

Rhema Christian Center
Noonday Bible Study – October 29 & 30, 2024
ST. JOHN 1 – WORD MADE FLESH
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INTRODUCTION

The Book of John is referred to as the fourth gospel and is distinct from the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke). While the synoptics share many of the same events and teachings, about 90 percent of John's content is different, offering new insights into the life and ministry of Jesus.

John's gospel emphasizes Jesus' divine identity as the "Word" (Logos) made flesh, and features long discourses where Jesus explains His relationship with the Father.

For starters, let's look at the comparison of the genealogies in the gospels that further highlight their distinct purposes:

- **Matthew** was written mainly for a Jewish audience. In Hebrew culture, tracing one's ancestry, especially back to King David, was essential for establishing a legitimate claim to kingship. Matthew emphasizes Jesus' right to this heritage by beginning with a genealogy in verse one, tracing Jesus' earthly lineage back to Abraham, who is also a prominent ancestor of David.
- In **Mark**, no genealogy is given, as the focus is on Jesus as a servant. Jesus' lineage is not emphasized.
- **In Luke**, Jesus' genealogy traces back to Adam, presenting Jesus as the Savior for all humanity. This gospel is addressed to a Greek audience, which valued universalism.
- In **John**, instead of a traditional genealogy, he begins by linking Jesus to the very beginning of creation: "In the beginning was the Word..." This emphasizes Jesus' divine nature and His role as the eternal Word of God, making His message relevant to everyone, regardless of background.

THE ETERNAL WORD

¹⁻⁵ 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 were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. ⁴ In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵ And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not ^{1a}comprehend it.

(V 1-2) These verses tell us that Jesus was not only with God from the very beginning, but that He **was God**. Jesus existed way before the manger scene. Before time existed, Jesus existed. In the Book of Revelation, Jesus says, "**I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending,**" He is eternal.

(V 3) John continues by explaining that **everything** was made through Jesus. When God created the universe, He did it through Jesus. Just like in Genesis 1:1, where God spoke and said, "**Let there be light.**" It happened. John is telling us that Jesus is that powerful Word of God. God speaks and it happens.

Nothing that exists came into being without Jesus. He is the one through whom everything exists—every star, every tree, every person—was created by the spoken word of God.

Col. 1:16-17 says, "For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him AND for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

(V:4-5): *"In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."*

Originally, Adam and Eve's choice to distrust and disobey God broke humanity's fellowship and union with Him. As a consequence, the darkness of sin resulted in spiritual and physical death. Since that moment, all people have walked in spiritual darkness, bound by death and the fear of death.

John 8:12: *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."*

Jesus is the true light for humanity, shining in the darkness. These VERSES refer to Jesus as the source of life and light for all people, symbolizing truth, guidance, and salvation. His light pierces the darkness of the world, bringing hope and truth to those who are open to receiving it.

THE FORERUNNER OF CHRIST

6-9 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. 8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. 9 That^[b] was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.

John the Baptist was a man sent by God with a specific mission: to prepare people for the arrival of Jesus. Although he wasn't the Light himself (Jesus), John helped people recognize that Jesus was the one who would bring truth and salvation to the world.

The World Rejected Him -- ¹⁰⁻¹¹ ***Jesus was in the world, and even though He made the world, people didn't recognize Him. He came to His own people (the Israelites), but they didn't accept Him.***

Even though Jesus created the world, many people didn't recognize who He was. When He came to His own people (the Jews), most of them rejected Him, which eventually led to His crucifixion.

The Children of God -- ¹²⁻¹³: ***But to everyone who received Him and believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God. These people are not born as God's children through human effort, but by God's work.***

Those who believe in Jesus become God's children—not by birthright or personal effort, but through a spiritual transformation that comes by faith. Jesus later spoke about this to Nicodemus, explaining that to enter God's Kingdom, one must be "born again" (John 3:3).

THE WORD BECOMES FLESH

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

In this verse John describes the incarnation of Jesus. The "Word"—Jesus, the eternal Son of God who existed before anything was created—became flesh. This means Jesus, fully divine, took on all aspects of being human, including a physical body, emotions, and life experiences, yet without sin. Philippians 2:8 says, "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!"

- **He dwelt among us:** God didn't just communicate from afar; He came to live with us in the most personal way by becoming human. This is a unique moment in

history when God entered the world in human form to connect with us directly.

- **John saw His glory:** Those who encountered Jesus saw glimpses of His divine nature, noticing something special about Him. John describes this as "the glory of the only begotten of the Father," showing Jesus' unique and eternal relationship with God. As the only begotten Son, He is one of a kind, sharing the same divine essence as the Father.
- **Jesus is “full of grace and truth”:** Jesus perfectly reflects two qualities of God—grace, meaning unearned kindness and mercy, and truth, which reflects God’s reliable and unchanging nature. Through His life and teachings, Jesus reveals God’s grace and truth to us, showing who God is and His plans for humanity.

In verses 15-18, John the Baptist testified about Jesus, saying, “This is the one I spoke of, saying, ‘He who comes after me is greater because He existed before me.’” Though Jesus started His ministry after John, He had always existed with God.

Verse 17 highlights that Moses gave the law (the commandments for how people should live), while Jesus brought grace and truth. Instead of focusing only on rules, Jesus helps us connect with God through love, mercy, and forgiveness.

Verse 18 tells us that no one has seen God directly, but Jesus, God’s Son who is very close to Him, has made God known to us. Jesus is the clearest way to understand what God is like and the depth of His love for us.

A VOICE IN THE WILDERNESS

19-28 Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.”

In this passage, John the Baptist is approached by religious leaders who want to know who he is. They ask if he is the Messiah, Elijah, or a great prophet, but John makes it clear: “I am not the Christ.” Instead, he identifies himself as the one preparing the way for the Lord, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah.

When they question why he baptizes if he isn't the Christ, John explains that his baptism is with water, but there's someone far greater already among them—Jesus—who shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit.

John's humility points us to Jesus. John knows his role is to prepare people's hearts for the One who brings true salvation. This reminds us that our role, like John's, is not to focus on ourselves but to point people to Jesus, the Savior who brings grace, truth, and new life to the world.

THE LAMB OF GOD

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰ This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who ^[k]is preferred before me, for He was before me.' ³¹ I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water."

³² And John bore witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. ³³ I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' ³⁴ And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God."

John makes a powerful statement when he identifies Jesus as the Savior of the world. The one who would take the sins of humanity upon Himself, just like a sacrificial lamb in the Old Testament had to die to take away the sins of the people.

John explains that even though he didn't fully know who Jesus was at first, God revealed it to him. When John baptized Jesus, he saw the Holy Spirit come down like a dove and remain on Him. This was the sign God gave to confirm that Jesus is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and that He is the Son of God.

For us today, this passage teaches that Jesus is our Savior, the Lamb of God, who came to take away our sins. John's witness shows us how to recognize Jesus for who He really is: the one who offers not just forgiveness, but also the power of the Holy Spirit to change our lives. Just as John pointed others to Jesus, we too are called to point others toward Him and His saving grace.

THE FIRST DISCIPLES

³⁵⁻⁴² Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. ³⁶ And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, "Behold the Lamb of God!" The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi" (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), "where are You staying?"

39 He said to them, “Come and see.” They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour). One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, “We have found the ^[m]Messiah” (which is translated, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus.

Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, “You are Simon the son of ^[m]Jonah. You shall be called Cephas” (which is translated, ^[n]A Stone).

In this passage, John the Baptist points two of his disciples to Jesus, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God!" Upon hearing this, the two disciples, including Andrew, decide to follow Jesus. When Jesus notices them following, He asks, "What do you seek?" They respond by asking where He is staying. Jesus invites them, "Come and see," and they spend the day with Him.

Afterward, Andrew, excited about meeting Jesus, finds his brother Simon (later known as Peter) and tells him, "We have found the Messiah." Andrew brings Peter to Jesus, and Jesus gives Simon a new name, "Cephas" (which means "a stone").

For us, this passage shows how encountering Jesus leads to a personal invitation to follow Him. Just like Andrew, when we recognize who Jesus is, we should want to share Him with others. Jesus doesn't just change our lives—He gives us a new identity, just like He did with Peter. Following Jesus means discovering purpose and becoming part of His mission to share the good news.

Philip and Nathanael

43 The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, “Follow Me.” 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip found Nathanael and said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”

46 And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth? Philip said to him, “Come and see.” 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit! Nathanael said to Him, “How do You know me? Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.”

49 Nathanael answered and said to Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel! 50 Jesus answered and said to him, “Because I said to you, ‘I saw you

under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” ⁵¹ *And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter^[a] you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”*

In this passage, Jesus calls Philip to follow Him, and Philip eagerly responds. Philip then finds Nathanael and tells him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about—the Messiah!" But Nathanael is skeptical and asks, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" Philip simply replies, "Come and see."

When Nathanael approaches Jesus, Jesus tells him that He saw him even before Philip called him, under the fig tree. This surprises Nathanael, and he declares, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God!" Jesus replies, saying that Nathanael will see even greater things, including heaven opening and angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

This passage shows us a few important things:

1. **The power of invitation** – Philip didn't argue with Nathanael's skepticism, he just invited him to see Jesus for himself. Sometimes, we don't need to have all the answers; we just need to invite people to meet Jesus.
2. **Jesus knows us** – Jesus saw Nathanael even before they met, showing that Jesus knows each of us deeply, even when we don't think He does. He knows our doubts, struggles, and hearts.
3. **Greater things are coming** – Jesus promises that those who follow Him will experience amazing things, things beyond what we can imagine, like a deeper connection with God and a purpose for our lives.

In the same way, we're invited to come to Jesus, see who He truly is, and experience the greater things He has in store for us.