

# Believing in the Name

*John 1:9-13*

- <sup>9</sup> The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.
- <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.
- <sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.
- <sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,
- <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.
- <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.
- <sup>15</sup> (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'")
- <sup>16</sup> For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.
- <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
- <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

## CHRONOLOGY OF THE PROLOGUE OF JOHN

The prologue to John's Gospel includes the first **18 verses** of **chapter 1**. Last week I explained that when

reading the prologue, it is important to **read it chronologically**. This is something most of us do not do, because we are too eager to move ahead, to get onto the application, and to see ourselves in the text. But the true lessons come in patience and letting the story come to us. This is where the real beauty of the Scripture lies. If we give it time and let the story unfold in its own, we will eventually come to see how we are there, but in a way that also allows us to see God's plan for all the other believers that have come before us. Let us see ourselves in a community of faith together.

A brief summary of the chronology is in order. It begins **"in the beginning."** This is a commentary on first verse of the Bible in **Genesis 1:1**, only this "beginning" refers to a time prior to all created activity on the part of God. So **the first verse begins before creation**. From here we move **forward to the first moments of creation** when **"all things came into being"** (**John 1:3**) by God's Word; his Word who is both with God and is God. **Then it moves to the creation of life on earth**, particularly the creation of mankind. For it says, **"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men"** (**1:4**). Noticing the early chronology will help you continue reading it this way.

The problem many have is the brief three verse interruption of John the Baptist (vv. 6-8) that seems to derail the chronology. Don't run off the track, but stay the course and come to vs. 9. For in this verse, we quickly return to the OT era. We know this because it says, "The true light, which gives light to everyone, *was coming into the world.*" The verb is rightly translated "was coming," meaning that the light was not yet in the world. And yet, the very next verse tells us that the Light/Word/Life *was* in the world already. How can John say that the light was not yet in the world and yet it was in the world? The answer is found in vs. 14 which gives the very heart of the Christian gospel: The Word became flesh. The light was coming into the world in a unique way that had never happened before. Yet, in some other way(s), the light was indeed already in the world. That takes us back to the OT era.

He explains that the majority of mankind "*did not know him*" (vs. 10), even though he was in the world. The meaning is, *he should have been known*, but they did not know him. How could he have been known? One way was through the Word, written on the heart of every man, woman, and child by nature in the form of *the law*, and *the conscience* that God gave them to know right from wrong

(cf. **Rom 2:14-15**). But they did not listen to their consciences and they disregarded the moral laws of the universe; they become utterly corrupt and wicked. As it says, “Every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (**Gen 6:5**).

Another way, as one of you helpfully pointed out last week after the sermon, is found in **Romans 1:19-21**. It says, “What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain.” And what are those things? They are the light of his “invisible attributes, that is his eternal power and divine nature.” The Apostle says that these are “clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world in the things that have been made.” The Psalmist agrees with this when he says (and notice the reference to the lights here), “The heavens declare the glory of god, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge.” Then notice the Word, “There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun ...” (**Ps 19:1-4**). These verses are full of light and word that tell people all about the glory of God.

Let me return to the Apostle to conclude this connection between the light and those who did not know the Light in the OT, “... **their foolish hearts were darkened.**” The light was there, but they became dark in their thankless, ungrateful turning from Him that left them without excuse. On this **week of Thanksgiving**, remember that the very first and gravest sin in Romans 1 is **thanklessness** to the Light and Giver of Life who is good and does good to all. In a culture where so many bounties continue to be ours, we often come to expect God’s generosity as a duty he owes us, rather than a grace he gives us, and in so doing, it is very easy to become thankless people. Thank him in the good times so that he does not force you to turn to him in bad times, for God doesn’t put up with ingratitude lightly.

Now, while the world was heading into darkness, hiding from the light, God gave them over to the darkness and left the whole world in that state, until he came to one man many years after the Flood and shone his light upon him. **Abram saw the Word of God** in a vision and **believed in the Light of Christ.** This continues the chronological nature of the prologue. “**He came to his own**” (**John 1:11**). He called to himself a nation and a people. He called them

his firstborn son. He covenanted with them and gave them his Light. Yet, they too acted like the others. “They did not receive him” (vs. 11).

Thus, vs. 11 sets up a dichotomy with vs. 12. Some did receive him, but most did not receive him. The Light was in the world, but most loved the darkness. The Word was given to Israel, but they could not keep it, for they were evil. They could not stand up to the purity that the Law demanded. The light that it shone upon them caused blindness to their sin, and by the time of Christ’s coming in the flesh, their leaders were all self-deceived, thinking themselves better than they were. They worshipped the Law while neglecting the law. They bragged about the law, while they broke the law. The light of the law was too bright for them, and they could no longer see themselves in the mirror of the law, for the law is given as a mirror to reflect back to us the kinds of people that we truly are in light of its brilliance and beauty. They did not want to look or they could no longer see, for they were blinded by the light.

But some did see themselves in the light of the law, and these, it says, “all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

Now, children are born, but these children, a people within a people, his own within his own were not born in the natural way, or in a way that seems right to a man (**vs. 13**). It is **vv. 12-13** that I want to camp on for the remainder of our time together, for there is much here that can benefit your soul, if you will stop and look at the things the Holy Spirit is teaching you as he inspired the Apostle John.

## Children of God

*The New Birth is a Right that God Gives*

What these two verses have in common is the idea of being “born.” Notice the end of **vs. 12**, “**he gave the right to become children of God**.” Notice the next verse, “**Who were born ... of God**.” You can also see a connection with **vs. 14** as “**the Word became flesh**” and in the idea of Christ being “**the only begotten/unique Son from the Father**.” So the preeminent question to ask is, **how is a person born?** This is a question that we will also look at with some different details when we come to Nicodemus’ question in John 3 and at other parts of this Gospel as well. But let’s

think about it more closely here, because John tells us some very important things right now.

First of all, it says that God gave some people “[the right to become children of God.](#)” This is not an inalienable right of all people, such as we find in our Declaration of Independence. It is a right that he grants to some people, but not all. Some people are children; some are not. Yet, just here, it is important to note that both groups of people I have previously discussed are [in some sense called in the Bible God’s children.](#)

Those who were “not his own” (that is anyone in the OT not a Jew) are in some sense “children of God.” Genesis refers to Adam, the father of all human beings, as the “son of God” ([Gen 5:3; Luke 3:38](#)). We are all created in God’s image ([Gen 1:26](#)). The Greek poets said, “[We are indeed his offspring,](#)” and Paul affirmed that this was true ([Acts 17:28-29](#)). The Jews as we have also seen were considered as a whole a very special or “firstborn” son of God. None were excluded in either of these groups from this designation, and to this day, in the sense that it is spoken, this remains true.

Therefore, if being children of God in [John 1:12](#) is not true of everyone, John must have a different sense in which

someone can be a child of God, because there is a sense in which everyone already is. The sense of all people being the offspring of God is a **creational** and **functional** and **moral** sense. God made us and so we are his and no one else's. We were given dominion as human beings over the earth. God created us with the moral ability to do it righteously, obediently. The sense of the Jews being God's children is a **natural** or **physical** sense. If you were born from Isaac (and if you were a man—circumcised), you were a Jew and, therefore, a child of God. Jesus even tells the Pharisees as much when he admits that they are children of Abraham (**John 8:56**). God redeemed the entire nation of Israel out of the exodus, not just a chosen few.

The sense of John 1:12 is a **spiritual** and **eternal** sense. It is spiritual, because it involves our souls being united to Christ in a mystical union. It is eternal because it will last forever. We will be given new bodies in the resurrection and will reign with Christ in the new heavens and new earth forever. Therefore, John 1:13 contrasts this with the kinds of children that he does not have mind.

Now, if God gives some the right to become children of God, this means that initially, no one has the right to be a child of God in this spiritual sense. It is not a birthright.

It is not something God is obliged to give. So, the question for you becomes, how do I get this right? How do I become a child of God? This question has importance if you have never been born again, but also if you have. If you have not, it is critical to understand that are not born a child of God in the spiritual sense, God must give you this title. So you must ask, [how do I get this title?](#) If you already have, it is important to know in order to further along your understanding of God and the salvation he has so generously bestowed upon you. Our goal as children of God is not to stay as infants, but to grow up to maturity.

In part, this means coming to understand [basic theology](#) such as how people become children of God. It is not necessary to know how this all happens *in order for it to happen*, because for it to happen one must do something other than understand how it happens. Let me give you an analogy. For a child to be adopted into a family, it is not necessary that they understand the process. It is only necessary that they are chosen by whomever it is that is doing the adopting. Later, it enriches their life to know that they were adopted, what they were adopted out of, why they were adopted, how the process worked, and all of that. But to become adopted, they don't need any of

this understanding. In fact, hardly any of them will have any understanding of it at all (though if they are older, they might have a basic understanding of it).

### *How We Do Not Become Children of God*

Let us look at **how we do not become children of God**. John gives two or perhaps three examples. First, it is **not through blood**. Second, it is **not through the will**. The second can be subdivided into two categories. The first is **not through the will of the flesh**. The second is **not through the will of man**.

What does it mean “**not through blood?**” “Blood” refers to biology, genetics, genealogy, birth right. This specifically targets the Jews of the OT, and continues to target them today, though today we can also apply it to people who think they are born Christians because of their parents or culture. No one is born a Christian in the spiritual sense of the word. That includes all the children in our midst today.

As I said previously, the Jews *were* God’s children *de facto*, by virtue of their blood lines going back to Abraham, though more technically it would be Jacob (since some of Abraham’s children and Isaac’s children were not Jews; i.e. Ishmael, Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, Shuah

and Esau). There was a sense in which Abraham was the father of even the most Christ-hating Pharisee. This sense is **biological**. It was through blood. But the sense in which John talks about the “children of God,” blood has absolutely nothing to do with it. Now, if John has in mind the OT, then he is saying that even back then, God distinguished between two kinds of children. There was the nation which he called his child. Then there was the remnant, children who even then were not born of the blood. They could have been blood born Israelites like Joseph or Moses or David. But they did not have to be. One thinks of Ephraim and Manasseh the Egyptian children of Joseph, or of Rahab the Canaanite, or Ruth the Moabite, or Nebuchadnezzar the Babylonian, or Naaman the Syrian, many of whom never even became Israelites, and yet God seems to have saved them. These people were not born Jews and many did not become Jews, and yet God gave them the right to become children of God. Just how, we will discuss in a moment.

First, let us look at **this idea of the will**. These children are not born of the “**will of the flesh**” nor of the “**will of man**.” In my opinion, these refer to two different aspects of our will. The first has to do with **our wills ability to**

obey the law. Now, it particularly has in mind sexual intercourse, as almost all the commentaries explain. Jesus says as much to Nicodemus, “Flesh gives birth to flesh.” When the male and female come together, the result can be a child.

I believe, however, that the specific can be generalized. The coming together of two people shows that they understand that there is something that must take place in the physical realm for children to be born. This, it seems to me, is a specific example of human works to accomplish a result. As such, it is not a stretch at all to say that it represents the law or obedience. I’m not suggesting that all human births are the result of obedience to the law (i.e. through proper marriage). Of course, many births are exactly the opposite as children are conceived from all sorts of immoral actions. I’m simply saying that the act itself represents humans doing something with a result occurring because of what they have done.

This is certainly what many people think happens with regard to their salvation when they obey the law. They think that their obedience to the law gives them the right to become children of God. Notice the order, for it is the same as the birth of a child. First there is the work, then

there is the birth. First physical love, then conception. First obedience to the law, then God looks upon me with favor and gives me the right to become a child of God. Friend, John is saying “No!” There is no one born spiritually in this way. So, however it is that God gives a person this right, it cannot be because of what they have done. As we have seen, those who think this way have actually been blinded by the very light that was given to show them their inability. They cannot see their own depravity and the infinite distance they still have to travel to work their way into God’s good graces. Nor have they even considered the analogy, for what works to be conceived? Thus, works can be considered one of two ways that we try to become children of God through our wills.

The second is more basic, and it is the problem with almost all Americans living today. This problem actually precedes the first problem in logical order. For this second problem causes people to actually think that they might just be good enough to pull off the works. This is the problem of [thinking to highly of power of the human will](#).

Let us talk about [freewill](#) here, for there may be no better place in the entire Gospel to do so. First, note that

John admits that humans have wills. He does not say we are without wills, but that our wills have no power to cause us to become children of God. Human beings are, in fact, not machines, as so many who despise Reformation theology love to say we believe. Robots are will-less creatures. Humans have wills.

The problem is that our wills have been just as tainted with sin as everything else in our nature. As Martin Luther put it, our wills are in “bondage” to sin. They are slaves to sin. They obey their master: Sin. Sin tells the will what to do, and it *willingly* does it. Everything people do is in fact their choice. As Jonathan Edwards put it, our wills choose that which the mind thinks is the best available choice. Frankly, it doesn't matter if a person is coerced either, because the will still makes its choice on what it thinks best at that moment. If you hold a gun up to someone's head and tell them to blaspheme God, and they do it, it is because the will believed it was a better choice to blaspheme than to expire.

We will look in great detail at the main reason the human will does not choose God, in John 3. The short answer is, **it hates God and runs from God** because it knows that the person has done evil things that God will judge.

The opposite of freewill is not predestination, but total depravity. The will cannot choose the good if it loves the evil. For now, all we need to really see is that John says people that are born in this spiritual sense are **not born as an act of the will**. He may specifically have in mind the choice of a man prior to the act of sex as many commentaries suggest, but it is just as possible (in fact, the two are not incompatible) that it refers to “**any human volition whatever.**”<sup>1</sup>

People usually think that the spiritual birth goes like this: First, I choose God. Then, he chooses me. First, I choose to be born. Then he gives me the right to become his child. Whether you put a kind of prevenient grace (a grace that goes before the choice) into the mix or just think that people are so basically good that they can make such a choice without it, all one really has to do is think for a moment about the analogy in discussion, and it will become immediately clear how absurd this all is.

How can a person have a will if they are not even born yet? The metaphor here is becoming a child. No child, ever conceived went to its parents ahead of time and said, “**I want to be conceived.**” That is absolutely absurd. You

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<sup>1</sup> Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995), 89-90.

might respond by saying that I am already here and I'm using my natural will to be born spiritually. But this is the whole point of the metaphor. Spiritually speaking, you are not yet born. And to be born spiritually, you must be born of spirit. This is how John ends the verse, "... but born of God." Jesus puts it this way to Nicodemus, "spirit gives birth to spirit." God is spirit and God gives conceives and gives birth to spiritual people.

Going again back to the OT, which is the time frame particularly in mind, this is the whole point of the birth of Isaac. The Jews should have understood about the spiritual birth from the type of Isaac. But even Abraham and Sarah did not understand this, and so they plotted how they might bring about the promise in the natural way, through Hagar. Praise God that we are not born through our own good works, because the result of them is Ishmael! But God did the miracle and opened a dead woman's womb and caused Isaac to be born. Thus, we can say that whatever role the will might play in the life of someone called God's child (and the will is active at some point), that role cannot be to cause God to give them the right to be born.

## How We Become Children of God: Seeing the Name of God

This leads me to consider vs. 12 as we look now to the answer for how or why a person is given the right to become a child of God. It says, “To all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave” this right. The reason I looked at vs. 13 first was so that we could now be clear on what receiving and believing do not mean. Whatever they do mean, they cannot mean working or willing, because those who work or will are not born in this way.

Because John does not tell us here, we must go to other places and use good theology to answer this question. John 11 and the story of Lazarus is probably the best example in John’s Gospel. Lazarus was the friend of Jesus and he had died. But Jesus was going to raise Lazarus from the dead. Now, Lazarus did believe and receive the Word that was spoken to him, but it was after the Word was spoken, not before. First Jesus said, “Lazarus, come out.” Then Lazarus was made alive, by the power of the Word. Then Lazarus came out of his own volition, because he received the Word. Again, the metaphor (which in this case is also

quite literal) is simple to understand. First you are dead. Then the Word of Life makes you alive by the power of God completely apart from yourself. Then you come alive. Then your will receives and believes. Then it does what is natural and walks out of the stinking tomb and rotten burial rags.

John's interest *here* is not so much in how a person receives or believes, but in *what* they receive and believe. **Hold on to your hats**, because this part might just blow your away. Remember, again, we are talking about saints *in the OT* first and foremost. What did *they* believe and receive? John says it was "**his Name.**" What does this mean? Let me answer that with the OT and then the NT. Consider a few OT verses. **Isaiah 30:27** says, "**Behold, the Name of the Lord comes from afar, burning with his anger, and in thick rising smoke; his lips are full of fury, and his tongue is like a devouring fire.**"<sup>2</sup> Just as we saw in OT passages with "the Word of the LORD," "of the LORD" is a prepositional phrase. **The Name is the subject** here, not the LORD. The Name burns with anger. The Name has

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<sup>2</sup> An amazing verse (actually two) in Revelation tying Isaiah, the Name and the Logos together is Revelation 19:12-13 (also written by John). "**His eyes are like a flame of fire, and on his head are many diadems, and he has a name written that no one knows but himself. He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.**"

lips of fury and a tongue like fire. The Name is personified as both belonging to and being separate from the LORD.

**Psalm 20:1** says, “May the LORD answer you in the day of trouble! May the Name of the God of Jacob protect you!” Here, “The LORD” and the “Name of the God of Jacob” are in poetic parallelism. **Verse 7** adds, “We trust in the Name of the LORD our God.” As Michael Heiser asks, “Doesn’t it sound odd that the psalmist would pray that ‘the Name’ protect anyone? Israelites in need of protection wouldn’t be trusting in a string of consonants (Y-H-W-H) to help them!”<sup>3</sup> Basically, the Name of the LORD is the essence of the LORD, but it is also a distinct person in the Godhead.

Human names are important, and tell us something about a person (which is why you should always be careful what you name your children). But this is only analogous to God. God’s Name is the essence of God, and yet the Name manifests itself in such a way so that it can be seen with human eyes. They received the Name, because they saw the name, and they saw the Name, because God revealed the Name and gave them eyes to see.

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<sup>3</sup> Heiser, *The Myth That is True*, 120.

Consider the **Angel of the LORD** in the story of Moses. **Exodus 23:20-22** says, “I send an angel before you ... Pay careful attention to him and obey his voice; do not rebel against him, for he will not pardon your transgression, for my Name is in him.” Moses saw this same Angel in the burning bush on Mt. Sinai. But consider how this angel reveals himself. Moses asks, “who shall I say sent me?” The Angel replies, “I AM WHO I AM ... Yahweh ... this is my name forever” (**Ex 3:14-15**). This is more than just the Angel giving a name. It is what the Name of the angel is. The angel’s Name is Yahweh. It is God. He is Yahweh, yet he is distinct from Yahweh. He is the Name of Yahweh. Remarkable! But it’s right there in your OT.

Now, you as Christians **should be perfectly comfortable** with this kind of language, because the NT takes this language and simply tells you that Jesus is the Name of God. That is, Jesus both carries the Name of God as the exact representation of the essence of the Father, and Jesus is the distinct person of the Godhead called the Name of God. You find this in the early preaching of Peter and others, “Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins” (**Acts**

2:38 etc). You find it throughout Paul's letters, "You were justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor 6:11); "Do everything in the Name of the Lord Jesus" (Col 3:17). All they are doing is taking the OT idea and filling it in with the person who incarnated, died, and rose from the dead.

For example, you find it in early Christian sayings which were Christian reflections on the OT. For example **Php 2:13**, "At the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth." This comes from **Isaiah 45:23** which comes in a context of God continually giving his name: "Thus says Yahweh, who created the heavens ... I am Yahweh and there is no other ... I Yahweh speak the truth ... Was it not I, Yahweh ... I myself have sworn [by my Word],<sup>4</sup> ... to me every knee shall bow ..." (**Isa 45:18-23**). The Christian hymn cited by Paul thus tells us that Jesus is the Name of God whom Isaiah says is Yahweh, to whom every knee shall bow.

You find it in the Epistles of John. One striking example says, "Little children ... your sins are forgiven for his Name's sake" (**1 Jn 2:12**).<sup>5</sup> Compare this with our

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<sup>4</sup> The Isaiah Targum adds this Memra language.

<sup>5</sup> A fascinating discussion on the relation of the Name to the OT and Targums is found in John L. Ronning, "The Targum of Isaiah and the Johannine Literature," *Westminster Theological Journal* 69:2 (Fall 2007): 247-51.

verse. Here you have the same idea of children and the name as we have in **John 1:12**. One more connection to this can be found in **John 1:14** in a surprising way. As the Word becomes flesh, he dwells among us. This “dwelling” is the word “**tabernacling**.” It is the idea of **Christ as the temple**. But listen to the OT, which says similar things in many places. “Do not worship the Lord your God in like manner, but look only to the site that the Lord your God will choose amidst all your tribes as His habitation, to establish His name there” (**Deut 12:4-5**). In another place, during the time that Solomon builds the temple, he recalls these words saying, “This house, the place of which you have said, ‘My Name shall be there’” (**1 Kgs 8:29**). Then a few verses later it says, “The LORD appeared to Solomon a second time” and said, “I have consecrated this house that you have built, by putting my name there forever” (**1 Kgs 9:2-3**). Do you see what John is doing? It is remarkable! John is saying that the body of Jesus is the temple wherein dwells God’s Name is Jesus. It is not a coincidence that vs. 14 comes here.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The relationship to being “born” (vv. 12-13) by receiving the Name, and to the Word becoming flesh and tabernacling among us has another curious interpretation in the early church (due to tainted manuscripts). Ireneus, Tertullian and others, reading a variant text that says, “to him who was born,” as opposed “to them who were born.” They took the “him” here as a reference to the virgin birth, so that verse 14 would refer to Christ’s virgin birth. See Ireneus, *Against Heresies*, III, xvi, 2; xix 2; Tertullian, *On the Flesh of Christ*, XIX). William

All of this is to tell you, that those who received and believed in the OT, were receiving and believing in the Name: “To all who did receive him, who believed in his Name.” This is more than believing in the names of God: El Shaddai, Jehovah Nissi, El-Roi, etc. It is believing in the Name of God, that is in the preincarnate Christ. Some who saw him believed in the one they saw. Count among those Hagar, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, and Daniel, whom we are told all saw him. Others, though, knew all about him as the story of Samson’s father Manoah teaches us.

When he came to Samson’s unnamed mother and Manoah heard about it, he did not know what to think. Then the Angel appeared to Him and told him his Name (“wonderful”) (Jdg 13:18). This is the same name given to Messiah in the prophecies of Isaiah (Isa 9:6).<sup>7</sup> Then it says remarkably that when the Angel no longer appeared to Manoah, and that therefore, “Manoah knew that he was the Angel of the LORD” and his wife adds, “We shall surely die, for we have seen God” (Jdg 13:21-22). In other

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Hendriksen and Simon J. Kistemaker, vol. 1-2, *New Testament Commentary : Exposition of the Gospel According to John*, New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1953-2001), Jn 1:13.

<sup>7</sup> Remarkably, rather than Wonderful, Counselor or Wonderful Counselor, the LXX of Isa 9:6 ties the name directly to the head angel of the Divine Council saying, “Angel of Great Counsel” or “Angel of the Great Council”).

words, every OT Jew was familiar with the stories of God visibly appearing to the Patriarchs and to Moses and Joshua. They knew about him. Now they too saw him. So, whether they saw him personally or not, they all could have believed and received ... HIM. This is exactly what some did. Some received *Him* in the OT.

But now, rather than an angel that comes and goes, appears to some and not others, the Word has been made flesh. He became a man so that all men in his day might see and behold him. This was not a secret, not a mystical vision, not an ascension to heaven. It was all so very ... ordinary. He came in flesh. He did not appear to some, but to *all* within his sight. He performed miracles, even raising himself from the dead. And in being raised from the dead, he has been given a Name that is above every name in heaven or on earth or under the earth. No angel, no son of God, no king, not even the Shining One Satan himself can stand up to the Name that now belongs to the risen Christ, Jesus the Savior, Messiah, God with Us, Immanuel, the only unique, non-becoming (we “become” children, but he IS God’s son), but eternally begotten Son of God. Because he has come in the flesh and been raised

from the dead, all people everywhere are commanded to repent of their sins in believe in the Name of Jesus.

This belief is a gift that comes from the effectual calling of dead people to life by the giver of life and God of Life who is pleased to give it to whomever he chooses. It is not a right, but a gift. It is not a merit, but a grace given to those who see their depravity and need in the mirror of God's word. It is not your will, but his will that creates life. Do you see him today? Have you heard of him and received the Name of the LORD? Look upon him with the eyes of faith, and through faith will be given to all who believe the right to *become* children of God. It was true then. It is all the more true today since he has now come in the flesh.