

5: *Experiencing God's Presence* ☆ *The Christmas Experience*

John's account of the Christmas story doesn't contain any mention of Mary & Joseph, a manger, angels, nor shepherds. Instead, John helps us see God's perspective. And this version of the Christmas story will demonstrate how a Baby changes everything.

Christmas from God's Perspective

John 1:1–3 (NET)

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.

Who is *the Word* is speaking of?

God with Us

John 1:14 (NET)

¹⁴ Now **the Word became flesh** and took up residence [Gr. tabernacled] among us. We saw his glory—the glory of the one and only, full of grace and truth, who came from the Father.

The Word became flesh. Who could this be and why is the meaning so veiled?

The Greek word translated *took up residence* (σκηνώω, skēnoō) often translated *dwelt among us* (ESV, NAS) alludes to the OT tabernacle (a portable temple tent) where the visible glory of God's presence (the *Shekinah*) resided.¹

Now the glory of God's presence is seen through Jesus, *the Word who became flesh* the one *who came from the Father*, who *took up residence* on earth. That's God's perspective on Christmas.

The Baptist's Perspective: Jesus > Me

John 1:15 (NET)

¹⁵ John testified about him and shouted out, "This one was the one about whom I said, 'He who comes after me is greater than I am, because **he existed before me.**'"

How could Jesus have existed before John (John was 6 months older than him - see Luke 1:26–27)? Since we have now determined who *the Word* is, let's substitute **Jesus** in it's place.

Substitute "Jesus" for "the Word"

John 1:1–2 (NET)

¹ In the beginning was the Word [Jesus], and the Word [Jesus] was with God, and the Word [Jesus] was fully God.² The Word [Jesus] was with God [Father & Spirit] in the beginning.

In the beginning - Gen. 1:1 "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Jesus is **timeless**...eternal. He has always been.

Further, *the Word was with God* and was *fully God*. How could this be? There is only ONE GOD revealed in 3 distinct persons...Father, Son, Spirit.

The Creator Enters Creation

John 1:3-5 (NET)

³ All things were created by him [Jesus], and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.⁴ In him [Jesus] was life, and the life [Jesus] was the light of mankind.⁵ And the light shines on in the darkness, but the darkness has not mastered it [understood or overcome it].

The Creator entered His creation. Into the middle of a dark world, Jesus showed up - *the light of mankind*. This is the baby who changes everything, the ONE who created everything...is HERE.

☀ **David Platt** wrote, “*The infinite God an infant child. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets.*”

Receive and Believe

John 1:9-12 (NET)

⁹ The true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was created by him, but the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to what was his own, but his own people did not receive him.¹² But to all who have received him—those **who believe in his name**—he has given **the right to become God’s children...**

The Son of God became human so that humans could become sons/daughters of God.

BIG TRUTH WE EXPERIENCE GOD’S PRESENCE WHEN WE EMBRACE GOD’S PAYMENT.

Jesus is GOD in SKIN, who came to DIE for our SIN.

Christmas from Paul’s Perspective

Philippians 2:5-11 (NET)

⁵ You should have the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had, ⁶ who though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature. ⁸ He humbled himself, by becoming obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross! ⁹ As a result God exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—in heaven and on earth and under the earth—¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

So, just as the **shepherds** & later **Magi** bowed before Jesus at His first coming, so too we will one day bow before Him at His second coming. When we turn from our sin and trust Jesus...we are changed. We are more than just a CREATION of God, we become CHILDREN of God.

John 1:12 (NET) But to all who have received him—those **who believe in his name**—he has given **the right to become God’s children...**

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