

John 1:1-14

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Preacher: None

[0:00] John chapter 1, that's on page 886. I hope we've all received some Christmas cards this year.

! We've had a few in our family. Thank you for sending them if that was you. And what are the usual scenes on Christmas cards? What are the ones that sell? They're usually pictures of kind of calm and cosy scenes, aren't they?

Maybe stockings hanging above a fireplace. A Christmas tree in the corner of a room. A beautiful, peaceful scene of snowy London. As if it ever snows or is peaceful here.

But maybe cute animals in a forest. Maybe a warm, cosy nativity scene around the manger. The picture of Christmas has become this cute, warm, cosy time of the year.

You think of the birth of Jesus and you think warm and fuzzy, don't you? But this passage in John shows that if we think the birth of Jesus is just meant to make us feel warm and fuzzy, we are completely missing the gravity of Christmas.

[1:10] Did you notice that this passage doesn't feel too Christmassy, does it? There are no sheep, no shepherds. No manger is mentioned. And that's because John is showing us something we often miss about Christmas.

At Christmas time, we are dealing with the cosmic, the eternal, the mind-blowing, the unfathomable. John is not trying to make Christmas feel warm and cosy.

He's trying to send shivers down your spine. He's showing us when we think about Christmas, we need to get goosebumps. Because look where this passage takes us.

Look where John begins his Christmas story. He doesn't begin with Mary. He doesn't begin with Joseph. He doesn't begin with shepherds. He takes us to the beginning of everything.

Look at verse 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This is the beginning of everything.

[2:17] Before all creation, before the universe, when it was just God in timeless eternity. John is saying, if you're going to grasp Christmas, if you really want to know what's going on in the manger, you need to go way further back than the manger.

You need to go back to eternity. You need to peer into the unfathomable. You need your head to explode. The Christmas scene of John 1, it wouldn't sell on Christmas cards.

It wouldn't fit on a Christmas card. But John doesn't want us to feel warm and fuzzy here. John wants to send shivers down your spine. And he does that by writing just five words.

And maybe some of the most astonishing words in the Bible. Verse 14. And the Word became flesh. Those five words will melt your brain.

This is what causes the shivers. And I want us to feel those shivers down our spines today. If you don't feel warm and fuzzy today, that's good. I'm glad.

[3:27] If you don't quite get everything today, that's okay. Neither do I. I want us to sense the gravity of what's going on at Christmas. Of who exactly that baby is in the manger.

And so the first thing we need to see is this. Jesus is God. Jesus is God. Look again how John begins the Christmas story.

Verse 1. In the beginning was the Word. John hits the rewind button on history here. And we rewind and go back before creation.

So before atoms. Before space. But before time itself. So you know when you rewind a film. And the time scrubs backwards.

And you get closer and closer to zero. And then eventually you hit zero. And what happens if you try to rewind any further than that? What happens?

[4 : 28] You can't, can you? That's the beginning of the film. The film doesn't exist before that zero. There's no film to rewind beyond that.

Well John takes us beyond zero. He shows us what there was before this story. History. Before anything began.

And what was there? Who was there? In the beginning was the Word. Now. Does this opening line sound familiar to you?

Does this ring any bells? If I said finish the Bible verse. In the beginning. What would you say?

Yeah. I think our go-to response would be.

In the beginning. God created the heavens and the earth. It sounds like Genesis 1. Doesn't it? The very first line of the Bible. The beginning of creation.

[5 : 27] Well John. He's taking us to that point. And that's intentional. He wants us to think. In the beginning. God created the heavens. He wants us.

For that. To roll off our tongues. But he wants to catch us there. And instead of saying God. He says. The Word.

In the beginning was. The Word. John is saying. Before all creation. In timeless eternity. Was God. Yes. But let me tell you about that God.

He is. The Word. The Word. And who is the Word? Well the Word. Is the Son of God. The Word. Is Jesus Christ. The Word. Is the person. That this whole gospel. Is about. The Word. Is Jesus. It's the person.

[6 : 24] Who came to earth. And laid in that manger. He. Was in the beginning. His existence. Didn't begin. In Mary's womb.

He has been. For all eternity. And look what it says. About him. Verse one. In the beginning. Was the Word. And the Word. Was with God.

And the Word. Was God. So follow along here. Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Word. Who is the Word?

The Word is God. Fully divine. In every way. Not less than God. Not almost God. The Word is fully God. In every way.

So what must we say of Jesus? Jesus is God. Let me say that again. Jesus is God.

[7 : 23] Jesus. The Son of God. Has existed from all eternity. And he is fully. Truly. And in every way. God. That is his identity.

The Son of God. Is all powerful. The Son of God. Is all knowing. The Son of God. Is all good. The Son of God. Is infinite.

And perfect. In every way. And he's the creator. Of all things. Did you see that? In verse 3. All things were made through him.

And without him. Was not anything made. That was made. All things were made through the Word. All things. Everything in the universe. So.

If we could shrink down. Everything that has been made. Every atom. Every wave of energy. All of time and space. Even heaven.

[8 : 19] And angels. And spiritual forces. Everything. If we could shrink that all down. And just. And put it in a pile here. The Word. Would not be part of that.

The Word is uncreated. He's always existed. But the Word. Can come over to that pile. And say. All of that. Was made through me.

Jesus. Is the creator. Of all things. He's uncreated. And eternal. He's always existed. From eternity past. He was in the beginning.

He is the source. Of life. For all things. Jesus. Is God. There'll be some people here. Who think. That Jesus.

Was just a good moral teacher. There'll be some here. Who think that. Jesus was simply. A very important prophet. There'll be some people here.

[9 : 17] Who don't really know. Who Jesus is. But you respect him. You don't really. Follow the religious aspect. But you respect. What's going on at Christmas. And with Jesus. Well let's be clear here.

Jesus. Is not just. A good moral teacher. His teaching. Is unparalleled. His morality. Is perfect. But he's not just that. He's not just a prophet.

He's not just the best. Among other prophets. No. That does not do. Jesus justice. Look what the Bible. Says here. Jesus. Is. God.

That is his identity. No. No. Mere teacher. Makes solar systems. Even the greatest prophet. Had a beginning. But Jesus.

Jesus. Is. God. And this should transform. Everything. About how you relate to Jesus. Did you see. [10:16] Since Jesus is God. You can't just respect him. And just leave it there. This Christmas. God deserves. More than that. You can't just.

Respect Jesus. You need to. Worship him. You can't just think. He's a great source. Of teaching. No. No. You need to see him.

As the source. Of everything. You can't just think. He's a prophet. Speaking great words. No. No. You need to see him. As the word.

Who has existed. From all eternity. You can't. Know Jesus. Without knowing. His eternity. And for those of us.

In Christ. Here today. It's funny. But this is something. About our saviour. We can lose sight of. Our saviour. Is not just. Some superpowered.

[11:13] Creature. No. Our saviour. Is God. Who is the good shepherd. Over your life. It's God.

Who protects. And defends. And loves his church. It's God. Not just someone. Really powerful. It's more than that. It's God himself.

It's the eternal word. Who was in the beginning. Jesus. Is God. God. Which is why. When we come to verse 14.

Our heads. Should explode. How do we get from. Timeless eternity. To the manger. Well this is where.

John gives us. Five words. That should send shivers. Down our spines. Verse 14. And the word. Became.

[12:09] Flesh. And this is the next thing. I want us to say. God. Became. Flesh. God. Became. Flesh. I want us to do something here.

I want us to hold. Two verses together. I want us to read. Verse 1. And verse 14. Together. Like squish them together. And let these two verses.

Roll into each other. Are you ready? In the beginning was the word. And the word was with God. And the word was God. And the word.

Became. Flesh. And dwelt among us. The eternal word. God. Became.

Flesh. Now what does flesh mean? Flesh means. Human. It means all that it means to be human. So it doesn't just mean skin and muscle.

[13:08] It doesn't just mean meat. But it means everything else as well. It means a body. A brain. Thoughts. Emotions.

A will. Desires. It means dreams. Pain. Weakness. It also means a soul. That's what flesh means. The word became truly human. Now two quick things to see here. Flesh doesn't mean sin. Jesus wasn't sinful at all.

To be truly human actually. It means to not be sinful. And that was Jesus. And another thing to see in this case is this. Flesh means the ability to die.

It means mortal. You could say here. The word became killable. And the word became flesh.

[14:05] Flesh. This is what has happened in the manger. Or actually in Mary's womb. God has become human. The eternal words has become flesh.

So imagine yourself at the nativity scene. Imagine yourself. Maybe you're one of the shepherds. And you walk over to the manger. And you look down.

And what do you see in the manger? You see a real truly human baby. You see flesh. But who is that flesh?

Who is that baby? Who is his identity? It is the eternal word. He's both.

At the same time. The word has become flesh. The identity and glory of God is now seen in flesh.

[15:11] It's that baby in the manger. Now that doesn't mean God changed into flesh. He didn't stop being God. He didn't become kind of this half God, half human mix.

No, he's still the word. Still truly God. But at the same time, he is now also flesh. If you want to be technical here, you can say God has taken on a human nature.

Now, this is mind-boggling, isn't it? If you're scratching your head right now, that's okay. That's the right reaction.

Because this is the most mind-boggling miracle God has done. And there's nothing like it. There's nothing we can compare this to. Jesus is the only example of this happening.

That being said, let's try to understand a little bit of what's going on here. Kids, or adults, who's asking for Lego for Christmas?

[16:16] Maybe asking for Harry Potter or Star Wars or Lego City? Lego's great, isn't it? Do you ever make worlds out of Lego? With people and buildings and spaceships and a story holding it all together?

I used to love doing that. My room would become this Lego world. I had underwater Lego. It was my favourite. Well, imagine you make this world out of Lego.

This amazing world. And you've designed the whole thing. And you've been really careful to make every part of it. And then, imagine this.

You become a Lego man or a Lego woman. And you start walking around the Lego world you made. What's just happened there?

The creator has become a part of the creation. That is a little bit like the word became flesh.

[17:17] Or you can think of it like this. Imagine you write a story. You're the author of a novel. Maybe there are some aspiring authors here today. And imagine this.

You write a book. And you make all these characters. You write all these characters into your book. And you make up this world. And this story. And it's so intricate and well crafted.

And then, imagine this. You start writing yourself into the story. You make yourself into a character of the world that you made.

So you, the author. You start living in the world you created. You become one of them and start speaking to them. Well, that is a little bit like the word became flesh.

But of course, that doesn't fully capture it, does it? Because we're created and Lego is created as well. And so verse 14, it's even more mind-blowing than that.

[18:19] But just think. In that manger, as the baby Jesus is cold and crying and hungry, in that moment, the creator of all things has become a creature.

The infinite is now also finite. The timeless has stepped into time.

The one who formed the solar systems is now crying for milk. He spins the galaxies while he's wrapped in swaddling cloths.

The one who is too pure and holy for angels to even look at. He's now surrounded by mud and mucus. The author of life itself has now become killable.

And the word became flesh. Something beyond our comprehension has happened at Christmas.

[19:32] Something unfathomable is lying in that manger. This is why choirs of angels come to earth and sing about a birth.

This is why wise men travel and bow down to and worship a baby. This is why it is right for us to celebrate this Christmas.

And the word became flesh. It deserves goosebumps. But not everyone has reacted that way. Because look what we did to the creator when he came to his creation. Look how we treated him. Did you see that in verse 10?

Verse 10. He was in the world. And the world was made through him. Yet the world did not know him. He came to his own. And his own people did not receive him.

[20:36] This is what happens when God comes to us. When the word became flesh. We rejected him. We don't want anything to do with him.

God comes to the world he made. He says, come, know your creator. And we turned our heads. We pushed him aside.

We ignored him. And not just that. We killed him. The word became flesh. And we murdered him. And we murdered him. This is the reality of the cross. Jesus' death is not merely people just rejecting his moral teaching.

It's the creation rejecting the creator and crucifying him. It's the maker becoming a Lego man. And all the other Lego people start breaking him into pieces.

[21:37] It's the author writing himself into the book. And all the other characters. They grab the pen and start scribbling him out of the story. The world was made through him.

Yet the world did not know him. This is our sin. This is the sin of the world. This is what the world is guilty of.

If you're not worshipping Jesus in your life right now. This is the reality. You're rejecting your creator. Your author.

But the good news is. That God became flesh. So that you would believe in him. And this is the final point today. God became flesh.

So that we would believe in him. Look how verse 14 ends. And the word became flesh. And dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory.

[22 : 36] Glory as of the only son from the father. Full of grace and truth. The glory. And majesty. And goodness of God.

His grace and his truth. It is all seen in the word becoming flesh. That flesh. Is where we see the grace and the glory of God.

God. But it's not only in the manger. It's on the cross. The glory of God is seen in his death.

The goodness of God is seen in crucified flesh. Because on the cross. The creator died.

To save his world that rejected him. The word became flesh. To take away the sin. Of rejecting the creator. As we killed our creator.

[23 : 35] He was actually saving his creation. And so whoever believes in Jesus. They will be brought back to their creator.

Look at verse 12. But to all who did receive him. Who believed in his name. He gave the right to become children of God. Whoever believes the word.

Whoever comes to Jesus. And says to him. You are my Lord and my God. You are my creator. You are the source of everything. Whoever comes to him.

If you believe in him. You will be brought back to your creator. You will be given the right to become a child of God.

You'll belong to him. And this is what has happened to all of us in Christ here today. Your creator has come to you.

[24 : 34] And made you a child of God. You now exist in this world. Not merely as a creature. But as a child. You are loved by God.

You belong to him. The word has become flesh. To bring us back. And if you don't know him today. This is why Christmas exists. This is what it's all about. All this happened. God became flesh. So that we would believe in him. The word became flesh.

Not just so that you could stand in awe. But so that you would believe in him. So that you would see his glory and grace on the cross. And know that your creator calls you back.

And there is now a way. It's through Jesus Christ. Your creator has come. Know him. Believe in him. If you're here today.

[25 : 35] And you think the idea of God becoming flesh. Is blasphemy. And you think a great God. Could not. Would not do that. Becoming flesh ruins his glory.

If that's you. Can you see here. It's the exact opposite. God becoming flesh. Reveals his glory. It shows how gracious God is.

It shows how great God is. The glory and grace and greatness of God. It is there in the flesh of Jesus Christ.

And now he calls us all. Come and see his glory. Come and experience his grace. Come and know his greatness.

And it's there in five words. Five words that send shivers down your spine. But five words that capture the glory of Christmas.

[26 : 37] And the word became flesh. Amen. Let me pray.