

5 – Crossing the Border of Myth

1 John 1:1-4

12/30/2018

If you want to read about the events surrounding Jesus' birth, you'd typically go to either the Gospel of Matthew or Luke. And there you'd read about the heartwarming events of this young couple, Mary and Joseph, becoming the parents of Jesus, traveling to Bethlehem to give birth and being visited by shepherds and eventually wise men.

Mark doesn't really include any details about Jesus' birth.

John doesn't record the kind of details of Christ's birth like Matthew and Luke do. And yet, he begins with a very important account of Jesus' birth. Instead, he tells us what Jesus' birth means for us. What difference does it make? Therefore, it's a very important recap to Matthew and Luke's accounts. And we're going to wrap up this Christmas series by looking at John's account this morning. And I want to look at John's account in two separate places.

First, the Gospel of John.

John 1:1-5 (NIV) *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

John 1:14 (NIV) *The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

John 1:18 (NIV) *No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.*

Observations:

1. When did "the Word" come into existence? **Answer: He's eternal**
2. Who is "the Word"? **Answer: Jesus (you know that as you read on)**
3. Who made all things? **Answer: The Word**
4. In *Him* was what? **Answer: life**
5. What did *the Word* do? **Answer: left heaven and came to live with us**
6. What aspect of God did we see in *The Word*? **Answer: His glory** (like looking at God through a filter)

In many ways John's account of Christ's birth, recorded a few years later, in John is very similar to what we just read – and yet there are some key and important additions.

1 John 1:1-4 (NIV) *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life.*

2 The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us.

3 We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. 4 We write this to make our joy complete.

Robert Yarborough, a New Testament scholar, says that the verbs in this text correspond to the eye witness testimonies given in a court of law at the time. So, John has set this up as if he's in a courtroom and giving a sworn testimony to His experiences with Jesus.

And He's stating very clearly up front that Jesus really did come and live among us, just as He claimed in the Gospel of John.

He claims that He personally experienced Jesus with 3 of the 5 senses: hearing, sight and touch.

John is refuting false teaching at the time that Jesus didn't really come to earth. Claims that He was merely an invention of the early apostles and the early church. Those claims still exist as strong today as they did back then. And so, John's testimony 2,000 years ago is as pertinent today as it was back then.

John says "we" *heard* Jesus.

The inner twelve that Jesus hand picked lived with him for 3+ years and heard Jesus teach and preach and rebuke and encourage the outcasts on numerous occasions. Many people, including themselves, were blown away by the authority with which Jesus taught.

- They also saw that authority on full display when he stood up in the boat being tossed around by the wind and waves and rebuked the weather and waves and they instantly ceased.
- They heard him boldly command Lazarus rise from the dead and come out of the grave - and he did.
- They heard him command demons to leave various individuals.
- They heard Jesus give thanks to the Father for 5 loaves and 2 small fish and then proceeded to feed over 5,000 people with it.
- They heard Jesus claim to be God Himself and
- they heard him claim that if you destroy this temple He would raise it up in three days and only later it dawned on them he was referring to his body.

John says we "*saw*" Jesus with our very own eyes.

He wasn't a figment of our imaginations.

- They saw Jesus walk on water in the midst of a violent storm
- They saw Jesus spit in the dirt and apply the mud to a man's eyes and he saw
- They saw Jesus refute the religious leaders of the day with numerous questions
- They saw Jesus cleanse the temple of the money changers and change water into wine
- They saw Jesus restore a man's ear after Peter cut it off
- They saw the risen Jesus rise up into heaven

Additionally John says we "*looked at*" him, which is a different Greek word than "*see*". This word implies that they went beyond seeing **they studied him**. They put Jesus under their careful investigation and He passed with flying colors. After studying his life for 3 years the disciples were all convinced that Jesus was indeed who he claimed to be, the Son of God.

John says we "*touched*" him.

- John was likely the one leaning on Jesus at the Passover meal in the Upper Room and took the bread and wine from Jesus' hands when he passed it to him.
- John felt Jesus' hands wash his feet during that same meeting
- John saw Jesus offer to Thomas to touch and feel the nail prints in his hands and side.
- During those 3+ years together they ate numerous meals with Jesus and walked with him countless miles together. John's point is that there is no way Jesus was just a figment of our imaginations. He was just as real as any other person you've encountered in your life.

Notice the title John uses to describe Jesus: the **Word of Life**. John had also stated this in the beginning of his Gospel account that we read earlier. What's significant about this title is that Jesus doesn't come merely giving us advice to help us live a better life, He doesn't point us to the Real Life like all other religious leaders and founders do. Jesus is the only one who can claim that he is life. He's always been life and always will be life. With Jesus there is no beginning or end - He's eternal in his very nature. And because He's eternal life, He then can offer us life. John's declaration wasn't that Jesus came into existence when he was born here on earth. No, he was always with God in heaven and now has appeared to us. And John says that this is the core basis of their proclamation. Jesus always existed

from the very beginning of time in heaven and has now appeared to us and offers us life in and through Him and Him alone. It ought to remind us of Jesus' bold declaration back in **John 14:6 (NIV)** Jesus answered, "*I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*"

John's purposes for writing:

Next, John shares with us the purpose of testifying to the truth of who Jesus is. The purpose isn't merely so that you can be confident of who Jesus is – although that's nice as well. He says the purpose of sharing this is *you may have fellowship with us*. Notice, nowhere in here does John talk about salvation. Saving us from death and rescuing us from God's condemnation that flows from His judgment upon our sins is not the ultimate goal of what he's proclaiming. We often think that the goal of Jesus coming was merely to save us from our sins and get us into heaven one day instead of hell. And while that's all true doctrine – it's inadequate to express the goal of why Jesus came. God wants more than your presence one day in heaven. The immediate and long term goal is "*fellowship.*" Fellowship (koinoia) describes two people that have something in common. Shared goals and values and experiences. And that's what the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit have always had in common. And now, through Jesus we are invited to join in that fellowship of the Trinity. It's what Adam and Eve had in the Garden in the very beginning before sin entered in. But our sins effectively blocked this fellowship from continuing. So, Jesus came to pay the penalty for our sins so that we could have this restored relationship and hence fellowship with our Heavenly Father.

It's important to notice how this fellowship with fellow believers happens though. We don't strive primarily to have fellowship with one another. We strive to have fellowship with the Father and his son, Jesus Christ and then as we each achieve unity with them we naturally achieve unity with each other as a side benefit. It's like the idea of an orchestra with the conductor. Each instrument doesn't do their own thing during a concert. They all have their individual parts but as each of them tunes into and follows the direction of the conductor, then they produce beautiful music together. Similarly with each of us. As each of us strives for unity with God and Jesus, then we are naturally in fellowship with each other as well. God transforms us from the inside out as the Holy Spirit changes our character to be more like Jesus. The result is that we all want what God wants for us individually and corporately. We increasingly strive to love the things that God loves and hate the things that God hates (such as sin). Our hearts ought to ache for those who don't know their Heavenly Father yet and so as we come together we listen to the Lord's leading on how to reach those individuals with the gifts and abilities and money that He's entrusted to our care. The longer we know each other the more we ought to love and appreciate each other and see God's character developing with one another.

When we focus merely on salvation (being saved from our sins and ready to spend eternity in heaven with God) we can become isolated from one another. But when we focus on fellowship, it enhances the sense of community and striving together and learning to be Christ's representatives, both individually and as a church to the world. I couldn't present the Live Nativity year after year alone – but together we're able present that to the community.

Lastly, John writes that one of the primary results of living in fellowship with God and Jesus and then with one another is that *our joy is made complete*. The joy God has always intended for us to live in reaches it's intended goal. The result of fellowship ought to be that we enjoy life more and more. Because there's a richness of this type of community that doesn't exist as we live life by ourselves and for ourselves. One of the most exciting aspects of serving as a minister is seeing people find new life in Jesus and then discovering this abiding joy that carries them through all the aspects of their life. This joy is an abiding confidence in the goodness and sovereignty of God in and through all circumstances in life, even the difficult ones.

Tell story about God bringing us money for a payment.

End Service my reading our passage together.

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Leave today enjoying the richness of your fellowship with God and with one another.
And ask God to teach you how to live in His joy every day.

5 – Crossing the Border of _____ 1 John 1:1-4

What's the purpose of John's birth of Jesus accounts?

Observations from John 1:1-5, 14, 18

1. When did "*the Word*" come into existence?
2. Who is "*the Word*"?
3. Who made all things?
4. In *Him* was what?
5. What did "*the Word*" do?
6. What aspect of God did we see in "*the Word*"?

Observations from 1 John 1:1-4

1. What type of setting does this language come from?
2. When did they *hear* Jesus?
3. When did they *see* Jesus?
4. When did they *touch* Jesus?

John's purposes for writing this:

1. F_____
 - a. What does *fellowship* mean?
 - b. How have you experienced *fellowship*?
 - c. How has this fellowship affected your life?
2. J_____ made complete
 - a. Are you experiencing this *joy* daily?
 - b. What has been helpful to help you live in joy?

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