

# John 1:1-14 "Jesus is Fully God, Fully Human, One Person. Alleluia!"

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Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[ 0 : 00 ] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Let's just bow our heads in prayer for a moment. Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would take these, on one hand, Father, very simple words, and on another hand, very profound words, and on another hand, Father, if we're three-handed, words that are just actually sort of too deep and profound for us to really get our minds around it. And so, Father, we ask that you would do a wonderful work of grace in our lives and bring your word into our lives that it might form us, that we might be formed by your word.

And we ask this in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. I'm not checking Instagram updates. I'm setting my timer.

[ 1 : 59 ] I'm setting my timer. This is always a bit of a more relaxed service, Christmas morning. A lot of churches, as you know, don't have services on Christmas morning anymore, but I think it's just really appropriate to have a service on Christmas morning. I do a different sermon, so to speak, than I do on Christmas morning, than Christmas Eve. And as I shared last night, this year I thought more than trying to have a bit of a systematic sermon, I'd just share four things that really struck me as I was meditating upon the text. And if you haven't been here before, one of the things I do, because there's kids who are present, and just for something different, I'll intersperse my talk with showing four mini-movies that just bring home different aspects of the gospel, and that's sort of how the morning's going to go.

So another sort of introductory thing is one of the problems with speaking on John 1, 1-14, is, to mix my metaphors a little bit, on one hand, it is like the Himalayas. It is like the Everest of the Bible.

And on the other hand, if you just thought of Mount Everest as just being in the middle of an ocean, surrounded by water, heresy after heresy for centuries have smashed against it and gotten ruined.

The heresy is not the Christian faith. And so you could actually write a very, very, very, very thick book, just going through a series of all of the classic and modern Christian heresies.

And there's all sorts of scripture texts that would refute them, but time and time again, you could just go back to John 1, 1-14 and see how that heresy smashes against John 1, 1-14. And it's not that John 1-14 or Christianity gets damaged. The heresy gets damaged. It just, it gets shipwrecked. It can't withstand it. It's a very deep and profound text. And so I'm just going to pick four things. I'm going to begin sort of like my third beginning. It's sort of like a hobbit having a first lunch, a second lunch, and then a third lunch. I have like three beginnings. And in this beginning, I had probably in the first 12 years or so, 15 years of my Christian life, I might have had, I probably had four or five times or six times where I came close to losing my faith, walking away from the Christian faith, because I had a variety of intellectual problems that made me doubt that Christianity was true. And

one that I had several times was just, I think, I'd think about the immensity of space and the immensity of the universe and the galaxy. And I'd just look at the stars, the limited ones I could see, and I'd be in this time of doubt about the Christian faith. And I'd look out at the night sky, and I just think to myself, it's just impossible to think that a god exists. Like the universe is just so empty, and it just doesn't make any sense in such a big universe that god would have some special concern with us, this one little planet. And I have these long, depressing, despairing types of reflections as I would both look at the sky and then think about what I was looking at. Now, obviously, I haven't lost my faith, although maybe

[ 5 : 22 ] I shouldn't say that, because Anglicans, lamentably, in Canada are not known for orthodoxy. But I haven't lost my Christian faith. I'm probably more like a Nigerian or a Rwandan Anglican or an Indonesian Anglican than a Canadian Anglican. In fact, I know I am. But, you know, it's really funny.

This is one of the main things I was thinking about this week, about how I'd had those times, and how, on one hand, I was, how deaf I was, and how dumb and blind I was, and inability to think. I should say that one of the things that always brought me back to the Christian faith was the truth of the resurrection. I mean, as Mike Lacona is famous for saying, if Jesus actually rose from the dead, Christianity is true. Like, it's just true. And whatever other difficulties you might have, whatever other things there are, if Jesus rose from the dead, Christianity is true. And that was actually a very powerful thing for me. But here's the thing that reflected upon this week. Actually, if you could put up the first point, that would be helpful. I'll switch to why I worded it this way. The universe declares the glory of God, so you can laugh. So, you know, maybe it should be a positive or a dash, you know, therefore you can laugh. But here's the thing. People that I know, they went off to this beautiful, beautiful island for a holiday, and they had several kids. And one of their kids was like, was 13 years old. And he really didn't want to be there. He didn't want to be with his parents. He didn't want to be with his family. And here they are on this spectacular beach. It was a beautiful, beautiful sunny day. It was one of those beautiful sunny days where it was nice and warm in the sun, but it wasn't so warm. The sand was too hot for your feet. Just nice. And because there was no humidity and a nice breeze coming off of the ocean, you could be out in the sun and it was nice. But if you got a little bit worried about it, you could just go into the shade and it was nice and at a really nice temperature, not too hot. And just beautiful, just spectacular. And this, the fellow said, every day I'm here is the new worst day of my life. Every day I'm here is the new worst day of my life. Like just said, like a depressed 13 year old, right? And what I'm thinking about is, with this is this. On the one hand, here I was at different times looking out on the starry host, thinking this shows that God doesn't exist somehow. Yet on the other hand, what's a very, very common thing if you want to take a picture of the glory of God? You take a picture of the galaxy.

So here I am saying like a 13 year old kid, every day I'm here looking out at the stars. It's the new worst day of my life and I'm depressed. And really, you look at the stars and it just, you know, the heavens declare the glory of God. It's absolutely spectacular. Another, by the way, another one of the things that would always bring me back to the Christian faith was the resurrection.

The second thing was actually design. I just, it was impossible for me to believe the intricacy of the universe could have happened by chance. And so, you know, in the text that we have today, I'm just going to say one verse right now, two verses, or three verses. In the beginning was the Word, the Word. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him not anything was made, not anything made, not was, and without Him was not anything made that was made. And that's just communicating that, it's really, really interesting that the way they describe whatever started the universe is Word. That's one of the words that describes God is Word. And that means communication, it means meaning, it means persons, and it means that, you know, it's from that, that the correct way to understand the starry host is to understand God speaking. Because God, one of the ways that God is described is as Word. And just as I was sharing with that story, that when you are spending a time looking at the glory of the universe and thinking, this is the new worst day of my life, you aren't happy and you don't laugh. But when you see the heavens and say, the heavens declare the glory of God, you can smile and you can laugh. Our first video is one that we'll just laugh over. It's a takeoff on the Toy Story and let's watch it.

[ 10 : 14 ] Look, I know we're all excited for Christmas morning, but if I hear one toe hit the ground before sunrise... Mom and Dad are sleeping in. What? Come on! We're playing! It's almost here. A

wonderful celebration is at hand. I love watching the family Christmas Eve ritual. Bake, wrap, collapse. And by family, you mean just the mom, right? I'd give anything to taste those cookies. And help clean up? And help clean up. Love helping clean up that cookie mess. Huh? What was that? Likely just a drab blowing through the house.

That or grandma's fruitcake finally detonated. It's a child! Get to your places! Go, go, go, go, go! And freeze!

Zip it everybody! Gloria! Sorry. Hey buddy. What are you doing out of bed? Oh, uh, sorry daddy. I was just checking on Jesus.

Mm-hmm. And how's he doing? Pretty good. It's his birthday, you know? That's right. You thinking about what to give him? No, but I think I should give him to someone else. Maybe Justin next door? Hold up. You want to give Jesus away? Yeah, so Justin can know him too. You know what, bud? I think you just figured out Christmas.

[12:04] Hey dad, can Jesus sleep with my turtle tonight? How about just on the nightstand? Oh, the messiah has been kidnapped! Armor up boys! We're going to battle!

Oh my stars, what kind of father loses? The redeemer of mankind! Hey everyone, settle down! Gabriel to Angel Legion Alpha, do you copy? It's go time.

Roger that. Moving in, over. We need torches and pitchforks! Everyone on my six! Everyone! Hey, it's okay! We must let him go. Okay, Blessed Mother. Please explain yourself.

This is why he came. To be poured out for many. Given as a sacrifice. We will each do well to re-gift him to all we can. So, should I call off the Angel Hit Squad, or no?

Yeah, buddy. Our work here is done. Have the merriest of Christmases, friends. All of you.

[13:27] I often work in coffee shops, and occasionally coffee shops are places where Jehovah Witnesses, after they've been doing their witnessing, go to have a coffee. Or maybe it's in the middle of it.

And especially if they come in the morning, which is when I do my sermons, so I'll have a Bible out. The Jehovah Witnesses will see a guy with a Bible, and eventually they'll start to talk to me. And then, of course, eventually they want to convert me.

And I have a great time with them, by the way. Just, just, uh, we actually have a real expert on Jehovah Witnesses here, because, uh, he, he was a part of the Jehovah Witnesses for quite a few years.

You can talk to Jason later about it. He can regale you, probably, with stories. So we're even sure with you how he got out of that into Christianity. But one of the things I love to do with them is they appear to know the Bible really well, but what they really just have is a script of little talking points. So the very first thing I like to do is knock them off their script and watch them flounder. But one of the things I tell them all the time is, uh, listen, the problem with you is you believe God is a God of love? And they say, of course, God is a God of love. I said, your understanding of God means that God can't possibly be a God of love. Now that gets them going, of course, right? Now they're really off the script, and they've never talked to anybody who says things like that to them.

[15:08] But, uh, well, well, here, here's the thing. Why do I say that? Let's look at John chapter one, verses one to three again. And it goes like this. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. Now here's the thing, and you wouldn't know this unless you knew the original language, and I wouldn't know it unless I read it in the commentary. But in the original language, there's two different words for with. Um, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, with, and the Word was God. Then verse two, he was in the beginning with God. And in the original language, there's two different words for with.

And so if I wanted to say, uh, let's say I asked, uh, Barbara where something was to, for the, the Lord's table, and she might say, oh, the cruets are with the hosts. And that's a with. In English, there's just one word with, right? But in the original language of the New Testament, uh, if you have two objects together, you use one word for with. But if I was to say, uh, where is Barbara today? I'd say she's sitting with Louise. And in that case, in the original language, when you're talking about two people being together, it's a different word. A word that only is used when two people are with each other. And so here in the, in the original language of, uh, of John 1, when it says, in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, the word with there implies two people are

with each other. Two persons, not two objects, two persons. And then when it says, he was in the beginning with God, and you use the word he, showing that the Word is a person, that once again, God and the Word, it's with, it's a person. And so not only does the Bible describe, pick the word word to describe Jesus, uh, and with this, it's communicating a whole pile of things.

Um, you know, the, the basic myth of our society is around naturalistic evolution, as if everything just came to be as a result of blind chance, impersonal chance, it's a universe that doesn't care about us. It's just scientific laws and coincidence. And in contrast to that, the Bible says the word is with. God, a person created all things. And that's why, if in fact, there is no God, you look out at the empty universe and you think, I am just a speck and I am no different to this universe than a piece of garbage.

That's the correct way to think. But if in fact, you understand that God has created all things, then you can look at the starry host and you can look at the mountains and forests and the beautiful sights and the sunsets and say, the heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. That's a correct way to understand the world. And, and it's not just that if you have communication, but the other thing that goes along with communication is communications and it connected to love. And, and so only Christianity, as I talked about last night, Allah is just by himself. He can't possibly be a God that loves because to love, there has to be another. And only the Christian gospel reveals that there is in fact distinctions within, there is just one God, but three persons. And from all eternity, one, one person of the Trinity, the father to the son has revealed and opened himself and communicated himself to the son, which is what words are and has loved the son and the son, and it says, in a sense, revealed himself to the father, been enchanted with the father and poured out his love for the father from all eternity. From all eternity, God is love. And I'll say that to

[ 18 : 59 ] Jehovah's Witnesses. You just think there's, that Jesus isn't God, the Holy Spirit's not God. Your God can't possibly be the God of love. Well, they squirm. It's usually after this conversation that they are polite to me from then on, but never talk to me again. But I just pray for them. I'll pray for them for as long as they come, that God would bring them to a saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

So if you could put up the second point, that would be really handy. And in a world of countless religions and spiritualities, only the triune God can be the God who is love. In a world of countless religions and spiritualities, only the triune God can be the God who is love. Let's watch this beautiful spoken word video that helps communicate some of these huge realities, transcendent and eternal truths all involved in the Christmas story.

Silent night. Holy night. Silent night.

in the middle of nowhere. It's dark, cold, the unlikeliest of places for the king of kings to lay his head. Yet he came. No audience, no entourage, the light of the world who came for you and for me.

[ 20 : 42 ] This is the story of Christmas. That night, everything changed. Heaven touched earth and love entered with a tiny breath.

The cry of a newborn king echoed through all eternity. I am with you. This is the story of Christmas. A star appeared in the heavens that night.

A star so bright astronomers began to follow. Angels filled the skies with songs of praise, calling shepherds to leave their flocks and see for themselves what had transpired.

And when they arrived, they were so compelled they bowed down in awe and worshipped him. This is the story of Christmas. Jesus' arrival brought the fulfillment of promises to a people who had lost all faith.

To a people living in despair, hope was born. In the midst of strife and division, the Prince of Peace came to silence our storms. In a world of hate, love won and broke through the darkness.

[ 21 : 58 ] This is the story of Christmas. This is no ordinary story. This is the greatest story ever told. The savior of the world, Emmanuel, God with us, who stepped down from heaven to earth, born for you and for me.

This is the story of Christmas. The other end of John 1, 1 to 14 that I meditated upon the most this time was verse 14 itself, which I'll just read again.

You know, you've gotten very clearly that the word is God and everything's made through him. And then verse 14, there's other things about John and then Jesus coming into the world. But verse 14 is this spectacular verse.

And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory. Glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. And the word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory.

Glory as of the only Son, the unique Son, the one of a kind Son. That word only there means the only one in its class. If you know some philosophical things. The only one in its class, Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

[ 23 : 15 ] And it's distinguishing between the earlier things saying that if you give your life to Jesus, you can become the adopted Son of God, adopted child of God. So it's distinguishing that, that whatever that's going to mean for us human beings, whoever Jesus is, he's one of a kind, the only one in his class.

And, well, here's the thing about this. Actually, if you could just put up the point, Claire, that would be helpful. Which is that baby Jesus from the moment of his conception onward was fully God, fully human, yet one person.

Baby Jesus from the moment of his conception onward was fully God, fully human, yet one person. At one time, when I started to work on my sermons for Christmas Eve and Christmas morning, I was actually going to do a sermon on Matthew chapter 1, 1 to 17.

Which is just before the Matthew's account of the birth of Jesus. And, and I was going to, because here's the thing I got from Tim Keller. I'm not smart enough to know this.

God, the Son of God, Jesus, is the only person in the history of the universe who chose his ancestors. Like, isn't that a cool idea?

[ 24 : 33 ] Once you see that, I couldn't unthink it. You know, I asked a woman years and years ago in Eganville on her 95th birthday, and she was 95 years old. She still led book discussions of highly intellectual New York Times, like highly intellectual books.

She led discussions on that. She went swimming twice a day. And on her 95th birthday, I asked her what was the secret to her having so much energy and being so healthy. And she says, I chose the right ancestors.

And everybody laughed. But actually, of course, she didn't. You just sort of stuck with your ancestors. And the reason I didn't end up doing it as a sermon for Christmas is, if you go through Matthew's list and you look at it, his list of ancestors includes X-rated stories.

And I didn't think I could talk about it with a whole pile of children present and do it justice. But go through it with a commentary or something and try to figure out who some of those people are in the background.

And you go, whoa, those are the people that, and that's part of the whole thing. But here's the thing. You know, when you hear the text, verse 14 again, and the word, so we know that the word is completely and utterly God.

[ 25 : 39 ] And it says here, the word became flesh. And it's very interesting. I'm going to talk about it more in a moment. But the word flesh there is communicating about human beings in all their weakness and frailty.

It's not saying their sinfulness, but their weakness and their frailty. So in other words, God, fully God, the word, became flesh, fully human. And yet, as it's obvious throughout the rest of the gospel, he's just one Jesus.

The whole incarnation. Remember, this is what I said. You can go through the history of heresies, including Jehovah Witnesses, and they smash and are ruined against John 1, 1-14.

It can be a huge, long book, a glorious book, to help you understand the Christian faith. And so the word, fully God, became flesh, fully human, yet one person, and dwelt among us.

And we have seen his glory, glory, as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. And so our next video is going to show, in a sense, I'm not doing the sermon, although those of you who know it can understand why I said some of the people in Jesus' ancestry had X-rated lives.

[ 26 : 48 ] Or viewer discretion. If you're doing a video of it, you have to have viewer discretion before not suitable for young children. But the other thing is, not only does he choose his ancestors, he chooses his backstory.

All of the story of creation, up until that moment, he chooses that. This next video, if you're unfamiliar with the Christian faith, just might be interesting images.

But for those of you who know the Old Testament fairly well, you'll see this wonderful blending of the stories of the Old Testament that culminate in the birth of Jesus. Let's watch. O come, O come,

Emmanuel, and ransom captive Israel, And in the dead wounds, in the lonely exile be.  
Until the Son of God appear. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel.

Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

[ 28 : 45 ] O Lord, I'm no need.

O hear the angel voices. O Lord, I'm no need.

O night when Christ was born. Love is the Lord.

O praise His name forever. His power of glory.

O land of the land. O Lord, I'm no need.

[ 30 : 14 ] O Lord, I'm no need. O Lord, I'm no need.

O Lord, I'm no need. The final thing that I reflected upon this last couple of weeks is I read John 1, 1-14, and meditated upon it, prayed over it, contemplated it, was this idea of frailty.

Those of you who know the Bible very well know that the word often translated as flesh. You might not know this, but in the original language, the word flesh has two very, very different meanings. Sort of like the word bark can either refer to something on a tree or something that a dog does. So knowing one doesn't help you to understand the other. It's just a word that has two very different meanings.

And I'm sure for people trying to understand the English language from, you know, people learning English, they might get surprised with trees having barks. Like they don't think, no, dogs bark, trees don't, whatever.

[ 31 : 26 ] You know, or the other way around. It might confuse them. I don't know. But in the original language, the word flesh has two very different meanings. And generally, when you read Paul, it has the meaning of that part of human beings that are in rebellion against God and want to be God.

But the other meaning is frailty. Human full, human finitude and frailty. And that's almost always how John uses it.

And so here, that, and that's by the way why some Christians get confused when it says, verse 14, and the word became flesh. And they think, oh, does that mean that Jesus became sinful? And they'll get confused.

And it's just because they don't understand that it's just like the word bark. It can have two very, very, very radically, quite completely different meanings. And John is using it in one clear sense here, which is human beings in all their frailty and being finite.

And I really, you know, reflected upon that. It's one of the wonders and the beauties of the Christian faith. If you go back up a little bit in John chapter one, and if you begin looking at verse six, and there was a man sent from God whose name was John, John the Baptist.

[ 32 : 41 ] He came as a witness. The other word is one who's going to testify, give testimony, to bear witness, to give testimony about the light. That all might believe through him.

And the word believe there, obviously it has something to do with some thoughts. You have to be able to do some thinking, but it's a receiving word. It's another person word.

It's not sort of like I believe the Toronto Maple Leafs will finally win the Stanley Cup in 70 years. That's one type of belief. But if I say that I believe Louise, or I believe in Louise, or I believe in my counsel, that's a different type of thing.

It involves ideas, but there's an element of trust there. And that's how you should understand the word believe in the Gospel of John. And so he says, And so he says, He came as a witness to bear witness about the light that all might believe through him.

He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, verse nine, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him. Yet the world did not know him.

[ 33 : 46 ] And here the word know, of course, is like similar to believe. It involves both an intellectual aspect, but also a relational aspect. Not, you know, really knowing the other person, because you don't want to give yourself to them, or allow them to open themselves up to you.

And then verse 11, He came to his own and his own people. And here's the word, Did not receive him, but all who did receive him, who believed in his name.

Here's connecting belief and receiving. He gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of the blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but God. They get born again by God, which John three talks about.



