

AM John 1:1-18 Four Reasons to Worship Christ

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[0 : 0 0] I am afraid of John's gospel and chapter 1, John's gospel and chapter 1, chapter 4, verse in the New Testament.

For Gospels and John writes these words in John chapter 1 and we're going to read just the first 18 verses of this passage.

John is describing the Lord Jesus here who is entitled the Word of God so if you bear that in mind that might make the reading intelligible to you John chapter 1 and verse 1 John writes these words 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 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 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 from the Father full of grace and truth

John 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 no one has ever seen God the only God who is at the Father's side he has made him known amen and may God give us good understanding of his written and inspired words and back to John's Gospel there that we just read John chapter 1 now I've entitled the sermon this morning reasons for worshipping Christ reasons for worshipping Christ when we think at this time of year when we think of the Christmas story as we know it or the narratives that we have in each of the Gospels about the birth of the Lord Jesus we think of various characters making various journeys as we read through the Gospels we read of the shepherds making a journey we read of the wise men or the Magi making a journey to worship Christ

Mary and Joseph themselves did take a journey from Nazareth to go up to Bethlehem to go and put their names down in the census that was called at that time but John's Gospel itself being a different kind of Gospel from Matthew Mark and Luke doesn't focus on those earthly journeys that Mary took or the shepherds took or the wise men the Magi took John focuses in this chapter really on the journey that Christ the Word of God took in coming into this world from heaven he focuses our minds on eternity past as we shall see and focuses on the Word of God

[5 : 04] Christ coming from eternity into time as we shall see into our world to be a saviour to go to the manger at Bethlehem and ultimately to go to make that journey to the cross of Calvary where he would die for sinners as a saviour now John's purpose and reason in writing he makes very clear at the end of his letter he tells us that he's written the things that are contained in this Gospel for a very specific reason he tells us so that we might believe that Jesus is the Son of God and by believing in his name we might have life eternal life through that person Jesus Christ so John writes and if we had time we would turn to

John 20 and verses 30 and 31 let me just read them to you because here is the reason that John wrote his Gospel and I know we're going to focus on chapter 1 but here's the reason he says now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not written in this book but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Messiah the sent one from God the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name the greatest gift that God has given us is his Son the Lord Jesus as we were telling the boys and girls and the reason that he's the greatest gift is because he is the one who can bring us salvation and the one who can bring us forgiveness and who can bring us to be in a right relationship with God and I want us to think about this person the Lord Jesus this morning the one that we especially remember at this time of year about this baby that came at Bethlehem and I want us to see how great he is and I want us to think about it just four reasons why we all as human beings should worship

Christ at this time and in our lives just as many people made a journey to reach the baby Jesus Christ many people came to worship him the shepherds came to worship him the magi made that journey for the specific reason to worship him and there are many reasons why we should worship him and John starts his gospel with these great words these amazing words these magisterial words that we have in verses 1 and 2 let's read them together again 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 what John is telling us here right at the very start of his gospel is that in the beginning this word existed this word is a title and a description of the Lord

Jesus himself look at verse 14 it says and the word became flesh and dwelt among us so the baby that was born at Bethlehem is entitled by John the word and he is the word that became flesh what we call the incarnation he's telling us that this word this one who came to speak to us and communicate with us because that's what words do isn't it we communicate by words and God here is communicating to us and to the world this word the word of Christ and John tells us here that this word was with God and indeed the word was God verse 1 and before anything else was made

John says before before the creation of this world before the creation of time before the creation of anything that has ever been made this word existed he Christ was there and that's why John says in the beginning and that takes us all the way back into eternity past and in other words John is saying that Jesus Christ existed long before we saw him at Bethlehem Bethlehem wasn't the starting point of Christ's existence 700 years before John wrote this an old man in the Old Testament called Isaiah said these words he prophesied about the coming of this person

[11 : 26] Christ the word listen to what Isaiah says in Isaiah 9 verse 6 he says for to us a child is born to us a son is given and the government shall be upon his shoulder and his name shall be called wonderful counsellor mighty God everlasting father the prince of peace you see a child was born but Isaiah says it was a son that was given a son that existed eternally before the creation of this world you see before anything was created Jesus Christ existed he was there the eternal son of God John says John says he existed at the beginning with God

John is pointing us to the fact that he is the one who had actually no beginning and no end because he is the eternal one and that's a reason to worship him and to adore him because he is eternal but the second reason to worship him I submit to you is because Jesus is God the Bible tells us that we are to worship God and him alone but John here as we are going to see gives us the second reason to worship him it's because Jesus is God John says Christ the word was not only there before the creation of all the things but he tells us that not only was this word with God but in fact look at verse one he says the word was

God Jesus is God in other words he is one with the father the father sent the son to be the saviour of the world so John is looking back into the past back into eternity and he's unfolding for us here the mystery of who God is and John is saying not only was the word with God but he was God he is one with the father and this God as we know as revealed in the new testament exists in three persons the father and the son and the eternal spirit the holy spirit three unique persons one

God and so as John opens his gospel with these magnificent words he's pointing us to the very core of Christianity of who Christ is he's pointing us to the essence of who God is and the baby that we think of at Christmas time born into this world at Bethlehem is God manifest as the apostle says later in the Bible or seen in the flesh as the hymn writer says he's very God begotten not created he is God of gods and light of lights the baby lying in that cattle feeding trough is none other than the almighty eternal self existent glorious

God the one whom angels veil their faces in his presence the one who dwells in light unapproachable and full of glory he's the one who as Charles Wesley said in his hymn is contracted to a span incomprehensibly made man man you know it's amazing if you just took two minutes just to think that God was contracted to a span incomprehensibly made man and as those shepherds looked into that manger they were looking at the word of God the one who had eternally been with the father and the holy spirit now veiled in flesh the

[16 : 58] Godhead see hail the incarnate deity and because he is God he is to be worshipped by all of us by you and I you know we have been created by God as we are going to see to worship and all of us are worshipping something each person here this morning and every person out in Dumfries and every person in Scotland and in the world every human being is worshipping something or someone and they are either worshipping the eternal God or they are worshipping something else but because Jesus is God he is to be worshipped but the third reason that John gives us here to worship is because

Jesus is our creator the wonder of Christmas really is that the baby of Bethlehem the one who came down is the one who made all things look at verse 3 it says all things were made through him and without him was not anything made that was made everything everything that was created and made in the entire universe was created by this person that John calls the word by Christ not one single thing that has been created was done without Christ you and I were created by God we belong to him we are his creatures now that's maybe not popular thinking in our world today and hasn't been from the inception of time probably because we get all sorts of people telling us that we have just been evolved from a big bang somewhere in the midst of billions of years before but the

Bible doesn't say that the Bible tells us that God created this world that Christ the word who was with God and who was God created us and we all belong to him and the practical implications of that for all of us in our lives is that God owns us God owns you and he owns me we belong to him because he created us and he not only owns us but we owe him we owe him and are in debt to him for our very existence we not only owe him for our existence but we owe him our obedience and he demands our attention and he rightly demands our wholehearted worship because as any creator of anything the creator knows what is best for us he's designed us he's moulded us he's made us he's created us and he knows how we function and how we function best and we were designed and created to worship him to obey him and to love him with our whole heart and you and I as his creatures as I've already said are either worshipping him or worshipping someone or something other than God the Bible tells us in fact that every single human being that has ever lived or will live knows that God exists

Romans 1 when we don't have time to look at it but it tells us that we as creatures of God know that God exists but we hold that truth down because it's inconvenient for us and we dispense and we dispel the idea of God owning us and demanding our obedience and worship you know we hear sometimes in our media about tax avoidance tax avoidance those of you who are accountants definitely know what I'm talking about and those of you who run businesses know that at the year end you have to prepare your accounts and you have to pay so much tax and there are those perhaps creative accountants who get you into a position where you can avoid tax not evade tax avoid tax but you know human beings are not only people who try to avoid tax we are people who try to avoid God at all costs

God avoidance and we think that we can avoid him but ultimately we can't John says all things were made by him Christ the word Jesus created all things C.S. Lewis in his book one of his Narnia books at the last battle says these words once in our world a stable a manger had something in it that was bigger than our whole world because as those shepherds looked into that manger and as those angels looked there and as the wise men came to the house later on in the narrative and as they looked at the infant baby the infant

[24 : 05] Christ they were looking at someone who was bigger than our whole world because Jesus is our creator but then the final reason that John gives that we should worship Christ is because Jesus is God incarnate that just means Jesus is come in the flesh look at verse 14 and the word 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 perhaps the most amazing truth that John unfolds for us and tells us in these verses is found in this verse

John in these ten simple words tells us that this almighty eternal creator he took a journey from eternity from the sapphire courts as the hymn writer says to a stable or a manger bear he took a journey from eternity into time from the farthest reaches of eternity to be with us to be with people like you and I Eugene Patterson puts it this way the word became flesh and moved into our neighbourhood isn't that amazing that the Lord Jesus came to live as it were next door to us he came down to earth from heaven who is

God and Lord of all and he did that at Bethlehem didn't he without compromising or without diminishing his deity you see when Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh he never ceased to be God he was no less God as he lay there in the manger than he had been in the aeons of eternity past when he was with the Father and the Holy Spirit and the baby of Bethlehem was conceived miraculously by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary who gave birth naturally to that baby he was perfect God and perfect man two natures in one person it was a union of the divine and a union of the human divine nature and human nature combined in the person and the baby that you saw at Bethlehem he is

God manifest in the flesh the writer of the Hebrews says that he's the exact likeness of God and the express image of his person and he was the one later on in this very gospel that John is writing John could say and the Lord Jesus was saying these words he that hath seen me has seen the father I and the father are one and at this time of year we hear these words so often don't we recorded by Matthew in chapter 1 and verse 23 behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and they shall call his name

Emmanuel which means God with us God with us veiled in flesh the Godhead see hail the incarnate deity and John says we beheld his glory the glory as of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth so for 33 years of his life God's glory was seen in the person of the word of God the Lord Jesus it was seen in his perfect sinless life but supremely it was seen in his death wasn't it at Calvary you see the very reason that God took upon himself human nature was so that he could die in the place of sinners like you and

[30 : 00] I he took a body that little body that was there in Bethlehem he took it upon himself for the very reason that he took it so that he could ultimately die on the cross at Calvary to be a savior of sinners you remember his name you shall call his name Jesus why why would you call his name Jesus because for the greatest reason of all that he would save his people from their sins he came in other words to die that's why he took the journey from eternity into time he took it for people like you and he took it for people people like myself sinners that's why John writes at the end as we read at the start why did he write he wrote about

Christ so that we might believe and believing have life through his name what did the Lord Jesus say I am come I am come that you might have life and that you might have it in all its fullness well wise men came to worship the shepherds came to see and when they saw they worshipped I wonder this morning have you realised that he is the person that you ought to worship that we all ought to worship that we ought to proclaim to the world as you were doing yesterday at the carol service I'm sure calling people to come to worship Christ the newborn king have you received him we asked the boys and girls this morning about the greatest gift and

God has given us his indescribable gift in his son the Lord Jesus and what we have to do is to take that gift by faith to accept Jesus Christ as the only saviour of sinners he's eternal he's your creator he's God manifest in the flesh he's come down to save people like you and I so as we think at this Christmas time or this time of year let's think and reassess our lives and ensure that the one object that is primary in our thoughts is to worship Christ the newborn king let's pray together father father we thank you that your son is the word of god the father from before the world began every star and every planet has been created by his hand and father we thank you that at this time of year we have this wonderful opportunity to cast our minds back to

Bethlehem and to see that baby and to as John does for us unfold who he is he's one with you he's your son and he's our saviour father we would only ask that you might warm our hearts this Christmas time all of us to see the greatness and the beauty of your son the lord Jesus father we confess that so often we can read these passages and just skim over them and lose the magnificence of who Christ is father forgive us for that and help us to align our thoughts align our worship and focus and homage to your son the lord Jesus father we pray these things that everyone here from the youngest to the oldest might know you whom to know as life eternal we ask this in Jesus name amen