

John 1:1-14

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 everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. ⁵The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

⁶There was a man, sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

⁹The real light that shines on everyone was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to what was his own, yet his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³They were born, not of blood, or of the desire of the flesh, or of a husband's will, but born of God.

¹⁴The Word became flesh and dwelled among us. We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

The Word Became Flesh

I.

Last night we talked about the dark, dark days of sin. We spoke about the fact that light and darkness are mutually exclusive. When light enters the picture, it drives the darkness away.

Isaiah told us yesterday: “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. For those living in the land of the shadow of death, the light has dawned” (Isaiah 9:2, EHV). We heard about the evils in Isaiah's day, and how those things are paralleled even today. Sin is rampant—unbelief and false religions, sexual sins, sins of substance abuse, sins of hatred of people, and political correctness that only wants certain words to be heard or spoken by others, and so many other sins.

Those sins are the darkness, and Jesus came as the Light to drive them out—to cleanse us from those sins.

The people in John's day didn't understand all that. They listened to Jesus speak. They recognized that he was a gifted speaker. It was true that he taught with authority, so they would even recognize him as a great teacher. But they didn't recognize him as both truly human and truly God, as we learned in the lesson from Isaiah yesterday.

John wanted them to know who Jesus *really* is.

And so John begins his record of the gospel: “In the beginning...” (John 1:1, EHV). It sounds very much like another book, doesn't it? Genesis. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1, EHV). In reality, though, John goes back even farther than Genesis. He goes back to *before* the beginning of time and space and the universe. He goes back to *before* God created the heavens and the earth.

“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 everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made” (John 1:1-3, EVH).

The Jesus Isaiah identified as the Light yesterday *created* light and darkness, sun, and moon, and stars and planets and everything that exists in the universe. He was there in the beginning. He is one of the Persons of the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

John identifies Jesus as “the Word.” Remember that God created everything with his voice. “Let there be...” God said, and there was. “Let there be light,” and light came into existence. When we look at the created universe and realize how vast and how intricate it is, and then think of the fact that our loving God understood everything necessary to make this universe a place for us to live, we begin to realize how far beyond our comprehension God is. We cannot even begin to grasp the limitlessness of his power.

II.

Take a walk in the park or in a shopping mall. Pick out a person and watch them closely. What can you learn of that individual? Sometimes how a person dresses and how they carry themselves can tell you something. What items the individual carries might give a few clues, too. But do you really *know* the person just from a few moments of observation? Not at all. Every piece of information you pick up from first contact could be fooling you completely. To get to know a person, you have to speak with them—to communicate.

Looking at the created world around us tells us a great deal about the Creator God who made it all, but it doesn't tell us everything we need to know. John said: "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him" (John 1:10, EHV). The people of John's day looked only at outward things. Even though they listened to his words, they listened only superficially; they thought of Jesus as only a great teacher and a great speaker. He was a wonderful *man*, but to them, that is all that he was.

Is that all he is to you? All kinds of people can serve as your example. You can find any number of great and eloquent speakers to fire your emotions and lift your spirits. You can access all kinds of information with a few swipes across the screen of your phone.

III.

We need to know *more* about the Savior-God.

"In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. ⁵The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it" (John 1:4-5, EHV). As Isaiah taught us yesterday, Jesus is the Light that completely drives out the darkness of sin. And *how* did he do this? "The Word became flesh and dwelled among us" (John 1:14, EHV).

Too many from John's day recognized Jesus only as a great man. They needed to know that he was...and is...God. That's why he identified Jesus as God from the very beginning, even *before* time began. But if all we know about Jesus was that he is God, we would be missing something.

If we only knew Jesus as God we might ask: "Do you know how hard it is to live as a weak human being in this dark world?" Jesus does. "Do you know what it is like to face endless temptation?" He does. "Do you know what it is like to be so scared you can barely function?" Jesus can point to the Garden of Gethsemane, where he sweated great drops of blood as Satan made one last gasp effort to get him to quit. "Do you know what it is like to have family and friends let you down again and again?" Look at Jesus' disciples and his family and you will realize that he gets it.

Jesus is both truly God and truly human. He *had* to be in order to complete the work of our salvation. To suffer and die to pay the penalty of death for our sins, he had to be truly human. To make his sacrifice for sins enough for every human being who ever lived, he had to be truly God. God the Father had to abandon Jesus—God the Son—on the cross in order for the work of salvation to be complete. He did it all.

IV.

"To all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. ¹³They were born, not of blood, or of the desire of the flesh, or of a husband's will, but born of God" (John 1:12-13, EHV).

We have heard the Christmas message again. Jesus, true God from all eternity, came to earth in a lowly fashion as a humble little baby, born in a stable, to grow up and pay for our sins.

We did not *choose* him, we *received* him. God the Holy Spirit worked faith in our hearts so that we have been born of God to understand and believe everything the Son of God has done for us.

You are a child of God. You are an heir of heaven. God's blessings flow to you at Christmas from the Word of God who has become flesh and has dwelled among us. Amen.