

I. In the beginning

A. John 1:1-18 . . . In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. [4] In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. [5] The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. [6] There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. [7] He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. [8] He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. [9] There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. [10] He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. [11] He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. [12] 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, [13] who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. [14] And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. [15] John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" [16] For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. [17] For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. [18] No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

B. In our study – so far (vs 1-12) – John has told us –

1. That Jesus is the Word – the One who explains God to us in words and ways we can understand, in spite of our human limitations.
2. That Jesus is a distinct person, and yet at the same time, He is God.
3. That Jesus created everything – which proves He is God.
4. That Jesus brings us life, and the life He brings is the light that shows us the way out of the lies and darkness of Satan and into the truth of God and the abundant life God has for all who trust and obey Him.
5. That as the Light of the world, Jesus shines in the darkness, but the darkness neither comprehends it nor vanquishes the Light.

6. That John the Baptist was not the Light, but rather the one who prepared the people for the coming of the Light.
7. That as the Light, Jesus is another means by which God reveals Himself to our world so that everyone everywhere can know there is a God, what He is like, and what He expects of us.
8. That the world, generally speaking, did not recognize Jesus as the sent one from God, and that the Jews rejected Jesus as the sent one from God.
9. That not receiving Jesus Christ is an act of willful unbelief.
10. And that there are some who have received Jesus Christ, and because of their faith and obedience, they have been given the right to become God's children and the power to live as God's children ought to live.

C. Prayer

II. The Light (starting with vs 13)

- A. John 1:12-13 . . . 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, [13] who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
 1. who were born, not [as a result] of blood – When John says “not of blood,” it is most probable he is referring to one’s heritage – such as being born a Jew or into a Christian home.
 - a. As you may recall from our study of Romans, the Jews believed they were automatically justified – in spite of how they lived – because they were descendants of Abraham. In other words, they believed God justified them because of their heritage.
 - b. In Romans 2, Paul spent some time countering this false belief, and here is a small example of what he said, “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly (by birth), nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. [29] But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that which is of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the letter; and his praise is not from men, but from God” (Romans 2:28-29).
 - c. Luke records John the Baptist saying something similar in Luke 3:8 . . . Therefore bear fruits in keeping with repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father,' for I say to you that from these stones God is able to raise up children to Abraham.
 - d. Therefore, your family heritage, no matter how godly, is unable to bring you into the family of God and make you God's child.

2. nor [as a result] of the will of the flesh – This infers the birth of a child as an unintended result of momentary passion. In other words, we are not born into the family of God and into this new life of faith and godliness as a result of strong emotions or excited passions.
 - a. It is my opinion that this is one of the reasons we ought to be careful how we present the gospel to unbelievers, for if we excite their passions without stirring up a thoughtful and willful determination to repent, trust in Jesus for eternal salvation, and move forward as a slave of Jesus Christ, then once the passions subside, the faith and obedience will also subside.
 - b. In Jesus' parable of the four soils, He explains in His depiction of the second soil that stirred up passions have no ability to genuinely and permanently make us children of God. We read in Matthew 13:20-21 . . . “The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; [21] yet he has no firm root in himself, but is only temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he falls away.”
3. nor [as a result] of the will of man – This refers to the intentional coming together of a husband and wife to conceive a baby.
 - a. The point being made here is that there is no action produced by our human will that can make us God's children – with the one exception of willingly cooperating with what God has done and is doing to make us His children.
 - b. For example, if from watching birds fly you want to fly yourself, you can devise and put into action all the plans your will-power can conceive, yet you will never fly like a bird because you do not have wings. In spite of all you may “will” to do, without wings you cannot fly like a bird.
 - c. In the same way, you can set your will to work on gaining forgiveness of sins and eternal life, and yet, without those things that your will has no power over – such as the sacrificial and redeeming work of Jesus Christ, the convicting and empowerment of the Holy Spirit, and the influential power of the living word, you cannot obtain God's gift of eternal life.
4. And so we come to John's words –but of God. The only way to become a child of God is to be born of God. And this happens only as we trust in the redeeming and reconciling work of Jesus Christ, and proceed to live accordingly.

- a. Peter said it this way in 1 Peter 1:3-5 . . . Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, [4] to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, [5] who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.
 - b. And affirming that we are born of God through Jesus Christ, when John the Baptist saw Jesus, he said: “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29)
 - c. Jesus said of himself, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me” (John 14:6).
 - d. And finally, Paul put it this way in Titus 3:4-5 . . . But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, [5] He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit.
5. Now I do not want to make too much of this, but I do want to draw your attention to the fact that throughout his gospel, John presents truths about God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, eternal salvation, and living a godly life that contain some measure of mystery – which neither he nor any other portion of the Bible definitively explains.
- a. For example, John presents Jesus as being both human and divine at the same time.
 - b. Another example is John speaking of the sovereign work of God and the free will of man as if they naturally and perfectly co-exist, and as if we are to accept them both as inseparable.
 - c. So once again, I urge you to accept the mysteries without having to have definitive explanations, and when you encounter seemingly contrasting truths, hold them together as co-existing when God’s word presents them as co-existing.
- B. John 1:14 . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.
1. According to scripture, the Word was wholly and solely divine at the time of creation. Or as John said, the Word was God. But when, by the Holy Spirit, Mary conceived Jesus, God took on flesh in order to become human like us and to spend 33 years living as one of us.

- a. In talking to the Israelites, Moses foretold this event in Deuteronomy 18:15 . . . The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me (Moses) from among you, from your countrymen (a fellow Jew), you shall listen to him.
 - b. Paul explained this event in Galatians 4:4-5 . . . But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, [5] so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.
 - c. And Paul explained the attitudes and thinking involved in this event in Philippians 2:5-8 . . . Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, [6] who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. [8] Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
2. After confirming that the divine Jesus became one of us and dwelt among us, John says that “we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father.”
 - a. In other words, while Jesus was living among us, He gave off a perceptible glow that allowed the thoughtful observer to see the glory of God.
 - b. And how did He give off this glow? Through His attitude, words, deeds, and interactions with people.
 - c. And what part of God’s glory did Jesus reveal? He revealed such glories as God’s compassion, grace, mercy, concern for the weak and poor, patience, slowness to anger, abundant lovingkindness, truth, forgiveness of transgression and sin, and the power to heal and perform other miracles.
 3. Interestingly, when John speaks of Jesus dwelling among us, he uses the Hebrew word for “tent” or “tabernacle.” In other words, John is saying that Jesus tented or tabernacled among us.
 - a. This sets up an allusion to Israel’s first Tabernacle after their exodus from Egypt, which was a tent.
 - b. And the fact that the first Tabernacle was a tent indicates it was a temporary dwelling place for God.
 - c. But we also know that this temporary dwelling place housed the glory of the presence of God – which was manifested in the Holy of Holies as the Shekinah or the Light of God’s presence.

- d. My point here is that like Israel's wilderness tabernacle, Jesus was a temporary tabernacle housing the presence of God – and in housing God, He manifested the glory of the presence of God just as that first tabernacle manifested the glory of God's presence.
4. And so John says, “and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father.”
- a. John wrote more specifically about seeing the glory of God in the life of Christ in 1 John 1:1-3 . . . “What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— [2] and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us— [3] what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”
 - b. Paul said something similar in 2 Corinthians 4:6 . . . For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness," is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.
 - c. And of course, the devil and his fellow demons have and continue to do all they can to hide the light or diminish its brightness so as to prevent unbelievers from seeing it for what it is. We read about this in 2 Corinthians 4:3-4 . . . Even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, [4] in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.
5. Finally, John concludes vs 14 by saying that Jesus Christ is full of grace and truth.
- a. We see both His grace and truth in Jesus' discussion with Nicodemus.
 - b. He showed how His fullness of grace when He said to Nicodemus: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. [17] For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him” (John 3:16-17). In other words, in relation to salvation, Jesus' primary role is that of grace.

- c. And Jesus showed how full He was of truth when He said to Nicodemus: “[The one] who believes in [Jesus] is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. [19] This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. [20] For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. [21] But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God” (John 3:17-21).

III. Conclusion

- A. Let me repeat again the parts of God’s glory that Jesus reveals to us. He reveals God’s compassion, grace, mercy, concern for the weak and poor, patience, slowness to anger, abundant lovingkindness, truth, forgiveness of transgression and sin, and the power to heal and perform miracles.
- B. Does this mean Jesus has no part in judging mankind? Absolutely not, for it is Jesus who will – at the end of time – sit on the Great White Throne and judge us all. But He did not come to earth as one of us to condemn us, but rather to save us – and the salvation He brought reveals the glory of God’s love and grace.