

The God Man - John 1:4-18

5-18-08

We ended our study in Genesis with a review of the revelation of Jesus that was woven throughout that amazing book of Moses. We started our study in John by seeing the wonder of Jesus as the instrument of creation. We saw He is God and yet is with God. We saw that the Father and Son inhabit eternity and considered the enormity of what He did in creating the stars. We saw how small we are and yet how great is His love for us. Now we'll continue with this hymn that declares the greatness of Jesus. That seems to be the theme of the Holy Spirit in the last two messages. I hope we are all feeling a greater sense of the awe our Savior should evoke in our hearts and minds.

⁴ *In him was life, and that life was the light of men.* Not only is He the eternally existent Creator, but life (*zoe*) is and always has been in Him. In John's first letter, he called Jesus the appearance of life. (1John 1:2) Jesus said He is life several times. (John 11:25; 14:6) So what does it mean that in Him is life? We know that He has granted us all the breath of life, which makes us living souls (Genesis 2:7), and He grants eternal life to those who come to Him (John 5:40). Separation from Him at the judgment is called death. (Revelation 21:8) Life is more than existing and death is more than ceasing to exist.

There are those who are dead while they physically live. (1Timothy 5:6; John 5:24) The wages of sin isn't just death after judgment but a kind of death right now. (Luke 15:24) If we could grasp that, the temptation to sin would lose its appeal. Perhaps it would help to imagine a skull and cross bones on every temptation that comes your way. The Apostle Paul said that for him to live is Christ. (Philippians 1:22) We need to get some Biblical perspectives of these words and change the way we think about the words life and death.

The verse goes on to say that that life is the light of men. It's almost like John is speaking another language. Think about it like this, if sin is death and destruction, holiness is life and goodness. (John 10:10; Isaiah 60:1-3) Jesus' life given for us is the way to holiness and love. His love reached out and showed us how to live without being self-centered. He showed us how to live in communion with the Father and depend upon Him for everything. (John 8:28) Then He made that possible through His sacrifice in our place. The life He lived demonstrated holiness. We never really saw it before. We saw good people, prophets, and saints, but never One whose life was THE light of men. (Romans 3:23)

⁵ *The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.* Jesus came into this sin sick world and shined truth and holiness, or John would say "life". Yet, sinful man couldn't understand what they were seeing. Sin so distorts everything that even when we see the truth we don't realize it for what it is. I've observed that people have a tendency to project their own behavior and thought patterns on others. Have you ever tried to help someone who thought you had ulterior motives? The people thought Jesus wanted to be king, take over the religious authorities, and be the big boss over everything, partly because that is what they would do if they had that kind of power. Actually, He just wanted to serve us by taking our sins upon

Commented [notes1]: The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

Commented [notes2]: Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies;

Commented [notes3]: Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Commented [notes4]: 7 the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.
Gen 2:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes5]: 40 yet you refuse to come to me to have life.
John 5:40 (NIV)

Commented [notes6]: 8 But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars--their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death."
Rev 21:8 (NIV)

Commented [notes7]: 6 But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives.
1 Tim 5:6 (NIV)

Commented [notes8]: 24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.
John 5:24 (NIV)

Commented [notes9]: 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.
Luke 15:24 (NIV)

Commented [notes10]: 21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.
Phil 1:21 (NIV)

Commented [notes11]: 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.
John 10:10 (NIV)

Commented [notes12]: 1 "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.
2 See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.
3 Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. ... [1]

Commented [notes13]: 28 So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [the one I claim to be] and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me ... [2]

Commented [notes14]: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
Romans 3:23 (NIV)

Himself so that we could receive the Holy Spirit. (Mark 10:45) He was the most misunderstood person that ever lived and some ways still is. (1Corinthians 1:23)

Commented [notes15]: 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45 (NIV)

There is a second equally valid translation for the end of that verse; *the darkness could not extinguish it*. It certainly tried. Every power of man was out to get Jesus and snuff out the light. But as you have probably noticed, light is never overcome by darkness. (Romans 12:21) Light always expels darkness! Hallelujah! Even death could not hold Him. (Acts 2:24)

Commented [notes16]: 23 but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, 1 Cor 1:23 (NIV)

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. John the Apostle went from speaking about the eternal Son to His entrance into the world He created. Now John the Apostle is turning to the witness. The darkness was bound to not understand, so God sent a witness, John the Baptist.

Commented [notes17]: 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:21 (NIV)

Commented [notes18]: 24 Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. Acts 2:24 (KJV)

John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin (Luke 1:36). We don't know if they interacted as children, but we do know that sometime before Jesus began His ministry, John went into the wilderness and told people to prepare the way of the Lord. (Matthew 3:1-3) The Messiah was coming and John was the witness that confirmed that Jesus was the One. People needed a guide to point them from darkness to light. John was that guide. (Malachi 3:1)

Commented [notes19]: 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. Luke 1:36 (NIV)

Commented [notes20]: 1 In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the Desert of Judea 2 and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near." 3 This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" Matt 3:1-3 (NIV)

This fulfilled two different expectations of the Jewish people. The Law told them they needed witnesses to confirm if the person's word was reliable. (Deuteronomy 19:15) They also expected Elijah to return to prepare the way of the Lord. Jesus later said John the Baptist fulfilled that role. (Mark 9:13) God is faithful to give signs to help those who are seeking life. Don't you think the same is true today? We'll see this again later in John. The Father wants us to have everything we need to encourage us to believe and come out of the darkness and into the light. (2Corinthians 4:6)

Commented [notes21]: 1 "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. Mal 3:1 (NIV)

Commented [notes22]: 15 One witness is not enough to convict a man accused of any crime or offense he may have committed. A matter must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. Deut 19:15 (NIV)

Notice in verse 7 that God sent John the Baptist so that ALL might believe through him. Remember that John is written later than the other Gospels. By the time he wrote, the church was clearly reaching out to all people, not just the Jews. So when John writes that it is for ALL men, he doesn't mean all Jews or all of this culture or that ethnicity. He means ALL men. He includes us. We'll see this theme continue throughout this gospel too. Christianity is the most adaptable religion to the cultures of the world because God loves the world of people He made. (John 3:16) It is the Creator reaching out to His creation. It is the most accepted faith because God gives the necessary signs to those who are open to receiving life.

Commented [notes23]: 13 But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him." Mark 9:13 (NIV)

Commented [notes24]: 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. 2 Cor 4:6 (NIV)

⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. Many asked John the Baptist if he was the One. He clearly told them he was not. He said he was not even close. He was just one that pointed to the light. (Luke 3:16)

Commented [notes25]: 6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. 2 Cor 4:6 (NIV)

We have another of those universal declarations of God's outreach to all men in verse 9. ⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. The true light is Jesus. He helps us see life for what it really is. In His light, we recognize sin for all its destructiveness. He gives that light to every man. (Psalm 36:9)

Commented [notes26]: 16 John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not w... [3]

Commented [notes27]: 9 For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light. Psalms 36:9 (NIV)

The Greek does not make it clear what is coming into the world, every man or the light. NIV has the later. It is my conviction that if there are two legitimate translations, if neither contradicts Scripture, then both are true. Jesus was coming into the world. Jesus enlightens every man that comes into the world.

Consider how universal a statement that is. I often have people ask about the innocent natives that never heard the Gospel. I direct them to John 1:9. Jesus comes as light to everyone. He gives whatever sign is needed for every hungry heart to believe. I don't understand how, except that as we saw last week, He is a great God and I shouldn't limit Him by my little musings of what is or isn't possible. John the Beloved declared that it is not only possible but that He does enlighten every man. What we do with that light is up to us. We can receive it and believe or we can turn back to the darkness and go on our selfish way. (John 3:36)

¹⁰ *He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.* He came to His own creation, but we did not recognize Him. That is pretty dense. It shows us how thoroughly sin has confused us. (Matthew 15:14) What more did we need? Paralyzed bodies respond to His Word. Disease flees at His touch or command. The elements obey Him. The course of nature is even reversed as the dead are raised to life, but we are so sin sick we don't get it. Even today, when you talk about Jesus, the world will interpret Him in numerous other ways, so that they do not have to recognize His benevolent Lordship. They do not recognize Him for who He is. There never has been or will be anyone like Jesus!

¹¹ *He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.* The Jews had the same problem as the rest of the world. They were His own people in several ways. They were the covenant people of Abraham. He came through Mary, a Jewish woman of the lineage of David. The Jews were His extended family. (John 10:35-36) Even they did not receive Him. They had the writings of Moses and the prophets filled with prophecies and pictures of the Messiah. They prayed for His coming, but they thought of Him in much the same way the world does, a prophet, an enlightened man, even a great spiritual leader, but not Lord of all creation! What a difference that distinction makes!

If Jesus is just another prophet, then he is just another fallible man who may have spoken some words of wisdom. If He is the New Age's one of many ascended masters, then He is one of many that show us how to do things the right way. But if He is God in the flesh, if He is the Creator, then that's a whole different story. It would mean we owe Him everything. (Revelation 4:11) It would mean we must listen to Him and try to understand exactly what He meant when He spoke. (Matthew 17:5) It would mean finding out what He expects of us should be the priority of our life. That's our goal in this study of John. However, the vast majority rejected Him.

¹² *Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--* If the Jews did not receive Him, could they truly be called children of God? John claims that the real children of God are those who believe in His name. He didn't get very far in his gospel before telling us how to get in a right relationship with God. We must receive Jesus. John explains what that means. It is to believe in His name. Now we don't have the same sense of the meaning of this direct

Commented [notes28]: 36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him." John 3:36 (NIV)

Commented [notes29]: 14 Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit." Matt 15:14 (NIV)

Commented [notes30]: 35 If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came--and the Scripture cannot be broken-- 36 what about the one whom the Father set apart as his very own and sent into the world? Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'?" John 10:35-36 (NIV)

Commented [notes31]: 11 "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." Rev 4:11 (NIV)

Commented [notes32]: 5 While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!" Matt 17:5 (NIV)

translation. If I say that today, it sounds like I'm asking you if you really believe His name is Jesus. Sure that's His name, but what does it mean to believe in His name? In that time, a person's name was their destiny and character. In the case of God, *His name is the sum of His attributes*. (Stephen Charnock) Jesus' name literally means the salvation of God. His attributes are the fruits of the Spirit. (Galatians 5:22-23) Do you believe it? Have you received it into your life?

If you have, then you have the right to become children of God. Notice John didn't say you instantly are. There are two sides of salvation and John the Beloved and the Apostle Paul understood this quite well. We are instantly and forever forgiven and cleansed when we come to Jesus, but we have to work that out every day of our life. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. (2 Corinthians 5:17) At the same time Paul could not claim to have arrived. He said he was stretching forward to take hold of that which had taken hold of him. (Philippians 3:12-14)

If you have received Christ, you are a child of God. Your spouse or friends might beg to differ with that statement because they see you becoming a child of God. It is already done in the eternal now, but you are still working it out in this world of time and space. Paul wrote, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (Philippians 2:12)

John 1:12 tells us how to go from being a child of darkness to a child of the light. We can change from being children of the world to children of God by receiving Jesus and believing on His name. How can you tell if you have? Because you have the power (or right) to become children of God. The transformation has begun, and life is not the same as it was. There is change, and you like it, and you want more of it. The light that lights every person has shown in your heart and you have received Him.

You are ¹³ *children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God*. This was another of John's efforts to help the Jewish people see that children of God were not just descendants of Abraham. You have to be born of God to be His child. (1 Peter 1:3)

We come into this life with a body and soul, but our spirit is dead and waiting for the moment when it will come to life. (1 John 3:14) Our spirit is where we commune with God. It is the new creation in us. It is where Christ dwells in us. (Romans 8:11) But similar to Adam, we must receive the breath of life. (Genesis 2:7) The word breath in Hebrew and Greek is also used for spirit. (John 20:22) We must receive the Spirit. When we do, suddenly, we are born again. This time it's not a fleshly physical birth but a spiritual birth. (John 3:6) Our spirit is alive and we can fellowship with God. That right or power is yours when we receive Jesus.

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*. The eternal Logos became a man and tented with us. That is the literal meaning of the first sentence. John is pointing back to the Tabernacle when the Shekinah glory dwelt in the Holy of Holies. (Exodus 40:34-35) That ball of light was a manifestation of God with them. Now instead of a physical tent, the Eternal God was present in a tent of flesh. That is the Christmas story, Immanuel, God with us. (Isaiah 7:14) The greatest

Commented [notes33]: 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Gal 5:22-23 (NIV)

Commented [notes34]: 17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! 2 Cor 5:17 (NIV)

Commented [notes35]: 12 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. 13 Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, 14 I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus. Phil 3:12-14 (NIV)

Commented [notes36]: 12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, Phil 2:12 (NIV)

Commented [notes37]: 3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 1 Peter 1:3 (NIV)

Commented [notes38]: 14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 1 John 3:14 (NIV)

Commented [notes39]: 11 And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you. Romans 8:11 (NIV)

Commented [notes40]: 7 the LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being. Gen 2:7 (NIV)

Commented [notes41]: 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. John 20:22 (NIV)

Commented [notes42]: 6 Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. John 3:6 (NIV)

Commented [notes43]: 34 Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. ... [4]

Commented [notes44]: 14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. [Isaiah 7:14 (NIV)

wonder to me is that He could love us enough to become like us and experience what we go through. (Hebrews 4:15)

Then John said that they saw His glory. What does that mean? It means more than what they saw on the Mount of Transfiguration. (Matthew 17:2) The glory of God is the outshining or expression of His heart. Jesus was the exact representation of the Father. (Hebrews 1:3) What they saw Him do and say was seeing the heart of God. That is glory as much as the Transfiguration was. When Jesus' time was up on this earth He said it was time for Him to glorified. (John 13:31) I don't think He was referring to heaven, but in people seeing the love of God expressed on the cross. That is real glory. That is the heart of God made visible for all to see. (John 12:23-24)

That glory they saw was full of grace and truth. (1John 1:1) Everything He said and did was overflowing with grace and truth. Being with Jesus daily had to be one experience after another of seeing grace and truth expressed.

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.'" John the Baptist was born first, but Jesus is the Ancient of Days. The Jewish world respected the older person, and though John was older than Jesus, John just wrote Jesus was with God in the beginning. The oldest is due the most respect.

¹⁶ From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. We just receive one blessing after another from the abundant grace of God. (1Corinthians 1:5) Then John the Beloved points again to the difference between the Old and New Covenants. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. The Law was good and helpful, but what man really needed was some way to deal with the fact that he could not keep the Law. (Romans 3:19-20) That was the grace and truth revealed in Jesus. That grace and truth came to us through what Jesus did for us. Don't let the liberal, so-called experts try to convince you that atonement is old fashioned and barbaric. Jesus came to die in your place so that through His sacrifice you could receive grace and truth. That's not barbaric, it's justice meeting love. (Romans 5:8)

¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known. That is what we learn from the life of Jesus, a revelation of the Father's love. The rest of our time in John's gospel is a revelation of God. He is the One that reveals the Father. He is the only one that has seen him. (God is an invisible Spirit. John 4:24 To see in this case means to comprehend.) If you want to know God, there is no other way than Jesus. Mohammed didn't see God. Bhudda didn't see God. Jesus alone dwells with God throughout eternity. If you want to know God, you must come to Jesus. (John 14:6)

This is a revelation of gracious love. We have focused on the doctrinal issues but let's bring it home and let our heart consider what is being said. The Creator of all loves us. You and I are part of the rebellious human race that ignores Him and refuses to recognize Him, but He comes and shines His light into every dark corner of our hearts. He does it again and again because we reject it again and again. Why? He is overflowing with gracious love and wants you to know Him and His love for you.

Commented [notes45]: 15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin. Heb 4:15 (NIV)

Commented [notes46]: 2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Matt 17:2 (NIV)

Commented [notes47]: 3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. Heb 1:3 (NIV)

Commented [notes48]: 31 When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified and God is glorified in him. John 13:31 (NIV)

Commented [notes49]: 23 Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. John 12:23-24 (NIV)

Commented [notes50]: 1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. 1 John 1:1 (NIV)

Commented [notes51]: 5 For in him you have been enriched in every way--in all your speaking and in all your knowledge-- 1 Cor 1:5 (NIV)

Commented [notes52]: 19 Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. 20 Therefore no one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin. Romans 3:19-20 (NIV)

Commented [notes53]: But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8 (NIV)

Commented [notes54]: 24 God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." John 4:24 (NIV)

Commented [notes55]: 6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. John 14:6 (NIV)

John couldn't have been any clearer about who Jesus is and what He means to us. Either Jesus had no discernment and picked the wrong person (John) to convey His message (and you'd have a hard time making that case) or this is the very truth of God. What will you do about it? Will you receive the light?

Page 1: [1] Commented [notes12] Paul Wallace

1 "Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you.
2 See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you.
3 Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.
Isaiah 60:1-3 (NIV)

Page 1: [2] Commented [notes13] Paul Wallace

28 So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am [the one I claim to be] and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.
John 8:28 (NIV)

Page 2: [3] Commented [notes26] Paul Wallace

16 John answered them all, "I baptize you with water. But one more powerful than I will come, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.
Luke 3:16 (NIV)

Page 4: [4] Commented [notes43] Paul Wallace

34 Then the cloud covered the Tent of Meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.
35 Moses could not enter the Tent of Meeting because the cloud had settled upon it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.
Ex 40:34-35 (NIV)