

John 1:1-13

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[0 : 00] Gospel of John, John chapter 1, John chapter 1. Some of you say, well, this is maybe an odd place to start a Christmas series. You expected maybe that I would turn to the Gospel of Luke. You thought maybe we could even go to the Gospel of Matthew. Some of you have heard me preach six or seven Christmas series. And in each one of them, I go to those texts and go to those places.

And rest assured, we will make our way there. But this year, I would like for us, if the Lord allows us to tarry and gives us the opportunity to do it, I want us just to look at the wonder of this child. What child is this? I know that's a song that we sing this time of the year. But just to be reminded of the child that is to be laid in the manger. The one that we know that would grow up and live a sinless, perfect life.

To die a substitutionary death. To be buried in a borrowed tomb. To be raised to walk in a wonderful life and a fullness of life that he could be handled and touched. And he can ascend to the Father to intercede for us.

[0 : 57] But we just want to stand in the amazement of this child. And we want to acknowledge what child is this that actually came. Because it is often said, when a child is born, that there is really no telling that this child could be anything.

That, you know, they can be anything. And they could be whatever they make it. I remember when our older kids were younger, we were involved in sports. And we were doing things. And I had a dad tell me one time as I was coaching his son.

And he kind of helped me out. He said, your son will be anything you coach him to be. Or anything you make him to be. He will be whatever you tell him to be. And I kept thinking, well, I don't think it's always that way. You know, he's not going to be taller than he is.

He's not going to be anything of this nature. But the implication was that whatever you encourage them to be, they will become. And they can be these things. And you can encourage them. And you can put the right environment around them.

And you can support them in any of these number of ways. But we don't have to ask that question as it pertains to Christ. Because we don't need to look and see what he can become before we begin the Christmas account.

[1 : 57] We really need to know who he is to begin with. So our text this morning, we will be looking at the position he holds. The position he holds even before his coming. We will be looking at the position he holds.

Because to really stand in awe and worship of the coming child, we need to understand from where he came and who he was when he came.

Right? Not who he is going to become. But the amazement of it is, is the fact that he came as he did. And this leads us, as that hymn would say, to laud him with praise.

And to give him the glory he deserves. That this is a king laying in a manger. And it is an astounding account. So if you are physically able and desire to do so, would you join with me as we stand together.

And we read the word of God. Found in John chapter 1, verses 1 through 13. And then we'll pray. The word of God says, In the beginning was the word.

[2 : 57] And the word was with God. And the word was God. He was in the beginning with God. And all things came into being through him. And apart from him, nothing came into being that has come into being.

In him was life. And the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness. And the darkness did not comprehend it. There came a man sent from God whose name was John.

He came as a witness to testify about the light. So that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but he came to testify about the light.

There was the true light, which coming into the world enlightens every man. 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 those who were his own did not receive him. But as many as received him. To them he gave the right to become children of God. Even to those who believe in his name.

[3 : 56] Who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. Let's pray. Father, we thank you so much for this day.

We thank you for the glorious opportunity we have of gathering together. We do ask that you would move on behalf of Brother Jerry. We thank you for the hospital and the doctors and the paramedics. Lord, we pray that you would move in a powerful way there. We pray that you would place your hand upon them. We pray that you would move in a powerful way amongst each one of us. As the word of God has been seen and heard.

Lord, we pray that now you would speak to our hearts and minds. That through the truth of scripture, we would gain not only a greater understanding of you, but a greater love and worship for you.

Lord, we pray that you would draw us, your people, closer to you. And if there be one here today who does not know you as their Lord and Savior, may today be the day which they realize the wonder of your coming.

[5 : 00] And may it be for your glory and honor. And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. As we begin to look at what child this is, we want to look first at the position he holds.

I love the gospel of John in that it is unique. John pens more verses in the New Testament than anyone else. I know that some people have been told, well, Paul wrote more of the New Testament. There are more books attributed to the authorship of Paul, for sure. But there are more verses in the New Testament attributed to the apostle John than anyone else. John writes often of the love of God and of the love of the Father.

There is a wonderful thing that we understand because John gives these great depths. He is the one that many people believe, and I think rightfully so, leaned upon the bosom of the Savior the night of his betrayal, had such an intimate fellowship with the living Savior.

He was there on the Mount of Transfiguration. He was also there on the island of Patmos where he was exiled, and the Lord himself appeared to him. And the angel of the Lord ministered to him and began declaring to him the revelation of end times.

[6 : 11] John is used mildly in the things of God as he pens the word of God. It is of great comfort which we could come to him. But one of the things that I love most about John is that when John opens up his gospel, which is not a synoptic gospel.

Synoptic is just a nice word that means same. Matthew, Mark, and Luke, synoptic gospels, in which there are many similarities between the three of them. We don't need to get into, you know, Bible criticism here, and that doesn't mean it in a bad way, looking at if they shared a source or if there was texts that were the same there.

We know that the hand of God moved the man of God to write the word of God, and these three have similar attributes to them. John stands alone. It is by itself. There are some things that are included in the other three, but most of John is very unique to him.

One of the most unique factors of the gospel of John is his introduction, and that is the reality that when he comes to the person of Christ, he gives no genealogy.

Don't worry. Some of you know that when I preach Christmas series, quite often, if not every time, I go to the genealogy of Christ, and you love listening to me read those names that do not flow too well off a southern tongue from a man from Bellbuckle named Billy Joe, and I live in War Trace.

[7 : 31] It is what it is, and sometimes my tongue, as well as I try to train it to say these things, it just can't say them right. I just wish they had normal names like Billy Joe. That is such a normal name, right? It means so much more if it would just be normal names like mine.

So you get it. It's not that normal. I understand. But anyway, we will get to the genealogies of Christ because it is amazing. When we look, one of the portions of this series will be the people that God uses to bring this child into being.

And we stand amazed at the people that are included in the genealogies. I remember for years, I used to read through them and go, oh, these names, they're so hard to say. I don't like pronouncing

them.

And someone, who happens to be your pastor's wife, said, you know, I read somewhere that God included the names of Scripture because they're important. And so the pastor started taking attention to the names that God thought these people important enough to include their names. And I began to research their names. Now I'm amazed at the names that are in that list. And we'll get to that. But what I love about John is in John, there is no genealogy of Christ.

[8 : 37] Because in Matthew, Jesus is the coming king who is a descendant of the king. He is a descendant of David. In Luke, where we find the other genealogy of Christ, Jesus is the son of God.

So he is the son of man and the son of God. So we take that lineage all the way back to Adam. In John, we have no genealogy because Jesus is God.

And God has no genealogy. And so what we see here is the fullness of who Christ is. And he begins his gospel with this reality. I cannot give you the genealogy of God because there is no genesis for God.

There is no beginning point of God. And you need to understand who he is. Look at the position this child holds. We don't say held because he does not give up that position when he came as a child. He does not retake that position when he ascends to the father. It is the position he holds presently, eternally, forever. And we notice it here in the gospel.

[9 : 43] It says, in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God. The first thing that we notice, and we've already said it, is that he, this child, is eternal.

He is eternal. John takes us all the way back to the very first verse of scripture. He goes back to where the Bible begins.

He goes back to Genesis. Genesis means the beginning, right? And he goes back to the Genesis account where it says, in the beginning. Now, I love that because John takes us all the way back to the beginning, wherever the beginning is.

And he takes us to that point of beginning. And what John does is he positions you at the very beginning where the earth was formless and void and the spirit of God was ascending and hovering over the waters of the landscape, it tells us there in the Genesis account.

John takes you all the way back to the beginning. Today, scientists, at least scientists who are either atheists or agnostic do not even like to acknowledge the Big Bang because a Big Bang implies a starting point because when something goes bang, it started.

[10 : 48] Because most theologians will tell you, sure, there was a Big Bang because when God said, it happened. So surely something went boom, right? There is a beginning point. And what John does is he takes you all the way back to the beginning.

He sets you at the beginning and he tells you to look beyond the beginning, to look before anything started. And when you look beyond the beginning, beyond that, past all that, and you're standing at the very start of everything, Jesus is still out there.

He is there for as far as you can see. He is beyond it. It says that he is eternal. In the beginning was the Word. That is, before there was anything else, in the beginning, he was.

He was with God. He was already present. And we need to understand the eternal nature of the child who came. We need to understand the eternal nature of the one who took on the flesh of humanity in such a humble means.

Because if we do not understand first positionally he is eternal, then we are declaring that he has a beginning like anything else. But he does not. Because it tells us in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[11 : 55] He was in the beginning with God. He repeats himself over and over here to reiterate for us the eternal nature of the Savior.

He is before the beginning of the beginnings. You know, the book of Micah, Micah 5.2, which by the way, when we get to when the Magi come from the east and the prophets declare who he is and the scholars are looking and Herod wants to know where this child will be born.

The Magi are following the Numbers 24 prophecy. The wise men around Herod clearly go to Micah 5.2, and they understand that in Micah 5.2, out of Bethlehem he shall come.

And so they point them to Magi to the town of Bethlehem. But they forget to read the rest of that verse, right? Because if Herod had read the rest of the verse or heard the rest of the verse, maybe he wouldn't have done what he did which followed that.

But then that wouldn't have fulfilled Scripture either because the sound of Rachel weeping and mourning over the death of her children. See, it's amazing what happens when we look at Scripture. But if you read the rest of Micah 5.2, not only does it declare where the Savior will come from geographically, it tells you where he came from historically.

[13:10] Because it says out of Bethlehem, he whose goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity, it says. See, Micah says that what we're looking to be appearing in Bethlehem is not something that begins the moment it appears, but something that has already been, something that is eternal.

Even Micah declares that coming out of Bethlehem would be the one who would be king, whose goings forth were from long ago, that his days of eternity, that he is an eternal being.

This is what is so astounding about this Savior who has come. This is what is so amazing about this king who has made his appearance. We do not anticipate the one whose goings forth have been from long ago and his days from eternity to show up as a child, but he does.

What an amazing position this child holds. He is eternity, clothed in the smallest of humanity, and made accessible for all to come near.

somehow another the eternal has been swaddled in cloths and laid in a manger. But don't ever lose sight of the reality that the one that is laid in a manger is the eternal one from the beginning.

[14:36] In the beginning he was. And just stop right there. Before anything else was, he was. Yet, he decided to intervene at a time in history.

Number two, we not only see that he is eternal, we also notice that he is encompassing. According to the original Noah Webster dictionary of encompassing, encompassing means to encircle or to go around like one would circle the earth.

It means to hold everything to be confined within the realm of that circle. It is to hold something captive. So, Christ is encompassing. That is, everything is within the realm of his being.

It tells us here, all things came into being through him. Now, I don't know a whole lot about really dissecting words, but all means all. Right?

In the simplest of forms, all means all. And all things means all things. All things, it says, came into being through him. And just in case we missed it, John repeats it, and apart from him, nothing came into being that has come into being.

[15:48] So that is, everything that we see, everything that we can touch, everything that we can handle, everything that is around us, all things have come into being through him. You say, well, wait a minute, pastor, there are some things that were not around when John was writing this.

There are many inventions that have come through the time of John. There are many technological advancements. I don't think John was walking around with a computer in his pocket, called a phone. I don't think he had any of those things, and I say, you're exactly right.

But when we understand that man created these things, and there is a creator of man, then through Christ, everything that has come into being has come into being through him. It says that all things that have ever come into being have come into being through him.

He is encompassing. They fall within the realm of his circle, it tells us. He says that he is the light that shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

He is that which enlightens the dark world. He sets it apart. All things are bound up in him, not only the things, but even all life. It says in him was life, and the life was the light of men.

[16:54] So not only do all things fall within the realm of his circle, so does all of life. Read your Genesis account. This is why when I first came here as pastor, we started our Sunday night and Wednesday night.

At that time, we were only doing Sunday night. Wednesday nights, we were doing something different, but my first Sunday night as pastor here, not the Sunday that I preached in view of a calling. That would have been the last Sunday in January 2016, but the very first Sunday in February of 2016, my very first Sunday night message as pastor was Genesis 1, 1 and following. And we have now made our way to the book of 2 Kings on Sunday nights and Wednesday nights. We have since transitioned, but why do we start in Genesis 1? It is because every problem of man is found within the first 11 chapters of scripture, Genesis 1 through 11, and then God's answer to the problem of man is found in Genesis 12 and following until you get to the end of the book of Revelation.

But we need to understand what happened in the beginning before we can know what's going on in the present so that we can have an expectation of what to expect in the future, right? But when you go to Genesis 1, what you find is that every new aspect of creation, what we call the creation event, every time God did something new, it says, and God said, let there be light and there was light. And God said, and God said, and God said, and God said, with every aspect of creation, it is preceded by the statement, and God said. And then John tells us in the beginning was the word. [18:27] Now you don't say a thing without words, right? We say use your words because words matter. I could stand up here and make all kinds of gestures, and I could stand up here and make all kinds of sounds, but I have not said a thing until I use words.

And it says, in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God, and through him everything came into being that has come into being. Why? Because, and God said. He is the very word of God, and he is God himself.

He is all-encompassing. Everything is in the sphere of his being. And you need to understand that. Because how else will we understand that he came to his own?

He came to that which he owned. See those swaddling cloths wrapped around him? Those are his. See that feeding trough he's laid in? That's his. See that manger? That's his. You see that fine house down the road? That's his.

You see that inn in which there's no room? That's his. You see those animals around him? That's his. You see those shepherds out in the field? Those are his. One of the wonderful things that we see in the Christmas account found in Luke, it says that the angels of the Lord went to the shepherds in the field to declare the birth of the Lord.

[19:33] Now think about that for just a moment. The same word used to describe the child laying in the manger is the same word used to describe whose angels it was that was making the declaration. So the moment he was entering humanity he was also declaring to his angels that were his to go stand on a hill for some shepherds to understand the glory of the Lord around them.

The shepherds are his. The angels are his. It is all his. And yet he came in such a humble fashion. What an eternal all encompassing child this is.

He is eternal. He is encompassing. Number three. He is expected. He is expected.

It tells us there came a man sent from God. Now wait a minute. Who is this that comes and is laid in that manger? In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God.

So when the word became flesh and dwelt among us and we call him Emmanuel. He if we were to continue reading on this Emmanuel which is God with us is now laying in a manger but shortly before he decided to come and dwell among us he decided that he would fashion one in the womb of a lady named Elizabeth who would go before him six months before him that would come and be a mouthpiece for him.

[20:57] It is another amazing story that we will hopefully see. I know I've used the word amazing a number of times. Some of you don't know it. A side note here. Your pastor's wife keeps count of how many times I use words. And she tells me after you sure did like that word today.

And I told her every now and then see now it's always in my mind. It's not a bad thing. Please none of you keep count of my words because if you tell me you're keeping count of my words I say well you should have been listening to other things. I won't say that to her.

Okay. I told her every now and I said we need some like baseball signs. If I start saying a word too much you can start doing something you know and it's complete squirrel.

I'm sorry. We'll get there. But anyway so what we notice here is that the one who came also sent a forerunner before he came.

It says there came a man sent from God whose name was John. We'll notice John. We'll pay a little bit more attention there and we'll begin to look at the people that God uses. He came as a witness to testify about the light so that all might believe through him.

[21:55] So why did he come? So that man may believe. Right? He came as a witness. The word witness also means sign. So he came as a testimonial sign so that all might believe through him.

He came as a witness so that he might testify about the light so that all might believe through him. He was not the light but he came to testify about the light. So we see here that God did not come unannounced.

This baby came with a forerunner, just as he declares in the book of Malachi. The Old Testament ends with the declaration of the forerunner coming before the Savior. And the New Testament

begins with the announcement of the forerunner who's coming before the Savior. It is one story bridged by 400 plus years of silence. But what we also notice here is that God does not come unannounced. He comes in a manner in which he was to be expected. I could show up at your house in an unannounced fashion. I could show up at your house and just knock on your door and you may not expect me and you may be taken back because, hey, the pastor is here. Before I came, I could send a letter maybe six months in advance and tell you, hey, I'm coming on such and such day.

[22 : 59] And you may forget. Or I may be able to send a letter in a repeated fashion so that each and every day you get a letter that I'm coming, that I'm coming, that I'm coming, that I'm coming, that I'm coming. And if you are caught off guard when I show up, then it is not my fault, but rather it is your fault because I announced my intention to come.

God does that. He sends a testimonial sign before he shows up and he sends one so that the people would be prepared and they would be expected. Again, we should not be surprised by this because I told you that John takes us back to the book of Genesis.

As a matter of fact, John 1 takes us back to Genesis 1, not only within the beginning and the word and everything he said, but read your Genesis 1 account. It tells us in creation, we sang about it just a few moments ago, that in the creation, God set the sun and the moon and the stars and the planets in the sky.

Have you ever wondered why they're there? Last night was a very clear night. You could sit out there and you could look at the stars and hopefully you did that and you stand amazed at the display of God across the heavens.

We don't have to look beyond there and wonder is there any other life out there. Rather look at that and say who created that? And you stand in the wonder of his creative work.

[24 : 18] Genesis 1 tells us why they are there. As a matter of fact, when he set them in the heavens, God himself said, these will be for a sign and for seasons.

That is, the stars and the planets and the sun and the moon, those things are signs set to remind us that someone greater than us exists.

They are signs across the heavens. They are there to testify to his glory and honor. This is why when we turn to Romans chapter 1, Paul could declare that all men are without excuse because what the creator has created is enough to testify to his reality.

That what may be known of him has been created by him and revealed to them. He says that all men are without excuse. Why? Because every individual lives underneath the testimonial sign of the heavens.

And they look up to the stars in the sky and they say, wow! And it would be, I have to say it this way, utter ignorance to say those things must have just shown up someday.

[25 : 33] But oh, now ignorance is the right word there. It's not the word I wanted to use, but it's the right word. Ignorance just implies a lack of understanding and a lack of knowledge.

It does not imply a lack of intellectual ability. But for those of us who know when we look to the stars and we look up to the sky, we see the signs.

The man rejected that sign. So God sent another sign. He sent a weird guy wearing camel robes with a leather belt eating wild honey and locusts out in the wilderness who is declaring that one is coming who is greater than I the thong of whose sandal straps I am not able to unloose.

He came to testify about the coming light who said, Behold, the Lamb of God who is slain before the foundation of the world. Who took the people that were following him and pointed them to the Savior.

He said, He must increase but I must decrease. See, this is the expected one. And here he is as a child laying in a manger.

[26 : 39] the one that all of creation has testified that someday he will come and he will dwell among us. He is the expected one. He is eternal. He is encompassing.

He is expected. Fourth and finally, my friend, he is empowering. He is empowering. We don't have to wonder what this child is going to do when he grows up.

We can stand and wonder of what he can do as soon as he comes. It tells us there was the true light which coming into the world enlightens every man.

He was in the world and the world was made through him. That's his encompassing ability. And the world did not know him. He came to his own. That is his own people and those who were his own

did not receive him. He was rejected, neglected, and forsaken which is a fulfillment of the Isaiah prophecy.

But look at what it says. Here is his empowering ability. But as many as received him, but as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God.

[27 : 49] But as many as received them, to them he gave the right. Listen, I have four kids, three in-laws, two daughters-in-law and a son-in-law, three grandchildren, but none of them can give you the right to become my child.

None of them. They cannot give you the rights. That is my prerogative. We have added to our family through the wonder of adoption.

We adopted him. He did not choose us. There have been moments just transparently with you in which he said he wished we didn't choose him. And I looked at him and I said, that's not your choice.

We chose him. I received a text message the same day my wife did. I was sitting in the office right over here, 105 Vine Street. I was a fresh new pastor of a church that had been in existence for almost 150 years, sitting in there studying, all of a sudden my phone goes off and there's this picture of a child that's flashed across the screen.

My wife's just a few miles down the road and before she could respond I said, yes, we'll take him. Go forward about three more years. We chose him to adoption. We set the court date.

[29 : 13] We filed the papers. We went into the proceeding. We went into the court case. We did all the action. He was present.

Some of you were present. But he had no power to do anything about it. Our kids didn't do it. The three biological children we were blessed with, they couldn't do it.

We had to do it. They could not give him that right. Did they accept him? Sure. Has he got on their nerves like a little brother? Absolutely. But they had no power nor ability to give him the right to be our child.

We did that. But not so with this child. But to those who receive him, he gives them the right to become the children of God.

Do you notice that? He has that authority. He has that power. He has that ability. He can say, but Father, they have accepted me.

[30 : 17] But they believe in me. They've received my word. And he lives daily to intercede on behalf of you and me. To give us the right to be called the children of God through the spirit of adoption.

He goes to the Father because he came from the Father. And when he goes before the Father, he says, Father, let me bring you those that are mine. And he gives us the right, it says. But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become the children of God.

Even to those who believe in his name. Oh, what power, what wonder, what empowerment this child has. He gives us the right.

But notice what it says in verse 13. Who were born to be born again. We'll read that in John chapter 3 if we were to go there, right? Who were born, it says, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man.

Just settle this issue right here. You are not a child of God if you have experienced such reality. Because it was your will. You say, oh, no, no, pastor, I want it to be.

[31 : 27] I'm not arguing with you on personal preferences. It says, nor of the will of man, nor of the will of the flesh. It's not because you willed it so.

It's not because you thought it would be better so. John reminds us that he's been given this empowering ability. Why? But of God. because naturally you do not receive him, neither do I.

But it is the will of God to draw us by the son of God that we may become the children of God. That's why we fall down and we will all him with praise and we declare he is king of kings.

because he has the ability and we don't. You cannot will yourself into heaven. You cannot will yourself into the family. You cannot make yourself a child of the king, but you can go to the child who is the king.

You can believe in him and it's the will of the father to draw you into the family. Give him the praise. It's not your efforts nor mine who were born.

[32 : 39] It says, not of blood nor the will of the flesh nor the will of man but of God. What wondrous child is this?

Let's pray. Father, thank you so much. Thank you for this season. Thank you for the opportunity to be together with our church family.

We thank you for your word. We pray that you continue to speak to every heart and mind through your word. Lord, through the power and presence of your Holy Spirit, you would reveal to us where we stand with the Savior.

Lord, for those of us who know you, may we declare your praise. For those of us who do not, may we fall on our knees and declare your worthiness to be our Savior. And we ask it all in Christ's name.

Amen. Amen.

[34 : 22] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.

[38 : 53] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.