

John 1 The Word became Flesh

Science can observe and measure to an extent the universe as it now is and postulate theories as to the mechanics of how it got going. But most people would agree generally that something does not come from nothing. An ordered system with consistent physical laws suggests a source. But science has no tools for finding or measuring that source.

John ch 1 which we read in church today goes beyond science to give us the theology, the truth behind or above what we can see and measure. And rather beautifully it is given not in technical university jargon we might struggle to understand but in the simple language of a fisherman from Galilee. John's writing is so plain that a child can read it, yet so rich in substance and deep in meaning it has exercised the world's greatest minds for centuries.

John was one of Jesus' 'inner circle' of disciples. His Gospel account is different from the others, giving less of Jesus' public sermons but more of His personal conversation. Eg. He doesn't record the Sermon on the Mount but tells us much more of what Jesus said on the night of the Last Supper.

John is quite unapologetic, declaring clearly his aim in writing. He offers a selection of material about Jesus of whom he was a close eyewitness in order that his readers might come to believe in Jesus as the Son of God and Saviour of the world and so have eternal life. Eternal life through trusting in Jesus Son of God, that's the big idea throughout the Gospel of John. We see this from the word 'go' in the introduction found in ch1.

Observe here:

The Divine Source

The Humble Glory

And an Astounding Possibility

First of all here is the source of all things. It is a divine source. God is the ultimate source of all created things and the bold claim of John is that Jesus Christ is divine. He is Lord. He is God the Son.

John begins by calling Jesus 'the Word'. This was vital in Old Testament thinking. God spoke creation into being and made promises to Abraham. He revealed His Law and Commandments (the 10 'Words') to Moses. 'The Word

of the Lord' came to prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah and was recorded in the written scripture.

'Word' was also significant in Greek thought which was widespread in the 1st century. The 'logos' was believed to be a divine principle of knowledge, order and reason that permeated everything.

Before there was anything else, says John, there was the Word, more than a principle, a *person*. He was active with God in creation for He is and has always been in nature God Himself.

Jesus, in Whom we Christians trust, in Whose name we are invited to pray, is the eternal Son of God, Creator of the universe and all it contains, the true Source of light and life, the Giver of grace, the Revealer of truth.

How wise indeed were the Magi to kneel in homage before him! He is the divine Source and appointed Saviour, why would we seek or settle for any lesser ?

But note secondly here His *Humble* Glory.

The Creator and rightful Lord of all comes into His own creation as an infant, dependant and vulnerable.

'The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.' For a time, the eternal God the Son chose to live as a human being, restricted by the laws of time and space he had created. He allowed Himself to be born in poor circumstances, carried and nursed. He experienced family life, community, he felt hunger, fatigue and pain. He knows what it's like to be sorely tempted, and to be treated unfairly with cruel contempt. He is no stranger to our world, no stranger at all.

'We have seen His glory' says John. Now perhaps he's thinking of that day on the Mount of Transfiguration when he and James and Peter were granted a glimpse of their Master in heavenly majesty but strangely he doesn't include the Transfiguration in his Gospel.

'Glory' in the Hebrew language is the same word is 'weight'. The glory of the Lord is described as the 'weight', the profound significance of His being and presence. Those in Scripture who receive a revelation of God's 'glory' are usually overwhelmed and intimidated.

But here is the wonder.

John says they witnessed ‘the glory of the *only begotten* Who came from the Father *full of grace*’. His unique glory, His most profound significance is not the epic splendour of God, but that God the Son willingly humbled Himself to become ‘incarnate’, one of us, and make our place His home.

The Apostle Paul writes in Philippians that Christians should be humble like our Master Who, ‘being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!’

John knows. He was there.

But he asserts thirdly that in Jesus we find not only the Divine Source. Because of His *Humble* Glory in taking on flesh and suffering the cross of Calvary for our sins He has brought to sinners like us an Astounding Possibility.

‘To all who received Him,’ John writes, ‘to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God...’

Believing in Jesus we are given power to become God’s children. The only begotten Son became human that we might become brothers and sisters in the family of God. Reborn, enabled to start over by the Holy Spirit. Sharers of eternal life and all its promises.

We cannot come before a holy God with untreated sin and hope to survive. But God the Son has made known to us the grace of a loving Father, Who invites us to repent and believe and enjoy with Him eternal life.

Amen