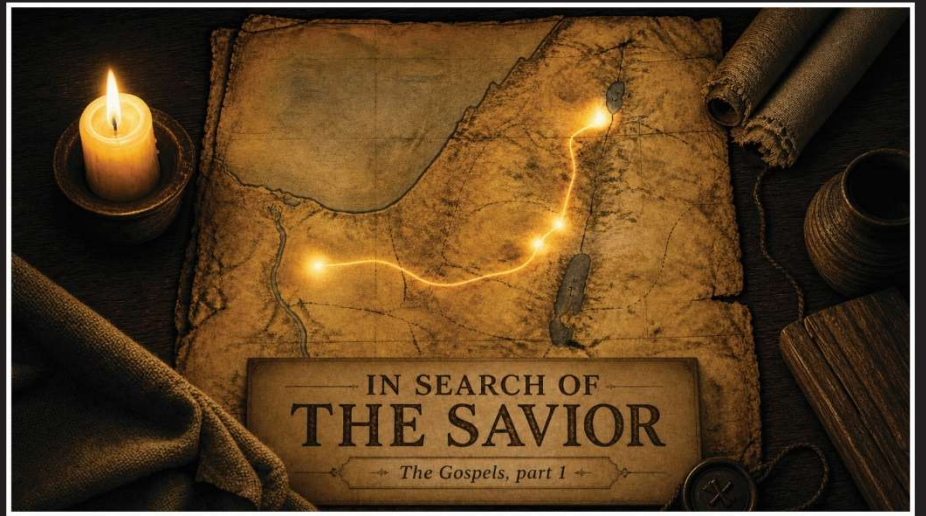




Midweek Study

Dr. Josh Franklin • Senior Pastor



Before Bethlehem

John 1:1-18

"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 (see Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:1-2)

Matthew traces Jesus' genealogy back to Abraham, and Luke carries it all the way to Adam. But John goes back much, much further than either of them. Before the universe had a beginning, the eternal Word already existed. Jesus existed long before Bethlehem. Actually, Jesus was involved in creating all things and is involved in sustaining all things. **Just as invisible thoughts are expressed in words, the invisible God expressed Himself through His Word – Jesus!** There are **three ways** Jesus, as the Living Word, reveals who God really is:

The Contrast:

The Bible	Jesus
God on Paper	God in a Person
The Written Word	The Living Word
God in a Book	God in a Body
God on a Leaf	God in a Life

I. As the Word, Christ Was God Being **Vocal** (*John 1:1-5; Hebrews 1:1-2*)

A. The Eternal **Son** (1-2)

B. The Creative **Source** (3-4)

C. The Unstoppable **Shining** (5)

II. As the Word, Christ Was God Being **Visible** (*John 1:9-14, 18; Colossians 1:15*)

The incarnation was not a subtraction of deity but the addition of humanity. If you want to know what God looks like, open the Gospels and look at Jesus.

A. He Was **Rejected** by His Own (10-11)

B. He Was **Received** by Those Who Believed (12-13)

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name."

C. He **Resided** Among Us (14-18)

- The Greek word for "dwelt" (v.14) means to tabernacle or to pitch a tent. Just as the tabernacle was God's living presence in the middle of Israel's camp in the wilderness, Jesus is God's living presence in the middle of all humanity.

"He is the image of the invisible God" (Colossians 1:15, NKJV). "For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9, NKJV). "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9, NKJV). The second commandment (Exodus 20:4) told Israel not to make graven images because no human-made image could adequately represent God. But Jesus is the one image that God Himself made of Himself.

III. As the Word, Christ Was God Being **Victorious** (John 1:5, 12; Heb. 2:14; 1 Jn 3:8)

Jesus did not come only to reveal the Father and speak the Father's language to us. He came to win a victory for us, which He did at the cross.

A. The Victory **Announced** from the Very Beginning (v. 5; Genesis 3:15)

B. The Victory **Accomplished** Through the Cross (Hebrews 2:14; 1 John 3:8)

C. The Victory **Available** to All Who Receive Him (v. 12, 16-17)

Key Terms:		
Term	Definition	Reference
Virgin Birth	Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, without a human father	Luke 1:35
Jesus	"The Lord saves" / "Jehovah saves" (Old Testament equivalent: Joshua)	Matthew 1:21
Emmanuel	"God with us"	Matthew 1:23
Eternal Word (Logos)	The visible expression of the invisible God	Colossians 1:15
Incarnation	When God came in human flesh	John 1:14

Applications For Today:

- Praise God that He is Not Distant.** Some people say, "If God is real, why does He not just show Himself?" He did. He showed up two thousand years ago. He tabernacled among us. He is Emmanuel, God with us, and He is present with us now as well. (Hebrews 4:15-16; Matthew 28:20)
- Have You Received the Living Word?** The open invitation of verse 12 is still standing. If you have never personally received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, what are you waiting for? (see 2 Corinthians 6:2)
- Receive Jesus as He Revealed Himself to Us.** We should not fabricate a Jesus we are comfortable worshipping. Worship Him for Who He is! You can't simply say silly statements like "Jesus is a good man, a moral teacher, or an inspiring religious founder." He doesn't give us those options. He is the God-man. A good moral teacher does not go around claiming to be God. Jesus either is exactly who He claimed to be, or He was a liar or a madman.
- Study the Gospels to Know God Better.** Because Jesus is the visible expression of the invisible God, the best way to know what God is like is to study the Gospels carefully. What makes Jesus angry? Who does He stop for? Who does He seek out? Each answer tells you more about God. (see John 14:9; Hebrews 1:1-2)