

Text: John 1:1-18

Title: "Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the Word become flesh."

Time: 9/17/2023 am

Place: NBBC

Introduction: We began our look at the Gospel of John together last January by noting the purpose for which John wrote, that his readers would believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing they would have life through His name (20:31). If by reading this Gospel, we find that we do believe that Jesus is the Christ, God's Son, in whose name we have found eternal life, then God's purpose for giving us this book of the Bible will have been accomplished. This should be our goal as we open the Book of John together this morning.

Having surveyed some of the major themes of the Gospel of John, we now begin our walk through the book one passage at a time in order. This first passage, 1:1-18, forms John's unique introduction to his Gospel. It is a formal foreword to his book, ordinarily called the prologue.

This introduction touches on all of the major themes of the book, which we have touched on in previous messages: truth (v. 14) and witness (v. 7), light (vv. 4, 5, 7, 8, 9) and glory (v. 14), eternal life (vv. 3, 4) and saving belief (v. 13), God the Father (v. 14) and God the Holy Spirit (v. 14, "the Word became flesh" through Him), love for one another (v. 18, "the bosom of the Father") and the rejection of the world (vv. 9, 10, 11). To read these 18 verses is to read a summary of John's Gospel.

So, to preach on these first 18 verses in one message could be like trying to combine our last ten messages on these themes into one. We are not going to attempt to do that this morning. Instead, I would like to use a verb that is repeated throughout these 18 verses to help focus our thoughts on one message from this passage. It is the Greek verb, *ginomai*. This is a word

that means *to become* or *to come to be something*. In our passage *ginomai* refers to five miracles. These are things that came into existence supernaturally.

Here are the five supernatural “miracles of becoming” we read about in our passage: (1) “all things” supernaturally come to be (v. 3); (2) “John” (the Baptist) supernaturally comes to be (vv. 4-11); (3) believers supernaturally come to be children of God (vv. 12-13); (4) the Word supernaturally comes to be human (v. 14); and (5) grace and truth supernaturally come to be through Jesus Christ (vv. 15-18).

As we read about the way these things came to be, they challenge us to believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, because He is the Word Who became flesh. But before we look at those five things, John beings with the One about Whom it may not be said that He ever came to be. He is eternal.

I. The Word never came to be who He is (vv. 1-2).

Illustration: In 2006 atheist Richard Dawkins published a book he titled, *The God Delusion*. It has been translated into 35 languages, and in the year it was published it ranked second on Amazon’s best-seller list. As of 2020, 3.3MM copies had sold. I remember a young member of our congregation reading it and losing his faith. We had to make the decision to remove him from our membership after church discipline failed to help him. He later recanted atheism trusting again in the Lord.

The central premise of Dawkin’s book claimed that if we believe that God created the universe, we must also ask, “Who created God?” Dawkins was ably answered by one of his Oxford colleagues, the mathematician Dr. John Lennox. Lennox wrote: “Who made God? The very asking of it shows that the questioner has a created God in mind. It is then scarcely surprising that one calls one’s book *The God Delusion*. For that is precisely what a created god is, a delusion, virtually by

definition . . . . A more informative title might have been: *The Created-God Delusion*. The book could then have been reduced to a pamphlet – but sales might . . . have suffered” [<https://geochristian.com/2013/10/10/who-created-god-an-answer-from-john-lennox/>].

Application: Five things come into existence supernaturally in our passage, but the Word is not one of them. Our text tells us “In the beginning was [literally, *was being*] the Word.” The phrase echoes the very first words of the Bible in Gen. 1:1, “In the beginning God.” Time itself had a beginning. God is the one who began time. The Word was existing when that happened. He was existing with God, and He was God. In other words, The Word is the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son of God who is in the bosom of the Father (v. 18). The Word is the uncreated God, the Second Person of the eternal Trinity.

Our created-gods are delusions that have afflicted not only atheists like Richard Dawkins. It is the delusion every one of us experiences when we decide for ourselves what our god is going to be like and what He is allowed to require of us. Creating your own view of God has a name – *idolatry*. The Word never became Who He is, nor does He change. Men follow a delusion when they try to make Him what He is not.

II. All things supernaturally came to be what they are (v. 3, *ginomai* = *were made*; see v. 10).

Illustration: On our website I have posted a video presentation about a hummingbird. If you have not seen the video, and I were to ask you to guess what the video focuses on, you would probably assume it says something about the amazing design of the hummingbird’s wings. They are amazing, but you would be wrong. The video is about the hummingbird’s tongue. It is comprised of two extensions that have clasps that open and close to capture nectar from plants and draw it back into their beaks. It can do so around 15 times per second.

Application: Verse 3 is about the hummingbird's tongue, and everything else. *All things* refers to "all things taken severally, and not regarded as a defined whole . . . the vast multiplicity of created things" [Westcott]. This vast multiplicity includes every object of study in every field of the arts and sciences.

Our passage calls this Creator of everything that has ever come into existence *the Word*, because He created all things in the beginning with His Word. The creation account of Genesis records over and over: "And God said." Heb. 11:3, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear."

We can see what the tongue of a hummingbird is like, and through faith we understand that this wonderfully designed device did not evolve from other things that can be seen. It was framed by the command of the Word, God's Son.

III. John the Baptist supernaturally came to be a witness (vv. 4-11, *ginomai* = *was* in v. 6).

Illustration: The first act of creation in Genesis 1 happened when God said, "Let there be light." The Jews of the days of Jesus and John the Baptist noted that light is mentioned five times in that account, and they concluded that each mention referred to one of the five books of the Pentateuch, their Torah, the Law of Moses, the first five books of our Bible [Lightfoot]. For the Jews, their religion based on the Jewish Torah was the life and light of men.

Application: But John's Gospel tells us that the true life and light of men is not a religion, not even the one found in the Pentateuch. Instead, the life and light of men is a person, the Word, the Creator, the Son of God (v. 4). As Paul told the men of Athens about their "Unknown God": He "giveth to all life,

and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:25), "for in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28).

Do you and I understand how dependent we are on Him today? Our text says that most do not. The Word shines in darkness, which responds with hostility (v. 5; see 12:35). To shine that way for every man, the life and light of men had to come into this world, the place of darkness (v. 9). His own things, His creatures, received Him not (vv. 10-11). Those who speak this rejection first inhale a breath He has given to them.

And in the middle of this truth about the shining of the life and light of the Son of God, we find John the Baptist sent by God to supernaturally come to be His witness (vv. 6-8). You may remember that Elizabeth, John's mother, was barren and beyond child-bearing years. But she bore a son as the angel told Zachariah, his father, she would. Zachariah failed to believe, and he could not speak until the child was named.

God sent John as a witness to the life and light of His Son so that all men might believe through him (v. 7). *All men* includes you and me. In other words, Elizabeth bore a son, although beyond her childbearing years, so that you and I could believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through His name. John's miraculous witness is a witness to you and me this morning. Do you believe him?

IV. The Word supernaturally came to be human (v. 14, *ginomai* = *was made*).

Illustration: We have studied the Book of Exodus together for some time now. Much of the Book is about the tabernacle, which is called *the tent of meeting* because it is the place where Yahweh, the God of Israel, determined to dwell among and meet with His people.

Long after the tabernacle is off the scene, the prophets of Yahweh promised Israel that He would again tabernacle with His people: "Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion: for, lo, I come, and I will dwell [*tabernacle* (LXX)] in the midst of thee, saith the Lord" (Zech. 2:14). Zechariah prophesied during the reconstruction of the temple. He is one of the postexilic prophets, because he ministered after the days of exile and the destruction of Solomon's temple. The rebuilt temple lacked the glory of the former one. Most significantly, no shekinah glory returned to the temple in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah.

Application: The return of Yahweh's glory to Zion did not come by way of a cloud in the rebuilt temple. No, it came by way of the Babe in a manger. The miracle that made this happen was the virgin conception and birth of Jesus Christ.

John says that the Word supernaturally came to be human flesh and literally tabernacled among him and his contemporaries. He says they beheld His glory, and it was the glory of the unique Son of God, full of grace and truth. One of the unique features of John's Gospel is its omission of the miracle of the transfiguration of Christ (Matthew 17, Mark 9, Luke 9). Evidently, John wants us to see the glory of Christ in His everyday humanity, as He emptied Himself of all but love.

Charles Wesley: "He left His Father's throne above, so free, so infinite His grace, emptied Himself of all but love, and bled for Adam's helpless race. Tis mercy all, immense and free. For O my God, it found out me!" Has it found out you?

V. Grace and truth supernaturally come to be (vv. 15-18, *ginomai* = *came* in v. 17).

Application: Here John returns to the witness of John the Baptist. *John bare witness of Him* is present tense (v. 15) - *John is bearing witness of Him* (even though he was martyred years before). This witness continues on today, and it tells us that

grace and truth supernaturally came to be for us through Jesus Christ.

Illustration: Maureen and I were at an engagement party a week ago Saturday, and the groom- and bride-to-be were showered with gifts. At the end of the gathering, they opened their gifts, and we watched as one gift took the place of another in the laps of the happy couple.

Their opening those gifts was a picture of the point of verse 16's *grace for grace*, except here we are talking about an infinite gift table with only two gifts of grace. One gift comes after the other, and the second takes the place of the first. The first gift of grace is the law of Moses (v. 17), which spoke of Jesus's grace and truth in symbol and shadow.

The second gift of grace is Jesus Christ, who not only was no symbol or shadow, but was the One from the bosom of the Father who showed us exactly what the unseen Father is like. And this is what He is like—He is a gracious Father who gives infinite grace. But this gift must be received by faith.

VI. You and I can supernaturally come to be children of God (vv. 12-13, *ginomai* = *to become* in v. 12).

Application: These verses speak of a supernatural miracle that each of us must experience in order to become God's child. God's children are not born naturally into this world as God's children. This is the point of verse 13. Eph. 2:2-3 tells us that we are born naturally into this world as children of disobedience, who are by nature children of God's wrath.

For us sin is natural, and nature cannot fix that. But God's supernatural promise certainly can: "As many as received Him, to them gave He the right to supernaturally come to be the children of God, even to those who believe on His name."

Conclusion: His name is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, because He is the eternal Word, our Creator, who became flesh to die for our sins and rise again. Will you believe on His name? Will you receive Him as your way, your truth, and your life – your King, your Prophet, and your Priest? Will you turn from your sinful unbelief and confess to Him that He is the Son of God?

Do you believe? If so, do you want others to know? The Apostle John wrote this Gospel because he believed and wanted others to know.

This infinite gift of salvation from sin through Jesus Christ, full of grace and truth, was meant to be shared. The gifts on the table are inexhaustibly infinite, enough for everyone. Have you told the Lord that you believe? Have you told your wife? Your friend? Your kids? Your friends here at church? When someone truly believes the Gospel, he wants to share the good news.

“A man came—I think it was actually in Philadelphia—on one occasion to the great George Whitefield and asked if he might print his sermons. Whitefield gave this reply; he said, ‘Well, I have no inherent objection, if you like, but you will never be able to put on the printed page the lightning and the thunder.’ That is the distinction—the sermon, and the ‘lightning and the thunder.’ To Whitefield this was of very great importance, and it should be of very great importance to all preachers, as I hope to show. You can put the sermon into print, but not the lightning and the thunder. That comes into the act of preaching and cannot be conveyed by cold print. Indeed it almost baffles the descriptive powers of the best reporters.”

—David Martin Lloyd-Jones,

*Preachers and Preaching*