

Gospel of John Chapter 1 Part 1 - John Karmelich

You know you've got time to kill when you're contemplating big theological questions. For example, I sometimes ponder, "Why did God bother to create everything?" In other words, what's in it for Him? I do not believe it was out of boredom. There has to be a purpose from His perspective. Here's my view of "why God bothered": First, realize He didn't create it for us! It's self-centered to think He created all of the universe just for us to enjoy our brief time here. If Jesus is God, again why did He bother? Think of the world as a gift from the Father to the Son. The church is the "bride of Christ" (Ephesians 5:22-32 or Revelation 19:7). There's nothing sexual about that and it doesn't mean we'll all be eternally female. It's just a word picture to indicate He created the world out of gratitude for what Jesus did. The church is effect is Jesus' prize for the fact He died for our sins. I bring that up because that is what this text in John deals with!

It ties to the point that if God is full of love, He wanted something to express that love on. I'll point out that if one loves to paint or play a musical instrument, one does it because they love to do it, not to just say get paid. So if God is full of love, He wanted something to express that love upon. We are created for that purpose. So why would God create some people to spend eternity in hell? Because He gave us freewill. His gift to His son requires us to respond to His love out of our freewill. That's the "ballgame" so we might as well accept it as fact and use our lives as God called us to live. To put it one more way, if I'm wrong, then I've still used my life to make a difference. Most religions would argue I've still got my ticket to heaven for living a good life (although I disagree with their views).

Gee John, thanks for the philosophical lecture. What does that have to do with the opening verses here in the Gospel of John? In effect, everything: Think of these opening verses as the "overture" telling the story of why Jesus is God and, yes, "Why He bothered." With that stated let me get into details of these verses. John is the only Gospel that bluntly states its purpose: to prove that Jesus is God. I think of the opening 18 verses as the "overture" in that it is an overview of the big picture theme of this book. Once I go over these verses (obviously in summary as books are written about these verses) I hope to give an idea to support why Jesus is God and, yes, "Why God bothered." OK here we go.

Verse one contains three short statements that seem repetitive until we understand what John meant for that opening: He refers to Jesus as "The Word." We know John is referring to Jesus, as Verse 22 states it bluntly. It's not that God had a book in His hand and it became Jesus! The idea is the Word of God is representative of God's perfect nature. Think of it as God's laws before they were communicated to us in order to communicate that fact to us. In effect, John is saying, "God and Jesus always existed before it became time to create the world." That "Word" was God (and still is), but the idea is to communicate to us the fact that "The Word" always was God even before the world was created. This leads me back to my question of "Why did God bother"? It was always His plan to create the world with people who accept the fact that Jesus is God, to be a gift to the "Word" for doing that! Angels were created to help us do the will of the Father. Some angels rebelled against that plan when they realized they're created to help man, as opposed to being the center of God's attention. Thus the drama unfolds!

Again I believe in a God who knows all things and knew all this was going to happen. He allowed this, in effect, to show that His power is greater than those fallen angels and by trusting in Him we will have an ultimate victory over those dark forces. Okay, enough of that.

I heard an analogy I liked: Imagine writing a book and falling in love with the book's characters. One loves the story so much that one inserts oneself as a character in the story. That in effect is what God

did by inserting Jesus into the world. It's also in effect what God did and why He exists in more than a single form. So why, "Three in one"? Why not a hundred in one? A separate entity exists (the Spirit) whose job it is to point us to God the Father. God the Son was necessary so He could step in the world that He (yes He) created! As the classic poem goes, "Jesus was crucified on a cross of wood, but made the hill on which it stood!" Bottom line is it is "Three in one," so deal with it!

Meanwhile back to the opening verses. After the reference to who Jesus is, we get verses emphasizing the fact that He is light. We're not talking sunlight. In the Genesis account, "light" appears on the first day, but the Sun wasn't created until the 4th day. Just saying the light here in John and in Genesis 1:3 both refer to Jesus as being the source of light in terms of what lives forever and those who accept Him are reflecting that light that shines in the world. We then get the fact that the "light became flesh," That in effect is the main topic of the book. (Remember the opening verses read like an overture!) Then we get the famous statement that we get grace. Grace simply means we get something we don't deserve. I would argue that's why we're saved again as a gift to Jesus for saving us! John then makes the famous statement that the law came through Moses (the first five books of the Bible) but grace and truth come through Jesus Himself. No need to comment further on that!

Then of all things we jump to John the Baptist. To understand, first realize why God created the Jewish nation: He wanted a group (Nation of Israel) to be His witness to the world. God unconditionally gave them that land (yes, they were kicked out, but will inherit it forever, see Romans 11). Realize Israel is a "land bridge" to three continents, so it became the perfect place to be where God would show people of His existence. John the Baptist, in effect, represents the end of the Old Testament. In the other Gospels, Jesus called John the Baptist the greatest of men because of His role as "forerunner" of Jesus as He was about to come into the world. (Luke 7:28, Matthew 11:11). The point is God "bothered with Israel" to set up a location for Jesus to come in the world. The role of John the Baptist (who is not the writer of this Gospel) was to announce Jesus' coming in the world!

If you liked this little study, I wrote a more detailed account about twenty years ago! To read the other one, click on one of the two links on this page. Thanks again for reading this. John