

# John

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] as the Lord will help me graciously I will speak from the first chapter of the gospel according to John the eleventh and twelfth verses he came unto his own and his own received him not but as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name the gospel according to John the first chapter the eleventh and twelfth verses he came unto his own and his own received him not but as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name since I have had any understanding in spiritual things

I have felt that the opening part of this first chapter of the gospel according to John is amongst the most sublime expressions expressions in the scripture and the feeling grows on me as I ponder over them there is something majestic and yet something so simple something so plainly stated and yet something so profound in its meaning in these opening expressions in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God the word of course is the person of the Lord Jesus Christ expressed in that way exactly why John should have been inspired the Holy Spirit to use that term

I wouldn't be certain about it is a term for the son of God that is more peculiar to John than the other writers it may well be that the meaning and purpose of that term the word is to show that all communications between God and man are through Jesus Christ as all communications of thought and feeling from my mind and my heart to yours this morning must be through the words that I am led to use it is very certain anyway that all that God speaks to men he speaks in and through the person of his dear son that is to say with regard to the gospel we read that

God who at sundry times and in divers manners spake unto our fathers by the prophets having these last days spoken unto us by his son and I think there you get the explanation why the eternal son of God is here expressed as the word because God has spoken unto us by his son oh blessed word that comes by such a blessed person as Jesus Christ is and what the blessed effect it has upon the heart when the Holy Spirit makes it thus personal to us in the beginning was the word as in the opening of the whole scriptures we read in the beginning God so it's here in the beginning was the word where it's a matter of the creation the world and all that therein is then it in the beginning was God but when it is the gospel of redeeming love and grace and eternal life then it is in the beginning was

Jesus Christ the son and the word was with God and the word was God here in the most simple terminology you have the divinity of Jesus Christ expressed and in that divinity he was God and you have the distinct personality of Jesus Christ expressed in that he was with God God essentially in his divinity for there is but one God not three gods one God with another God no there is one God and in that one God or as we often say that one Godhead there are three equally divine equally eternal equally holy equally blessed persons the father and the son and the holy ghost and this is not just a matter of theory it's fundamental the whole character and scheme of salvation rests on the trinity in the beginning the word was God and the word was with God but oh how profound all this is how simple it is expressed that Jesus Christ was in the beginning as the word that he was divine in his eternal nature that he was distinct from the father in his person but who can fathom the depth of this mystery of divinity brethren there is nothing better for us than when we feel we cannot fathom things so divine there is nothing better for us than to feel the holy heavenly influence of them come upon our spirit you've heard me say this before

[ 7 : 29 ] I know that some years ago many years ago now when I was engaged in my garden by the side of the chapel and not particularly either thinking about the things of God such an impression came on my mind of this that I'm now preaching to you this morning of the mystery and the glory and the blessedness of the trinity the father and the son and the holy spirit and the father sending his only begotten son from his eternal heart of love and the holy spirit proceeding from the father to reveal that blessed person in our hearts as I told you before I I stopped and I took off my hat and I bowed my head and I worshiped now it's nice to feel things like that isn't it when they come on our heart not in the sense of

I was going to say dry theology not much like that term but you understand me when they come with such an impression of heavenliness and holiness that morning it seemed to me as though this truth didn't belong to this world at all it seemed so heavenly I can't describe the heavenliness with which this came upon my spirit and I've never quite lost it in the beginning was the word the eternal son the son of God in his divine nature and he was God in every sense and meaning of that word God he was and yet he was distinct and he came into this world from this eternal unity in the

Godhead and yet in this distinct personality as the son Jesus Christ came into this world and was as much here as I'm here and you're here this morning he came into this world he came a light into a very dark world very dark in Jesus Christ the true light shone into the darkness of this world sin caused and sin maintained darkness the light shone in the darkness of this world life came by Jesus Christ in him was life as well as light that is it was a life giving light and a life giving life in him was life and that life was light it was the light of life so that wherever the light shone personally and effectually into the hearts of any life came and where life came through the gospel that light came just as in the creation of the world we read and God said let there be light and there was light so in

Jesus Christ God said to sinners let there be light in your soul and when he says that there is light the light of truth shines in the darkness the utter darkness of our soul it's all very it's all very sublime very beautiful and very real oh how certain I feel when I say this that I'm not speaking vain things to you this morning that these are the truths that God has revealed in his word and in measure as revealed in my heart through his word and what I want to preach to you this morning in the hope that the Lord will reveal them through the preached word more and more in your souls too but here is something very sad it is understandable alas but very sad that the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not ordinarily if the light shines in darkness everything is enlightened by it but with regard to this world it is not so the light shined in darkness but the darkness of the world continued as dense as ever and it is so now the light is still shining in the darkness of this world and the darkness is continuing as dark as ever because the darkness comprehended it not John goes on to speak of himself a little in this matter that he was not that true light but I'll pass over that and come now to the words of our text he came unto his own and his own received him not but as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name let us first for a few minutes consider the vital importance of this matter it is always good if we can feel it so to approach the things of God with an impression of their great importance to us and certainly it is a most vital consideration as to whether we have or whether we have not received him he came unto his own and his own received him not I'll come to that in a minute or two probably it is sufficient for me now to say that the most important and the most vital and the most personal matter for each one of us if we did but realize it to be so is as to whether we have or have not received

Jesus Christ and mark you this there is no neutrality about this matter there is no half and half position to stand in regard to it i know that with some Jesus Christ is rejected in a very open and in the almost violent way in their spirit there are others who would by no means react in such a way to this and yet still don't receive him and that there are some who receive Jesus Christ in a very clear and distinct and blessed way they can hardly doubt about it because they receive him in such a way of life and grace and love and power into their hearts that their case is beyond question but there are some who have received Jesus Christ and yet still cannot be clear in their own heart about this matter they have not perhaps had the experience that some have had in receiving Jesus Christ and they feel the matter is in doubt and question now how thankful i should be if the Lord would help me to speak a word in season to such for as i've said there's no neutral ground when Jesus Christ comes to any and he comes still in the word of the gospel as much as he came when he preached and on the shores of Galilee when he comes in the word of the gospel to men it puts them in a very solemn position either they receive or they reject he comes unto them and they receive him not or they receive him now there are some considerations about this i think we need to be clear about now it must not be inferred that because the word is heard willingly heard and it may be with some readiness of mind that Jesus Christ is received and here i touch something that is very heavy on my own heart i think of those now i know not one single person to whom this is personally applicable really because i cannot read the heart but i think of a case of those who hear the word year in and year out and are quite ready to give their attention to that which may be spoken in the Lord's name and that's as far as it goes now it's a good thing to hear the word i'm thankful for anyone to come and hear the gospel i wish it might be the Lord's will to constrain those to come in and hear the word who inquire in the dark about what it really means and teaches because for one thing ordinarily

[ 18 : 43 ] faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God that is to say when the word is heard in such a way as that the Holy Spirit makes it effective clothes it with power then that word is received believably and be clear about this my friends there's no way of receiving Jesus Christ except through the word don't look for visions i don't say none have ever received Jesus Christ that way but that's not the one i would direct you to seek to receive Jesus Christ it's not necessarily that you should have heard a voice from heaven like Saul of Tarsus heard on the way to Damascus don't think you must hear some audible voice to receive

Jesus Christ no Jesus Christ is received by faith through the word that declares him but then you see you may hear the word not be the end of it no faith come in any quickening way to your heart through it if you would say well we can't make the word effectual in our hearts you say true but if you're content to leave it at that you're in soul peril you really are the best counsel I can give anyone if they feel they're in that difficulty is that there's a throne of grace and there's such a thing as prayer and the Lord has promised to hear it and your course is not to argue about the difficulties arising from

God's sovereignty and man's responsibility and the like for you may get really entangled in such problems but to beg of the Lord to make the word of the gospel life and power in your soul because that will get you somewhere for the Lord has promised to hear prayer but don't rest in hearing the word to put it short hearing the word is not receiving Jesus Christ and another thing it may go farther than that and the word may give us considerable understanding with regard to the truth itself and that is all to the good because as I've sometimes said truth enters the heart through the understanding you know when the

Lord Jesus Christ opened the understanding of the disciples then opened he their understanding truth entered into their heart wonderfully for faith in receiving Jesus Christ does not act blindly you know it acts through discernment and understanding and a spiritual perception of the truth and teaching concerning that blessed person but one reason why when he came on to his own his own received if not was because their understandings were darkened the understanding to the soul is like the hall to a house truth enters that way but with so many it enters into the understanding and stops there it goes no farther it enters not into their heart so that they receive

Jesus Christ by the word now be clear about that that you don't rest in an understanding of what the truth of the gospel is and receive not Jesus Christ into your heart it is one thing to understand theology another thing to receive Jesus Christ who is the truth itself and this is helpful isn't it because it isn't everyone by any means you can understand what I mean by theology but there are those things that the Lord has hidden from the wise and prudent with all their wisdom and revealed unto babes I would be glad to be a babe if Jesus Christ would reveal more and more of himself in my soul we want him to be made to us our wisdom it's a great thing to have a good understanding in regard of the truth and teaching of the scriptures it preserves the mind from being entangled by erroneous and false doctrine and it is also as I have said the means whereby the saving knowledge of truth is by the

[ 24 : 28 ] Holy Spirit imparted to our heart if the understanding is darkened the soul is dark if the understanding is blinded the soul is blind so be thankful for a gospel to hear but do not rest in hearing be thankful for any understanding that has been given to you to understand the scriptures but don't be content with that for you see you may come short of receiving Jesus Christ another point I would just mention and that is do not be mistaken about this that though one should have some feeling with regard to spiritual things it does not settle this matter that they receive Jesus

Christ savingly now as I understand these spiritual things there can be no receiving Jesus Christ without some feeling surely the mind cannot be spiritually enlightened and there be no feeling as that light of life shines into the heart surely the heart cannot be softened and its hardness broken down without any feeling under that operation of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ my friends is such a person I mean he's such a blessed person his name is so gracious it is so full of everything that is holy and pure so that because of the savour of his good ointments his name is ointment poured for now you couldn't receive such a blessed person as that unfeelingly he is too precious his name is too sweet his love is too heart affecting his blood is too precious in the efficacy of it for you to receive

Jesus Christ without any feeling but then we mustn't mistake in this matter that feeling of itself necessarily implies that we receive Jesus Christ you'll remember how it was with the stony ground hearers they received the word with joy alas the joy was as superficial as their religion was there was no depth because they had no depth of earth they withered away the teaching of Jesus Christ is quite simple they were shallow that's what it means they were shallow there was a superficial sensitiveness about them that responded to the word in that easy way of joy that they had no depth of earth there was no depth to it all it was all so easy so shallow so superficial so much a mere matter of the emotions and no real understanding no depth no heart worth no rooting down of the things of God into their souls soon come soon go that's how it was with them they received the word with joy but having no root they withered away it is often better to receive the word with sorrow at first with distress of heart under a sense of conviction of sin in such a way as brings us not in a formal manner but from our very heart to pray the publican's prayer

God be merciful to me a sinner usually brethren the Lord wounds before he heals he kills before he makes alive he brings down before he lifts up he shows something and causes us to have consciousness of it of our own sinfulness before he shows us what a blessed saviour Jesus Christ is don't think that shallow feeling means that Jesus Christ has been received all feeling isn't shallow and in the early experience of some in the things of God as I have feelings that might not perhaps be said to be all that deep but you know it's always a feature of the work and teaching of God the Holy

Spirit that it deepens it deepens no one need be concerned about their beginning not having as some have had a very deep and powerful character how has it gone with you since how has it gone with you since do you find yourself having a deeper sense now of your poor needy sinful case do you find the Lord is teaching you more deeply how helpless you are apart from his saving grace and power is he teaching you more and more what it is to rely wholly on Jesus Christ and his precious love and grace the continuation proves more than anything else whether the beginning is right well now

[ 30 : 57 ] I've taken a long time this morning over what I only intended to be just some observations upon the vital necessity of this matter and I don't want to build you up on anything that isn't genuine that isn't real that's why I speak as I do not to discourage anyone only I don't want to build you up like wood hay and stubble in these solemn things coming to our text rather late now this morning to open it up there are these considerations for our word this morning today first then in this text there is a merciful appearance he came he came on to his own and then there is secondly an unbelieving rejection they received him not then there is thirdly a believing reception but as many as received him and they received him by believing even to them that believe on his name there is a believing reception and then there is lastly a divine privilege to them gave he power to become the sons of God or as the margin renders it to them gave he the right or the privilege to become the sons of God but the time is now almost gone for me to enter into these things any further he came on to his own he came

Jesus came as I said when I began he was ever in the bosom of the father neither did he ever leave the bosom of the father as to his divinity I was once in some uncertainty of mind with regard to that doctrine that at one time caused so much contention that is the eternal sonship of the Lord Jesus Christ in his divine nature there seemed to me that I come to leave a good deal of my reasonings about these things there seemed to me such difficulties in believing that but one day the very spot comes back to my imagination at this moment that word came into my mind when I was pondering over these deep things the only begotten son which is in the bosom of the father he hath declared him and it seemed all so clear to me

Jesus Christ was the only begotten son in the bosom of the father before ever he was a son of man in the arms of Mary he was the only begotten son in the bosom of the father and I noted it or it affected me so distinctly it didn't read who was in the bosom of the father which of course would have been perfectly true but who is and it's the Lord's own words too and he knew the truth of this matter the only begotten son which is I thought that's wonderful when he said that he was in this world he'd come into the world he'd come unto his own he was a son of man the son of Mary but he said the only begotten son is in the bosom of the father now

I can't explain these things to you this morning but to me it isn't a matter of explaining nor is it a matter of receiving something that my mind rejects when these divine truths come upon our hearts as I believe the Holy Spirit brings them upon our hearts our difficulties are not necessarily explained but they just vanish like like clouds before the sun or the darkness of the night before the dawn of the morning they just vanish and truth in all its purity and in all its preciousness and in all its certainty and in all its divine originality is made so clear to us our difficulties vanish we don't reason them away the light of truth enlightens them away the only begotten son which is in the bosom of the father that eternal bosom of eternal love that is

Jesus Christ my friends that is Jesus Christ that blessed person and may the Holy Spirit reveal him in your heart cause the light of truth to enlighten as the Lord knows I need it so badly myself a little I believe I can glimpse into these mysteries of truth and blessedness some light I believe has shone into my otherwise dark mind and heart enough to guide my feet this way and enough influence the precious word this precious word has had upon my mind and my spirit to make me feel I can believe it and love it but

[ 37 : 39 ] I am continually coming back here to this expression this beautiful verse and I hope you won't think that you hear it too often from my lips oh that my soul could love and praise him more his beautiest trace his majesty adore live near his heart his heart of compassion and grace and love and mercy and holiness live near his heart upon upon his bosom lean obey his voice and all his will esteem now I hope you feel you can follow me in this because this is the way that leads to everlasting life and everlasting bliss and everlasting communion

Jesus has come into the world a light to enlighten us a saviour to save us a high priest to atone for us a prophet to teach us and a king to establish his blessed kingdom which is not meat and drink but righteousness and peace and joy in the holy ghost in our breasts that blessed kingdom that shall never end he has come into the world he came he came unto his own and his own received him not but as many as received him to them gave he power to become the sons of God even to them that believe on his name it is the old gospel you heard this morning of

Jesus Christ I have nothing else to preach I wouldn't dare to preach anything else it would imperil my soul and imperil yours if I did but this simple plain gracious word may the Holy Spirit convey to our hearts afresh this morning and if we have received Jesus Christ might the effect of the word be even now Lord Jesus come afresh into my soul come afresh into my soul my heart longs for thee the living God the living friend of sinners amen