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The Word Incarnate John 1:12-13 Part 2

Have you been following the news? The United States economy is being described as the worst since the great depression. The threat of terrorism continues to escalate. Even this last week a man was arrested for attempting to sell a "surface-to-air missile" to a man who he thought was a terrorist committed to bringing down an American airliner. Our involvement in Iraq appears to have been much more troublesome than what many people believed that it would be. The state of California is trying to function while suffering a 38 billion-dollar deficit. We are as a state facing a recall election with 135 names on the ballot. This only is the tip of the iceberg of what is going on around us and it isn't even touching on what is happening to the individual families that are represented here this weekend.

But even though this is true, hopefully we are not in any way tempted to become anxious or to be become discouraged. Certainly this positive upbeat attitude is not the result of anything most likely happening around us or to us but rather it is the result of something else which is of much greater significance. What is that? This question leads us into the passage that we will be studying this weekend.

We are considering the introduction to the Gospel of John. It goes from **John 1:1** and concludes with **John 1:18**. These eighteen verses answer the question What makes Jesus qualified to reveal God to man? In seeking to answer this question from our study of this passage what have we learned so far?

First of all, what we learned about the Word and God in John 1:1-2 makes Jesus qualified to reveal God to man. Let me read this passage for you, "**In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) He was in the beginning with God.**" Obviously being God places the Word in a perfect position to reveal God to man. What else makes Jesus qualified to reveal God to man?

What we learned about the Word and Creation in John 1:3-5 makes Jesus qualified to reveal God to man. Let me read this passage for you, "**All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. (4) In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. (5) And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.**" Certainly the Word in His creative activity put Himself in a very proactive position to communicate with this world and to point them heavenward. Unfortunately because of the sin of Adam and the darkened state of this world this communication through creation was only marginally successful.

The Word always knew that he would have to come and address the sin problem that blanketed this world in darkness. But before the Word could come there was a final step that had to be taken prophetically according to Isaiah 40:3. A specific person would have to come into this world, as a forerunner, as a voice crying in the wilderness, before Jesus the light of this world, could enter the world's stage.

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This leads us to the next thing that makes Jesus qualified to reveal God to man? What is it?

What we learned about the Word and John the Baptist in John 1:6-8 makes Jesus qualified to reveal God to man. Let me read this passage for you, "**There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. (7) He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through Him. (8) He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light.**" John the Baptist fulfilled Isaiah's prophecy which made it possible for the true light to enter the world. Knowing that this very special voice had indeed come into the world leads us to the next thing that makes Jesus qualified to reveal God to man? What is it?

What we learned about the Word incarnate in John 1:9-14 makes Jesus qualified to reveal God to man. Let me once again read this passage for you. I will be reading from the New American Standard Bible, "**There was the true light, which, coming to the world, enlightens every man. (10) He was in the world, and the world was made through Him and the world did not know Him. (11) He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. (12) 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, (13) who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. (14) And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.**" This is the passage that we began to study last week. What have we learned so far about the Word incarnate?

We learned that the Word, the true light, who alone is able to enlighten every man, chose to come into the world (John 1:9) Let us read **John 1:9, "There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man."** The coming of Christ, the true light, which John says, "enlightens every man" does not mean that every man is enlightened regardless of their response to the light but only that every man who is enlightened has been enlightened by the true light and not by any other light.

And what else did we learn about the Word incarnate? We learned that the true light was rejected. (John 1:10-11). Let me read for you **John 1:10-11, "He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. (11) He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him."** What a tragedy! Rejected by the world and also rejected by his own! Fortunately we are not yet done with this passage. What is the next thing that we learn?

We learn that though the true light was rejected by the multitudes there were some who chose to receive Him (John 1:12). Let us look at the very first phrase of **John 1:12 "But as many as received Him."** Yes it is true that the Word, or in other words the true light, was rejected by the world and by His own but John does not want us to think the rejection, that he describes for us in **John 1:10-11**, was without certain exceptions.

The world from the time of the fall of man has consistently rejected the Lord and His messengers but even in spite of this there have always been a faithful remnant. And the Apostle John wants us to understand this. This is why he starts **John 1:12** by saying, "**But as many as received Him.**" This simple but important phrase changes the whole tone of the passage.

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We are no longer looking at the true light being rejected by the world's multitudes but rather we are now looking at the true light being received by God's faithful remnant. What is the benefit to receiving the light of the world into our lives?

On the basis of **John 1:9** we might anticipate that the apostle would go on to say something like this, "**But as many as received Him they were enlightened.**" It is of course true that all those that received the true light were enlightened. It is true that they at the instant they received Him were able to see God and to know God in a relational sense. But John wants to go beyond what he had already said and he does this in the very next phrase, He says "**But as many as received Him to them He gave the right to become the children of God.**" This is an incredible statement.

Those who receive the Word become the children of God (John 1:12). It can't get any better than this! Certainly the Apostle John would say this. Consider what he wrote in **1 John 3:1-2**, "**See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called the children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (2) Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is.**" John was overwhelmed by the special relationship he enjoyed with God and we should be as well. Becoming a child of God should be viewed by us as the wonder of all wonders. Becoming a child of God is better than being a passenger on the ark. Becoming a child of God is better than witnessing the plagues and being delivered from Egyptian bondage.

Those who become a part of God's family by receiving Christ no longer have to fear judgment and neither do they ever again have to feel alienated, alone or insecure. They have access to their Father's throne of grace. Not anybody's throne but to their father's throne. **1 Peter 5:7** tell us "**cast all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.**" Why does He care for us? Because when we received the Word, when we received the true light, when we received Christ, we became the children of God

How important is it for us to be confident that we are enjoying this very special relationship with God? I recently was diagnosed with cancer. Not only was this a potential threat to the quality of my life but it was even a potential threat to my life itself. Certainly I could have become anxious but this never happened. Why? Because I truly believe that I have received Christ, I truly believe that I have received the Word, I have come to believe that I have received the true light and because of this I am confident that God is my father and that He cares for me. Why should I be anxious? Obviously I have no reason to be anxious.

I have had this experience because I know that I have received Christ and therefore have this special relationship with God. But there may be some here this weekend who may not at all be confident that having received Christ that they have a special relationship with God or they are not at all confident that they in fact have received Christ. I would like to take a few moments and seek to minister to this possible anxiety by asking two different questions which both can be answered in the context of **John 1:12**.

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How can those who have received Christ be assured that they in fact have become the children of God? First of all, those who have received Christ can be assured they have become God's children based on the authority of God Himself. Let us look once again at **John 1:12**, "**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.**"

What does John say happens to those who receive Christ? It says, "that they are given the right." Some of you may have a King James Bible here this weekend and it will read "to them gave He power." Which is the better translation? The NAS translation is the better translation. The word translated "right" (EXCOUSIA) means that there is a freedom to act or an authority to act. When a person chooses to receive Christ there is absolutely no power in heaven or earth that can stop him from becoming a child of God. Why? Because God has given the right or the authority to that person who has received Christ to become His child and enjoy that special relationship with Him.

But someone might say but could the person who is given this authority by God choose not to exercise it? In other words, could the person who is given this authority by God to become His child actually choose not to do so? Based on **John 1:13**, as we will see, this would be absurd. Those who receive Christ based on the authority of God Himself will not probably become a child of God they will become a child of God.

Having answered the question of how those who have received Christ can be assured that they in fact have become the children of God leaves us with only one more outstanding question in response to assurance. What is this last outstanding question? This is the question. How do we know if we have in fact received Christ?

We can be confident that we have received Christ and therefore have been given the right to become a child of God if we have believed in the name of Christ. Let us look once again at **John 1:12**, "**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.**" If we have not received Christ then we have not chosen to believe in His name and if we have not chosen to believe in His name then we have not received Christ. These phrases are looking at the same thing.

Let us first of all answer the question, what does John mean when he says, "to those who believe in His name." There are two keys to understanding this expression. The first key is appreciating the importance of the phrase "His name." All of us when we are having children give a great deal of thought to the name we might give to our child. Some people might try to get their children's names to rhyme or for all their children's names to start with the same letter or perhaps parents might attempt to make sure all their children's names are unique or not unique depending on the bent of the parent. Some Christian parents might choose to give their children a biblical name. There are all kinds of reasons why parents give certain names to children. But even though the giving of names is important to many parents for many different reasons. None of those reasons will rise up to the level of importance that scriptures sometimes give to the "name" when it appears in a particular context such as we have here.

When John talks about "to those who believe in His name," he is not talking about us accepting the fact that Christ's given name was "Jesus," even though the name of Jesus is an important name

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meaning "Savior." When John is talking about believing in Christ's name he is talking about believing in the person of Christ as He is revealed in the Scripture (John 20:31). He is talking about seeing Jesus as God sees Jesus.

This is consistent with God's action of changing Abram's name to Abraham and Jacobs name to Israel. This is also consistent with John's purpose statement in **John 20:31**. What does it say? **"But these things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name."** In John's purpose statement he is not simply calling us to believe in Jesus, he is not simply calling us to believe in the Lord Jesus, but he is calling us to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. *If we want to understand what John means by "to those who believe in His name" it begins with understanding the significance of "His name." And the second key is to understand what John meant by the phrase "believing in."*

Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words tells us that the word "believing" (PISTEUEIN) means persuaded, hence to put confidence in, to trust, not mere assent. If we are truly persuaded that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God then we must receive Him as such. Obviously believing in the name of Christ is not simply giving mental assent to certain facts about Jesus it goes beyond that.

Certainly when Jesus called His disciples we see this. What did He say to Peter and Andrew in **Matthew 4:19** **"Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."** And then shortly after this he called James and John to follow Him as well. You might say that the call of Christ on the 12 disciples was different than the call of Christ to the multitudes but it wasn't. What did He say in **Luke 9:23-24**? **"And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. (24) For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it."** Believing in Jesus is all about entrusting ourselves to Jesus as Jesus has been revealed in the Scripture. And if we have been persuaded to believe in Jesus as He has been revealed in the scriptures then certainly we will put our faith in Jesus as the Christ the Son of God choosing to follow Him.

What are the two keys to understanding what John means by "to those who believe in His name?" The first key is understanding the significance of "His name" and the second key is understanding what John means by the Phrase "believing in." *If we want to understand what John means by "to those who believe in His name" it begins with understanding the significance of "His name." And the second key is to understand what John mean by the phrase "believing in."*

Another way of understanding the phrase "believing in His name" is to simply understanding it as "receiving Christ." For us to believe in His name is to receive Christ and for us to receive Christ is to believe in His name. This decision will dramatically change our lives for the better no matter what is happening around us or to us.

Have you received Christ? You can only say that you have received Christ if you are one of those who has chosen to believe in His name. And those who have chosen to believe in His name do not have to guess whether or not they have received Him, they will know by the way they live their lives.

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What have we learned about the Word incarnate so far in John 1:9-14 that qualifies Him to reveal God to man? First of all we learned that the Word, the true light, who alone is able to enlighten every man, chose to come into the world in **John 1:9**. Secondly, we learned that the true light was rejected in **John 1:10-11**. And thirdly we learned that though the true light was rejected by the multitudes there are some who choose to receive Him (John 1:12). What else do we learn?

Those who become children of God can only become children of God by the grace of God. (John 1:13). Let us read **John 1:13, "Who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."** Being born into the family of God is quite different from being born into the human family.

First of all, being born into the human family requires a sexual encounter between a man and a woman. This is most likely communicated by the phrase, "Who were born not of blood" or in other words, literally speaking, "Who were born not of bloods." John then traces this sexual encounter back to the desire of the flesh to have this sexual encounter. This is appears to be communicated in the next phrase, "nor of the will of the flesh." And then he traces the desire for the sexual encounter back to the man. This is seen in the very next phrase, "nor of the will of man." The word for "man" is not the generic word for mankind but rather the word that refers to the male. John in **John 1:13**, traces for the readers, what he sees as the steps that lead up to someone being born into the human family.

But then John concludes John 1:13 by saying that if someone is going to become a child of God it will only happen by God's choice (Ephesians 2:8-9). John says, "**who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**"

It is true that those that who have received Christ have been granted the authority by Christ to become His child but receiving Christ has nothing to do with our choice but rather His choice. This is why **Ephesians 2:8-9** says, "**For by grace you have been saved through faith and not of yourselves it is a gift of God not of works lest any man should boast.**"

CONCLUSION

There are a lot of uncertainties in this world. There is a lot of trouble in this world. But it is a wonderful thing to say along with John in **1 John 3:1, "See How great of love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God."**