



The Scrolls

Helping **CENTRAL BIBLE CHURCH** Families Belong, Become and Go Beyond V24 N50 December 11, 2022

LIGHT HAS COME

“Light of Creation”

John 1:1-9

THIS WEEK'S CORE COMPETENCY

Jesus Christ

I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.”

Hebrews 1:3



Who is the
Word?

What better time to reflect on the mystery of the incarnation than Advent? While the union of God and man cannot be fully understood, it can be more fully understood. Orthodox Christology teaches that Jesus Christ is one person with two natures—nature being defined as “the location of the attributes and capacities” of the person (Stephen J. Wellum, *God the Son Incarnate*, FETS, 425). On the one hand, his divine nature is eternal. It existed from before the beginning. John writes, “In the beginning the Word already existed; the Word was with God and the Word was God” (GNT). On the other hand, his human nature is not. It came into existence at the time of the incarnation, when, as John says, “the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (1:14). In other words, the human nature of Jesus Christ came into existence concurrent with his conception. According to Luke, Gabriel said to Mary, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

And when she asked, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God” (1:28-35).

According to the writer of the book of Hebrews, God prepared a body—speaking of Christ’s humanity—for the one whose sacrifice would replace burnt offerings and sin offerings with which God was not pleased. On the quotation from Psalm 40:6-8 in Hebrews 10:5-7, “Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me,” one commentator writes: “The detail that God had prepared a body [*sōma*] for the speaker [i.e., the eternal Son], who entered the world to do God’s will, accounts for the writer’s selection of this quotation. It not only indicated that the incarnation and active obedience of Christ had been prophesied in Scripture, but it provided

biblical support for the subsequent argument that the ‘offering of the body [*sōmatos*] of Jesus Christ was qualitatively superior to the offerings prescribed by law (vv 8-10)” (William L. Lane, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 47B, *Hebrews* 9-13, 262).

So how do orthodox theologians describe the relationship between the divine and human natures in Jesus Christ? Read carefully and reflectively the following quotes offered by Wellum:

“The church has come to confess, that Christ is the God-man, the divine person of the Son with two natures, one divine and one human” (423).

“‘The Word became flesh’ (John 1:14) . . . John tells us that the *who*, the *subject*, the *person* of the incarnation is the Word or the Son from eternity. This one and the same person is both eternal and divine: he ‘was with God’ (*pros ton theon*) and he ‘was God’ (*theos en ho logos*) (John 1:1). The person who has existed eternally as Son in relation to God the Father and in divine fellowship with the Father and the Spirit is the same person who made the willing and obedient decision to become incarnate. The second person of the Trinity, through whom all things were created and who has always sustained and always will sustain all things, is the same person who assumed a created ‘human nature, body and soul, into union with himself so that he now has a human nature of his own’” (424).

“The person of Christ exists as the God-man because he subsists in the divine nature and in a human nature. The Son continued to be God, subsisting in and acting through the divine nature that he has shared with the Father and Spirit from eternity. And the Son came to be all that it means to be a man: a person subsisting in and acting through a human body-soul” (428).

And finally, “The *divine person* of the Son, subsisting in the *divine nature*, did not become a human person but assumed a *human nature*, such that the same *I* is the *person of Christ* that now subsists in the *divine nature as God* and in a *human nature as a man*” (429). And now you know the rest of the theological story.



EXAMINE GOD'S WORD

Read John 1:1-9

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

6 There was a man sent from God whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. 8 He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

9 The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world.

Read in another translation

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was fully God. 2 The Word was with God in the beginning. 3 All things were created by him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of mankind. 5 And the light shines on in the darkness, but the darkness has not mastered it.

6 A man came, sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that everyone might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify about the light. 9 The true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. (NET)

After reading the text, practice your Observation skills by noting the following:

- Bracket "in the beginning" in vv. 1, 2.
- Circle "was" in vv. 1 (3x), 2.
- Highlight "Word" in v. 1.
- Bracket "with God" in vv. 1, 2.
- Circle "life," "light," and "darkness" in vv. 1-9.
- Underline "with" in vv. 1, 2.
- Box "through" indicating *means* or *agency* in v. 3.
- Circle "made" in v. 3.
- Circle "overcome" in v. 5.
- Box "so that" indicating *purpose* in v. 7.

What one word would you use to describe the TONE of this passage? (i.e., stern, joyful, cautious, etc.)

What word or idea stands out to you in this passage?

What one thing do you not understand in this passage?

Try to summarize the THEME of this passage in one word. If you were going to describe these verses, you might say, "This text is about _____."



DIG DEEPER

Answer the questions to help you apply the passage and prepare for discussion

1. Paraphrase “in the beginning;” put what it means in other words.
2. In the beginning the Word *was*. What does that indicate to you?
3. Do you think “the Word” is a *person*, *place*, or *thing*? What makes you think so?
4. Describe the relationship of “the Word” to God.
5. Verse 2 is redundant, isn’t it; why include it?
6. Describe the relationship of “the Word” to creation.
7. John says, “In him was life” (v. 4a). How so?
8. “That life,” he says, “was the light of men” (v. 4b). What could that possibly mean?
9. The darkness has not *overcome* the light (v. 5). Why not?
10. **Discussion:** Talk about the relationship of John the Baptist to the light.

Commentary On The Text

Authors agree that the first eighteen verses of John's Gospel form a prologue to the whole. About it one writes, "One reason why the Gospel of John was symbolized in the ancient church by the eagle is the lofty heights attained by its prologue. With skill and delicacy, John handles issues of profound importance. It comes as no surprise that this prologue has been foundational to the classic Christian formulation of the doctrine of Christ. Here divinity and humanity, preexistence and incarnation, revelation and sacrifice are each discussed by John with deceptive simplicity" (Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, 51, 52).

Verses 1 and 2 introduce "the Word" and describe his relationship to God. John says, "in the beginning," that is, before the creation of each and every thing that exists (cf., Ge 1:1), the Word already existed; he was already there "with God." The preposition implies two important things: not only was the Word present with God, but he also enjoyed a close personal relationship to him. At the same time, we infer from its use that the Word is distinguishable from God – the fact that the Word is said to be "with" God clearly differentiates them – something also implied by the following statement, "the Word was God" [*theos ēn ho logos*]. John avoided using the definite article with *theos*. He said, "the Word was God," not "God was the Word." "The latter would have meant that God and the Word were the same. It would have pointed to an identity. But John is leaving open the possibility that there may be more to 'God' than the 'Word' (clearly he thought of the Father as God, and his later references indicate a similar status for the Spirit). But when he thinks of the Word he lays it down unequivocally that nothing less than God will do for our understanding of the Word" (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT, 78). Note, to say that "the Word" was with God in the beginning is not to say that "Jesus" was with God in the beginning. The Word is incarnate, that is, becomes flesh (v. 14) in the man Jesus ca. 4 B.C.

Verses 3-5 describe his relationship to creation. According to John, the Word was God's *agent* in creation; "through him all things were made" (v. 3a). The word translated "made" might better be translated "came into being," thereby affirming that each and every thing owes its very existence to him. Having affirmed this, John goes on to emphasize what he has just affirmed by negating its opposite, "without him nothing was made that has been made" (v. 3b). He

not only created each and every thing that exists, but he also gave life to what he created. "'Life' in John characteristically refers to eternal life (see on 3:15), the gift of God through His Son. Here, however, the term must be taken in its broadest sense. It is only because there is life in the *Logos* that there is life in anything on earth at all. Life does not exist in its own right. It is not even spoken of as made 'by' or 'through' the Word, but as existing 'in' Him" (Morris, 82, 83). Verse 4 is difficult. What does "and that light was the light of men" mean? Is it not an allusion to what theologians call *natural revelation*? In that, along with the impartation of life comes the impartation of the light of revelation. Put a little differently, does not the very presence of life reveal the existence of the divine Life-Giver and the ability of humanity to apprehend that revelation? That being the case, John's following statement makes sense. The light of divine revelation shines in darkness and the darkness is not able to extinguish it – even though it tries.

Verses 6-9 introduce John, the forerunner, sent from God, commissioned by him, if you will, to testify concerning the light. He was not the light; his mission was to introduce the light to the world so that everyone might believe. Yet unidentified by name, verses 10-13 clearly refer to Jesus, the one whom John calls "the Word" in verses 1-3, the one whose forerunner was the Baptist according to verses 6-8, and the one whom the apostle called "the true light that gives light to every man" in verse 9.

At this point in John's prologue, we know that the Word was with God in the beginning, that the Word was God, and that through him each and every thing came to be. And we know that John the Baptist was sent by God to serve as a witness to testify concerning the light. We don't know the identity of the light yet. We have to wait until verse 14 for John to make it clear that the eternal Word became flesh in Jesus Christ. On the incarnation, that is, the embodiment of the Word in flesh, the *outer life* of Jesus demonstrates that he had a body and grew and developed like all other human beings, and the *inner life* of Jesus demonstrates that he had a mind, will, and soul, and experienced life like all other human beings.

Word Studies/Notes

v. 1 in the beginning If through the Word all things came to be (v. 3), the Word must have existed before all things were created. "The phrase carries back the thoughts of the reader to Gen. i. 1, which necessarily fixes the sense of the *beginning*. Here, as there, 'the beginning' is the initial moment of time and creation; but there is this difference, that Moses dwells on that which starts from the point, and traces the record of divine action *from* the beginning (comp. 1 John i. 1, ii. 13), while St John lifts our thoughts *beyond* the beginning and dwells on that which 'was' when time, and with time finite being, began its course. Comp. Prov. viii. 23. Already when 'God created the heaven and the earth,' 'the Word was'" (B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John*, 2). "The Greek word behind 'beginning', *archē*, often bears the meaning 'origin' (cf. BAGD), and there may be echoes of that here, for the Word who already was 'in the beginning' is soon shown to be God's agent of creation (vv. 4-4), what we might call the 'originator' of all things" (D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John*, PNTC, 114).

v. 1 was "The Greek words *ginomai* (to become) and *eimi* (to be) have similar nuances, but John frequently uses them together to make a point. For instance, in 8:58 Jesus says (lit.), 'Before Abraham was [*ginomai*], I am [*eimi*].' The first verb suggest 'coming into being,' such as Abraham's birth; the second implies ongoing existence . . . In each case [in v. 1] he uses *eimi*. John is making an absolute affirmation about the eternal existence of the Word. It did not come into being nor was there ever a time when 'the Word was not.' Whatever we can say about God we can and must say about the Word" (Gary M. Burge, *The NIV Application Commentary: John*, 54, 55).

v. 1 the Word In the Old Testament "'the word' (Heb. *dābār*) of God is connected with God's powerful activity in creation (cf. Gn. 1:3ff.; Ps. 33:6), revelation (Je. 1:4; Is. 9:8; Ezk. 33:7; Am. 3:1, 8) and deliverance (Ps. 107:20; Is. 55:1). If the LORD is said to *speak* to the prophet Isaiah (e.g. Is. 7:3), elsewhere we read that 'the word of the LORD came to Isaiah' (Is. 38:4; cf. Je. 1:4; Ezk. 1:6). It was by 'the word of the LORD' that the heavens were made (Ps. 33:6); in Gn. 1:3, 6, 9, etc. God simply speaks, and his powerful word creates. That same word effects deliverance and judgment (Is. 55:11; cf. Ps. 29:3ff.). When some of his people faced illness that brought them to the brink of death, God 'sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave' (Ps. 107:20) . . . In short, God's 'Word' in the Old Testament is his powerful self-expression in creation, revelation and salvation, and the personification of that 'Word' makes it suitable for John to apply it as a title to God's ultimate self-disclosure, the person of his own Son" (Carson, 115, 16; see also Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT, 115-26).

v. 1 with God The Greek preposition [*pros*] taken literally means "the Word was *towards* God." "Probably we should understand from the preposition the two ideas of *accompaniment* and *relationship*. That the thought is of importance and is no casual expression is indicated by the fact that the statement is repeated in v. 2 . . . Not only did the Word exist 'in the beginning', but He existed in the *closest possible connection* with the Father" (75, 76 italics added). "In all but one or two peculiar constructions (e.g. 1 Pet. 3:15), *pros* may mean 'with' only when a person is with a person, usually in some fairly intimate relationship. And that suggests that John may already be pointing out, rather subtly, that the 'Word' he is talking about is a person, *with* God and therefore distinguishable from God, and enjoying a personal relationship with him" (Carson, 116-17; cf., F. F. Bruce, *The Gospel of John*, 31).

v. 1 was God Not "was a god" as Jehovah's witnesses claim (see Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 234-35). "John is not merely saying that there is something divine about Jesus. He is affirming that He is God, and doing so emphatically as we see from the word order in the Greek" (Morris, 77).

v. 2 with God "John includes these words to make sure what he has already said is understood. After all, v. 1 is very condensed. Now John works backward, saying in effect: 'This Word who is God, is the very one of whom I have also said that he was in the beginning, and that he was with (*pros*) God. In particular, v. 2 reiterates the middle clause of v. 1, and thus prepares the way for v. 3" (Carson, 117-18).

v. 3 through him "God is the Creator; his Word is the agent. The two parts of the verse say the same thing, first positively ('through him everything came into being'), and then negatively ('apart from him nothing that exists came into being')" (Bruce, 32; see Ps 33:6; cf., Col 1:16).

v. 4 life . . . men "The self-existing life of the Word was so dispensed at creation that it became the light of the human race (ton *anthrōpōn*, 'of human beings'). It is not clear whether John is thinking of our essential constitution, the fact that we have been made 'in the image of God' (cf. Gn. 1:27, continuing the creation theme), or of the reflection of himself in the universe he has created (what theologians something call 'natural' or 'general' revelation; cf. Rom. 1:20) or even of more specific revelation bound up with the coming of the Son" (Carson, 119).

v. 5 overcome it Or "overcome it" (see NIV margin; ESV); cf., "mastered it" (the NET Bible). "The light is shining in the darkness. And the darkness was unable to overcome the light" (Morris, 86; cf., Westcott, 5).



APPLY THE TEXT

CENTRAL MESSAGE OF THE TEXT

The Word that existed in the beginning was himself God and the one who created each and every thing, giving life and light to all humanity .

CENTRAL MESSAGE FOR YOUR LIFE

(Rewrite the Central Message above to personally apply to your own life)



3 LIVING QUESTIONS

The “Living Questions” are simple questions we may ask of any text in order to apply the Bible to our life. Answer the questions below as personally as you can.

1. What does this passage teach me about God?

2. What does this passage teach me about myself?

3. What does this passage lead me to do?



FAMILY TALK

I can't believe I'm admitting this for all the world to see, but here it is. Recycling confounds me. How do recycled plastic bottles become carpet or fleece? How do metal cans become your dishwasher? I know that there are methods used to break products down to create new and often better things, but point A to point B is lost on me. It's like little elves take our soda cans and BAM! A shiny new appliance is delivered to our home. In a weirdly similar way, Jesus is the object of our creation and our recreation. He made us and everything in the world. Somehow, at the moment of trusting faith through the gift of salvation, Jesus recreates us. Bam! We're a whole new life. Though we may look the same, we're wildly different. Our perspective, hopes, motives, desires – all different. Our purpose changes from living for ourselves to living for the Lord. Where we spend our money and time, different. How we raise our children, different. This season, take a moment to marvel at the sanctifying work of Christ in your life. How are you different because of Jesus? Knowing this, how does your focus on the Christmas season change? Are you more worried about buying the coolest gift for your child or sharing the greatest Gift they can ever receive? Tell them how and why you're changed because of Jesus and share the good news of great joy with them. If you've never shared the Gospel with your child, today is the day! We're praying for you.

What Does The Bible Say?

Read Luke 2:8-20 and John 1:1-9

Who appeared to the shepherds and what did he say?

What decision did the shepherds make after hearing the angels sing?

What did the shepherds do after seeing baby Jesus?

What Do You Think?

What do you learn about Jesus from John 1:1-9?

What Do You Do?

Use Play-Doh to make an animal. Now use Play-Doh to make something different. How does Jesus make new life?

CORE COMPETENCY: Jesus Christ

I believe Jesus Christ is fully God/perfectly man and died for my sins.

MEMORY VERSE: Isaiah 9:6

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

KidPIX COUPON

Earn 1 KidPIX Token by completing the CENTRAL Kids Bible Study on this page and another token by memorizing and reciting the memory verse for this week.

Questions: kids@wearecentral.org

- _____ I completed my Bible Study
- _____ I memorized this week's verse
- _____ I brought my Bible to church
- _____ I brought a friend



CHILD'S NAME

GRADE

PARENT SIGNATURE

OUR CORE COMPETENCIES

CENTRAL BELIEFS

Authority of the Bible (2 Timothy 3:16-17)
I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Church (Ephesians 4:15-16)
I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Eternity (John 14:1-4)
I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

The Holy Spirit (Romans 8:9)
I believe the Holy Spirit convicts, calls, converts and changes me as a child of God.

Humanity (John 3:16)
I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Identity in Christ (John 1:12)
I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4)
I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God who became man, died for sinners and rose from the dead.

Life Purpose (Acts 20:24)
I believe I am a steward of God's resources and have been redeemed to participate in His Kingdom purposes for His glory.

Personal God (Psalm 121:1-2)
I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace (Ephesians 2:8-9)
I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.



CENTRAL VIRTUES

Love (1 John 4:10-12)
I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Joy (John 15:11)
I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace (Philippians 4:6-7)
I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself and others.

Patience (Proverbs 14:29)
I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness (1 Thessalonians 5:15)
I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others

Faithfulness (Proverbs 3:3-4)
I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness (Philippians 4:5)
I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Self-Control (Titus 2:11-13)
I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Grace (Colossians 3:13)
I demonstrate forgiveness, mercy and generosity to others, even when they have offended me.

Hope (1 Peter 1:3-5)
I have a growing anticipation of God's promises and my secure eternity with Him.

Humility (Philippians 2:3-4)
I choose to esteem others above myself.



CENTRAL PRACTICES

Bible Study (Hebrews 4:12)
I study the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Biblical Community (Acts 2:44-47)
I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Compassion (Psalm 82:3-4)
I seek to serve the last, the least and the lost in my community.

Disciple-Making (2 Timothy 2:2)
I multiply godly beliefs, virtues and practices in others to encourage their spiritual growth in Christ.

Evangelism (Acts 1:8)
I share Jesus with others through personal proclamation and demonstration of the gospel.

Generosity (2 Corinthians 9:6-11)
I gladly give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Prayer (Psalm 66:16-20)
I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-Mindedness (Matthew 6:33)
I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts (Romans 12:4-6)
I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Worship (Psalm 95:1-7)
I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Tom Bulick (M.A. in Educational Leadership, Eastern Michigan University, Th.M. in Old Testament, and Ph.D. in Bible Exposition, Dallas Theological Seminary). For more than forty years, Tom has served as pastor, faculty member, and administrator. Tom was Vice President for Student Life and Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Trinity Western University (Vancouver, B.C.) from 1986 to 1998 and Spiritual Formation Pastor at Central Bible Church (Arlington, TX) from 1998 to 2022. He and his wife Ruth have one son, Zach.

Stephanie Thomas (B.B.A University of Texas at Arlington). Stephanie is married to James and they have four children: Elijah, Levi, Ella and Simon. Stephanie has attended Central Bible Church for more than 20 years, has been on staff since 2014, and now serves as Children's Minister.

The Scrolls Bible Study is a spiritual growth resource of Central Bible Church, Fort Worth, Texas.

© 2022 Central Bible Church.

Material researched, written and supervised by Dr. Tom Bulick. All Scripture referenced from the New International Version unless otherwise noted. This resource is freely distributed and may be copied without permission.



**CENTRAL
BIBLE CHURCH**

8001 Anderson Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76120
817-274-1315
wearecentral.org