

Behold the Word Shining

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[0 : 00] And if you would open up your Bibles to John chapter 1 verses 1 through 18.! So the four Gospels are all accounts of the life of Jesus.

Matthew and Luke keep record of the birth of Jesus. Mark just kind of jumps into the life of Jesus. And John 1 through 18 holds record of the prologue to John, the introduction to John, and it accounts the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ with a little different language.

Would you hear John 1, 1 through 18? 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. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John, John the Baptist. He came as a witness to bear witness about the light that all might believe through Him.

[1 : 13] He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, 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.

He came to His own, and His own people did not receive Him. But to all who did receive Him, who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. And we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son, the one-of-a-kind Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John the Baptist bore witness about Him, and cried out, This was He of whom I said, He who comes after me ranks before me, because He was before me.

For from His fullness we have all received grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

[2 : 26] No one has ever seen God, the only God, the one-of-a-kind God, who is at the Father's side. He has made Him known.

May God bless the hearing of His Word. It gets pretty dark in Wisconsin during the wintertime. And it's not just the sun setting around four in the afternoon.

Winter in Wisconsin can be one dark, overcast day after another. And it can have psychological effects.

But, some of my favorite days as a Wisconsin resident, are those crisp Wisconsin winter days when the sun is shining.

You come outside, and you're like, Look it! Behold! The sun is shining in its glory! Surprise! Surprise! Those are great days. This morning reminded me of that.

[3 : 31] And this morning, here we are four days out from Christmas Day, and there is a different sun shining in His glory.

Behold! The Word shining! Jesus Christ, in His incarnate glory, is shining today. And He will be shining for the rest of our lives until He returns.

He will be even shining on Friday, December 26th of this week. He will be shining even when your soul feels cold.

He will be shining even when the circumstances of your life are one overcast day after another. Or maybe you've come into the sanctuary this morning, and you're feeling like my Christmas tree right now.

And that is, it's starting to dry out. It's starting to get a little brittle. Needles are falling. And you're like, I just need some life.

[4 : 47] The sun, the Word incarnate, is always shining. And He is a life giver. He gives life.

If you want to feel the sun shine upon your face. Well, we've reached a point in John 1, 1 through 18. We've reached the last section of this prologue.

And these 18 verses are designed to pique your interest in what's to come in the rest of the book. John has been giving us glimpses of the glory of Jesus Christ. And I don't know about you, but I've been asking myself, who is this Word made flesh?

The Gospel of John answers that question. You might be kind of feeling this, like I want this light which gives eternal life.

I want it. That's what this book is designed to do. You might be saying, I want His light to shine into my darkness and give me life.

[5 : 56] Behold the Word shining in His incarnate glory. And this morning, I'm going to show you three ways He is shining from verses 14 through 18. His super grace is shining.

See that in verse 16. His surpassing greatness is shining. We'll see that in verses 15 and 17. And His seeable glory is shining.

And that's in verses 14 and 18. Behold the Word incarnate shining who gives us life. Do you need life this morning? You feel like a dried out Christmas tree?

It's just a matter of time. The Word is shining in His life-giving grace. Let's look at His super grace in verse 16.

You've got to see this. This is extraordinary. Verse 16 says, For from His, the Word incarnate, Jesus Christ, from His fullness, we have all received grace upon grace.

[7 : 03] Of course, the His, His fullness, is the Word Jesus. 1-1, John 1-1, in the beginning was the Word. He was in the beginning.

It's a shout out to Genesis 1-1. He is the uncreated creator of all things. The second person of the Trinity.

He was distinct from God. And yet, He was with God. He was in relationship with God. We're going to see that in verse 18 when we get there. The Word was God.

Totally God. Fully God. Completely God. And in verse 4, we see that in Him was life. Not just the physical life of creation.

He sustains all things by the Word of His power. But spiritual life. Eternal life. Saving life. He is not just the creator, but the recreator of a whole new creation.

[8 : 06] Starting with the souls of men and women. He is our light shining into the darkness of our sinful, spiritually dead world. And last week, we learned that if you receive Him, if you believe in His name.

And again, that's not just some kind of passive acknowledgement, but it's an act of faith. Remember the illustration from last week? When I brought you to Lincoln Lagoon, it's frozen over.

I put a hundred bucks, rubber banded it around a rock, put it in a yellow festival bag, and threw it on the middle of the ice and said, go get it. In order for you to get that hundred bucks, you need to exercise faith.

Got to walk on the ice. You can't just say you believe and stand by me. Saving faith is an act of faith in His name.

All that Jesus Christ is. And it's His fullness. The fullness of His grace. Grace upon grace. It's a super grace that we have received.

[9 : 10] His grace gives life. You remember John 3.16. He gives eternal life to those who believe. John 10.10.

I came that they might have life and might have it abundantly. What is grace? Grace is God's posture towards sinners.

His unconditional love. But God's grace is not limited to His posture. God's grace is also God's power. His power to make sinners who were dead in their sins and enemies to Him living in darkness.

And powerfully give them new life. Making them His sons and daughters. And bringing them into His family. His kingdom of light. That is His power. It's His power to forgive.

It's His power to give us new desires. New affections. New priorities. A new telos. A new reason for being.

[10 : 18] And this grace. It brings peace. It brings shalom. Remember the angels in Luke 2. Glory to God in the highest.

Christ. And on earth peace among those whom He is pleased. His posture. His power. Brings us peace. Because He makes us pleasing in His sight. By paying a great price. We can think about this grace in two ways. It's a superseding grace. And what I mean by that is this. I'll explain it in the next point a little bit more. But God gave Israel the law through Moses. We see that in verse 17. And the law was the first covenant. [11:16] Or what we have come to see through Hebrews as the old covenant. And God gave Israel the law. He made them His people. Not because they earned it or deserved it. It was all by His grace. And the grace that now comes from Jesus Christ. Supersedes the grace of the old covenant. It is a new fuller grace. A new covenant grace. Both covenants were costly. They came with blood. The new covenant comes with the blood of Jesus. Because He is totally God and totally man. And that blood has brought us peace. It's a superseding grace. And it's a super abounding grace. Isn't it good to know that when you are saved by God's grace. It's not just a one and done grace. God graces you. [12:20] Saves you. And He's done pouring out His grace. No. He keeps pouring out His grace. Paul tells Timothy in 2 Timothy 2.1. Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. His super abounding grace. His posture to us continues to give us strength and power. His grace is a ferociously flowing grace. Jesus isn't in the manger anymore. We don't worship a baby in a feeding trough anymore. Nope. He grew up. He lived a perfect life. He died for sinners. He was raised victorious over sin, death, and the devil. He's reigning on high. And we're one Christmas closer to His second advent. And the throne that He sits on. Hebrews 4. Is a throne of grace. And it's not just a trickle grace from the throne. It's not just this kind of like dripping faucet grace from His throne. [13:26] It's Niagara grace. It is flowing. 681,000 gallons of water are flowing over Niagara right now. Every second. Now. Every second. It's unmeasurable. It's unceasing. It's unstoppable. God's grace is unconditional. It's always flowing. Super abounding. Niagara-like grace. Super seeding. Super abounding. It's super grace. Are you starting to see the grace? This grace upon grace. Grace. Behold the word shining. His grace is spectacular. It's nothing that we earn. And it's located in Him. In Jesus. And grace is there. Life is in there. [14:26] Our Christmas tree? It's starting to die. But if you're rooted in Jesus. Grace upon grace. Grace. We have seen. His super grace. Now let's take a look. At His surpassing greatness. Because that too. Well that's shining. In verses 15 and 17. John points us to. Two members of the Bible's prophetic. Hall of fame. Verse 15. JTB. John the Baptist. And in verse 17. Moses. Two members of the prophetic. Hall of fame. And there is a reason why. We're being showed. John the Baptist. And Moses. On either side. Of this grace. Upon grace. You see. This one. In whom. [15:27] Grace is found. Life is found. He is. Of surpassing greatness. Than John the Baptist. And Moses. We've already been introduced. To John the Baptist. In verses 6 through 8. He was not the true light. But came. As a witness to the light. He was. The Isaiah 40. Verse 3. Voice crying. Out in the wilderness. Make straight. The ways of the Lord. He will say that here. In John. Verse 123. In verse 15. John the disciple. Quotes. John the Baptist. As saying. He. Speaking of the incarnate word. He who comes after me. Ranks. Before me. He's greater than me. Because he was before me. Now I know that kind of sounds like a riddle. But it's not. It's an extraordinary declaration. [16:24] Of the eternal pre-existence. Of the word. He who comes after me. John the Baptist. Is talking about how Jesus was born. Six months after him.

He started his ministry. After him. And in that culture. Those who are older. Had a higher social standing. Than those who are younger. But not in this case. No.

John the Baptist says. No. He ranks. Higher. Than me. He's greater than me. Because John the Baptist knows. That he has come. To make way. The way of the Lord.

God. John the Baptist knows. That this who comes after him. Has no beginning. John the Baptist knows.

That this incarnate word. Jesus Christ. Was totally God. God. And he's bearing witness. To that the word incarnate.

[17:22] Is God. Eternal. Become a man. The uncreated creator. The one with no beginning. From everlasting. To everlasting.

The second son. The second member. Of the Trinity. Is God. So what JTB. Is saying here. Is that Jesus. The word incarnate. Is God. Eternal.

Which makes him. Of surpassing greatness. Than John the Baptist. And then in verse 17. We are. We see that. That Jesus.

Is greater than Moses. Moses. Moses was the man. He wrote the first five books. Of the Old Testament. The law.

God. God delivered. Israel. Out of the slavery. To Egypt. Under the leadership. Of Moses. God. Gave. Moses. The Ten Commandments.

[18:17] On Mount Sinai. When God made a covenant. With Israel. That God. Would be. Their God. In Israel. Would be. His people. It was only by God's grace.

That he would do. Such a thing. It's not on the basis. Of anything. That Israel had done. God had chosen them. By his grace. But. But Israel.

Failed. To keep the covenant. That God had established. They failed. To keep the law. That was given. By Moses. But God. Had a succession.

Plan of grace. In place. He had it in place. All along. The old covenant. Was superseded. By the new covenant. Grace upon grace.

The law. Was given through Moses. Grace. And truth. Came through Jesus Christ. Now in the gospel of John. This is the first time.

[19:12] In verse 17. Jesus Christ is named. But there's something. Even more. Spectacular. Going on here. The little phrase.

Grace and truth. In the language. Of the new testament. Is actually. Capturing something. From the language. Of the old testament. Something that had been.

Repeated over. And over. And over again. Something that. Was repeated. In God. Had actually. Said about himself. Grace and truth. Is actually.

A translation. Of. God's. Steadfast. Love. And faithfulness. And why that is. Significant. Is this. God. Appeared to Moses. In Exodus. In Exodus 34. Six through eight. And God. Proclaimed himself. To Moses. As he went by Moses. He had. He had put Moses. In a cleft of a rock. And he couldn't see his glory.

[20:09] Straight away. So God. Passes him by. And. But God. Declares himself. Among other things. Slow to anger. Full of mercy. Abounding. Full of.

Steadfast. Love. And faithfulness. And what we are being shown here. Is that Jesus. The word incarnate.

Is. The Lord incarnate. Abounding. In steadfast. Love. And faithfulness. In the flesh. Grace and truth.

Moses. Was putting a cleft of a rock. Because he couldn't handle. The surpassing greatness. Of God. Going by.

What this means is. Jesus is greater than Moses. God. Eternal. Abounding. In steadfast. Love. And faithfulness. The maker.

[21:07] And keeper. Of covenants. He has come. In the flesh. Do you see.

His surpassing. Greatness. Here. In verse. 15 and 17. Let me ask you. Three questions. Is. The incarnate. Word.

Jesus Christ. Greater than. Less than. Or equal to. John the Baptist. Amen. Is. Jesus Christ. Wonderful. Counselor. Mighty God. Everlasting. Father. Prince of Peace. Is he greater than. Less than. Or equal to. Moses. Jesus. Amen.

Amen. Is. The king of kings. And lord of lords. Greater. Less than. Or equal to.

[22 : 01] You. Greater than. He's greater than us all. And what we see here. Is that. His surpassing.

Greatness. Is. Because. He is. God. In. The flesh. The baby. In the feeding trough. Was. God. Eternal. Full of. Steadfast. Love. And. Faithfulness. The maker. Of a new covenant. Come to rescue. Us. Do you have an amen. So now.

We move on to. seeing His seeable glory. We've seen His super grace towards you and me. We have seen His surpassing greatness greater than you and me.

And now, let's behold His seeable glory. This is in verses 14 and 18. Again, it's extraordinary.

[23 : 03] Verses 14 and 18 make an extraordinary claim about the Christian faith. And if you're new to the Christian faith, in order to become a Christian, you're going to have to own this, believe this.

And the Word became flesh. One commentator that I read this week said that this is John putting the incarnation of the second person of the Trinity in the most blunt of words.

And the Word became flesh. It's kind of like this. And the Word took on human meat. That kind of bluntness. The Word became a man.

100% God became 100% human, yet without sin. And this is one of the glorious wonders of Christmas, that God became a man.

We sang it just moments ago. The second verse of Hark the Herald Angels Sing. Christ by highest. You know, I'd sing it for you because I'm one of two crooners in the room. But I shan't.

[24 : 20] Christ by highest heaven adored. Christ the everlasting Lord. Late in time, behold Him come. Galatians 4.4. Offspring of the virgin's womb.

Veiled in flesh, the Godhead. Behold. See. Hail, the incarnate deity. Pleased as man with men to dwell.

Jesus, our God with us. Emmanuel. Hark the Herald Angels Sing. Glory to the newborn King. It's a wonder.

It's amazing. And this, the Word became flesh. And the next phrase is, and dwelt among us. Literally, that will read, He pitched His tent among us.

And we're to think about how God in the Old Testament pitched His tent with His people in the wilderness. How God would descend in His cloud of glory and enter the tabernacle, which was this really fancy, elaborate tent of God's design in order for God to dwell in with His people.

[25 : 35] So God came to dwell with His people in a tent. And we're being told here, God came to dwell again with His people in a tent of humanity, in the flesh.

And He remains in the flesh. That's amazing. And then John said, we beheld His glory. John and the disciples saw the glory of the incarnate God in His human tent.

His glory on display when we go through the book of John. We'll be in it for several months in 2026. Lord willing. And what we'll see is the glory of Christ on display in a variety of different ways.

He will perform seven signs through the gospel of John. And each one shows us His glory. But the distinct and brightest glory of the gospel of John comes at the end when the one and only Son dies on the cross.

That is the glory of glories of the Son that they beheld. God in the flesh the maker of everything the uncreated creator no beginning taking on flesh would die.

[27 : 00] Glory for sinners like you and me. Spectacular display of glory on the cross for those who have eyes to see.

So what we see here is absolutely stunning. John and his disciples seeing the glory of the Son the seeable glory of the Son.

And now we turn to verse 18. These two verses are related. No one has ever seen God. John starts. He's talking about the first person of the Trinity.

No one has ever seen God's face in fullness. Moses Joshua Isaiah Daniel had glimpses of God. They had shielded views of God. Even the six winged seraphim in God's presence shield their eyes with a pair of their wings so as not to look directly at the glory of the first person of the Trinity.

[28 : 12] Exodus 33. 20. God says to Moses you cannot see my face and live. But that all changed. That all changed with the birth of Jesus.

The word become flesh. You know this song. Mary did you know? Mary did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water?

Mary did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters? Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new? Mary he came for you. This child that you delivered will soon deliver you.

Mary did you know that your baby boy will give sight to the blind man? Glory. Mary did you know that your baby boy would calm a storm with his hand?

Glory. did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod and when you kiss your little baby you've kissed the face of God?

[29 : 17] Mary did you know that your baby boy is the Lord of all creation? Glory. Mary did you know that your baby boy will one day rule the nations?

Come Lord Jesus. Did you know that your baby boy was heaven's perfect lamb and the sleeping child you're holding is the great I am?

How about that for glory? Spectacular. And then we read this. For God who said let light shine out of darkness has shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

You see the word incarnate is shining in the face of Jesus Christ. Life. We read in 18 no one has ever seen God the only God.

It's the same word in verse 14 being used. Glory as of the only son from the father the only God and the only son it's one of a kind from the father.

[30 : 33] It's the same language used in John 3 16 for God so loved the world that he gave his one of a kind son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. He's one of a kind because he's totally God and totally man the perfect mediator between God and man.

And this one of a kind son who's at the father's side it's getting back at this relationship between father and son that was in place at the beginning of creation.

That little phrase at the father's side was used of the disciple of John leaning on Jesus' chest at the dinner. It's a picture of closeness of relational intimacy.

intimacy. This enfleshed second person of the Trinity Jesus who has this relationship with God the father he has made seeable the never before seen God.

Eternal the uncreated creator. covenant maker and keeper. The God of steadfast love and faithfulness can now be seen because he's been made known.

[31 : 58] The son has made known the father. Philip in John 14 says have we seen the father? Can you show us the father? And Jesus says if you've seen me you've seen the father.

father. He is the exact representation of him. He's the radiance of the glory of God. He is the visible unseen God.

He is a wonder and he is shining into the darkness. You can think about it this way. Jesus is preaching God the father with an incarnate sermon.

this word of being made known is where we get exegesis from. It means to explain to draw out to bring out the nuance and the wonders of something.

And so you can be thinking this as Jesus the son narrates God the father. He makes him known. It's absolutely wonderful.

[33 : 08] You see both 14 and 15 both point to the one and only son. The one and only God. And both are talking about this making known of God.

The word became flesh in order to make known the unseen God. The God of steadfast love and faithfulness.

And that glory is best seen at the cross. But what? You say how can I see his glory today?

I mean John we behold his glory. They were they saw him they walked with him. They saw him raise the dead. They saw him on the cross. They saw him after his resurrection.

They saw him their eyewitnesses. How are we to behold his glory? glory. The gospel of John all of its pages are glory pages.

[34 : 11] Are revelation after revelation of the glory of the son. The unique glory culminating in his death and resurrection. That's where we look.

Right here. That's where we'll see his glory. Show me your glory. And then we'll read it. For the months to come we're going to get into the gospel of John and we're going to be beholding the glory of the son.

So come Sunday after Sunday and we will behold his glory together. Behold it. Believe in him and we will live. By the way the Holy Spirit the third person of the Trinity he's not left out of all this.

What he is eager to do is he is eager to spotlight the son. The second person of the Trinity because salvation is found in no one else.

And like Moses we respond by saying show us your glory. Help us to see. We want to be changed. [35 : 16] Do you want to see his glory? Do you want to be changed? Do you want the life that he alone can give? Are you feeling like a dried out Christmas tree?

If it's not today he probably will in February. Show me your glory and when he shows you his glory it's his grace on display and it is a life giving grace.

Show me your glory. behold the incarnate word shining his super grace superseding grace super abounding grace that gives life his surpassing greatness he's greater than John the Baptist he's greater than Moses and he's greater than you and me and his seeable glory.

The gospel of John puts the glory of Christ on display again and again and again and the most spectacular fashion will take place at his cross.

He's always shining. This child born to us this son given to us is the true light that brings light and life into our darkness.

[36 : 55] Merry Christmas. Let us pray. Lord Jesus we love it when you steal the show and there's no stealing.

because you are due rightfully yours all glory and power majesty and might. God would you give us hearts that have received your fullness grace upon grace that we would be full of life and whether that's this coming Thursday or this coming Friday that you would be the controlling center of our life and because you and your grace are at the center of our life we would be enlivened.

Would you give us life? God we're so grateful to gather around your word together.

In Jesus name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Bluetooth Bluetooth