



CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

February 6, 2022

*"That All Might Believe"**SS at 9:30. Service at 10:30 with King's Kids.*NEWS

Wednesday Night 6:30

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**JOHN 1:1-5 ~ Review**

The Bible opens with what seems like the “\_\_\_\_\_.” That’s what Genesis means. But it starts with \_\_\_\_\_ already existing...

This is a message for \_\_\_\_\_. Since the God of Abraham created \_\_\_\_\_, He is the God of \_\_\_\_\_.

That is what the prologue of our Gospel does as well. The \_\_\_\_\_ is without beginning and He is the \_\_\_\_\_ of all people.

Neither the opening of Genesis, nor of John, is an account of how things came to be, or an explanation of how things are now. Neither is a statement about origin, or creation, and neither is about you and me - these are both statements to us, about \_\_\_\_\_.

As humans we want more \_\_\_\_\_ about the creative process and the origins of our existence and the meaning for our own life. God instead tells us something about Himself, and that itself, gives us all the meaning we could ever hope for...

“God is, and in Him, you can be.”

*Fill out the other side, detach this part of the page, and place it in the offering plate or the prayer/suggestion box in the lobby or with an Elder or Deacon of the church.*

*God Bless You!*

**JOHN 1:6-13 ~**

This natural human man was sent by God for a \_\_\_\_\_. It is ἀποστέλλω (ä-pōs-tēl-lō) from which we get our word \_\_\_\_\_, an emissary or ambassador on the mission with the sender's full \_\_\_\_\_. His mission was to bear "Witness," the noun and "Testify," the verb [μαρτυρία (märtü-řē-ä), and μαρτυρέω (märtü-řē-ō), respectively].

Modern American Christians will \_\_\_\_\_ God, by complaining, over minor inconveniences, whereas ancient Roman Christians refused to \_\_\_\_\_ God even when facing unspeakable horrors. Who among us does not need an \_\_\_\_\_ adjustment?

This John's name was Ἰωάννης (ē-ō-än-nās). The Greek name approximating יְהוֹחָנָן (yō-xā-nän). This John, the son of the priest Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth, was known as the \_\_\_\_\_.

Why would God send an ambassador to proclaim this Light? So that \_\_\_\_\_ might believe.

To believe is what God credited to Abraham as \_\_\_\_\_ (Romans 4:1-8). Believing is what is required - that is active faith and trust in the completed work of the Word on your behalf.

In this Gospel, John uses the verb form, to believe, 101 times. Paul uses it 66 times in Romans and 27 times in the Galatians, his two most Gospel-like Letters.

Salvific belief is not only a mental \_\_\_\_\_ to a set of propositions. It is a personal, active, ongoing, and important choice to believe in the \_\_\_\_\_.

The term "World" here is focused on humanity as a whole. The Word was rejected at large, but more shockingly, by the \_\_\_\_\_ to whom He specifically came. As bleak as is, there were exceptions.

Everyone who "Received," the Word, or to put it another way, "Who believe in His name," were given the authority, power, and right to become the very \_\_\_\_\_ of Almighty God.

Write a brief note – detach and place in the offering, or the prayer box, or give it to a Deacon or Elder.

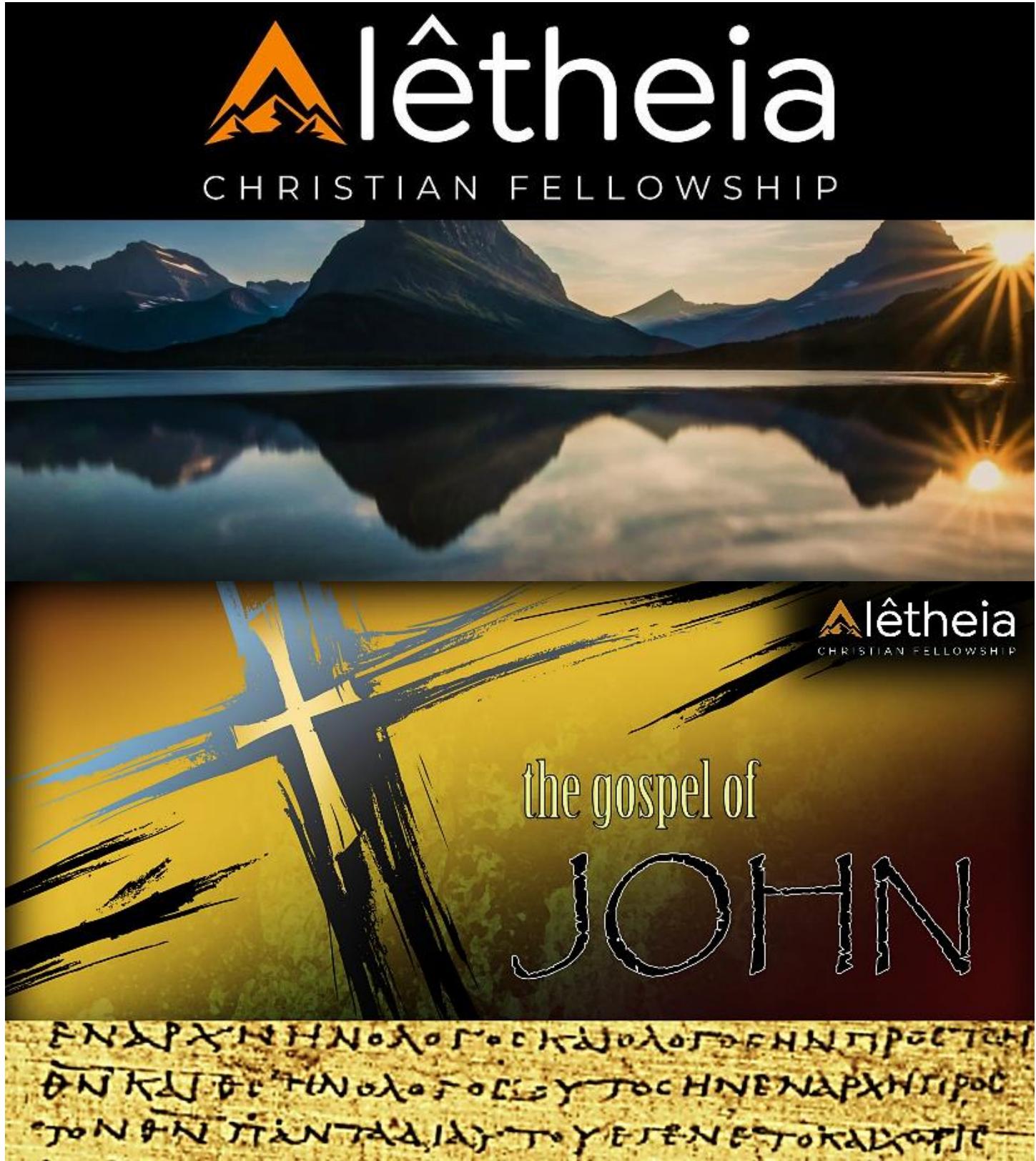
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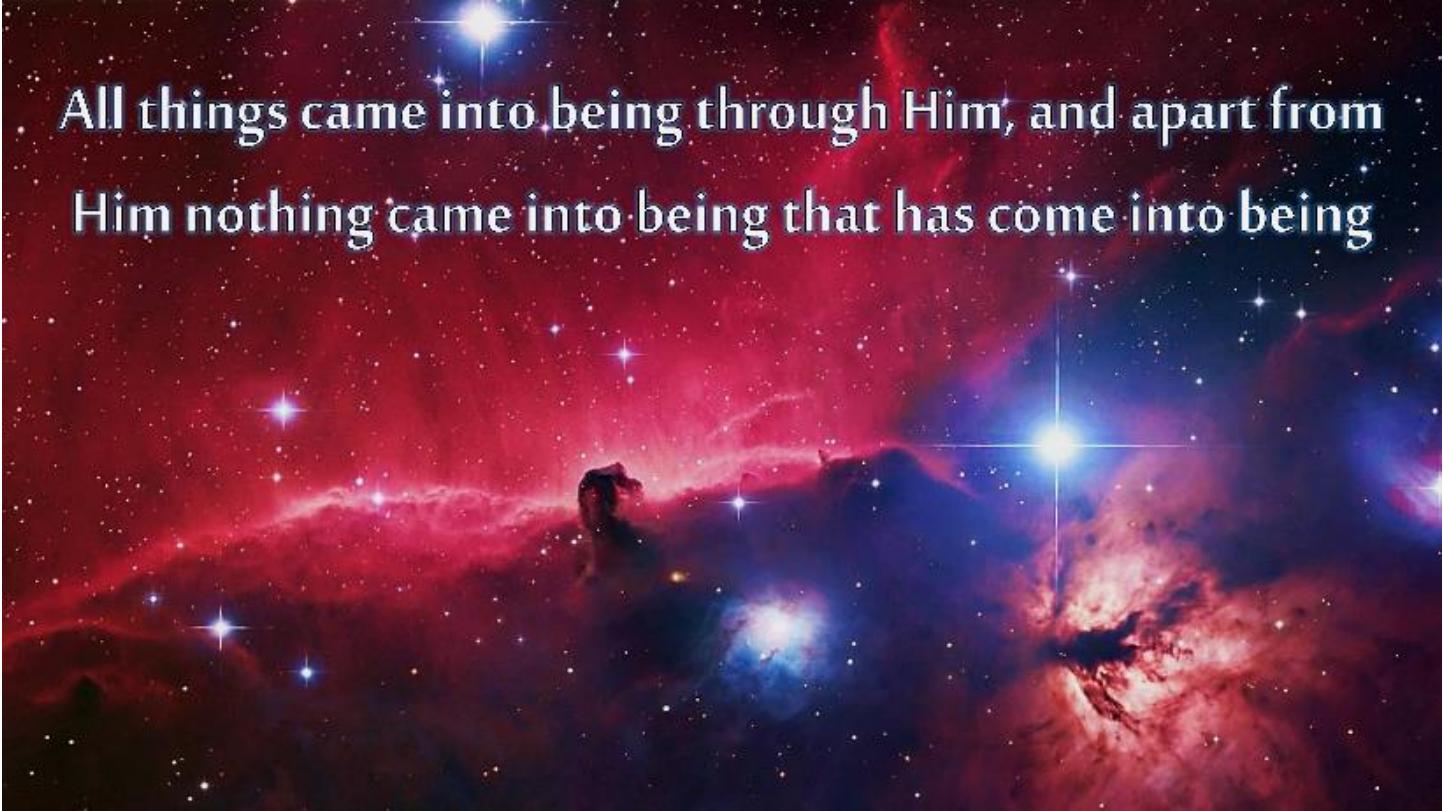


Since it's been a while, a little review is in order. We covered the prologue of John's Gospel constituting the first 5 verses. Many years ago, I came up with my own amplified translation of those verses: John 1:1-5,

1Before anything at all had been created, there already existed the Word. Further, the Word and the One True God existed together in close personal harmonious intimacy. Beyond that, the Word, while not the one true God in total by Himself was Himself fully the one true God.

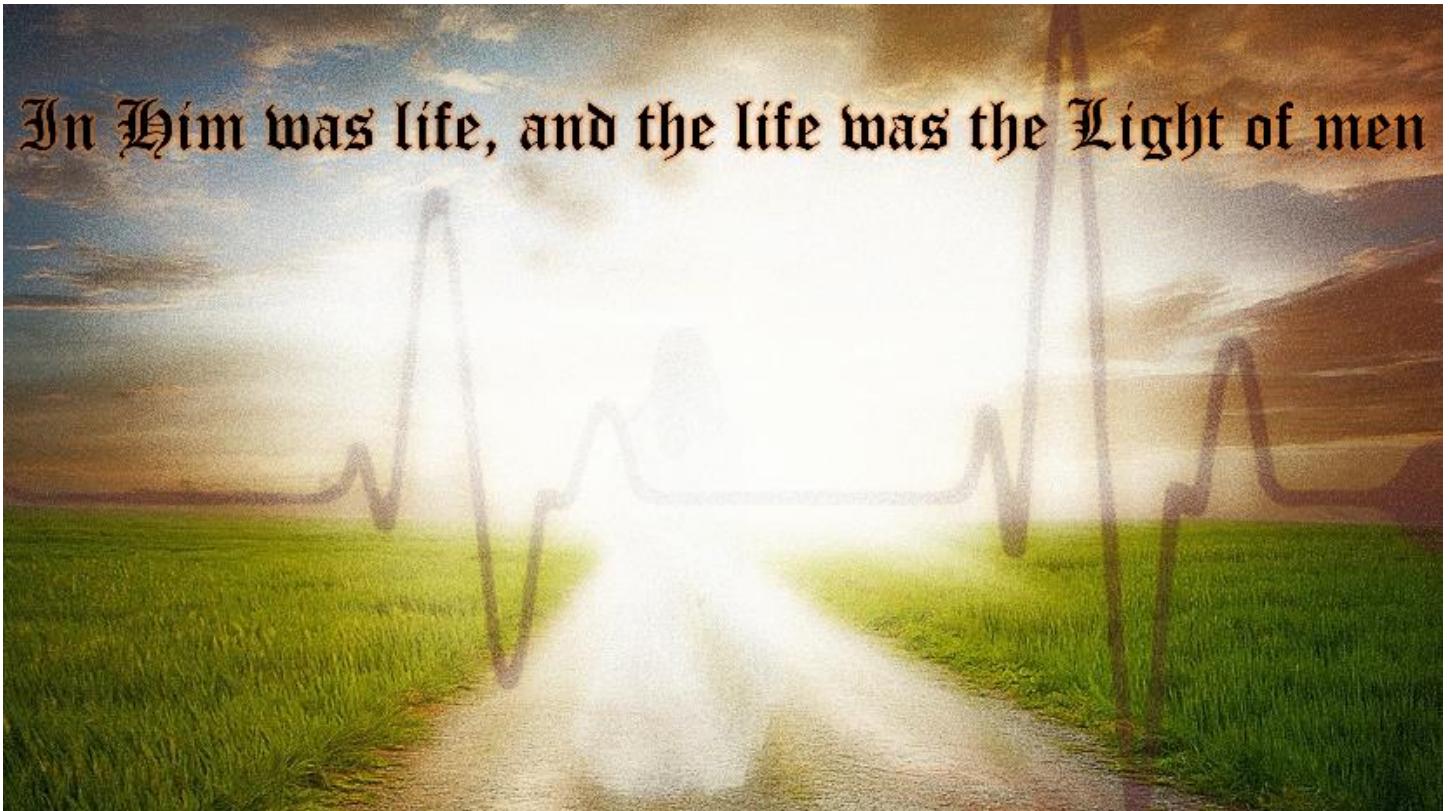


2To reinforce, contemporaneously, the Word and the One True God already existed in close personal relationship and fellowship before creation began.



All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being

3Everything individually and collectively, natural and supernatural, that has ever been created was brought into existence through the active agency of the Word. Obviously then, not even one single created thing has come into existence apart from the presence and activity of the Word.



4 Contained within the Word was the lifeforce - the power to create, bestow, and sustain physical, material life as well as metaphysical, supernatural life. It is this ongoing enablement of life that is the light that illuminates the central Truth for all mankind. (That all life is initially, entirely, and continuously dependent upon the Word of God's power holding all things together).



5This light of Truth was presented to the darkness of man's ignorance and self-centeredness, and although these twin elements of darkness did not welcome nor even comprehend the light, they could not destroy it either.

That's arguably the most powerful statement in the Bible. The basis for my amplification, not my amplification itself. As we saw before, it echoes the opening of Genesis.



You'll remember that the Bible begins with what seems like the "Beginning." In fact, the idea of beginning is where the title Genesis comes from. We translate: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Obvious right? Well, if you stop right there and consider that verse carefully a few things become clear. First, it opens with God already existing and so it isn't truly the beginning - it's only the beginning of God creating what's relevant to us.

That's the second idea. This is a message for us. It wasn't written to angels, or aliens, or animals, but to us. This is the information that God wanted us to

possess. His eternal preexistence is assumed in simply indicating it as a given. The implication is there is no beginning.

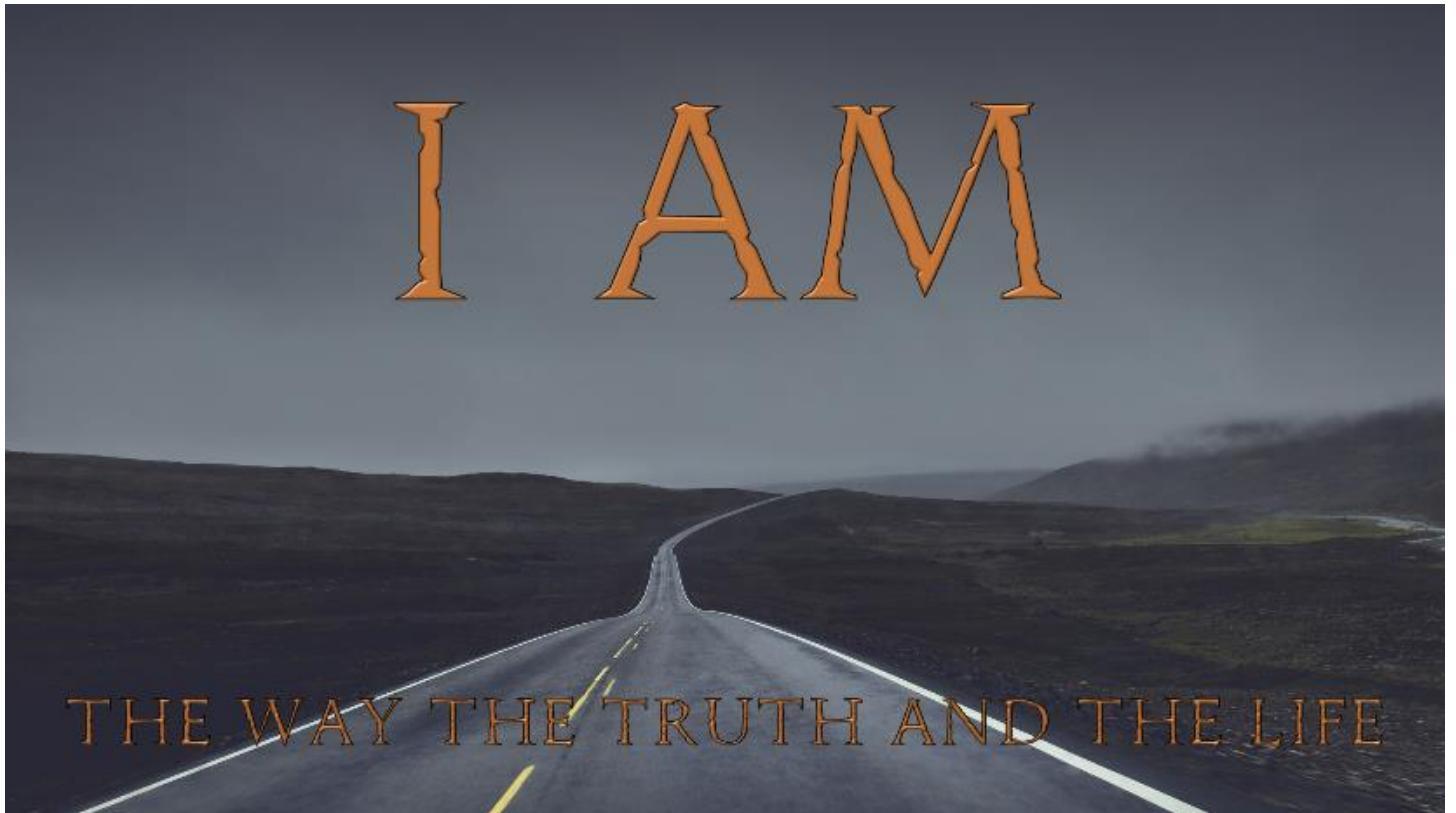
The third idea is that this eternally existent Being created literally everything that has ever been created. Well, that confirms the fact that He Himself was not created in any way, and so He Himself has no beginning. Beyond that it presents the reality that since the God of Abraham created everything, He is the God of everyone, not just Abraham.

That may not seem nearly as stunning as it truly is because we're used to the idea, but it is quite profound. All other religions posit gods who are national, or regional, we could even say racial. Your gods were unique to your people-group. Whatever your gods, they were always the result of a birth of some kind. Sometimes spontaneous, sometimes bizarre, sometimes more normally from a set of parents. Typically, there was a multi-generational family of gods particular to a specific nation, race, or culture.

Here, we have a God who simply exists and who created everything and so, while He will later be

associated with a select people, He was always, and continues always to be, the one and only true God of all people.

That is precisely what the prologue of our Gospel does as well. The Word of God is without beginning thus making Him an integral part of God and we will see that while He was sent to that select people, He was and is the Savior of all people. The implication buried within the fabric of these first few verses is that there can be no other Savior for anyone, just as there can be no other God for anyone. Accordingly, the Bible frequently declares that no one, not Adam, not Abraham, not David, not John, can possibly enter into Heaven apart from the one and only Savior sent to the whole world by the one and only God.



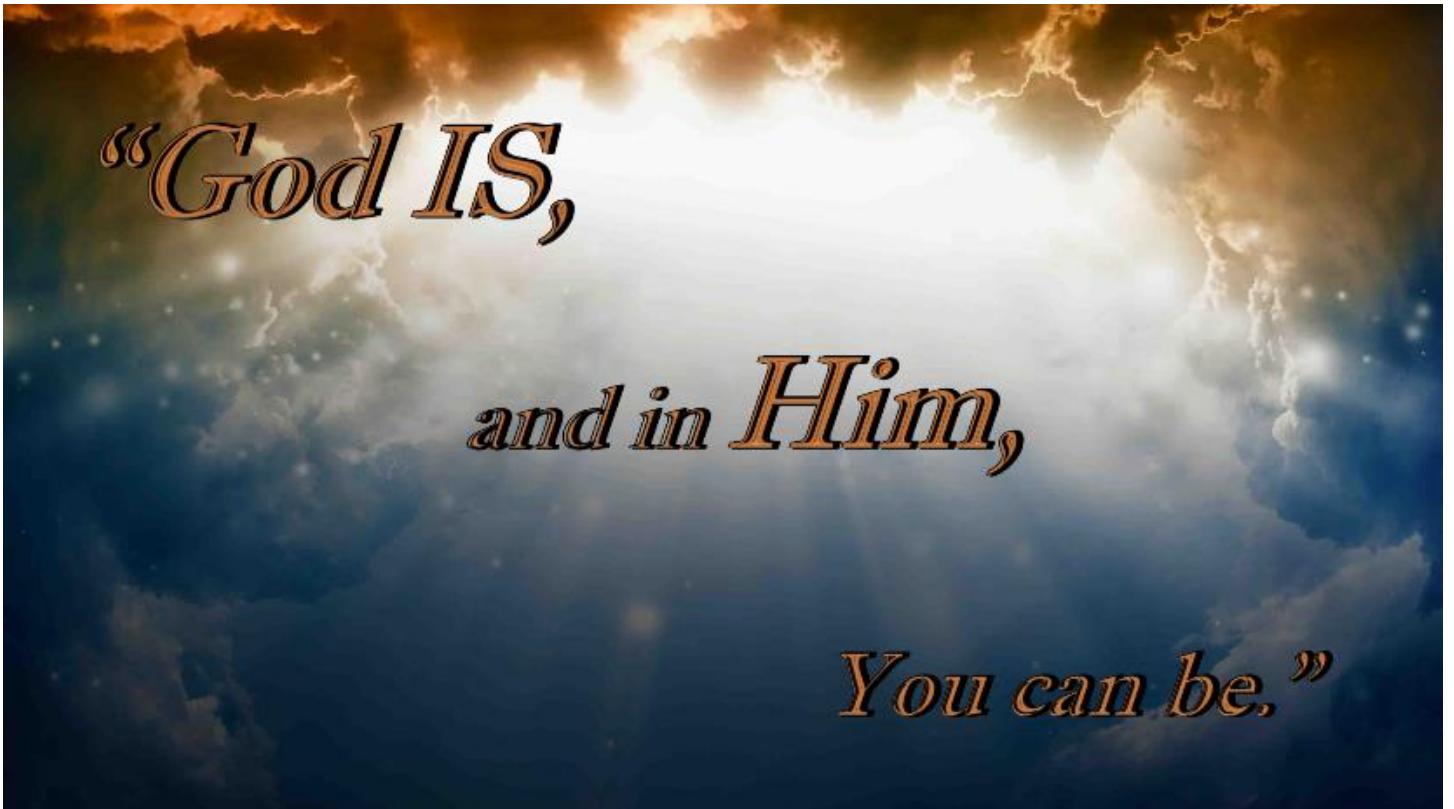
It's fine for regional religions to say that there are multiple paths to God. It is impossible for Christianity to do so and remain Christianity. Please understand that statement and why it must be true. Well meaning, kinder-gentler Christians want to affirm everyone else and will accept the Universalist notion that there is a unique path to Heaven for each individual. Such a notion is utterly incompatible with Christianity and the Bible upon which it is based.

The final thing I want to point out in looking at the opening of Genesis and of John is that neither is an account of how things came to be, and neither is an

explanation of how things are now. This is a statement not about origin, not about creation, not about the physical universe, not about earth and not about you and me - this is a statement to us, about God.

I think this is an area of great misunderstanding for both Christians and non-Christians alike. We as humans want to know the details of God's origin or in this case more information about what He was doing previously. We want more information about the creative process and the origins of our existence and the meaning for our own life.

God instead tells us something about Himself that itself gives us all the meaning we could even hope for.



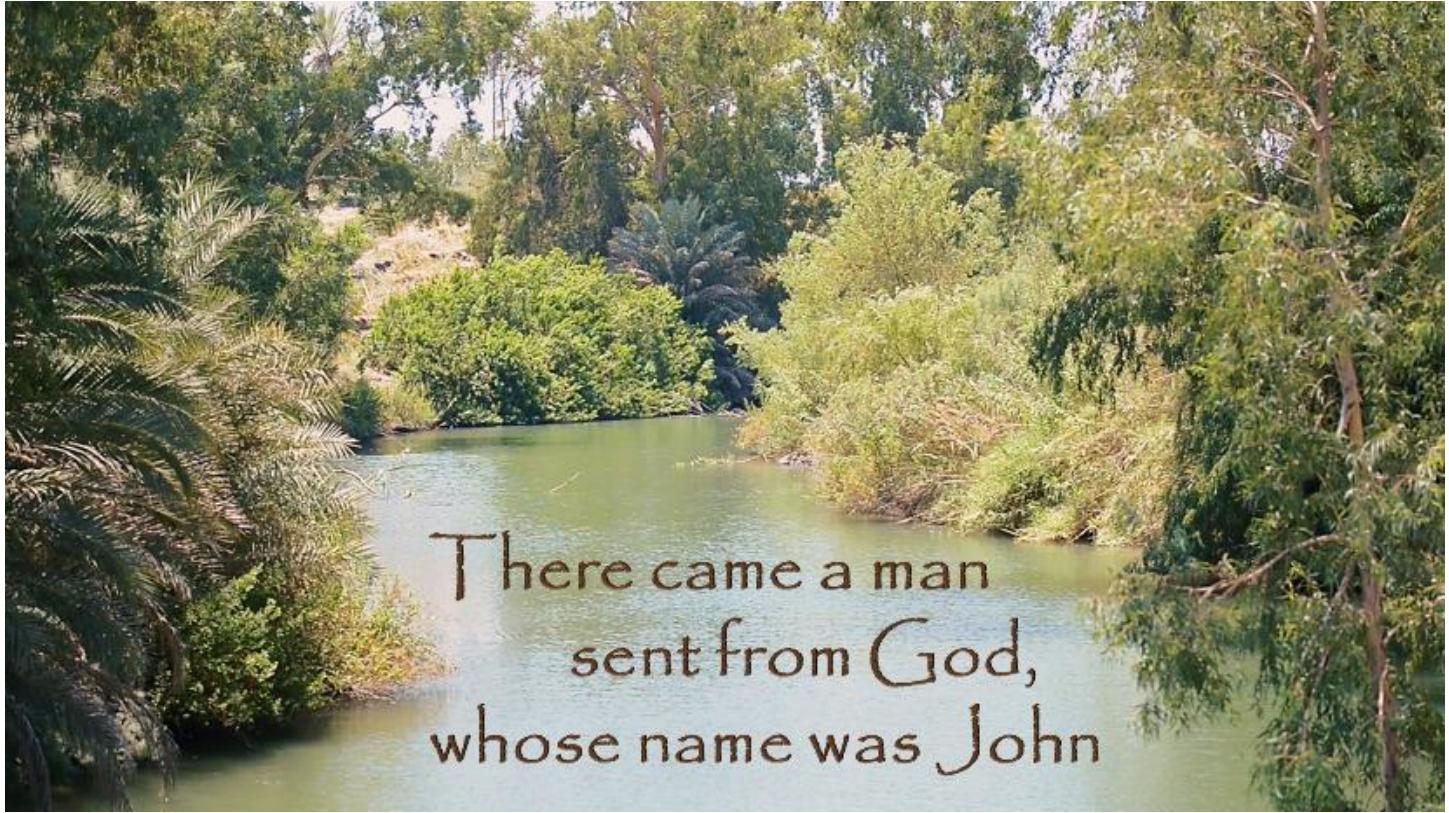
*“God IS,  
and in Him,*

*You can be.”*

“God is, and in Him, you can be.” Think on that one for a while. It’s not Yoda, or yoga, it’s a statement of being.

John 1:6-13, 6There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. 8He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light. 9There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. 10He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. 12But as many as received Him, to them He gave the

right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, 13who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.



“There came a man sent from God” is a big contrast from what we’ve seen concerning the Word. Here the man is clearly only a man who came into being as a creature - meaning as something created, just like everything else outside of God Himself. But this natural human man was sent by God for a purpose.

It is ἀποστέλλω (äōēō) from which we get our word Apostle. An Apostle is sent as an emissary or ambassador on the mission assigned by the sender

and with the sender's full authority within the scope of that mission. In a way, John the Baptist was an Apostle of the Father, whereas the 12 were Apostles of Jesus - it all ends up being the same thing ultimately. John had a commission to "Testify about the Light."



"Witness," is the noun and "Testify," is the verb of the same basic word - μαρτυρία (mäṛ-tü-ṛē-ä), and μαρτυρέω (mäṛ-tü-ṛē-ō), respectively. Can you think of what word we derive from this in English? Martyr. The concept was that early Christians would stand firm in their testimony even unto brutal execution.

It is a “Testimony” so important, so true, and so firmly held by a person that not even threat of torturous death can cause them to waver. Isn’t it interesting that our own “Testimony” seems in jeopardy when we are merely disappointed by some unfair condition?



Studies show that when people have too many choices, they are far more stressed and unsettled than they if they only have one choice. That goes for infants with a mobile full of playthings versus one with very few. It goes for adult shoppers with a 100 choices of hiking shoe, versus 5 choices.



Contentment makes poor men rich, Discontent makes rich men poor.

I think there's something similar going on with people who have greater freedom and wealth as opposed to people who have little to nothing. It seems that the more we have in terms of freedom, leisure time, material possessions, and financial resources the less content we become - the more resentful we are over the smallest slights.

Modern American Christians will question God's benevolence, love, awareness, and, or, ability, when the stock market plunges, or the wrong person is elected. Ancient Roman Christians refused to question God when their government feed them to wild animals

for the entertainment of the crowd, or used them as human torches to light the roadway in the dark.



I don't know of a modern American Christian, including me, who does not need an attitude adjustment. John was unjustly deprived of his freedom, thrown into a dungeon unfit for feral hogs, a beheaded without a trial because he simply said out loud what was absolutely true. Millions upon millions upon millions of people have suffered the same.



Again, this John is not John the Apostle the author of our Gospel, the three Epistles and the Book of Revelation. That John, the son of Zebedee and Salome, never mentions himself by name in his Gospel. He was not this John either.

This John's name was supposed to be Zacharias after his father and in honor of the Old Testament Prophet Zechariah. To everyone's shock, but in obedience to God, his somewhat elderly parents named him Ἰωάννης (ē-ō-än-nās). There's a logical reason why that evolved into John in English, but we'll skip it. John, or technically the Greek from which it is derived, was a

Greek name approximating the Hebrew יְהוָה-יַעֲמֹד (yō-ŷā-nän). As you might have guessed this John was known as the Baptizer, or John the Baptist. He was the son of the priest Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth. She was the relative Mary stayed with for three months while pregnant with Jesus.

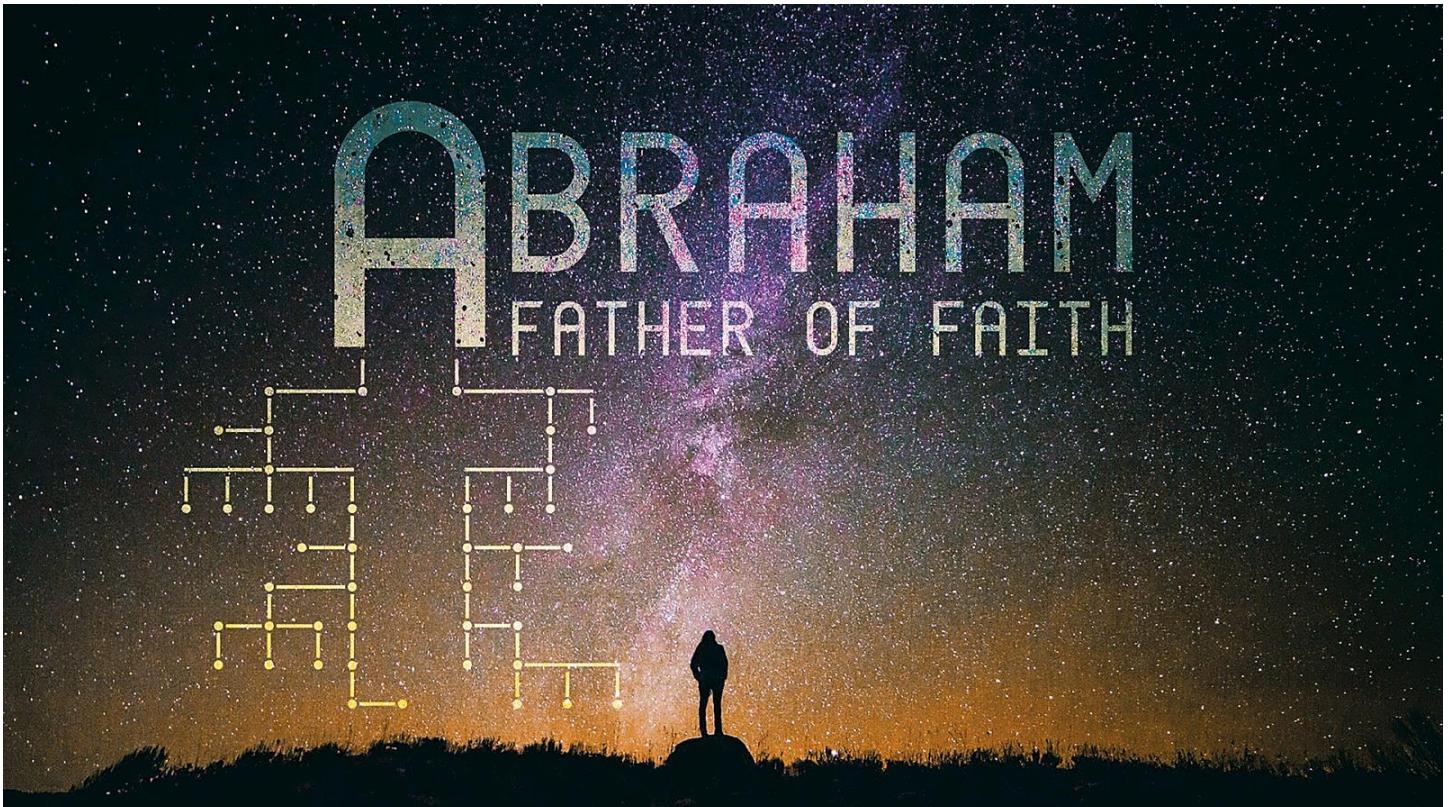


The Baptist was sent to “Testify about the Light.” “Light,” of course refers back a couple of verses to the “Life” generating and sustaining force found only in the Word which illuminates the central Truth that apart from His active agency every created thing ceases to exist - that includes all life.

It is that fundamental understanding given by the Father, embodied by the Word and illuminated by the Holy Spirit that enables humans to reach out to God. Notice that we reach out to Him because He first presented Life, Truth, Light, to us.

Why would God send an ambassador to proclaim this Light? Specifically stated at the end on verse 7, and elaborated on in verses 12&13, so that all might believe.

John was specifically sent to the Jews and here we see that his ultimate mission was to all humanity. It will be the same with Jesus. We non-Jewish people might ask why? Why were the Jews God chosen people - His own children?



It's helpful to realize that when God chose them, there was no such thing as a Jew. It wasn't like God looked at all the races and said, wow I really like these Jewish people best. Abraham was born and bred in Ur. As far as we can tell his family had been in that area for generations. It was between the modern cities of Basrah and Baghdad Iraq. If you want to identify Abraham with some ethnicity, you'd have to say that he was Iraqi - back in those days, probably Akkadian, possibly Sumerian.



God pulled Abraham up through Mesopotamia to the city of Haran (or ַרְן) at the northern reaches of what is called the “Fertile Crescent” in what is now southern Turkey. After Abe’s dad died there, God pushed him south through the “Rift Valley” into the Land of Canaan.

God promised that land to him and his descendants. What’s interesting is Abraham’s covenant descendants constitute a much smaller group of people than his literal descendants and a tiny percentage of his spiritual descendants. It was Isaac, not Ishmael. It was Jacob, not Esau. In many ways, it was Judah, Benjamin and Levi and not the rest. The Jews are

Jews because of a select descent from a guy who was not a Jew. Today Abraham is the spiritual father of people representing every ethnicity.

My only point is that God didn't look at the Jewish people and say I choose you collectively. God looked at a man named Abraham and said I choose you individually and I will continue to choose your descendants selectively. It just so happens that by the first century they were called Jews.

The Bible, both Old and New Testaments clearly demonstrate that there was nothing special about the Jewish nation as opposed to any other nation except that God chose to use them for His purposes, just like He chose to use John the Baptist for His purpose, which we are explicitly told was so "All might believe". That ties directly into verse 12 where it states that those with the right to be God's children are those who believe in the name of the Word.



To believe, that is the very thing that God credited to Abraham as righteousness to get the whole thing rolling. The Apostle Paul elaborated on Abraham's faith saying, "To the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness." He then quoted King David, "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds have been forgiven, And whose sins have been covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account." (Romans 4:1-8). What's changed today? Nothing. Believing is what is required - that is active faith and trust in the completed work of the Word on your behalf.

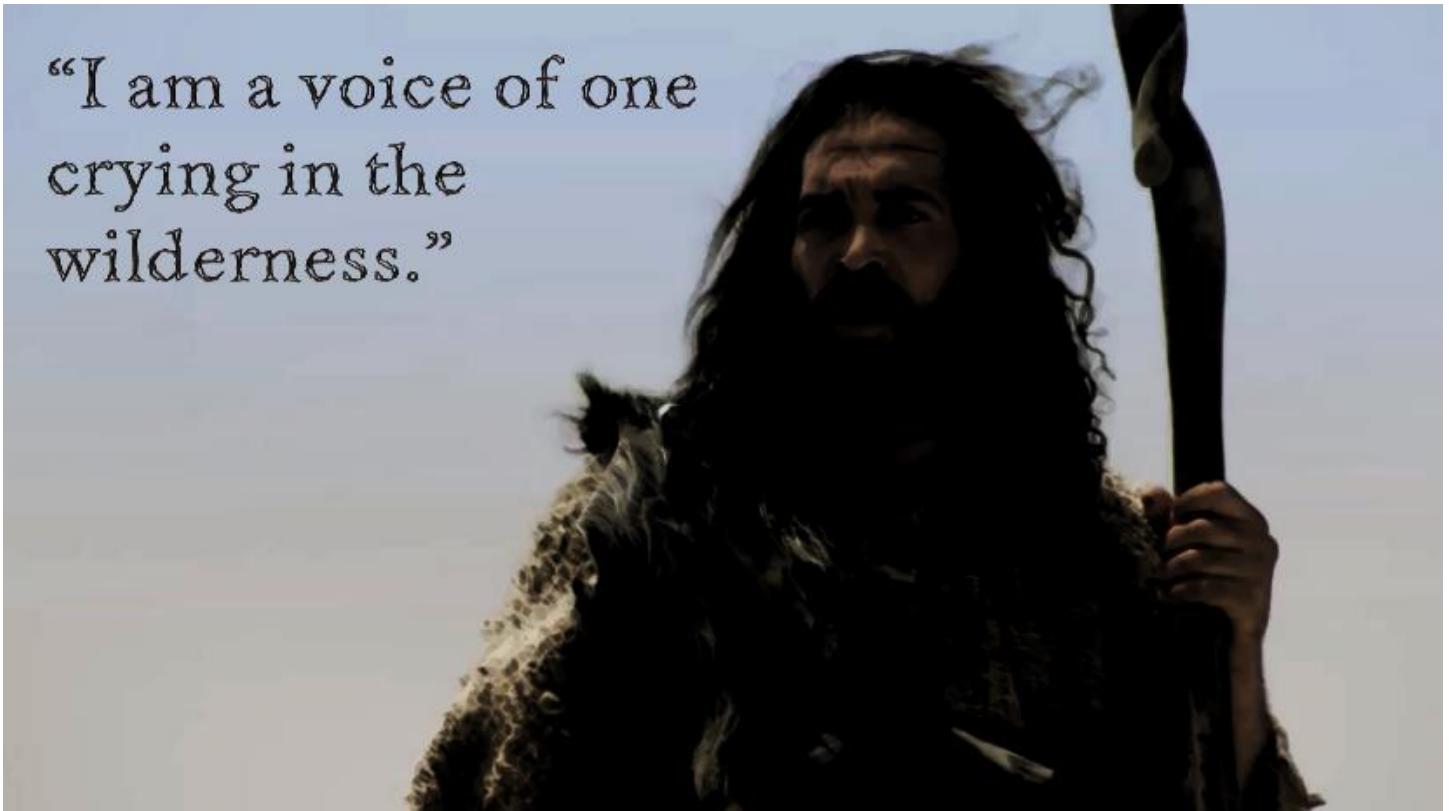
Can you believe? Now, notice that I said believing is what is required, rather than belief is what is required. Believing rather than belief. It is an important distinction. In this Gospel, John uses the verb form to believe 101 times. Paul uses it 66 times in his Letter to the Romans and in his other much shorter Gospel focused Letter to the Galatians another 27 times. The subtle emphasis on using the verb is the nuance of continued action.

Salvific belief, or we could say the belief that is credited as righteousness, or we could say the belief that results in complete forgiveness for all of your sin, is not only a mental agreement to a set of propositions. It doesn't mean that you consciously go along with the proposals of Christianity. We talked about it a couple of months ago. It is a personal, active, ongoing, and important choice to believe in the Word.

That means that believing can only be done by you, never by someone on your behalf. You will stand or fall based on your believing, not someone else's. It is active, habitual and serious. Those three together mean that your believing is so thorough, it is simply who you are and so is simply what you do. The next

aspect means that it is not emotion based. There are emotions associated with it, but the basis of the believing is not emotional at all. Young couples are so in love that they cannot wait to be married and live in married bliss forevermore. A couple of years in and many wouldn't shed a single tear if the other one was run over by a herd of stampeding heffalumps and woozles. What happened? Their love was based upon emotion. In the long run that will never do for marriage, and it will never do at all, for Salvation. Finally, that choice to put all your trust in something is focused on the Word. Not on Christianity, nor on ideologies of love, or social justice, or kumbaya, or religious affiliation, but on the Word Himself - solely on the Word.

When John, or Paul for that matter, speak of believing, that's what they mean.



“I am a voice of one crying in the wilderness.”

All four Gospels present John the Baptist as the one who “Made straight the way for the Lord,” as he himself declared. All of them show that he was a prophet and a pivotal character in God’s drama bridging the gap between Old Covenant and New, but they also all make it crystal clear that he was only a man. None are as openly explicit about that than here in verse 8 - “He was not the Light.”



Verse 9 then fully picks up the theme from verses 4&5. Verse 10 subtly shifts from the Light theme back to the Word theme without explicitly stating it. “He,” is the Word from verse 1, Who is also the Light and the Life, He was in the world. I don’t know if you noticed, but that’s a bit of an odd way to say that.



The term “World” here is more focused than the concept of the entire creation, or of the physical universe, or of even the Earth by itself. While all that is in the background the emphasis is on humanity as a whole. The whole world of mankind. The Word existed among humans and all humans along with everything else, was created through the Word. He through Whom mankind came into being was in the realm of mankind, but they did not know Him. The implication is they did not accept Him, which is the positive way of saying the Truth, mankind rejected the very Word through Whom they were created.

Not only that, but even more specifically the Word came to mankind as a Jew amongst Jews and even the Jews refused to accept Him.

As bleak as that sounds there were exceptions. There were a few who reacted differently than the majority. Some who were open to the Word. The phrase “As many as,” means just that, everyone of, and all of them, as in, all those who “Received,” the Word, the Word gave to them the authority, power, and right to become the very children of Almighty God.



This is purely relational. In a sense all humans are the children of God as they are individually made by Him in

His Own image, but there is a difference as far as the east is from the west, between that fact and the relationship of Father and child spoken of here.

God is the Father of all, but is intimately, interpersonally, relationally, the Father of only those who receive the Word. In verse 12 the middle bit is the part about being given the power and right to be children. Both before and after that we have the prerequisite for that relationship authority stated in two ways, both meaning the same thing.

First it is stated as “Receiving,” and second it is stated as “Believing.” They both mean complete and total acceptance of the Word for precisely Who and what the Word is - full acceptance of the Word in actuality. Such people are born of God because they are His true children. From His perspective such people were born of God as His true kids. From our perspective such people are reborn of God as they fully accept the Word and thus are empowered by the Word to be God’s children.

Either way, such a condition has nothing to do with biology, physical constraints, nor human machinations.

Specifically, it has nothing to do with a female mother, nor with human desire, nor with a male father. It is supernatural - a birthing by God beyond the material, temporal, spatial, reality. That means an eternally existing familial bond.

Amazing stuff - and Who precisely is this Word through Whom everything was created and in Whom eternal life as a child of God is possible? Verse 14.



John 1:14, And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. The

Word of God made flesh is Jesus the Christ One and Only Savior of the world.