

John 1:14 The Gospel in a Nutshell

This morning, we have traced the biblical account of Jesus' birth all the way from Genesis to the Gospel accounts. Each of these passages tell us something about who Jesus is and what he came to do.

Only two of the Gospels include the account of Jesus' birth—Matthew and Luke. Mark begins his Gospel with the preaching of John the Baptist. John begins his Gospel with creation and describes Jesus' birth as the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us.

Matthew and Luke give us more of a historical account of Jesus' birth. John describes these events in more theological terms. John tells us very little about Jesus' birth, but he does tell us a great deal about who Jesus is.

As we approach Christmas, it's very important that we keep in mind who Jesus really is. People have all kinds of weird, unbiblical ideas about Jesus. At Christmastime, we celebrate Jesus' birth because of who he is and what he did.

John 1:14 nicely breaks into five parts for us. Let's look at the story of Christmas under five headings. Each of these headings tell us something about who Jesus is and what he did.

- I. INCARNATION: “The Word was made flesh”
 - A. Incarnation = “made flesh”
 - B. “Word” throughout this context is Jesus. Cf. 1:1.
 - C. By saying that the Word became flesh, he's asserting that God actually became man without ceasing to be God. The Second Person of the Trinity took upon himself a fully human nature. That's what the incarnation is all about.

2 Tim 3:16 *God was manifest in the flesh.*

Php 2:7 *[Jesus] made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:*

An essential element of the Christmas story is the fact that God became a man. God the Son took on himself a human nature.

Who was that little baby in a manger? God the Son, the Word made flesh.

II. HABITATION: “And dwelt amongst us”

- A. “Dwelt” means to “pitch one’s tent, tabernacle.”
- B. You may remember that in the OT, the tabernacle was a tent, often called “the tent of meeting.” God’s “Shekinah glory” (Ex 40:34-35) would occasionally appear at the tabernacle. God dwelt in the tent. You might say that the tabernacle was the location of God’s presence.

Ex 25:8 And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.

- C. Just as God dwelt among his people in the OT tent, Christ dwells among his people.

Mt 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Trans: The Christmas carol tells us “God with man is now residing.”

God’s intent is to dwell with his people, and that’s what he is doing through Jesus.

III. OBSERVATION: “and we beheld His glory”

- A. This message about Jesus is not myth, legend, or folk tale; it’s actual history. John is bearing personal witness to the fact that these things occurred in time and space.
- B. John was an eye-witness of the things Jesus did, as others were. John was one of the first disciples and was with Jesus almost the entire length of his earthly ministry. He’s an expert on who Jesus is and what he did.

Notice the language John uses to describe his personal experiences with Jesus:

1 John 1:1–2 *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life—2 the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us—*

C. “we beheld his glory”

1. Jesus’ miracles displayed his glory. The disciples beheld Jesus’ glory through the miracles.

Jn 2:11 *This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.*

Jn 11:40 *Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?*

God’s glory was displayed in the words and works of Jesus.

2. Jesus’ Transfiguration was a direct display of his glory. Peter, James, and John were there and saw Jesus in his unveiled glory.

2Pe 1:16-18 *For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.*

D. The glory they saw made it obvious Who He was—the Messiah, the Son of God. They were convinced that he was whom he claimed to be.

Joh 11:27 *[Martha] saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.*

Trans: John provides a first-hand, eye-witness account of what actually happened. John and the others saw the miracles Jesus did and they saw his unveiled glory on the Mt. of Transfiguration. This provided overwhelming proof that Jesus was whom he claimed to be—the Son of God, the Messiah.

IV. IDENTIFICATION: “the only begotten of the Father”

- A. “only begotten” is a very important term. John uses the term four times in the first three chapters of his Gospel.
- B. The word “only begotten” (*μονογενῆς*) literally means “only kind.” The idea is one and only, special; “**unique**,” “unparalleled,” “unequalled.”
- C. In this case, the author is *not* speaking of physical birth, as if Jesus was the physical son of God the Father.
- D. The emphasis is on the special relationship between the Father and the Son. God has many sons/children, but only one “only begotten” son.
- E. This is likely speaking of Jesus’ *eternal* sonship, the fact that he is the Son of God from all eternity. He was already the Son of God before his incarnation. By nature, from eternity, he is the Son of God.

App: Jesus once asked his disciples who people thought he was. Peter said, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Mt 16.16). This fact is an essential element of the Christmas story.

Your eternal destiny hinges on how you identify Jesus. Who do you say that Jesus is? If you do not affirm what the Bible teaches about Jesus, there is no hope of salvation.

John 8:24 *[Jesus said,] if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.*

V. PROFUSION: “full of grace and truth”

John 1:17 *For the law was given by Moses, [but] grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.*

Jesus is the fullest and final expression of grace and truth.

- A. He was full of grace

1. Jesus showed remarkable kindness toward people like publicans and prostitutes. Those who knew they were sick found Jesus to be a very gracious and patient physician.
2. Salvation is the ultimate expression of grace. Eph 2:8-9.

B. He was full of truth. “I am the way, the truth and the life.”

Joh 18:37 ... for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

- C. By saying that Jesus is “full of grace and truth,” John is inviting us to experience God’s grace and believe the truth.
 1. John wrote this for a specific purpose:
John 20:31 these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.
 2. When John says that Jesus was “full of grace and truth,” he’s inviting his readers to believe in Jesus as the source of grace and truth.
 3. Have you experienced Jesus’ grace and truth?

John does not record any of the details of Jesus’ birth, but he tells us in theological terms what happened when Jesus was born—“the word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

Jesus dwells among us right now. He has promised to be with us always. He will never leave us or forsake us.

Jesus invites us to dwell with him eternally—John 14:1-3. In order for that to happen, we must confess and believe the truth about Jesus—he is the only begotten of the Father; he is full of grace and truth.