

The word became flesh

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 July 2015

Preacher: Dr Antony Latham

[0 : 00] A very warm welcome everybody to this morning's service. A special welcome is to any visitors that are among us.

I see one or two here. We pray that you'll enjoy our service together with us today. There will be a summer Sunday school for children, including visitors of primary school age.

It's a summer Sunday school, later on in service. Tea and coffee will be served after the close of the service, to which all are welcome. So please join us for tea and coffee. The evening service at 6pm will be conducted by Duncan McPherson.

The Ladies' Bible Study will not meet this week. The Firstfruits Fellowship meets in the Church of Scotland Hall on Tuesday at 7.30pm.

The prayer meeting on Wednesday is at 7.30pm. And that's in the Old Primary School. The Old Primary School. And will be conducted by Callum McKinnon.

[1 : 06] Service is next Sunday, 11am. Dr. Angus McKellar will be leading us. And 6pm, Alan Barclay will lead that service. So let's start our worship this morning with Mission Praise number 247.

Which should also be on the wall up there. How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts to me. My soul is longing and fainting, courts of the Lord to see.

Let's sing this together to God's praise. Let us just now bow our heads in prayer together. Heavenly Father, how lovely is thy dwelling place.

We long to be with you, closer to you. We long to be in your courts, just now, in this service. And we pray, Lord, that you'll be with us for each person here.

Lord, that by your Spirit you'll come amongst us now. That you'll speak to each heart. That you'll help us to put aside the things of the world. Lord, to put aside the worries and the anxieties.

[2 : 13] And to focus on you. To focus on your word and your truth. Upon Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Lord, we pray for ourselves, Lord, that each one of us will grow in the knowledge and love of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We pray for any here who do not know the Lord Jesus or are searching. That they will find him. That he is the way, the truth and the life.

Lord, that this will be a special time. A time of change for each one of us. We pray for our congregation, Lord. We pray for all of those who are not here.

Those who are perhaps who are sick. Who for one reason or another are away on holidays. We ask your blessing upon them. That you'll bless them and give them your peace and your strength.

Lord, we particularly pray for David, our minister, and his family. We ask that their time away is a time of refreshment and rest and encouragement and recuperation.

[3 : 23] We thank you for all that they do. For all that David does. And we pray, Lord, that he will come back here refreshed and full of your grace and your strength.

So, Lord, we pray for those too who are grieving at this time. It's a time when we hear nearly every week of somebody who has passed away.

And we ask that you be with those who are grieving. That you are very close. That the comfort of the Holy Spirit will be with each one. And they will turn to you for that grace that only you can give.

We pray for all those who are sick. We pray for those who are unable to come because of age or sickness or whatever it is. We ask your blessing upon them and your healing hand upon them.

And as we look outward from this congregation, we pray for the whole of Harris. We ask your blessing upon each church that meets here. We pray for the new minister in the Church of Scotland.

[4 : 32] We thank you for him and we ask your blessing upon him and his ministry as he starts there. We pray that we will work together for the furtherance of the Gospel.

And Lord, as we look beyond, we pray for those who are in our communities, are lost, who are sad, who are depressed.

For those who are suffering from various addictions. Help us to look out for them, Lord. Help us to look to our neighbours and to reach out with love in practical ways.

We pray for the whole of this country, this nation, Lord, which increasingly turns away from your truth. We pray, Lord, for the leaders.

We ask that you be with them. We pray, Lord, that you will raise up people who love you, who will follow your precepts, who will stand up and stand up for the truth fearlessly.

[5 : 33] We look out on the world, Lord, and we see daily on our television screens such terrible things going on all over the world. We pray, Lord, for those who are suffering from poverty, from starvation, from war.

We pray for all of those agencies and missionaries and others who are helping those who are suffering around the world. We pray against the forces of evil that we see so often daily on our screens.

We pray for the power of your spirit to defeat evil wherever it may be. And, Lord, we pray for the church. We thank you that on this special day all around the world, people are meeting.

We ask your blessing upon your worldwide church to bring unity, to bring strength, to increase the numbers of those who profess Jesus as Saviour.

We commit all these things to you now in the name of Jesus. Amen. Boys and girls, would you like to come forward here? Please, thank you.

[6 : 57] It's great to see all of you here today. I know some of you are away on holidays, but it's lovely to see you. Are you enjoying the holidays? Having a good time?

No one having a good time? Are you having a nice holiday time? Yes. You are? Good. That's great. I am going to show you something.

I wonder, do you know what it could be? It's a bit unfair, this, but I'm going to show that to everybody here in case you wonder what on earth I'm showing to the children here.

But I'm just going to pass it around. You have to just hold that. It's not heavy. Have a look at it and pass it around to the next person. Have a think.

What on earth is that thing? Okay. Okay. Some ideas. I can see people thinking.

[7 : 58] Okay. That's great. Okay. Anyone with any ideas? Put your hands up if you think you might know what it is.

Yeah. What do you think it is? A clam. A which? A clam. A clam. Okay. That's an idea. It's actually not one of those. Any ideas? Okay.

Could you put up the first picture, please? Not sure how well it's going to show up. What's that? Has anyone seen one of those?

Well, that actually... Can everybody see it there? That actually is an animal that doesn't exist anymore.

All of them have passed away. It's called a woolly mammoth. And it's a bit like an elephant. Has anybody seen an elephant? Yes. You've seen an elephant. Did you go to the zoo and see an elephant?

[8 : 57] You've seen them on television? Well, they're very like elephants, but they lived thousands of years ago. And this is a tooth from a woolly mammoth. That's what it is. My son, Brendan, spent about three months of his pocket money buying this in a shop a few years ago.

He blew the whole lot. And anyway, he loves things like this, but it's a nice thing. It's a woolly mammoth. Tooth. You wouldn't like to have a toothache in that, would you?

Have any of you lost any of your teeth? Yeah, I can see a lot of you have lost teeth. Well, woolly mammoths apparently lost teeth quite frequently. They have to replace them all the time.

So this was found somewhere, and it has been proven to be thousands of years old. It's a woolly mammoth tooth. And if you look at it, it's actually beautifully made.

You see that nice surface there? And it's just perfect for grinding up all the vegetables and the leaves and the things that they used to eat. And it's beautifully made, perfectly for the woolly mammoth.

[10:06] Now, I'm just going to show you another tooth. This is a tooth. I'm going to ask you to guess it on fair, really.

I guess which animal that's from. It's quite sharp, isn't it? Having a very good look at it. Definitely not a human, too, is it? Not only your teeth.

Okay. Quick guess, anybody? Yeah? Is it a lion? It's not a lion. It's actually from a much bigger animal.

It's a good guess, though, because lions have similar sort of teeth. It's actually from a bigger animal even than that. Do you know who that is? Anyone known with this?

[11:16] Yes. Is it a whale? It is a whale. Exactly. That is a sperm whale. It's one of the biggest animals you'll find in the sea. And some of the grown-ups here will remember, a few years back, a sperm whale.

A huge animal, which was probably about 40 feet long, much bigger than an elephant, was washed up on a aris. I don't know if any of you remember that.

And it was washed up on the rocks round about Holgebost. And this is one of the teeth from that sperm whale. Sperm whales. I don't know what you think sperm whales eat.

Any idea? What does sperm whales like to eat? It's definitely not porridge. I thought it was a bit of an unfair question.

They love to eat giant squid. Giant squid, I don't know if you've ever seen one on television, but they're huge animals that live very, very deep down the bottom of the sea.

[12:16] They're huge, about a mile down, actually, in the dark, deep depths. And these animals are amazing. They can dive down about a mile down into the dark. And they find these giant squid.

They have big tentacles, like octopus tentacles. And they use these teeth for the perfect, be made for the sperm whale. And if you think about your own teeth, probably don't think much about your own teeth, but think about the front ones.

They're perfect for biting into things and slicing into things. And the back teeth are very good for chewing and grinding up the food. So next time you take your food, think about how well-made they are.

Now, we're going to, with the grown-ups, we're going to talk about the way that God has created everything in the universe, including you and me, perfectly.

And not just teeth, that he's made perfectly for animals and for you and me, but he's made all the other things that are beautiful and good. And some of you might know that I'm a doctor.

[13:20] And every time I think about the human body and what we are made of, I see how wonderfully we are made. We are made so beautifully and incredibly.

And it's not by accident. It couldn't have happened on its own, no matter what anyone might tell you. This is because God made us. And each one of us is made by God.

We're all a bit different. Some are smaller, some are bigger, some have different colored hair. And so on, different characters. But God made each one of you just the way he wanted you to be.

So think about that today. And the verse we're going to look at from John's Gospel is, For all things were made through him. That is Jesus. Jesus himself made everything.

That's you and me. And even the sun and the stars and the moon and the whole universe. So we need to worship him. What an amazing God he is.

[14:21] We need to worship him. We're going to do that by singing from number 23. All things bright and beautiful. All creatures great and small.

So Mission Praise number 23. All things bright and beautiful. All creatures great and small. All things wise and wonderful. The Lord God made them all.

When you think again and look around, Harris, look at yourselves. Remember that it's God who made all this. And sing together to God's praise. We're now going to turn to our reading for today, which is from John's Gospel, chapter 1, beginning at verse 1.

John's Gospel, chapter 1, beginning at verse 1. I'm actually going to read to verse 18. I think I only gave the first five verses to Cami.

So not his fault for not showing a whole lot. It's going to be 1 to 18. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

[15:32] He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made. Without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was light, and that light was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. There came a man who was sent from God. His name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe.

He himself was not the light. He came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.

He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.

Children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision, or a husband's will, but born of God. The word became flesh, and made his dwelling among us.

[16:44] We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me has surpassed me, because he was before me.

From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God, but God, the one and only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known. Now we're going to have another prayer in Garlick and Fargo is going to lead us in that. I'm going to have another prayer in Garlick.

God bless you, Elefants, indooing Aye. God bless you, He who intervned, is giving to you one of the things you theme for the land for the Dolly of the Holy.

[18:14] And from experiencing theachen, the leadingingly theottest, one of the. I was going to have an otras, this day, this day thanks to him toADAMze Curran. But being in our youth realized that day, the Trinity is being saved. And when he gave the battle to be down exactly what you are, he was ■■■■■ING hu de na in.■■■■ his mother, you u žENTEN us data you have made them alive through the earth.

So I have no way for all of us to stand here. and run away from other things in their debugging. Supervx kilowatt.

As long as they were even in the life. In the■ and then the game is ■ botting.

And as Siddhine was feeling twice per week, that■ific of God had to fight. Jesus how we will tell you the every tiver mr me throughout foreign As he shocked his kind of death, lives in a new way.

While my My Th■ radiates, it ■ I how much money they've given my Charooly has a full energy Simon's bed. When I think about Bionic to see a season about all three...

[20:07] not crying has a chills, I've missed my legs and your cue is cr üst and his head has a heart, 10 Kerry at■ for a hundred thousand thousand■ies Fredriirchyn 19Kstanden Some photos in different places a year from Guilty Island nd we'd get starts to work that way, we wool westerns and you know India will ■ cold.

Booth irregularly would get stilted to eat yin along the evening with old Moses Bl■■■ shows some lunch, Sinbad Repression keys have a drawterm analyze and you'll ___ about , auxiliary things , this bare things you ain't rid off the the . categories.

read the papers. You don't work with the simple writing■.

Good what Thee Thads Dr Bell Center Mr reaches our eggs Like a mouse Like a stick ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ boum pants. ¶ ¶ ¶ ...■■■ song with your son.

[24:03] ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ ¶ loh ¶ and I hope you will not be alive, We can learn or study.

We tend to go on a route. May we wish you anything further? If there are suddenly more following those days We will take our free money Getting away our way of salvation We will get any extra trouble the verkl remotechio site i drink that I can say me I seek love, aipping upon a añad.

I will speak and play enough with the questionnaire.

A d- 84 and now I've been waving a hand tight perspective in the spring and then I will press red button onto a small boat.

And now everything has changed and have failed me for the moment. My This is Intro collectively. Given a moment I am even going to write about 2 months later places. My name is Chris Mac buildings stars were somewhat specific Jasrud's Dhyton color.

[26:30] My their name is revealed from Jaylen Store and Car barn with a fan in St cruelossa dele That dear poor woman score was like this and that causing more gue vor Of their lips won how that

beautiful if they gave longer and it squares on the ground.

So much further e.g. falling down here... because there are assists that did not exist, either after removing a person imposed directly or pointing a contrary to■■■...

but as such is our joy. Then I knowWhy and it fires for all... Matekin Aysehor obst ■ aspects of vari Amen.

The heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[30 : 31] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We're now going to turn again to that passage of scripture we looked at before from John's Gospel, chapter one, beginning at verse one, John's Gospel, chapter one, beginning at verse one.

[34 : 29] at verse 1. Let's just pray before we start to look at this together. Heavenly Father, we thank you for your word.

We thank you that it is inspired and perfect and from you. We pray, Lord, that as we look at this together, these magnificent words, that you help us, that you guide us, that your spirit will lead each of us to know you better.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen. Who is Jesus? Can we trust Jesus?

Is Jesus unique? Or is he just one of many, many other religious leaders who started a religion? What is his nature?

What is he like? These are good questions. And they're ones which we grapple with. And sometimes people get confused with if we're not careful.

[35 : 41] And if we meet someone in the street or anywhere and we try to share our faith with them, we'll often come across these sort of questions about Jesus. Is Jesus the only way?

Why would I become a Christian instead of following some other religion, for instance? Is it not arrogant to claim that everyone else is off track and that Jesus is the only way?

That's what you'll find a lot of people in the world are saying about when you talk about. John's Gospel, right at the very beginning, is an antidote to all of this.

John gives us clear truths that are fundamental in answering those questions and that perhaps some of you may have this morning. Let's just turn back to the first chapter of John's Gospel and look at the, we're just going to look at the first five verses together.

And really these are some of the most wonderful and sublime verses in the Bible. There's a depth and there's a meaning here that is exalted and magnificent. Is it not true?

[36 : 49] We learn so much in these five short verses that we could probably write books that would fill many libraries about them. In fact, I think libraries are full of books about these words.

I suppose it's all the more amazing when you think about it that these words were written by a man who used to fish on Lake Galilee and who was at his nets when Jesus called him.

And here he is writing these words now. A man who probably had very little education. In fact, as we read these verses we can only come to the conclusion that the writer, John, was utterly inspired by the Holy Spirit as he wrote them.

There is no other explanation. We should really expect that. But it is wonderful when we see this inspiration so clearly. The sheer beauty and depth of these words is one of the reasons why we should believe in the truth of the Bible and its divine inspiration.

Verse 1 In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God. In the beginning this clearly echoes the first words of Genesis where we read in the beginning God made the heavens and the earth.

[38 : 11] And here it is again in the beginning was the Word. And already we have a strong hint that the Word is in fact God. And this is no accident as we will have it confirmed as we read further.

Now the word in Greek is logos. And it's a word that would make sense to both Greeks and Jews. First of all Greeks in Greek thinking logos meant not just word but also reason.

and they believed that the whole universe is an ordered place and what lies behind the universe and orders it is reason or logos word.

And so logos the word to the Greeks was filled with meaning about the cause of the universe. For Jews creation as we know took place through God's speaking.

In Genesis we see that we read and God said let there be light and God said let the land produce vegetation and God said let us make man in our own image.

[39 : 23] And so God's Word is an integral part of who He is and is an expression of His power behind all creation. Also in Jewish word in Jewish thought word logos was associated with wisdom very close to each other.

And in Proverbs for instance in Proverbs chapter 8 verse 30 we read of wisdom being at God's side at creation. Wisdom is often spoken of as a person.

In Proverbs 8 1 we read does not wisdom call out? Now we know as we read further in these verses in John's chapter 1 that the Word is none other than Jesus Christ.

In verse 14 John confirms this. He says the Word became flesh and made His dwelling with us. In the beginning was the Word.

And what this means is vital for our understanding of Jesus Christ. He was already there when the universe was created. He was pre-existent.

[40 : 29] He was uncreated. Now for you and I this is interesting theology perhaps and fascinating but what does it really mean for our lives?

How does it impact on our walk with God? And this is the first point to make I think. Jesus is eternal and uncreated.

He always was. Remember how He told the Jews before Abraham was I am. And you know what happened then? They knew that this was Jesus claiming to be God and they started to stone Him. We have a Savior who is the same yesterday and today and forever. That I am shows us that He is eternal and always has been in existence.

And so when we come to Jesus we don't just come to a created man or a special prophet or a hero. we come to one who is beyond our sense of time and is unchanging and He really is the same yesterday, today and forever.

[41 : 39] We have a Savior who doesn't change who always was and this gives us great confidence when we come to Him or certainly should do. All we see around us is fleeting.

Everything we see around us including ourselves is passing. Nothing is permanent here in this world. There is a permanence about Jesus. There are people apparently who arrange for their bodies to be deep frozen when they die or if they can afford it just their heads apparently in the hope that science will one day be able to revive them and that they will live forever.

They are looking for permanence. They are looking for continuity on this earth. But would they not abandon this idea completely if they understood that the one who saves Jesus and who is in charge of our future after death is eternal and permanent and cannot change?

We can trust such a Savior. In the beginning before anything was made was the Word. And then we read in the same verse and the Word was with God and the Word was God.

Now we are beginning to glimpse more of the wonder of this Word. He was with God but he was God. This is what John is declaring here at the very start of his Gospel.

[43 : 06] Let's go back to Genesis chapter 1. We read there that God is portrayed as plural and when he comes to the creation of man we read let us make man in our image.

Right at the beginning of the Bible we have strong evidence of the Trinity. God is speaking and deliberating within the Godhead the Trinity. He was not speaking with angels who are created beings but within the Trinity.

This is too much for us is it not to understand? After all we are just created beings. But it ties well within our verse here.

The Word is with God and was God. And this makes great sense as we read the Gospel accounts. Jesus is clearly God in that he speaks and acts as God and forgives sins for instance.

Only God can forgive sins. And yet he speaks all the time of being inseparable from the Father. Likewise he speaks of the Holy Spirit who is the Counselor that will be left with us when he ascends to heaven.

[44 : 19] He says I will never leave you and he leaves us with the Holy Spirit. So we have the implication and the teaching of the Trinity right throughout the Gospel. We don't have time to go into the doctrine of the Trinity too much just now.

But these verses we have in these verses we have a marvelous insight into that triune relationship. We may not understand it but we can appreciate the truth of it and we can understand it better the nature of the incarnation God becoming man as we ponder over these things.

John 14:23 is a lovely confirmation of the work of the Father and the Son together in a person's life. Jesus says if anyone loves me he will obey my teaching.

My Father will love him and we note that we will come to him and make our home with him. And then the last beautiful truth that we get in this first verse the Word was God not just with God but God himself.

In just 17 words we have the pre-existence and eternal nature of Jesus the fact that he was always with God and that he is God. Hebrews 1:3 describes Jesus as the exact representation of his being of God's being.

[45:51] And in Colossians 1:19 we read about Jesus for God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him. Philippians 2:6 about Jesus says who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage.

Now if you happen to have discussions with some of the cults such as Jehovah's Witnesses you'll find that this verse is altered by them. They don't accept that Jesus is God and they deliberately mistranslated it.

And if you're needing something to say to them then open the Bible at the beginning of John's Gospel and read this first verse to them. This verse puts Jesus in his rightful place as God who came to earth.

There is a debate even among some theologians about the cross. You might have heard about this. How could God the Father punish the Son in this way?

The innocent Jesus when he didn't do anything wrong? It seems to them inconceivable that God would put his own Son on the cross to take our sins and punishment.

[47:14] But what they're ignoring is that it is God himself on the cross. This is the amazing thing. It is God who went to the cross in the form of Jesus.

There's no use seeing Jesus as simply human with an angry God punishing him. It is God himself who came to save us and die for us on the cross.

How could a man take our sins? Only the God man Jesus can do that. So there is an utter uniqueness about the Christian faith.

People like to argue and to discuss about different religions and to compare them. I used to do this. When I was young, I couldn't really see how I could choose one religion over another.

And perhaps I thought there were many ways to God. But this one verse shows us the complete uniqueness of our faith. It is in the one whose God himself became flesh.

[48:16] We don't trust in the teaching and morals of some prophet or holy man. We put our trust in the one who is there in the beginning with God and actually God.

And John has laid down these few words enough to make any doubters stop in their tracks. Again, when I was young, I was a student. I remember actually it was up in Aberdeen and I was at one of the hospitals up there.

I was accosted by some people of the Baha'i faith on the streets. They were very nice people and they invited me to an evening meeting. and I went along to the evening meeting.

I don't remember too much. They were very sincere and they were keen to influence me. And when I questioned, same old question coming to me, when I questioned how anyone could choose one religion over another, I was told that God or the truth about God was rather like when lots of blind people came across an elephant.

one touched the tail, another touched the trunk, another touched the side of the elephant. They all feel and detect something different, but in fact they're all feeling the same animal.

[49:34] This was their picture of different religions coming to the same truth. Strangely enough, only last week I spoke at length to another Baha'i friend who said the same, and he said that my belief in Jesus was wonderful, but he also said that all the other major religions were equally valid.

And it sounds very nice, doesn't it? But when I read John's Gospel and this one verse, I can see how completely this ignores the basic truths about Jesus.

He is unique, he is incomparable, and there's no other founder of any religion who comes close to him. He is altogether an utterly eternal part of the Holy Trinity and is God himself.

No wonder he said, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. There are no other options given.

You literally take him or leave him. Saying though lots of ways is to show complete disregard for the basis of our faith. Now our post-modern society doesn't like this and prefers a pick and mix religious experience.

[50 : 57] They say there's no one absolute truth anymore. Your truth may be different from mine, but it's just as valid. It's arrogant surely to say otherwise or so we are told.

But is it not arrogant to think that you can just ignore the claims made about Jesus as if they were of no importance? And it requires humility in fact to come to him and accept him as who he is. Not watered down to suit our individual preferences.

As if it didn't really matter. As if it didn't matter that he was eternal or even God. Perhaps there are some here who wonder about the uniqueness of Jesus and whether we can truly say he's the only way.

And I pray that you'll read and meditate over these words and other words in the Gospels and come to the conclusion with God's help that he is the one, the only one, to trust and put our faith in.

Verse 2 is given for our emphasis. He, the personal he, was with God in the beginning. And moving on swiftly to verse 3.

[52 : 21] Through him all things were made, without him nothing was made that has been made. This comes back to the children's talk about God creating everything through Jesus Christ.

Through him all things were made. Everything in creation was made through this word. We need to understand what this means. We often see Jesus in the human aspect.

But Jesus was the agent by which the entire universe was made. Not just you and me and Harris and the earth and all its wonders, but the whole cosmos was made by him.

And this is confirmed in Hebrews 1 verse 2. In these last days he has spoken to us by his Son whom he appointed heir of all things and through whom also he made the universe.

Can we, can you show a picture of the galaxy please? This is a photograph of a galaxy called the Andromeda Galaxy some of you might have heard of.

[53 : 33] Thanks, I'm just going to turn the light up just to see. It's a beautiful thing. This is a photo from a telescope of a galaxy. It's not our galaxy, it's the Andromeda Galaxy.

It's the nearest galaxy actually to our one. Our own galaxy the Milky Way is very similar. On a clear night you can see the Milky Way across the sky.

Not many clear nights at the moment I know, but you can see that across our sky because we are within that galaxy the Milky Way. It's our galaxy, the one in which our Sun lies.

The Sun is just one of the billions of stars in our galaxy. It is the near in fact there are about 200 billion stars in our own Milky Way.

Our galaxy is huge. It is 100,000 light years from one side to another. This means that if you were to travel at the speed of light which is 186,000 miles per second it would take you 100,000 years to get across our galaxy.

[54 : 47] from one side to the other. Isn't that awesome? I think it's fantastic. Our galaxy is just one of hundreds of billions of galaxies that have been seen in the universe and that we are now detecting with things like the Hubble telescope.

Not only is the universe vast, awesome, and magnificent, it is also beautiful. Perhaps we could show the next one. And Christians we should not be surprised that the photographs that we are now getting of the universe are stunningly beautiful.

This is actually a picture of what's called a nebula which is a cloud of gas. It's millions of miles from one side to another. This is the Orion Nebula. We find it in the Orion constellation.

and it is stunning. And it shouldn't surprise us because Jesus, the Word, put this together.

We're right now beginning to see just how wonderful the universe actually is. We have an amazing creator. Jesus, the Son of God who came from heaven to walk on this earth made all this.

[56 : 03] And it puts them in perspective, doesn't it? we could equally marvel at the inside of atoms and the beauty and the immense power we find there. We worship God who made all of this.

Going back to verse 3, through him all things were made. Without him nothing was made that has been made. And a Savior who has done all this can do anything he wishes.

Really, all things are possible with God. Now we don't have enough time to cover the last two verses properly, but let's look briefly at verse 4. In him was life, and that life was the light of men.

Now this is a theme that John explores throughout his gospel. Jesus is the one who gives life. Not just the fact that you are physically alive, though that's a miracle. He is the one who gives spiritual life and eternal life.

this is a huge subject we can't really do justice to today. But remember his words, I am the way and the truth and the life.

[57 : 15] No one comes to the Father except through me. I said to the friend who is a Baha'i just the other day, Jesus doesn't really leave us with any other options for coming to God.

He is exclusive, and rightly so. He is the one we must go to for real life. He said in John 6, very truly I tell you the one who believes has eternal life.

And in John chapter 10, I give them eternal life and they shall never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand. And we can see that this life is connected to light.

The end of that verse, and that life was the light of men. Another great theme in John's Gospel, the contrast of the light of Christ to the darkness of sin and Satan.

Looking at verse 5, the light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. Another translation, equally valid, is the darkness has not overcome it.

[58 : 21] I'm not sure which one. Overcome it. Understood it, overcome it. And I think that John probably meant both. The world doesn't understand this light, and the darkness also has never overcome this light.

That's a wonderful truth that we need to hold on to. Light is positive. Shine a torch in the dark and it will always reveal and show up what's hidden.

You can't shine darkness. You can only shine light. Darkness is negative. Jesus is the light of the world and shines in our lives to show up in areas that need cleaning up and banishing the darkness. And we read verse nine to confirm that the true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. Jesus was coming to show that light.

light. And in verse nine in chapter eleven he says, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

[59 : 34] Are you in darkness? Come to the light that is only found in Jesus, the light of the world. And the darkness, verse five, has never overcome this light.

He has all authority over every darkness. And so when we look at the person of Jesus and we wonder who he is and whether he is the only one for this suffering and dark world, we cannot do better than to check out these five verses of John's Gospel.

He was there in the beginning and is eternal. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. He is with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God in three persons.

He is God. Through him all things were made. In him is life. He is the life. He is the light of the world, shining into and conquering all our darkness.

Now isn't it amazing and wonderful that such a God could come down from the glory of heaven and be well of us and die for us.

[60 : 51] That is love. We'll never fathom or plumb the depths of such love ever. And who would not worship him? Who can say that he is just one of many possible ways?

He is the unique, he is the only saviour who came from heaven for you and me. Even as far as going to the cross for each one of us. So let us believe and trust him with our whole lives.

Let's pray. Father, we thank you for these amazing words.

It's hard to do justice to them, but we acknowledge that they're inspired by you, and we acknowledge that Jesus, you came from the glories of heaven.

You are the same yesterday, today, and forever. You are completely dependable. You are the life, you are the light. You created all things most beautifully.

[62 : 00] We come to you now, and we ask that each person here will put their lives and trusting them to you, the way, the truth, and the life. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen. We are now going to sing our last hymn. Remind me which number it is.

What? 162. 162. From heaven you came, helpless babe, entered our world, your glory veiled, not to be served, but to serve, to give your life that we might live.

Let's sing this together to God's praise. love. And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the Lord