



# Three Years That Changed the World

When The Word Became Flesh – John 1:1-18

# Three Years That Changed The World

This series of lessons is about Jesus and His life on this earth – more specifically His three years of ministry and His ultimate death and resurrection. He will be born of a virgin (Mary), lead a sinless life, teach others to love God, to love one another, and to proclaim the good news that He is the Savior of the World! There will be those who believe in Him and those who reject him, but it doesn't change the fact that He Is who He claimed to be – “God manifested in the flesh”.

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“And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory” (I Timothy 3:16)

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12)

“He must increase, but I must decrease”  
(John 3:30)

“The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:35)

The birth and  
Ministry of  
John the  
Baptist played  
a pivotal role in  
the ministry  
and message  
of Jesus the  
Messiah



# The Birth of John the Baptist

**“In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Both of them were **righteous in the sight of God**, observing all the Lord’s commands and decrees blamelessly. But they were childless because Elizabeth was not able to conceive, and they were both very old.” (Luke 1:5-7)**

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**“Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing at the right side of the altar of incense. When Zechariah saw him, he was startled and was gripped with fear. But the angel said to him: “Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. **Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son**, and you are to **call him John**. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth” (Luke 1:11-14)**

# The Birth of John the Baptist

“He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, **in the spirit and power of Elijah**, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—**to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.**” (Luke 1:16-17)

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“When it was time for Elizabeth to have her baby, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown her great mercy, and they shared her joy.” (Luke 1:57-58)

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“And the child grew and became strong in spirit, and **he lived in the wilderness until he appeared publicly to Israel**” (Luke 1:80)



- ✓ It will be John who will preach about repentance in preparation for the Messiah and cause many to return back to the Lord:

“As John’s disciples were leaving, Jesus began to speak to the crowd about John: “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swayed by the wind? If not, what did you go out to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? No, those who wear fine clothes are in kings’ palaces. Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. This is the one about whom it is written: I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you. Truly I tell you, among those born of women there has not risen anyone greater than John the Baptist; yet whoever is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it. **For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.** And if you are willing to accept it, **he is the Elijah who was to come.** Whoever has ears, let them hear” (Matthew 11:7-15)

✓ **John the Baptist** is the fulfillment of Malachi 3:1-6 & 4:5-6:

**“I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me.** Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come, says the Lord Almighty. But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For **he will be like a refiner’s fire** or a launderer’s soap. He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver. Then the Lord will have men who will bring offerings in righteousness, and the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem will be acceptable to the Lord, as in days gone by, as in former years. So, I will come to put you on trial. I will be quick to testify against sorcerers, adulterers and perjurers, against those who defraud laborers of their wages, who oppress the widows and the fatherless, and deprive the foreigners among you of justice, but do not fear me,” says the Lord Almighty” (Malachi 3:1-6)

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**“See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you** before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction”  
(Malachi 4:5-6)

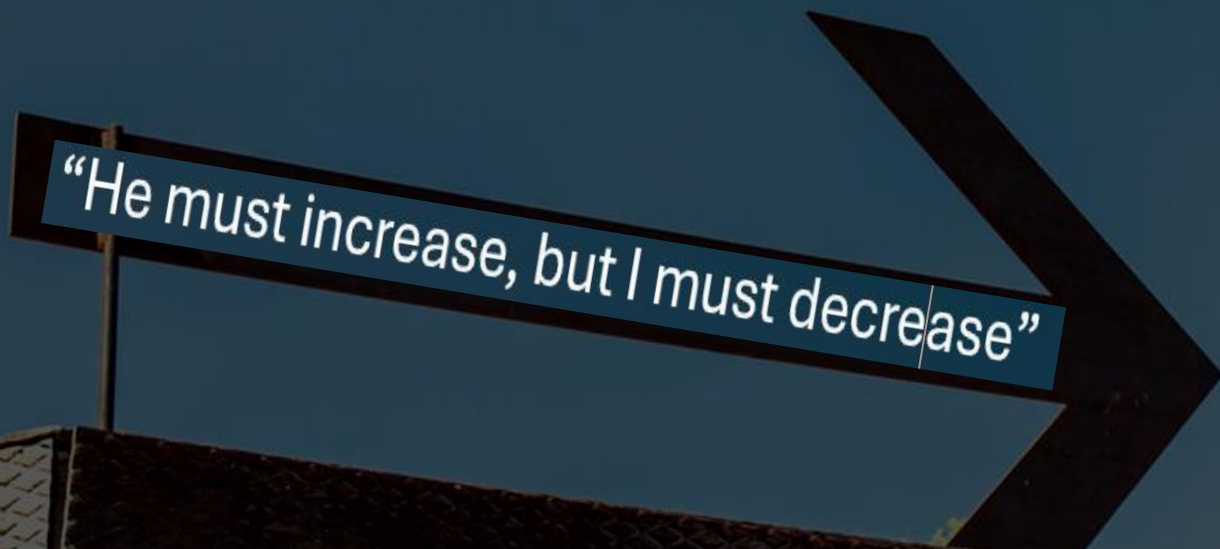
## Zacharias' (John the Baptist's father) makes this prophetic statement:

“Now his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied, saying: “Blessed is the Lord God of Israel, **For He has visited and redeemed His people**, And has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David, As He spoke by the mouth of His holy prophets, Who have been since the world began, That we should be saved from our enemies And from the hand of all who hate us, To perform the mercy promised to our fathers and to **remember His holy covenant**, The oath which He swore to our father Abraham: To grant us that we, Being delivered from the hand of our enemies, Might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life. “And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Highest; **For you will go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways**, To **give knowledge of salvation** to His people by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, with which the Dayspring from on high has visited us; To **give light to those who sit in darkness** and the shadow of death, to **guide our feet into the way of peace.**” So, the child grew and became strong in spirit, and **was in the deserts till the day of his manifestation to Israel**” (Luke 1:67-80)



“In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” (Luke 1:26-28)

The birth of John the Baptist and the birth of Jesus were interconnected



*“He must increase, but I must decrease”*

# The Birth of Jesus

“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register. So, Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.” (Luke 2:1-7)

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*“But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times” (Micah 5:2)*

## The Angel Appears to Shepherds

“And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. **An angel of the Lord appeared to them**, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. **I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.** Today in the town of David **a Savior has been born to you**; he is the Messiah, the **Lord**. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” (Luke 2:8-12)

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“Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “**Let’s go to Bethlehem** and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about” (Luke 2:13-15)

## The Shepherds and Others Rejoice

“So, they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was **lying in the manger**. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, **glorifying and praising God** for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.”

(Luke 2:16-20)

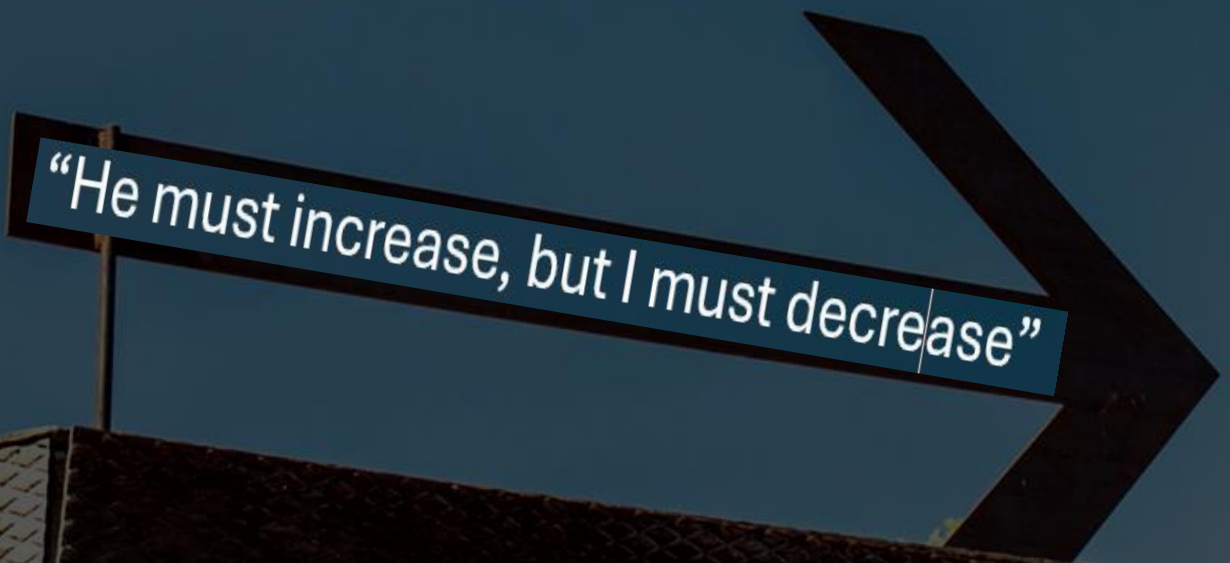
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“When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. **For my eyes have seen your salvation**, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a **light for revelation to the Gentiles**, and **the glory of your people Israel**.” (Luke 2:27-32)

“When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him (Luke 2:39-40)

The birth and Ministry of John the Baptist played a pivotal role in the ministry and message of Jesus the Messiah



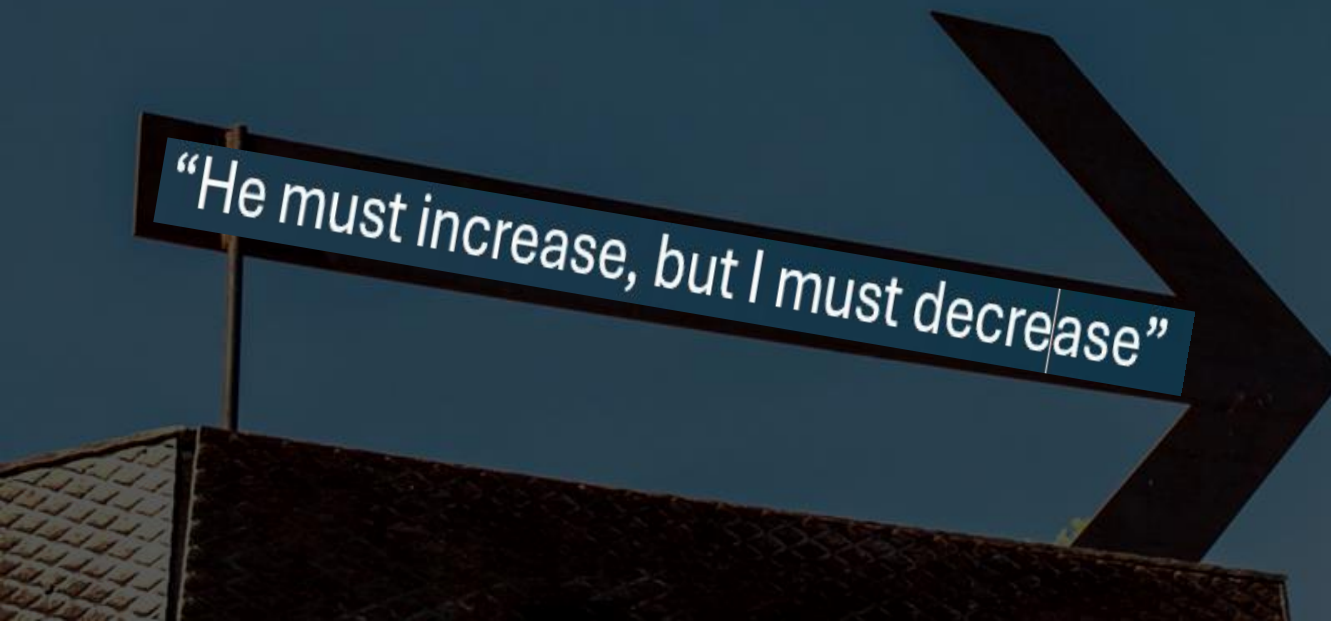
*“He must increase, but I must decrease”*



**Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem** for the Festival of the Passover. **When he was twelve years old**, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy **Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem**, but they were unaware of it. Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. **After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers**. When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you." "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. **"Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?"** But they did not understand what he was saying to them. Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. **And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.** (Luke 2:41-52)

The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God, as it is written in Isaiah the prophet: “I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way” “a voice of one calling in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’(Mark 1:1-3)

The birth and Ministry of John the Baptist played a pivotal role in the ministry and message of Jesus the Messiah



*“He must increase, but I must decrease”*

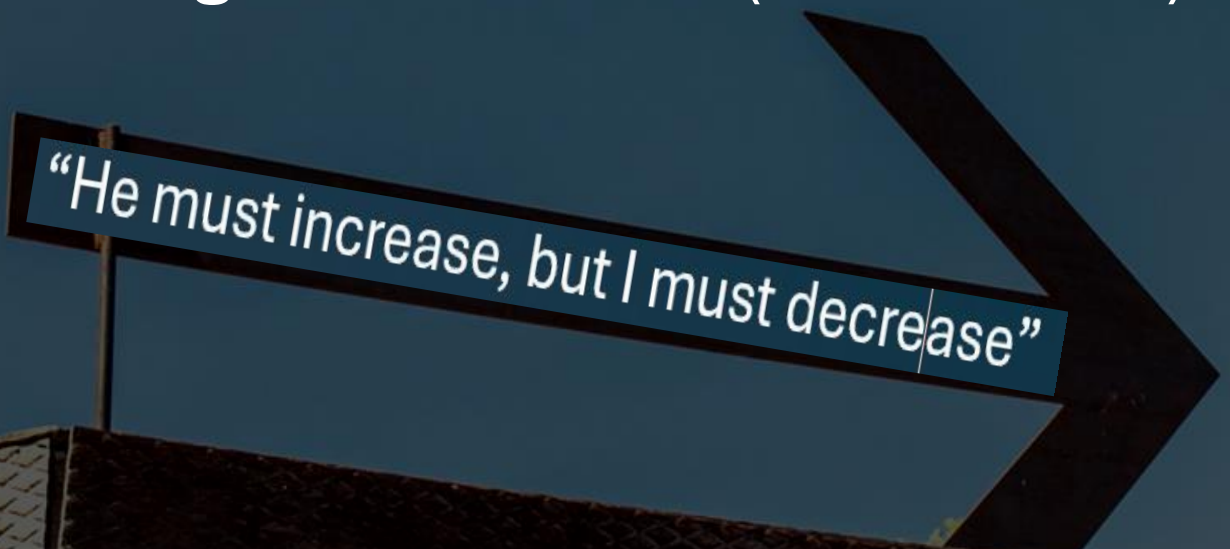
And so, John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness, **preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins**. The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. And this was his message: "After me comes the one more powerful than I, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit." (Mark 1:4-8)

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But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where he was baptizing, he said to them: "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce fruit in keeping with repentance. And do not think you can say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father.' I tell you that out of these stones God can raise up children for Abraham. The ax is already at the root of the trees, and every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire. (Matthew 3:7-10)

John testified concerning him. He cried out, saying, “This is the one I spoke about when I said, ‘**He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.**’ Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. For the law was given through Moses; **grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.** (John 1:15-17)

Several  
Noteworthy  
Items  
related to John  
the Baptist and  
Jesus



*“He must increase, but I must decrease”*

## Several Noteworthy Items:

- ✓ We can discern very easily that role of John the Baptist was to prepare the hearts of God's people for their Messiah, Jesus Christ.
- ✓ Both Matthew and Luke provide historical records of the birth of John and Jesus, but little is known/recorder about either of their childhood years
- ✓ By the time John the Baptist begins preaching his message of repentance it had been just over 400 years since Malachi recorded his final prophetic words
- ✓ Since that time, the Jews had longed for their Messiah and had endured oppression, war and persecution from the Greeks and now the Romans.
- ✓ Many Jews had lost hope, most religious leaders made compromises and built their own "religious systems" contrary to God's plan, and the masses of people were lost with no sense of direction
- ✓ Yet, God broke into history by taking on human flesh, born of a virgin and was now ready to reveal Himself to 12 ordinary men who would become his disciples, give up everything, and follow Jesus.



## Several Noteworthy Items:

- ✓ All 4 gospel accounts provide detail as to the ministry of John the Baptist and the life of Jesus.
- ✓ Our primary gospel account that this series is focused on will be the **Gospel of John** and this lesson begins with the writings of the Apostle John
- ❖ Although John does not identify himself as the author, it is widely accepted that he is the author, and he references himself in his gospel account as the **disciple whom Jesus loved** (John 21)
- ❖ John would have been an eyewitness to the events recorded in his gospel account and he will go on to write 3 letters (I,II, III John) and the Book of Revelation. All of which maintain the same theological truths, writing style, and special insight that would be attributed to the Apostle John.

# The Word Became Flesh

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John 1:1-18

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 nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it (John 1:1-5)



## Several Noteworthy Items:

- ❖ First and foremost, when 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”**:
- ✓ He was already a follower of Jesus
- ✓ He witnessed his miracles, listened to his teachings and accepted his words as truth.
- ✓ He, like the other 12 apostles and followers of Jesus were fully convinced that Jesus was God
- ✓ John could write these words and testify of the deity of Jesus Christ, not just here but throughout the gospel of John and his other writings, and not just because he knew them to be true but because **they are true**.
- ✓ To believe in the deity of Jesus Christ is completely essential for he can be nothing less than God.

## Several Noteworthy Items:

❖ Here are some testimonies as to the deity of Christ:

- ✓ “The Word was God” (John 1:1)
- ✓ “Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:58)
- ✓ “I and My Father are one” (John 10:30)
- ✓ “And Thomas answered and said to Him, “My Lord and my God!” (John 20:28)

❖ There is too much irrefutable evidence that Jesus is God and to conclude otherwise is to be in error and in jeopardy of eternal separation from God

*“The Father loves the Son and has given all things into His hand. **He who believes in the Son has everlasting life**; and **he who does not believe the Son shall not see life**, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (John 3:35)*



## Several Noteworthy Items:

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.” (John 1:1-2)**

- ❖ John is declaring that Jesus Christ was already in existence for all eternity thus having no beginning and no end
- ❖ Jesus Christ is not a created being – He has always been which taken literally would mean he preexisted or always existed
- ❖ John also declares that the Word (Jesus Christ) existed with God - two separate yet equal (in all things) beings.
- ❖ It is important to understand that the Word is a person and not an “attribute” of God.

## Several Noteworthy Items:

**“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it (John 1:3-5)**

- ❖ John is declaring that Jesus Christ created everything that came into being
- ❖ “That Jesus Christ created everything offers two further proofs of His deity. The Creator of all things must Himself be uncreated and only the eternal God is uncreated” (John McArthur, Commentary on John, Volume 1, page 20)
- ❖ This statement; ***“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made”*** declares Jesus to be the creator and given that scriptures portray God as creator, then Jesus must be God.

## Several Noteworthy Items:

**“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not comprehend it (John 1:3-5)**

- ❖ The use of the words “life” and “light” were not accidental
  - ✓ Jesus is life – “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the **Word of life** - the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and was manifested to us” (I John 1:1-2)
  - ✓ Jesus is light – “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12)

**There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light but was sent to bear witness of that Light. (John 1:6-8)**



“There was a man sent from God, whose name was John” (John 1:6)

- ❖ The “man” that the gospel writer is referring to is John the Baptist
  - ✓ “He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And **he will go on before the Lord**, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to **make ready a people prepared for the Lord.**” (Luke 1:16-17)
  - ✓ He was equipped (in the same manner as the Old Testament Prophets were) for a specific ministry which was to point others to Jesus Christ
- ❖ As great of a man that John the Baptist was – he was not “the Light” but the one who would “bear witness” of that Light so that others would come to trust in Jesus Christ (the True Light)



**That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God (John 1:9-13)**



“That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world.”  
(John 1:9)

- ❖ It is rather sad that even though the world was made through Him, John (the Gospel writer) will record:
  - ✓ “the world did not know Him”
  - ✓ “His own did not receive Him”
- ❖ Perhaps a testament to a turning away from God for over 4 centuries:
  - ✓ The world was blind to Him - ***“For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.”***  
(I Corinthians 1:21)
  - ✓ His own were blind to him – ***“He who is of God hears God’s words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God”*** (John 8:47)

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12-13)

- ❖ Although unbelief existed universally (both Jew and Gentile) there will also be those who “receive” the invitation to believe
  - ✓ This will be the message of John the Baptist
  - ✓ This is the message of Jesus
- ❖ Those who believe (receive Him) will become children of God – “***For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son.***” (John 3:16, 18)

**And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ ” And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him (John 1:14-18)**



“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14)

- ❖ This statement “The Word (Logos) became flesh” is literally saying that:
  - ✓ Jesus Christ (the eternal Logos) is God
  - ✓ He came to earth as a man
  - ✓ He didn’t just “appear” like a man but in fact became a man
- ❖ “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: **Who, being in very nature God**, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being **made in human likeness**. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross!” (Philippians 2:6-8)

***“John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, “This was He of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.’ ” And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.” (John 1:15-16)***

- ❖ John the Baptist gave continual testimony about Jesus
  - ✓ This was his mission and his purpose
  - ✓ John (born 6 month prior to Jesus) understood that his physical birth may have preceded the physical birth of Jesus, but he knew that Jesus was eternal, and like Peter recognized that Jesus was The Christ, The Son of The Living God.
  - ✓ Eventually John the Baptist knew that his ministry and purpose would end and give way to the message of grace – but there was still work to be done.
- ❖ “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God not by works, so that no one can boast.” (Ephesians 2:8-9)



***“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” (John 1:17-18)***

- ❖ **Grace triumphed over law** - “So the law was our guardian (our tutor) until Christ came that we might be justified by faith” (Galatians 3:24)
- ❖ **Through Jesus – God was made visible**; “The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 3:15-17)
- ❖ **Jesus is the explanation of God** – “If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?” (John 14:7-9)