

The Word Was Made Flesh

The Significance of Christmas—part 2

December 17, 2017

DAY 1: The light and life of Christ

1. As we continue our look at the prologue of the gospel of John, I am thankful that we have eyewitness testimonies of who Jesus Christ was, not just idle speculation by people two thousand years later, guessing and “wishful-thinking-it” as to who He was.

2. The apostle John writes of John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah...

John 1:6 There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John.

⁷ *He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe.*

⁸ *He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.*

3. Not only was the apostle John an eyewitness, but John the Baptist, the forerunner to Christ was also an eyewitness.

4. What was the essence of John’s message? (verse 7)

5. What was the intended purpose of John’s testimony? (verse 7)

John 1:9 The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.

John 1:4-5 In Him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

6. The apostle John repeats an important attribute of Jesus Christ. What does John claim about Jesus?

7. What do you think it means that Jesus can give light to everyone?

8. Spiritual light empowers people who are blind to see important truths: the spiritual truth of who God is, and their need of a savior. And secondly, Jesus doesn’t just give us power to see. He IS the light we need.

DAY 2: The Word became flesh

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, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

1. This is the meaning of Christmas. God has come into the world, born of a virgin, in the person of Jesus Christ.

2. We have already read in John's prologue about the deity of the Word (Jesus Christ).

3. What attribute of deity does John attribute to Jesus in verse 14?

4. The "glory of God" is seen in multiple ways: His perfect holiness, His grandeur and majesty, and also His complete other-centered love. It is this glory that Christ gave the disciples!

John 17:21 ...that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

²² *I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one:*

²³ *I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

5. The glory of God in the life of believers is seen when we are other-centered in how we relate to one another. (verse 22)

John 1:15 John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'"

6. John the Baptist's testimony includes something of the eternal nature of Jesus Christ. John was born about six months ahead of Jesus, yet notice how John speaks of the existence of Jesus at the end of verse 15!

DAY 3: Grace and truth in Jesus Christ

John 1:16 From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.

1. The fullness of Christ means the totality of His character.
2. It is out of who Christ is that we receive “grace.” Grace is defined as “unmerited favor,” favor (blessings) that are undeserved.
3. The grace of God toward sinners means He has seen the absolute worst about us, and not only forgives us but wants us as His children!
4. Whether or not we deserve anything is not the point of Christianity. The point of Christianity is to put on display the astounding glory of God, which includes His amazing grace to sinners and rebels like us!

*Ephesians 2:4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,
⁵ made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions--it is by grace you have been saved.*

⁶ And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,

⁷ in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.

⁸ For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith--and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast.

5. What strikes you from this passage in Ephesians?

6. Grace does mean that we can do whatever we want, even willfully sin. Notice what also came with grace through Jesus Christ...

John 1:17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

7. At the end of this prologue, John sums up the fact that Jesus reveals all of God that is necessary for us to know!

John 1:18 No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

8. What strikes you most from today's verses?

DAY 4: The first of two responses: “Thanks, but no thanks.”

1. After taking all of these verses to describe the wonder and glory of Jesus Christ, and the astounding news of His coming in the flesh, John describes two stunning rejections of Jesus Christ, one rejection on a worldwide scale, and one rejection on an “up close and personal” scale.

John 1:10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

2. The word “recognize” means more than, “Gee, if we had known He was coming we would have been ready.” It means they did not “approve” of Him, or “love” Him.

3. Of course, we know even more. The world rejected Him and had Him crucified!

4. John writes in a way that is stunned by mankind’s rejection. This is seen in the second phrase in John 1:10, “...and though the world was made through him ...”

5. The wider context of John’s prologue makes this rejection even more stunning! They rejected Him as their Creator, Savior, King, and Lord.

6. What John infers is the guilty blindness of mankind. It’s not that they just could not know Him. They WOULD NOT know Him.

John 1:11 He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him.

7. The second rejection is much “closer to home.” Jesus Christ was rejected by God’s people, the Jewish nation.

8. It’s an incredible indictment that the nation that had the Old Testament commandments and law, history, the poetic books and the prophetic books, with hundreds of Messianic prophecies could have missed so badly on Christ.

9. It is a stunning indictment on human nature. It exposes man’s willfulness of his determination to not have anyone tell him what to do, not even God!

10. But these two rejections also tell us of the stunning love of God the Father, who, in spite of these two evil and rebellious rejections, still continued on in His redemptive story, the rescue of an obstinate and hard-hearted people!

DAY 5: The second response: becoming God's children

1. The other response is found in verses John 1:12-13.

John 1:12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

2. John gives several ways people did not become God's children in verse 13. Underline three examples.

3. How does someone become a child of God? (verse 12).

4. What does the metaphor of being "born of God," indicate?

Titus 3:5-7 (RSV) ...he saved us, not because of deeds done by us in righteousness, but in virtue of his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal in the Holy Spirit, ⁶ which he poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, ⁷ so that we might be justified by his grace and become heirs in hope of eternal life.

5. Underline each phrase that parallels or illustrates what John has taught us.

6. What strikes you most about this second response, of becoming a child of God?