

***The Challenges of Christmas:  
Beholding His Glory ~ John 1:1-18***

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**Introduction:** This Christmas season we have been walking through the Christmas story looking at the special challenges of Christmas. From Joseph and Mary, we learned that one challenge is *putting God's plans ahead of our own plans*. From Simeon and Anna, we struggled with the difficult lesson of *waiting on God*. Last week we considered the challenge of *believing God for the impossible* from the angel's statement to Mary, "For nothing will be impossible with God." Today, we conclude this Christmas series with the most significant challenge of Christmas—to "See His Glory."

**Text:** <sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.  
<sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning.  
<sup>3</sup> All things were created through Him,  
and apart from Him not one thing was created  
that has been created.  
<sup>4</sup> Life was in Him,  
and that life was the light of men.  
<sup>5</sup> That light shines in the darkness,  
yet the darkness did not overcome it.  
<sup>6</sup> There was a man named John  
who was sent from God.  
<sup>7</sup> He came as a witness  
to testify about the light,  
so that all might believe through him.  
<sup>8</sup> He was not the light,  
but he came to testify about the light.  
<sup>9</sup> The true light, who gives light to everyone,  
was coming into the world.  
<sup>10</sup> He was in the world,  
and the world was created through Him,  
yet the world did not recognize Him.  
<sup>11</sup> He came to His own,  
and His own people did not receive Him.  
<sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive Him,  
He gave them the right to be children of God,  
to those who believe in His name,  
<sup>13</sup> who were born,  
not of blood,  
or of the will of the flesh,  
or of the will of man,  
but of God.  
<sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh

and took up residence among us.

We observed His glory,  
the glory as the One and Only Son from the Father,  
full of grace and truth.

<sup>15</sup> (John testified concerning Him and exclaimed,  
"This was the One of whom I said,  
'The One coming after me has surpassed me,  
because He existed before me. ' ")

<sup>16</sup> Indeed, we have all received grace after grace  
from His fullness,  
<sup>17</sup> for although the law was given through Moses;  
grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

<sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God.  
The One and Only Son —  
the One who is at the Father's side —  
He has revealed Him.

John is strangely different from the other three Gospels. Material that was in the other Gospels is now absent. On the other hand, John includes other stories and sayings that are absent in the other three. We should understand at least several reasons for these differences. First, John's purpose is more theological than chronological. The stories and sayings that John includes have a specific theological purpose. Specifically, John's aim is to point people toward belief in Jesus Christ (John 20:31). Second, John tells us himself that containing all that Jesus did and said is impossible (John 21:25).

Biblical students usually refer to the first eighteen verses of John as the Prologue. These verses serve as an introduction to the whole gospel. John did not begin with the birth account as does Matthew and Luke or the preaching of John the Baptist as does Mark, he began with Jesus' pre-existence with God, the Father. In these first eighteen verses, John got right to the point about the true identification of Jesus.

John's introduction helps us to identify the glory of God that is revealed in Jesus so that we will see more than just a baby in a manger.

### **God's Glory Revealed in the Incarnation of Jesus**

The word "incarnation" is a theological term that means that God became man and entered human history. The importance of the incarnation is crucial to orthodox Christianity. The incarnation says to us that Jesus is both wholly God and wholly human. Where do we get such a view? We get it right here in John 1. To John, it is even more important than the birth narrative.

#### The Progression of Thought in this Passage

1. 1:14—The Word became flesh.
2. 1:1—The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

So, Jesus is God!

### The Supporting Facts in this Passage

1. The eternal nature of Jesus (1:2)
2. Jesus doing things we know God did (1:3)

### So What?

What does this understanding of Jesus have to do with the glory of God? The glory of God is not easy to define, but whatever we understand about the glory of God, we must understand that **God's glory is Personified in Jesus!**

**Since Jesus is the personification of God's glory, Jesus must have pre-eminence in my life!** We see His glory by His "taking up residence" in our lives. Just as Jesus took up residence in the earth through a baby, He takes up residence in our lives through the Holy Spirit.

## **God's Glory Revealed in the Salvation that Comes from Jesus**

### The Reason for His Coming

- He came to give life.
- He planned His Coming around the cross.

Some years ago, these words appeared in a Christmas card that someone sent to us. Every since then, I have thought these words to be so appropriate for Christmas.

*If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator. If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist. If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist. If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer. But, our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Savior.*

### The Result of His Coming

Some will believe; some will not.

Some will see his glory; some will not.

### So What?

We see God's glory by knowing Him and making Him Known!

If this is going to happen, like John the Baptist, we must decrease, so He can increase.