by Matthew, Mark Luke & John
The Christmas story, as popularly known is in only two – want to guess which two?
Yes, it's in Matthew & Luke.

So we are going to take a look at the very odd Christmas story found in John's record of
the Gospel.

John 1:1-18

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome^[a] it.

⁶There was a man sent from God whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—
¹³children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

¹⁵ (John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, "This is the one I spoke about when I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'") ¹⁶ Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and ¹⁹ is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.

The first bit that needs some explanation is "The Word" or logos in Greek

- Creation story - God spoke things into being - "let there be light" and it was so
- Originally a word meaning "a ground", "a plea", "an opinion", "an expectation", "word", "speech", "account", "reason"
- Kind of like saying, "Here it is"
- God spoke, and it was so – God said “let there be light” and it was so

This doesn't give a lot of detail ...

- How it happened
- What was the process
- What kind of effort did it take
- How long did it take ...

Because it wasn't supposed to.

Our modern western mindset is to

- Think through the details
- Be thorough

But that was NOT the mindset of those who wrote the bible because

That was NOT the mindset of the people at the time.

The Hebrew mindset wasn't to give all the details

Rather they are trying to express what God did, not how it was done.

Thus, "let there be light" and it was so, was perfectly reasonable.

John expresses the Christmas event, the birth of Christ, by saying, THE WORD BECAME FLESH.

And that was perfectly reasonable.

Here we see John using this word, logos, in describing Jesus and in describing God

- Whatever "is" is from God
- And this logos account, opinion, reason, expectation is embodied in the person of Jesus

Notice John 1:14

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

- It wasn't that Jesus was "conceived," and that was the beginning of Jesus, 9 months prior to his birth
- Jesus always was, always existed

Here, Jesus took on flesh

Whatever was, from the beginning of time, took on flesh, for the first time.

God had been with people

- Pick a book in the Old Testament and we hear about God being with people

Not only that but we see angels throughout the Old Testament interacting with people

But now, for the first time in history, God

- Whose love is beyond our comprehension
- Whose majesty and power and awesomeness are beyond our ability to grasp

For the first time, God would take on human form, flesh, blood, body and interact with people

John brings this up here because throughout his gospel account, he wants us to keep in mind that the deeds and words of Jesus are the deeds and words of God.

That's why John is laying this important groundwork now.

Someone wasn't just born on Christmas, rather God took up dwelling among us.

Another noteworthy item is when John refers to "the world" *kosmos* is the original word

- "The world" is mentioned 78 times in just this Gospel

Most of the time when the world is mentioned, it is with a negative connotation

That's because

- The world is not the created order of things
- The world is the part of creation that is in rebellion
- It is not the way God made it

So when we read about "the world," it is not giving a great endorsement of the world

- Rather it is to show the depth of God's love
- zB, John 3:16 "For God so loved the world"

Jesus talks about the life of a disciple is hard and done at a high price

Luke 14:26-27

²⁶"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. ²⁷And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple.

Why is there such a high price to be a disciple?

Because disciples are to act in this rebellious world.

Let's take a look at one particular verse that mentions "the world"

John 1:10-11

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

Ironic that although Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the ancestral home of his descendants, there was no room at any house, no room for him at the inn.

His own people did not receive him

- He came to the Jewish people
- Jewish culture
- Jewish whose scriptures predicted the coming of the Christ ...

And the Jews were the first to dismiss him and reject him.

John 1:12

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

The concept of a “name” at this time and place included everything a person was.

Even today, sometime we say that someone speaks “in a person’s name,” meaning with the other person’s authority and expressing his/her views.

To trust in the name of Jesus the Messiah does not mean giving magic powers to the name itself

Rather it means to trust in the person, the entire being, of Jesus.

The name Jesus means “salvation”

John 1:12

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

CHILDREN of GOD

This is the idea of having a close, intimate with God!

Throughout the Old Testament, God revealed himself to people and had a close relationship with them

- Abraham
- Jacob / Israel
- Moses
- David

Now, with the new covenant that comes through Jesus, this child, such as relationship is available to all who believe in him!

John 1:14 the most significant verse

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The word for dwelling, skenoo, is the same word used in the Old Testament to describe the Tabernacle. In other words ...

- Just as the tabernacle was the focus of God's dwelling in the Old Testament Jesus is God's dwelling with the Jews at the time of Christ

But only the priests went into the tabernacle and even they didn't get to see the face of God

Jesus is God in the flesh, for everyone, for all to see!!

We can't look at this piece of scripture without a word or two about the author's use of light and darkness.

- Jesus is God's light. Light equates goodness and only Jesus is truly good.
- Darkness = evil. Darkness also lack of understanding – such as not understanding that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life

This builds on Psalm 119:105

Your word is a lamp for my feet,
a light on my path.

YOUR WORD? We just talked about the WORD becoming flesh.

I was trying to think of the darkest place I have ever been – a cave.

- In a cave it is pitch black, total darkness.
- If we turn off the lights here, our eyes will adjust to miniscule amounts of ambient light – that never happens in a cave. There is no light to adjust to.

Yet a single match can light a great amount of space.

And as long as the light stays on, darkness can't get more dark.

Darkness cannot overcome light.

But LIGHT can overcome darkness

Evil ... selfishness, greed, lust, pride envy, ...

CANNOT overcome the love and goodness the God brought into the world.

As long as we are living out God's love,

HOPE will continue to show and people will know that there is a better way than the ways of *THIS* world.

I'm sure some of you are wondering ...

WHY is Pastor Phil giving, more or less, an academic presentation of John 1?

As we read through the gospel account, we see that Jesus was rejected almost EVERYDAY HE WAS ALIVE and it started on day number one.

What about us today?

- Are we going to keep rejecting God from the classroom, our homes, shopping malls and grocery stores?
- Are we going to continue pushing God down out of public discourse?

The other choice is to set aside the bows & wrapping paper and keep front and center that Christmas is COMPLETELY about God

- Not about the businesses
- How the Christmas shopping season can spur on the economy or

It should be how God doesn't want his face on a Christmas Card.

God wants his face on the face of every Christian living out their faith in the world today.

Revelation 3:20

Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.

God wants to be with us!

Throughout time people have reject God.

Now it's our turn. What will we do?

Let's not choose bows & boxes again.

Let's choose Immanuel, God with us!

Count Zinzendorf, the founder of the Moravians, was converted in an art gallery in Dusseldorf while contemplating a painting of Christ on the cross which had the inscription, "I did this for thee. What hast thou done for me?" This picture had been painted by an artist three hundred years before.

When he had finished his first sketch of the face of the Redeemer, this artist called in his landlady's little daughter and asked her who she thought it was. The girl looked at it and said, "It is a good man." The painter knew that he had failed.

He destroyed the first sketch and, after praying for greater skill, finished a second. Again he called the little girl in and asked her to tell him whom she thought the face represented. This time the girl said that she thought it looked like a great sufferer. Again the painter knew that he had failed, and again he destroyed the sketch he had made.

After meditation and prayer, he made a third sketch. When it was finished, he called the girl in a third time and asked her who it was. Looking at the portrait, the girl exclaimed, "It is the Lord!"

That alone makes the coming of Christ meaningful to the world ...

- not that a good man came
- not that a wise teacher came
- not that a great sufferer came

but that God came--Immanuel, God with us.

That's what Christmas is about.