

The Word Made Flesh

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[0 : 0 0] so John chapter 1 beginning at verse 1 which is in page 1063 in the church bibles in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God he was with God in the beginning through him all things were made without him nothing was made that has been made in him was life and that life was the light of all mankind the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it there was a man sent from God whose name was John he came as a witness to testify concerning that light so that through him all might believe he himself was not the light he only came as a witness to the light the true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world he was in the world and though the world was made through him the world did not recognize him he came to that which was his own but his own did not receive him yet to all who did receive him to those who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of God children born not of natural descent nor of human decision or a husband's will but born of God the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us we have seen his glory the glory of the one and only son who came from the father full of grace and truth

John testified concerning him he cried out saying this is the one I spoke about when I said he who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given for the law was given through Moses grace and truth came through Jesus Christ no one has ever seen God but the one and only son who is himself God and is the closest relationship with the father has made him known this is the word of the Lord thanks be to God well thank you Anne for reading have I on?

yeah yeah excellent but I don't you just love a wash night service it's one of my favourite services of the year I'm not on Neil now you're still in this four year old there we go how about now is this yeah there we go you can all hear me now it's late you're going to want to be able to hear me nobody wants to be straining trying to listen to me at the moment well as Martin said I'm one of the ministry trainees here in St Silas my name's Andrew I'd love to meet you afterwards if we haven't met before be a great help if you can keep your Bibles open page 1063 as we look with awe upon God's word as we dwell on that night where Jesus was born let's approach God in prayer as we start Father we know that all too often we are distracted by many different things at Christmas and take our eyes and take our eyes off the birth of your son so we pray that as we spend time this evening dwelling on the birth of your son that you would help us to look upon the events with renewed awe wonder and thankfulness for that special evening in that little time of Bethlehem in Jesus name we pray

Amen Amen I wonder are you looking forward to tomorrow how do you really feel about it I suspect that a lot of us when we sit round our dinner table with family or friends might have some lists of conversation topics that just are not going to be broached in any form some of us might have long lists that are written down that are passed around saying don't talk about any of these with this certain relative who's coming maybe year after year you work really hard to keep the conversation off of politics off of whatever else it might be but you have this one relative who always ends up bringing up a two hour long conversation on whatever hobby horse it might be this year that's mildly offensive that you desperately want to get out of that you just sit there wishing actually I wish I never said that thing that I started with if only I could just go back and take that back some of us might not be spending tomorrow with family at all because sadly families are complicated and things are hard we don't all get to choose our families you're just stuck with who you get that's how it works for the vast majority of us our families are those that we were born to or were raised by and when you become an adult it's not like it's open season let me pick my parents who's going to be best for me now you just stick with who it is that you have that is of course unless you're the creator of the world choosing to come into the world the all powerful

God who can choose who is going to be his earthly family and tonight as we look at John's opening account in the gospel as we think of that I hope that we can rediscover or discover for the first time some of the awe and the wonder of Jesus coming to Mary and Joseph coming into the world and as we think about God's family and we think about that hopefully we'll have some big thoughts together we'll look this evening at this passage in three points the first of which is the creating word came down verses 1 to 3 in the beginning that's how John starts his gospel in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God he was with God in the beginning John doesn't start by taking us back to Mary's conception he doesn't start by taking us to where Christ was born no he takes us right back he goes right back to the very beginning he takes us back to the conception of the whole world tonight we're looking at one night we're thinking about that but we're also thinking on a cosmic scale we're thinking about the creation of the whole universe the beginning of the world right back in Genesis our first verse in the Bible says in the beginning is how it starts and John mirrors that here for us as well the word that is Jesus was with God right in the beginning and verse 3 we learn that through him all things were made without him nothing that we see was made

[7 : 23] Jesus is the agent of creation for everything that we see around us so as Mary and Joseph desperately seek to find a place to rest as they arrive in Bethlehem and Luke and they knock on door after door looking for an inn to possibly stay and after door slams shut and slams shut as innkeeper after innkeeper says I'm sorry there's no space here there's nowhere for you to lay your head they are turning away their creator they don't know it but Mary is carrying the creator of the world and surely if they knew they would have done something different if you realised that the creator had come knocking with their family that they chose looking for somewhere to stay you would say here have my bed I don't have anywhere else but I'll sleep on the floor you sleep here and yet they end up in a stable surrounded by animals with Jesus laid in a manger living in squalor in Bethlehem and it is outrageous isn't it perhaps we're so used to it we know that's a Christmas story but when you stop and think about it it's utterly outrageous that that's how the creator of the world comes into the earth and yet also when we stop and think about it it is what

Jesus chose he could have joined any family whatsoever but he chose to come to Mary and Joseph a couple who were in a scandalous situation he came to Mary who was the innocent victim of most people presuming there had been some form of sexual immorality leading to her getting pregnant he chose them the word chose them prior to Jesus birth God has revealed himself to his people primarily through Moses and the prophet and the law the old testament of the bible but in Jesus coming to earth on that night we see the ultimate self expression of God he is in perfect control he can choose what he's going to be and he chooses to express himself in this way and never before since the early days of Adam has there been such an expression of God living with man dwelling with man

Jesus came and was born to lowly people in a manger surrounded by dirty animals and we mustn't let ourselves be numb to the awe that we see the wonder that the creator would come to earth in such a manner he stepped into the world not in a high and mighty palace but as one carol boots it from the squalor of a dirty civil and it begs the question why why is it that that's how God chooses to express himself to reveal himself to us why isn't tonight the time where we are celebrating and remembering the grandest royal birth ever thousands of trumpets so much royal purple chariot after chariot a massive birth notice pinned up on the gates millions of people celebrating because if we were to enter one of our creations if we were to enter a video game in the world that we'd built or to enter a lego set that a lot of you might spend a lot of time tomorrow building if you created it and you were to enter it well you'd make sure that you had the best things the best materials the best house to live in wouldn't we and we'd go I've made this

I own this therefore these people are just here to do what I want them to do these people are here to serve me 24 7 to fulfill all my needs and desires and whims I might have realistically that's how we would rule if we were to enter such a situation but John says that's not why Jesus came our second point this evening the creating word comes down and brings light so that all may believe all might believe verses 4 to 9 Jesus did not come to be a dictator over the world did not come to rule harshly to be a heavy burden on his people that's not who he is revealed to be as we think about that night so we think about the deliberate choice for Jesus to be born in that way but he brought light into the world verse 4 says in him was life and that life was the light of all mankind the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it

Jesus brings life to a world that is devoid of it to a world where there is so much darkness not the life that we think of a life for a period of time and then there's death but true life true life that was in the world before Adam and Eve sinned true life before they brought death into the world before it was snuffed out as a result of humanity walking away saying no I want to be in charge as a result being removed from the presence of God a move that has left the world in darkness at the mercy of death Jesus brings light to that world as the boy is born in Bethlehem he brings true light true life beyond what we often think of

[13 : 45] Jesus brought the eternal life to humanity a way to get there true meaningful life and that life is the light of all mankind the light of the world that illuminates the way the world was meant to be so that as we sing these carols and we long for Jesus to come back again we think of that night and we think of all the darkness that goes on we know that Jesus brought light that shows us this world is not how it is ought to be the light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it we're told in Revelation 12 that on that night as Jesus was born that Satan was right there in front of Mary seeking to devour Jesus the night that he was born the second he was born to quench that flame to stop the light from going out and exposing the darkness only Satan failed and the darkness has not and will not overcome the light the light still shines and it still shows the way to true life verse 6

John the Baptist comes on the scene now John was sent from God as a witness to testify concerning that light he came to point people to the light to get them to turn and to believe to point them to Jesus so that at the end of verse 7 all might believe Jesus came so that all might believe in him and verse 9 that true light gives light to everyone people have seen it it is there for everyone the question is what do you do with it John the Baptist boots people in the courtroom he brings them in and he says how are you going to respond he gets the first witness and it's him and he comes and he testifies well I know that you have seen the light because the light has been shown to everybody you have definitely seen it and now you must decide what are you going to do with it

John is the witness that testifies and says you must do something they must make their decision the light forces a distinction to be made all might believe but only some do we know that so painfully don't we of the hundreds of people who have been through this building and will be through this building before the year is up we know that many of them don't believe but all see the light and that is the great dividing line how you respond because there has to be a response and the shepherds on that night go they respond and they seek the light the angels appear and blind them and they hear and listen and they go they hurry to go and see more our third point the creating word comes down and brings light so that all may believe so long as we receive him verses 10 to 14

Jesus born into the world he lovingly created and sustains wasn't recognized by the world verse 10 he was in the world and though the world was made through him the world did not recognize him and we know the pain it is to see someone who should recognize others be unable to the family member that through old age or illness is unable to recognize their spouse their child whoever else it might be the deep anguish that that causes we know the pain of that Jesus came to his people who he had loved who he had provided for over hundreds of years and yet they did not recognize him and they did not receive him from the king of the heaven to the friend of sinners through the kisses of a friend's betrayal he was lifted onto a cruel cross he came this day as he was born to all those who believe in him and yet he went unrecognized and rejected by most of those he came for yet verse 12 to all who did receive him to those who believed in his name he gave the right to become children of

God children born not of a natural descent nor of human decision nor a husband's will but born of God although many rejected him those who receive him who believe in his name he chooses he chooses to bring into his family to become children of God we don't get to choose our family we're stuck with him you might remember that tomorrow when you're sat around the dinner table but God chooses who is a part of his family he chooses who becomes his children the invite is open to all and those who respond he chooses to bring them in for children of God are not of natural descent but those whom he chooses and as I've dwelled on that idea this week as I've been preparing for this sermon I've realised more and more just how incredible that is

[19:57] I don't know why anybody would do any hardship to bring me into their family to choose to have me in their family I've not got great chat around the dinner table I mainly like to talk about politics which doesn't all go down well with family why would anyone do anything at all why would someone come and be persecuted from the moment they're born to choose to have me to choose to have you in their family it is astounding at the start where Jesus is born if you are a Christian here tonight rejoice that the Lord chooses you to be in his family it's not that he how he had to come I had to do this he chooses to come he chooses to bring you in he doesn't just put up with you he does it because he loves you and he likes you he wants you to be in relationship with him and he doesn't want a sporadic relationship he doesn't want just to see you at Christmas and the obligatory get together he wants us to embrace being a part of his family every day to rejoice in him in the morning to bring our highs and our lows before him to share everyday real life as a family together so let's embrace being a part of

God's family this Christmas if family is tough we know that we have this great family to be a part of let's do this together as Christians as we go into 2025 let's embrace being a part of God's family with fellow Christians more dearly choose to be actively involved working as a family embrace being at church week in week out Sundays midweek whenever it might be knowing that you have been chosen to be a part of this church family it's not that it was an obligation to bring you in it's that he wanted to the boy in this stable in Bethlehem comes to bring humanity back to their creator to take all who receive him to true life that is free from death and as he is born verse 14 the word became flesh and made his dwelling among us we have seen his glory the glory of the one and only son who came from the father full of grace and truth the glory of God has been revealed

John invites you to read on to see what that glory looks like to see who the full expression of God is through Christ and so if you're not a Christian and you're here tonight it's great that you are let me invite you to spend some time reading through John's gospel this Christmas season I think you'll be really surprised by what's in there perhaps especially if you've never read it for yourself as an adult there is so much more to it than you might think come and see the revealed glory of the creator through Jesus as Martin said we'd love for you to join us again on January the 12th that Sunday as we take a closer look at Jesus we have our services it's back to church Sunday with flyers kicking about that you can take or maybe you know someone who has been to church over this Christmas season who you'd love to bring back to experience this family it'd be a great thing to come back and take a closer look at Jesus together let's pray father we marvel that you would choose us to be a part of your family that you would send your son to the squalor of a dirty stable to offer us the chance to become your children thank you father for that amazing gift giving freely though we don't deserve it help us to embrace being a part of your family with our brothers and sisters in

Jesus name amen let me invite you to stand as we sing in a we we we what what we we we