Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Word Became Flesh
Scripture: John 1:1-14
Code: 90-422

Let's go back to John chapter 1 and talk a little bit about the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, back to John chapter 1. I think this year we've received fewer Christmas cards than any other year. Are you having that experience? And I just don't…people aren't sending as many Christmas cards, but the ones that they do send are two kinds, pictures of their kids, pictures of family, which are great and wonderful, and pictures of shepherds and wise men and mangers and stars and angels and all of that, right? I mean, that's pretty much…we could separate them, the people go over here, the manger scenes go over here and that seems to be the current theme. And you might even wonder if the Christmas story could even be told without those very familiar elements. Would…what would the Christmas story be with no stable, no manger, no Joseph, no Mary, no Bethlehem, no shepherds, no angels, no star, no wise men and no baby? What would the Christmas story be?

It would be John's account of the Christmas story. I read it, fourteen verses, no Joseph, no Mary, no Bethlehem, no manger, no stable, no shepherds, no wise men, no star, no angels and no baby. But this is not any less the story. And if you think you can't tell the story without those features, you're wrong because that's exactly what John does here. One line from the text that I read you stands out and I want us to look at that line, it's in the last verse, verse 14, and here is the story in four words…four words in English, four words in Greek, "The Word Became Flesh." The Word became flesh. That is the most profound truth of all truth. That's why we celebrate Christmas. Not because of the physical features of a stable and a manger and a star and a young couple and shepherds and wise men, they all participate, of course, in the physical historical features of the birth of Christ. But the real story is the Word became Flesh. And John is an absolute master at an economy of words, saying things that are vast and incomprehensible in very simple terms, so simple that a child can understand them and the wisest of the wise cannot plumb the full depth of them. The Word became Flesh.

Who is the Word? Verse 1 says, "The Word was with God and the Word was God. And this Word became flesh, verse 14 says, and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory." The Word became flesh, dwelt among us without giving up any of His glory. This is the story of Christmas.

Now I understand the familiar accounts of Matthew and Luke which give us all the elements and personalities and features that kind of make up the telling of the story that's charming and sentimental and wonderful, I understand that. But far more important than understanding all of that, is understanding what was really going on from the supernatural side. And, frankly, there was nothing

supernatural, apart from the angels' appearances. The manger wasn't supernatural, neither was the stable, neither were Joseph and Mary, neither were the shepherds or the wise men for that matter. But there is a supernatural reality going on there that John explains to us that is critical for us to understand because the non-negotiable reality that we celebrate at this time of the year is that the eternal God, the infinite transcendent, all-knowing, all-powerful, all present, everlastingly unchanging eternal God of the universe became a human being. That is the message.

Emmanuel, you heard it sung, which means "God with us." That is the essential truth of Christianity and the most essential truth of all truth because it is the only truth that can save a sinner from eternal hell.

John writes his gospel to get that truth across, that we would understand that Jesus is God in human flesh. Again, Matthew and Luke give us the earthly elements, the historical features. John gives us the heavenly elements, the supernatural features. The message is about the deity of Christ. In fact, that's John's message all the way through. And not only John, but the other gospel writers and all the rest of the writers of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, they all want us to know that Jesus is God. In fact, if you go through the New Testament, you'll find all kinds of lines of evidence. He claimed to be God. He said, "I and the Father are one. If you've seen Me, you've seen the Father." There are direct statements about Him that He is God. Thomas said to Him, "My Lord and My God." Titles are given to Jesus that belong only to God, the eternal judge, the holy One, the first and the last, the Lord of the Sabbath, the Savior, the Mighty God, the Lord of Lords, the Alpha and Omega, the Lord of glory, the Redeemer. These are terms that are used of God alone in the Old Testament, and of Christ in the New…evidence that He is God. And He possesses those incommunicable attributes that is attributes of God's person that cannot be passed on to us, such as the fact that He is eternal, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, immutable, sovereign and all glorious. And all of those things are said of Christ as well.

And then Jesus did works that only God can do, raising the dead, overpowering the Kingdom of Darkness, and forgiving sin. Jesus also received worship. We have that throughout the story of the New Testament from the gospels all the way to the book of Revelation. The angels disdained to be worshiped in Revelation 22. Men disdained to be worshiped in Acts 10, and Jesus accepted worship, evidence that He is God.

Jesus also received an answered prayer, something only God can do. The evidences of the deity of Jesus Christ filled the Scripture, but none of them are more powerful than this opening section of the gospel of John. And it gets overlooked. I think sometimes familiarity causes us to sort of push it away. We hear the sounds of it. I even memorized this in Greek once long ago. It was so familiar.

But the most concise statement in all the Bible on the incarnation, God becoming man, are the four words in verse 14, "The Word became Flesh," God became a man." The infinite became finite. The

eternal one entered time. The invisible became visible.

Why is He called the Word? Why not say, “In the Beginning was Christ? Or Jesus? Or the Lord Jesus, or the Lord Jesus Christ? Why the Word?”

Because that term *logos* in the Greek is so loaded with meaning, both for Jew and Gentile. Talk about the Gentiles for a moment. The term “Word” is used once there in verse 14 to describe Jesus in the incarnation and three times in verse 1. And interestingly, there’s no explanation of it. Now when a term is used in the scriptures and it isn’t explained, then we can assume that they didn’t need an explanation, that it was so obvious what it meant that there was no need to dive into it, and that would be the case. Greeks would read this and they would completely understand what John was attempting to say because in the Greek world of philosophy and religion, the *logos* was believed to be a title given to the creative force, to the ordering intelligent mind of the universe. This is an abstract mind to the Greeks. An impersonal, non-personal principle of reason and order and intelligence, a creative force, a source of knowledge and wisdom that existed. It would be very much like what is popular today called ID intelligent design. Evolution is crumbling under the weight of its own lies. And in its place is rising a kind of non-theistic notion called intelligent design and the people who affirm that say we’ve got to have an intelligent designer because we have an intelligent universe. So we believe in intelligent design. But like the Greeks, some kind of impersonal force. It was Einstein who first launched this when he said, “Of course there is a God, of course there is a power behind this, but we could never know it. This is cosmic force, cosmic intelligence, cosmic order, certainly not to be identified as the God of the bible because if you’re going to make it into the God of the Bible, then we’ve got to deal with the God of the Bible in the way that it’s revealed in the Bible, and we not only have a Creator, we have a judge and a Law giver and an executioner for those who reject Him.

What John is saying here is this. The Logos is not an impersonal power. The Logos is not some kind of floating principle of reason. The Logos is a person. To the Greek mind, the Logo was the most powerful force in the universe, creative power, source of wisdom, knowledge, intelligence. And John is saying this is a person and He became a man, a personal God who came into the world in the man Jesus.

To the Jew, the Word had even more meaning. And by the way, that was not just a philosophical understanding that trickled down to the populous in the Greek world from their philosophers so that they all understood the meaning of the word *logos* in their system. But to the Jews, the Word of the Lord was a very familiar idea. If you read the Old Testament, you will read this many times, “The Word of the Lord came, the Word of the Lord came, the Word of the Lord came to so-and-so. The Word of the Lord was simply God revealing Himself, His person, His nature, His will, His wisdom, His truth. The Word of the Lord was the expression of the personal God, the true and living God of the Old Testament. By His Word, God had spoken. Hebrews 1 says, “Through many means in many ways, in time past, through the prophets God spoke. John is saying that the revelation of god, the

disclosure of God, the manifestation of God is now incarnate. The expression of God's nature, will, wisdom, truth is embodied. That's why Hebrews 1 says, "In time past He spoke and now He's spoken unto us, verse 2, in His Son." God is being revealed in Christ. You're hearing from God. You're seeing God unveiled, manifest.

So the Word is God, the personal God to the Jew in flesh. Jesus then is God in human flesh. He is the Word of the living God. And He uses that term because it covers both the Gentiles and the Jews, and it's a magnificent thing because in Psalm 138 verse 2 God says, "I've exalted My Word equal to My name." God and His Word are one and the same because if God doesn't speak, we don't know anything about Him. When He does speak, everything He speaks is consistent with who He is.

So God, the Word, became flesh. Became is an important verb, I'm going to bring it up again so just mark it in your mind, *ginomai* so just mark it in your mind, *ginomai.* Though God is unchanging, immutable, changeless, God then is pure being. God is pure being and as God doesn't become anything. God is not becoming, God is not changing, God is not growing. God is not getting more information, as some people say. God is not at any point incomplete. God is pure, unchangeable being. And yet, though He is being as God and not becoming as God, He became a man. And that was a change. The Incarnation was that event when God took on the fullness of humanity while remaining fully God. Two natures not mingled, fused together in indivisible oneness, in one person, the Lord Jesus Christ. And you sang about it a few minutes ago when you sang Charles Wesley's great hymn, Hark the Herald Angels Sing," do you remember this verse? "Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see, hail the incarnate deity, pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel." That is just a great verse, maybe the best verse in all the Christian carols. The eternal God becomes a man. God speaks in human flesh as a man. Fully man and fully God.

And to make it unmistakable, verse 14 says, "And dwelt among us." Christ's humanity is not an illusion, it is not a vision, it is not an apparition, it is not some kind of phantom, it is not some kind of mental experience. It is not a mere appearance. He took on humanity. Philippians 2:7, He was made in the likeness of men. In Hebrews 2, "He partook of flesh and blood." And to make the statement irrefutable, He lived in this world thirty-three years…thirty of them as a man among men with no indications that He was any other than a human being, till He began His ministry.

In Colossians chapter 2 and verse 9, Paul says, "In Him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form, no diminishing of His deity, He is fully God and fully man." And He dwelt among us so that we could know that.

John wants us to know that that's what Christmas is about, God fully God becomes man, fully man, and dwells among us to reveal who He is. He speaks in a way that He has never spoken before, the clearest representation of God ever was the incarnation of Christ. Jesus is the Word who became flesh.

Now John is going to give us three lines of revelation…three lines of declaration…three lines that help us to grasp the deity of Christ. Now if this sounds a little philosophical, it isn't. It's going to come right out of the text. First of all, John shows us that the Word became flesh by virtue of His preexistence, by virtue of His preexistence.

Let's go back to verse 1. "In the beginning was the Word." Now we'll stop right there. In the beginning was the Word. What beginning? The beginning of what? In the beginning of the beginning. That is a phrase taken right out of Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God made the heavens and the earth." In the beginning, *arche* refers to Genesis 1:1, the original beginning of everything that exists. In the beginning, when everything that exists came into existence…listen…the Word was. In other words, Jesus was already in existence when everything that exists came into existence. That's that statement, it's profound. In the beginning when everything was created, the Word already was. He is not a created being. He existed before anything that now exists existed. Since time began with creation, whoever exists before time exists eternally. At the point where everything began, He already was…preexistence.

Was is an imperfect tense verb, *eimi*, a form of *eimi. Eimi* is the verb to be. And it describes continuous existence. The imperfect tense describes continuous reality. Ami *is the verb to be, continuous existence before the beginning of everything. When the beginning began, He already was. John doesn't use ginomai,* he doesn't say, "In the beginning the Word came into existence." He uses *ami*, "In the beginning the Word already existed." There never was a point when He came into existence. And that is why the testimony of Scripture is that He is before all things. That is why He says in John 8, "Before Abraham was, I am." He was in the beginning already existing.

The Mormons, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others tell us He was a created being. In fact, the Mormons tell us that the God of the Bible was created by another God, the other God created the God of the Bible who then created Jesus. Those are such damning lies because they deny God being God and Christ being God. Not only did He exist in the beginning, follow through this first verse, He was with God…He was with God. In verse 2 He says it again. "He was in the beginning already with God." When the beginning began, He was already existing with God. That's very important. He is not God's competitor, He is not some antagonist to God. He is not one of multiple gods, there are not two gods, competing gods. He is with God. He is *proston, theon.* That literally means face-to-face with God in intelligent personal communion. He is then distinct from God because He is with God. He preexists in fellowship with God. This is so important. In John 17 He prays at the end of His incarnation, looking at the cross, "Restore to Me the glory I had with You before the world began, when we were *proston theon* face-to-face.

And what was the relationship that He had with God? God gives testimony, God the Father gives testimony to His relationship to the Son in Luke 3:22 at the baptism when He says, "This is My…what

Son?...beloved Son." The Son of My love. He is not a competitor to God, He is not another God. He is not a lesser God. He is before any creation existing and He's existing in intimate, personal communion with the Father. And it is a communion of love, perfect love. This is preexistence. If Jesus is preexistent, then He is not part of the creation. If He is preexistent, He is outside the creation and He is before time. And if He is outside the creation and before time, He is eternal. And if He is eternal, He is God.

Secondly, John wants us to understand even digging deeper into this profound reality, and doing it in simple words that a child could understand. Not only does He speak of the preexistence of Christ, but He speaks of the co-existence of Christ. Go back to verse 1, "Not only was He with God, verse 1 says, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was God." The Word was God. He is both with God and is God. And therein lies the mystery of the Trinity, right? He is distinct from the Father, having face-to-face communion with the Father, and yet is fully God as is the Father. As we read in Colossians 2:9, "In Him, all the fullness of deity dwells." In His preexistence, eternal preexistence, He is with God and He is God. And that is His co-existence, His co-existence. He is as much God as God is God. The Word is not an attribute of God. The Word is not a message from God. The Word is not an emanation from God. The Word is not a creation by God. The Word is God. He is a person with God and a person who is God.

Charles Wesley wrote another hymn that we love, "And can it be that I should gain," you know that hymn? And in that he says, "He left His Father's throne above, amazing love how can it be that Thou, My God, would die for Me?" This is the heart and soul of Christianity. Four words in the Greek, again. Four words in English. The Word was God. Clearest most direct revelation of the deity of Jesus Christ on the pages of Scripture. The end of verse 1, "The Word was God." The Word is the subject, the Word is God. He is with God as a separate person and yet He is God by nature. He has the same nature and essence as God.

So when you think about them, the Christmas story, this is what is at the heart of the whole thing, the one who came into the world is God Himself, is God the Son who was eternally with God before anything existed. Preexistent and coexistent with God.

There's a third very important reality that John wants us to understand. And that is not only the words preexistence and coexistence with God, but His self-existence. And now when you get to this expression or this phrase, or this term, you're really grappling with the substance of deity. When you talk about His preexistence, it's important because you're talking about His eternality. When you're talking about His coexistence, it's important because you're talking about His equality. But now when you talk about His self-existence, you're talking about the essence of His nature. One is eternality, two is equality, three is essence. His self-existence is critical.

Through the years, this has kind of been an abstract idea, kind of left in the back waters of theology and theologians have a word for this, they call it the aseity of God…a-s-e-i-t-y, the aseity of God, very obscure term but it means the self-existence of God.

What does it mean that He is self-existent? It means in simple language, go down to verse 4, here it is again, four words. I told you John's economy of words is stunning. "In Him was Life." In Him was Life." John 5:26 says it again, that in God is life and in the Son is life. This is an amazing statement. Life not *bios*, not just physical life, but *zoe*, the biggest, broadest term for all kinds of life. And what it's saying is this. Life was in Him. What do you mean by that? Well look at it from a negative standpoint. He didn't receive life from any other source. He didn't develop life from some other power. This is self-existence. He wasn't given life, He didn't receive life, He possesses it as an essential of His nature. In Him was life. That's why Jesus would say things like, "I'm the Way, the Truth, and the Life." This is the truth of the self-existence of God. And I tell you, this reality concerning Jesus Christ is foundational to the Christian faith. And unless you believe this, you cannot be saved, even though you talk about Jesus all the time and say you believe in Jesus. If you don't believe in the Jesus who is the eternal God, who is self-existent, who has life in Himself, then you have another Jesus. And we're warned in the New Testament, if you have another Jesus, you're accursed. If you have another Jesus, you have another gospel, you're cursed. Altering the foundational realities of the identity of Jesus Christ is a damning act, very popular in false religions. In fact, it's pretty much universal in false religions, developed by demons consistently across the board in false religions.

But John's testimony is, "In Him was Life." He wasn't given life, He contains Life in Himself. He's the source of life. All that is created can be said…I'll just give you a little way to distinguish these things. All that is created can be said to be *ginomai*, the Greek verb becoming. All that is created is becoming, right? All the creation moves and shifts and alters and changes. We understand that. It's in the process of becoming, becoming something other than what it is. And if you want a clear illustration of that, look in the mirror tomorrow, take an old picture from ten years ago, and you'll know you're becoming. You may not like what you're becoming, but it's the way it is. Look at your house, and it is becoming. Look at your car, and it is becoming something other than it is or that you want it to be. Everything is becoming. The trees in your hard, the grass on the ground, the flowers…everything changes because the nature of created things is that they are not immutable, they are always becoming.

God is pure being, He doesn't become anything other than He is. And when people come along and they've been doing this under the name of evangelicalism recently and start tampering with the essential, pure being of God by saying God lacks knowledge, God lacks information, He can't know this, He can't know that, He's trying to react the best way He can to what's going on in the world, seemingly to get God off the hook for the trouble in the world. So He won't get blamed, they paint Him as ignorance…ignorant, then you've got a…you just struck a death blow at the essence of the nature of God who is pure being. Being is eternal and unchanging. Becoming is temporal and changing. This

simple distinction of verbs distinguishes the Creator from the creation.

This is the foundational reality of all realities. “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And God gave life to everything that has life, right?” He gave life to everything that has life…everything, because life is in Him. Most important truth of all truths right there in Genesis 1, verse 1, and that is a very most assaulted truth, I think, in many places in our world today, isn’t it? Massive effort to deny the creation account of Genesis 1. Get rid of the creation and you can get rid of the Creator. If you get rid of the Creator, you can live the way you want because there’s no recourse for your sin. The whole universe falls into the category of becoming because there was a point at which it didn’t exist. Before anything was created, there was only being, God, three in one, eternally self-existent. In other words, He has life in Himself. Unlike us, we all receive our life from parents and ultimately, of course, from Him.

So when in Exodus the question is asked, “Who are You? Who are You?” He says this, “I am who I am. I don’t change. I am the eternally existing One.” That’s why Acts 17:28 says, “We live and move and have our being in Him. All life comes from Him. Who is this Jesus, this baby born in Bethlehem, who is this? This is no other than the preexistent, coexistent, self-existent God, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

There’s more to say about this in verse 4. “In Him was life and the life was the light of men.” He came into this world as that eternal life, as John calls Him. He came into the world as that eternal life and when He arrived, the light was on. He even said, “I’m the light of the world,” John 8:12. “I’m the light.” Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness.”

What does that mean? There is certainly distinction between life and light. Life is one thing and light is something else. But here they’re fused together. Life is the principle, light is simply an analogy. Light is simply the illustration. The life, the preexistent, coexistence, self-existent life of God in human form in Jesus became the light of men. In other words, when He showed up, the light went on. The light overcame the darkness of ignorance; the light overpowered the darkness of sin. It’s an analogy, an analogical way to speak. The life was the light is the same construction, by the way, as the Word was God. As God and the Word are the same, light and life are the same. The light combines with life and manifests itself. The metaphorical way of showing the impact of the arrival of Christ, the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, Paul calls it, in 2 Corinthians 4, shines.

When God appeared in the Old Testament on many occasions, He appeared as light, didn’t He? It’s called the *Shekinah*, blazing light. We see that with Moses. We see that when He showed up at the tabernacle, when He showed up at the temple, when He led them by a pillar of light during the day, and cloudy light and fire by night. In other words, the radiant reality and manifestation of God’s life shining through His Son was like light to a dark world. Jesus is the eternal life of God in human flesh, manifesting like light shining in the darkness of a sinful world. And then he says in verse 5, “The light

shines in the darkness. There was nothing like this ever." The *Shekinah* was wonderful when it came. But it came and it went, and came and it went. Jesus came and stayed. The light shines in the darkness. There was nothing like it and the darkness did not comprehend it.

I need to help you with the word comprehend in the NAS. I don't know what version you have, but that is the Greek verb *katalambano*, it's a compound verb. Better to translate it, "It did not overcome it…did not overcome it." The light did not overcome it. In fact, John actually tells us what happened in 1 John 2:8, he says, "The darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining." As Christ came, and as He began to appear and manifested Himself at the beginning of His ministry, the darkness began to be dispelled and it could not overpower the light of His life. The light of the life of God in Jesus drives the darkness away, even a small candle will overwhelm the darkness of a room. Darkness can't overcome light.

And he mentions in verses 6 to 8 that there was a man sent from God, a prophet, to give testimony and that prophet was John the Baptist. He came to testify about the light, He pointed to Christ so that all might believe through Him. He wasn't the light, but He came to testify about the light. Jesus came in to display the life of God like light in a dark world. Verse 9 says there was the true light which coming into the world.

Stop there for a moment. He was the Word made flesh. He was the light coming into the world. He was life manifest. And He enlightens every man who knows about Him, every man who ever heard Him, read of Him, saw Him was exposed to that light.

So the preexistent, coexistent, self-existent God, the Word became flesh and dwelt among us and the light of the glory of God was shining in the midst of a dark world.

These are proclamations that John makes about Him being preexistent, coexistent, self-existent. Is there any proof for that? What is the evidence? There can only be one line of evidence, only one. It wouldn't be His miracles, because the Apostles did miracles. Some of the Old Testament prophets saw miracles. What is the proof that Jesus is the eternal God? There can be only one proof and that one proof is that He existed before time began. If He's the eternal God, He had to exist before anything existed. That is the only possible line of proof, only one fact is necessary and John gives it in verse 3, here it is, "All things came into being through Him," which means that He existed before they came into being, "and apart from Him, nothing came into being that is come into being." There is the sole evidence for the eternality of Jesus Christ. He is God because He existed before anything existed, before time existed. And all things that came into existence, came into existence through Him and apart from Him nothing…the Greek would say, "Not even one thing came into existence that has come into existence." Nothing.

The Apostle Paul reiterates this, Colossians 1:16, “For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers, or authorities.” Talking about angelic beings. “All things have been created through Him and for Him and He is before all things. Hebrews 1:2, “And He made all things, and He upholds all things.” This is again profound and simple, “All things came into being through Him, all things came into existence, a better way to translate that, through Him.” The Creator of all that exists must Himself be uncreated.

He comes into the world, verse 9, shining in the lightning. The response is amazing, verse 10, “He was in the world and the world was made through Him.” There it is again. That’s how we know He’s God. The world was made through Him. The Creator, and the world didn’t know Him. “The world didn’t know Him? What are you talking about the world here?” The world…the world, people in the world, not any limitation there. The world. They still don’t. The Gentile nations, the world, anybody and everybody. Then he narrows it down in verse 11, “He came to His own,” and now he’s talking about Israel, His own, My people as He refers to them repeatedly in the Old Testament, to His own people, the Jews and those who were His own did not receive Him. Amazing story, isn’t it? The uncreated, Creator of everything, came into His creation, life came into the world and lit up the world and the world didn’t know Him. And His own people who had all the prophecies saying He was coming didn’t receive Him, they killed Him, along with the nations, the Romans. And that’s the sad reality of sin.

But the first evidence for the deity of Christ is that He made the world. That’s material creation, that’s John’s testimony. Verse 3, “All things came into being through Him.” All things that exist, exist because He brought them into existence,” and then again in verse 10, “the world was made through Him.” That’s the first line of testimony, material creation. The second line of testimony is creation as well, but this time spiritual creation…spiritual creation, verses 12 and 13. The second line of evidence, “But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name who were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Do you notice some very important terms? “To become children and be born,” that’s a creative process.” Not only is the Word, the Lord Jesus, the Creator of the material universe, but He is the Creator of His own family through spiritual creation. He is the one who creates the material world and He is the one who creates His own spiritual family, “As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become the children of God.” How did it happen? “They were born of God,” not by any human means, not by blood, that means humanity, the will of the flesh, the will of man, it can’t happen. This is a spiritual creation. What it means to be born from above. But by God this is done.

Not only then is the Word the Creator of the material realm, but of the spiritual realm as well. We become His creation, His new creation, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

How do we know that Jesus then is God in flesh? Cause John gives us testimony that He preexisted, coexisted, self-existed with God as God, evidence He is the Creator of the material universe and of the family of God through spiritual creation.

There is Christmas then without the shepherds, without the manger or the stable, Joseph and Mary, and even a baby and that's the divine story. Lots of people believe in the manger. Lots of people believe in the shepherds and the wise men and the start and the angel. The question is, do you believe in the Son of God? That's the question. Lots of people believe in the sentiments regarding the baby. In John 20 as John closes his gospel, he says, "These things that I've written to you, I've written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in His name.

John says you have to believe. He says it in chapter 20 verse 31, I just read it. But he says it right here in our text in chapter 1 verse 12, "To those who believe in His name." What do you mean believe in His name? His name is who He is. All that He is. To believe in His name is not to believe that His name was Jesus, but to believe in the fullness of His person. Do you believe in the Christ that is revealed here in Scripture? Do you believe in Him savingly as your Redeemer, your own hope of salvation, your Lord and your God? Let's pray.

The story never loses its power. It never loses its profound nature. Lord, it is as ever fresh to us as if we had not heard it before, so wondrous, to unfathomable and yet so simple that even a little child can understand. Thank You for giving us such revelation, such majestic proof and for the purpose that we might believe Jesus to believe who He is. The Word made flesh who dwelt among us, died for us and rose on our behalf, to provide forgiveness of sin and eternal salvation. This is the real story. This is the story we must understand. May it capture ever heart to the point that we embrace fully the name of the Lord Jesus, the fullness of who He is and what He did and what He provides for us. And we pray in His name. Amen.

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