

## Sunday Morning Message

February 20, 2022

### *The Presentation of Christ from John's Perspective – Part One – John the Apostle The Gospel According to John*

Text – John 1:10 - 34

Congregational Reading – John 1:10 - 14

#### Introduction

Though we are not giving a chronology of all of the events included in the four gospel accounts involving the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, I will give you "a nutshell" account of how it all took place. First of all, let me remind us of what we already discussed: John tells us virtually nothing about the birth of Christ, save only what is rather mysteriously mentioned in verse fourteen. There is also no mention in John's Gospel of Christ's childhood or of his baptism. The actual chronology of events probably went like this.

#### Christ's Baptism and Inauguration (From my Gospel Synopsis Notes)

A. The Ministry of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:1 – 12; Mark 1:1 – 8; Luke 3:1 – 20; John 1:6 – 8)

B. The Baptism of Jesus in Bethaborah (**Matthew 3:13 – 17**; Mark 1:9 – 11; Luke 3:21 – 23)

*"Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* (Matthew 3:13-17)

Luke tells us that Jesus was about thirty years of age when Jesus was baptized.

C. The Temptation in the Wilderness (Matthew 4:1 – 11; **Mark 1:12 – 13**; Luke 4:1 – 13)

*"And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him."* (Mark 1:12-13)

D. John's Testimony Regarding Jesus (John 1:15 – 34)

#### Transition

The event that we will be looking at today, I believe comes when Jesus returns from His forty day period of fasting in the wilderness and after His being tempted by Satan. We will hear testimony from both John the Apostle as he gives us commentary about

the Lord Jesus through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and we will also listen to what John the Baptist has to say regarding Jesus as He was being presented to the world as the “Lamb of God.”

Last week, our entire focus was on John the Baptist – who he was, and what his purpose was. We read that John boldly declared that he was sent to bear witness of the Light of the World, which was Christ. Today, our focus will be on the Light Himself.

## **I. The Truth About Christ from John the Apostle (vs. 10 – 14; 16 – 18)**

First we have the truth about Christ from John the Apostle’s perspective. John the Apostle is writing this Bible narrative under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. We refer to this as confluent inspiration, meaning that the Scriptures are indeed given by the inspiration of God, but they also contain a human element. The perspective and literary style of John’s Gospel account are unique and distinguishable from the other Gospel writers.

### **A. His Rejection by Many (vs. 10 – 11)**

Verse ten tells us that Jesus was not recognized by neither the world in general, nor specifically by His own nation, Israel.

Notice also the reference again to Christ as being the Creator of the world, which was also referenced in vs. 1 – 3.

Jesus claimed to be God. He claimed to be with God the Father “in the beginning” before the world was created. He claimed to be the Creator of the Universe along with His Father and with the Holy Spirit; He claimed to be able to forgive sins. The Jews of all people should have been able to recognize who Jesus was, but they rejected Him outright. (See Matthew 12:22 – 28)

Practical Point – Not everybody recognizes who Jesus is. To some, He is just fictitious fairy tale; to others who attempt to give in with a little compromise, He was a good man and a moral teacher, but certainly not God incarnate.

In Mere Christianity, C. S. Lewis discusses this rather foolish rejection:

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept His claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with

any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.<sup>1</sup>

Who is Jesus to you? I would suggest to you that this is the most important question that you can consider, and you had better consider it before your time on this earth runs out. Because if Jesus is who He claims to be, then you had better make up your mind to receive Him before it is eternally too late.

## B. His Reception by Some (vs. 12 – 13)

Jesus must be received by faith. Christ is received when we cease trusting in our own way, and place our complete trust and dependence upon Him. We recognize Him as our only hope for forgiveness and redemption.

John will refer to this over and over again in this Gospel account:

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." (John 3:16-19)*

*"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." (John 3:36)*

The Apostle Paul discusses this as well in all of his epistles:

*"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23)*

*"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. ... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:8-11, 13)*

Those who receive Christ as Saviour are said to be born-again or born of God.

In a future message, we will examine in depth Jesus' discussion with a religious leader of Israel named Nicodemus:

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<sup>1</sup> Lewis, C. S.. Mere Christianity (C.S. Lewis Signature Classics) (p. 52). HarperOne. Kindle Edition.

Jesus told Nicodemus “... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.” (John 3:3-7)

Notice also that John distinguishes the physical birth from the spiritual birth in v. 13. Back in Matthew 12:46 - 50, there is a story that illustrates this point. Jesus tells His followers that a true relationship with God comes not through being born to a certain family, but by being born-again by faith into God’s family.

### C. His Mysterious Reference to His Incarnation (v. 14)

Verse fourteen states that God was “made flesh.” The word “made” (ἐγένετο from γίνομαι – *ginomai* – Verb - 3<sup>rd</sup> Per - Sing – Indicative - 2<sup>nd</sup> Aor – Mid Dep), means that at a particular point in time, the eternal Christ who always was took upon Himself human flesh. We know from both Matthew’s gospel and Luke’s gospel that this happened when he entered into the womb of the Virgin Mary.

This is the only comment that John makes regarding the incarnation. Again, John presents Jesus as God, and he is not too concerned about any of the human elements of Jesus story. He does tell us here that that the same Word who is God, and who created all things was made flesh, and because he was in a human body, they could see Him and experience Him face to face.

### From Doctrinal Synopsis Paper

Having established the fact that Jesus is fully God, it is now necessary to also declare that Jesus is fully man. Jesus is the God-man. He is one hundred percent God as well as one hundred percent man. He exists as both God and man at the same time. He was God in eternity past, and in His pre-incarnate past since the time of the Creation. He became man in the womb of Mary when the Holy Ghost came upon her and the power of the highest overshadowed her (Luke 1:3). Yet, as man, and even as a babe within the womb, He never ceased to be God. There was never a time in Christ’s existence where He was less than God. This union of the two natures of Christ in one person is referred to as the hypostatic union. Spurgeon said, “remember, Christ was not a deified man, neither was he a humanized God. He was perfectly God and at the same time perfectly man.”<sup>2</sup> This concept is impossible to fully comprehend with finite human minds, and some false attempts have been made to explain it. Jesus was not half-man and half-God, and He did not have dual personalities. Jesus is One person with two natures, a divine nature, and a human nature. Though the person of Christ is singular, He does have two natures.

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<sup>2</sup> Mark Water, *The New Encyclopedia of Christian Quotations* (Alresford, Hampshire: John Hunt Publishers Ltd, 2000), 178.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who being the Eternal essence of Deity took upon Himself flesh (1 John 4:2; John 1:14) through the virgin birth making Him the God-man. Because Jesus had to be sinless, He was conceived and born of a virgin through the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18 – 25; Luke 1:34 – 35). God became incarnate in human flesh and blood (Hebrews 10:5; Philippians 2:7-8; Hebrews 2:14), but with a sinless human nature (Hebrews 4:15; 2 Corinthians 5:21). As the God-man, Jesus exists forever consisting of this hypostatic union of two distinct natures: fully human (Hebrews 7:24; 1 Timothy 2:5) and fully divine (Colossians 2:9), without confounding the natures or dividing the person.

Christ had to become a man for several reasons. First, He had to atone for the sins of mankind. It was man that sinned (Romans 5:12) so it would also require that a man pay the penalty for sin (Hebrews 10:5 – 10). As a man, Jesus was tempted in every way that all men are tempted, yet He never sinned (Hebrews 4:15). By becoming man Jesus was approachable by other men. If Jesus was only God in the sense of pure glory or light, man could not come near Him; just as they cannot get near the sun, unless they were supernaturally enabled as were Moses (Exodus 33:23), and the Apostles Peter, James, and John in the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1 – 2); or John on Patmos when He saw the resurrected glorified Lord (Revelation 1:16).

Jesus also needed to be God, as only a sinless God can forgive sins (Mark 2:7; Luke 5:21). Since Jesus had no earthly father, He did not inherit a sinful nature. Joseph was not involved in the conception of Christ (Matthew 1:18). Thus, Christ is perfect in His humanity, and in His deity.

Jesus did voluntarily surrender some of the prerogatives of His deity. He did not cease to be God, but He did temporarily and voluntarily give up the independent use of His divine attributes and prerogatives. This is taught in Philippians 2:7 where Christ is said to have: "*made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*" This passage in Philippians 2 is referred to as the Kenosis passage. Christ took upon Himself human limitations such as fatigue, thirst, and hunger (John 4:6; John 19:28; Matthew 4:2). Luke 2 teaches that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature (Luke 2:52). Jesus also operated in the power of the Holy Spirit while performing miracles (Matthew 12:28; Acts 10:38).

The question arises as to whether or not it was possible for Jesus to sin. Was the temptation by the Devil in the wilderness a genuine temptation (Matthew 4; Mark 1:12; Luke 4)? As a man, Jesus was able to be tempted, which means he was susceptible to sin, and also "peccable," meaning that he was able to sin. However, Jesus was also God, which means, as God, He was neither peccable, nor capable of being tempted. The temptation in the wilderness, along with Jesus sinlessness at all other times, proved that He was Who He claimed to be – God. The temptation was a real temptation, however, from the standpoint of the tempter. It was a genuine attempt by Satan to cause Jesus to yield to his (Satan's) wishes. However, because Jesus was God, He would not, and could not yield. Shedd states: "The last Adam differs from the first Adam by reason of his impeccability. He was characterized not only by the *posse non peccare*, but by the *non posse peccare*. He was not only able to overcome temptation, but he was unable to be overcome by it."<sup>3</sup>

John the Apostle saw Jesus as an adult in a thirty year old human body. John also got a glimpse of what Christ looks like in a glorified body when he and Peter and James were up on the Mount of Transfiguration. (see Matthew 17:1 – 8)

He also got a vision of what Christ looks like in Heaven. (see Revelation 1:9 – 18)

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<sup>3</sup> Shedd, p. 659.

We who have received Him will all see Him in His glorified body someday, perhaps very soon.

#### D. His Review of Some of the Benefits We Have in Christ (vs. 16 – 18)

The word, “fullness” (πληρώματος from πλήρωμα – *plērōma* – Noun – Gen – Sing – Neut), has the idea of abundance.

*"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)" (Romans 5:17)*

*"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33)*

Moses gave us the Law, which revealed God’s perfect expectation for man’s behavior, which was impossible for us to keep because of the sinful nature that we have. The law could never save us, because we could not keep it. It demanded perfection. The law could only teach us as a schoolmaster that we needed a Saviour. Christ is that Saviour. He came to redeem us from both the curse and bondage of the Old Testament Law. Through Him we have received grace – unmerited favour, and mercy. We deserve judgment, but instead we receive mercy, grace, and eternal life, and with that, someday the blessing of Heaven.

John tells us that God is a Spirit:

*"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." (John 4:24)*

In the Old Testament man could not see God, unless God revealed Himself in some tangible form. Jesus is God in human form. He shows us the Father. He said to Philip: *"he that hath seen me hath seen the Father"* (John 14:9).

By coming to earth and becoming a human, Jesus not only provides salvation for us, but He gives us something that we can see and understand about God. He is *the express image of God*. We can see God through Him.

McGee said: “You could not see God—God is spirit. He had to become flesh; He had to become one of us in order for us to know Him. We could not go up there to understand Him; He had to come down here and bring God down where we are.”<sup>4</sup>

#### Conclusion to Part One

Jesus showed us who God is, and we are supposed to show the world who God is. The world is supposed to be able to see God through us.

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<sup>4</sup> J. Vernon McGee, *Thru the Bible Commentary*, electronic ed., vol. 4 (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997), 370.

## II. Part Two - The Testimony About Christ from John the Baptist (vs. 15; 19 – 34)