

---

a *Grace Notes* course

## **Life of Christ 100**

by Mark Perkins, Pastor  
Front Range Bible Church, Denver, Colorado

### **Lesson 105**

Jesus' Young Adulthood  
Preparing the Way of the Lord (Isaiah 40)  
Jesus and John the Baptist

---

## Life of Christ 100, Lesson 105

### Contents

Jesus' Young Adulthood .....	1
Preparing the Way of the Lord (Isaiah 40) .....	3
Jesus and John the Baptist .....	4

## Jesus' Young Adulthood

The young adulthood of Christ is recorded in verse 52. Translation, "And Jesus kept on progressing in wisdom and years and blessing before God and men."

The verb *prokopto* applies to all three statements which follow; all three are equivalent with reference to the progression which occurs.

The verb means to advance or progress. There is a hint that hard work or toil that is involved in this advancement, from the stem *kopos*.

In reality, there is a double advancement that is commensurate with his advance in age. The age advancement goes on without volition it is the natural thing.

The other two advances have to do with the good decisions of our Lord in His young manhood.

*prokopto* is in the imperfect tense, showing this progression over a duration of time.

The first way in which Christ grew (as he grew in years) is in wisdom; *sophia*. His increase in wisdom goes on unabated through the perception and application of the Word of Truth. Note this in spite of the fact that his parents made the wrong decision for him.

The second way in which Christ grew (as he grew in years) is in *charis*.

*charis* can be translated as grace, or the result of the appropriation of grace, which is blessing.

Since the appropriation of God's grace is portrayed in the word *sophia*, this second thing must concentrate on the blessing side. The word favor is not a good translation, since it limits the realm of blessing to opinion. It encompasses much more than respect or opinion.

There are two realms of blessing which are mentioned: human and divine.

The preposition *para* plus the dative case of the two nouns shows that the blessing is in the sight of each category described by those nouns.

In the sight of is another way of saying viewpoint. The two categories of blessing are human and divine; *anthropoids* and *theo*.

No matter which viewpoint you take, Christ was blessed in his life as a young man.

There is no doubt whatsoever that this blessing was due to *sophia*, and commensurate with its growth. To: Appropriate Prosperity; Essence of God Note: this passage and the next take place during the ministry of Christ, but they reveal details that have to do with his early years.

Mark 6:3 gives reference to Christ's family life and profession as an adult. Translation: "Is this not the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us?' And they were constantly stumbling at him."

Christ is speaking in His hometown in his home synagogue. The home crowd identifies him as one of their own, and they use this against him.

He grew up there, and when they see him teaching they use his family and his profession against him, as if to destroy his credibility by them.

In the parallel passage of Matt 13:55, Christ is called the son of the carpenter, a reference to his father.

In these passages, two facts come out: That Christ had at least four brothers and two sisters (if not more).

This indicates that Joseph and Mary had several children other than Christ.

Christ is about 30 years old at this time, and he was the first child in his family. All of these others were younger, but we know no other details.

It is apparent that Joseph died at some time after Christ was 12 years old. If this is so, then no doubt Christ had to take some responsibility for the younger siblings, especially in the area of logistical provision. Providing for a family of seven would have been no easy trick. In addition, he continued his spiritual growth, Lk 2:52.

From Christ's statement at the cross, it is also apparent that Mary did not have sufficient means to live on her own, John 19:27.

That Christ was a carpenter and the son of a carpenter. Mat 13:55 identifies that some of the Nazarenes identified Jesus as the son of the carpenter. Mark 6:3 identifies that some called him a carpenter in his own right.

There were carpenter guilds at the time which were very similar to the modern labor unions. Often they provided workers' benefits such as unemployment insurance or burial plots. These guilds were also formed for collective bargaining, and fought for the improvement of working conditions and workers' wages.

Because of the antiestablishment nature of these organizations, it is very unlikely that Jesus was a part of one. Away from population centers the guilds were less powerful and also less frequently present at all. Such was the case in Nazareth.

From Today's Handbook of Bible Times & Customs, p. 123, "This occupation takes on special significance because both Jesus and Joseph worked at it. Carpenters were not usually house builders because homes were not made of wood, but they did have wooden trim and fixtures. Jesus likely spent His time fashioning ox yokes, stools, plows, cabinets, carts and lattice windows. On occasion carpenters also made artificial teeth! The tools Jesus handled were the axe, hatchet, saw, knives, plane and square. Hammers and bronze nails were in use at the time. It was also possible that He worked with a bow drill."

The carpenter was much more of a fringe profession than it is in our country today. There was not that much good building wood in Israel, and the homes were made of stone. There would not have been that much work for a carpenter in a small town like Nazareth. Christ's hometown crowd speaks of his profession in a derisive manner.

Although Christ was a carpenter as a young man, he did not use his experience to illustrate any of his teachings.

Christ's family and his profession and father's profession are used as ad hominem arguments against his ministry.

The phrase which follows their description of him explains their tone of voice: 'and they were constantly being stumbled at him.'

An ad hominem argument is one which uses extraneous human arguments as an attack against credibility. A person's profession or other family members are not the issue in credibility, but the Nazarenes use this against Jesus, because they

cannot accept his message, because it hits too close to home it requires the sacrifice of their pride.

A carpenter in a small town would likely be poor, especially a fatherless family of seven or more. They are making fun of his family because they were poor.

Luke 4:16 testifies about Christ's custom of going to worship in the synagogue. Translation: "And he went unto Nazareth, where he had been raised, and he entered according to his custom on the Sabbath day into the synagogue and he stood up to read."

Christ's usual custom was to worship on the Sabbath day in the synagogue. From the position of the phrase 'according to his custom', it is apparent that his custom of entering the synagogue is restricted to the sabbath day. Because this occurs in Nazareth, it is likely that it was his custom to do this in previous years.

It was likely that it was also Christ's custom to stand up and read the law. Any male Jew could read and give a sermon in the synagogue. Arrangements for the sermon were made beforehand, so Christ was definitely invited to speak here. Since this event occurs after the first year of Christ's ministry, he is already very well known throughout the land.

Although the reading of the Law and the sermon were restricted to the Sabbath day, it was possible to worship and learn the truth at the synagogue any day of the week.

Nazareth was a country town, definitely off the beaten path. It had some military significance because both the Mediterranean and the Sea of Galilee could be seen from there. It was on a hill which looked both ways. Jesus could grow and develop his spiritual genius here without being noticed.

This custom extends back to his days of growing up in Nazareth. This crowd has heard him speak before, although he had never revealed his true nature or mission before this time, John 2:4 (my time has not yet come). They may have liked him before, but now they do not. This is most likely due to his Messianic claim.

The real reason for the rejection is his teaching, even though the Nazarenes reject him on another

basis. This is typical of those who are negative to the truth.

### **Preparing the Way of the Lord (Isaiah 40)**

The Jews received the call to leave Egypt. They were to proceed to the promised land under the leadership of Moses. Between them and the promised land was a few hundred miles of wilderness. Of course, they had to cross it.

Leading them was the cloud by day and the fire by night; visible manifestations of Divine presence. Furthermore, there was the tabernacle, the tent of meeting with God.

Not long after they left Egypt, God provided a covenant at Mt. Sinai. A Law which defined individual liberty in ten commandments. That Law also defined sin.

Because of their involvement in sin and idolatry, the Jews were delayed in the desert some forty years. Their journey through the wilderness was anything but straight.

When Isaiah preached the message preserved in Isaiah 40, the southern kingdom of Judah was in a state of apostasy and their destruction by the Assyrians was near.

Isaiah preached a message which would remind the Jews of their crooked path in the desert, and of the reason for their failure: a bankrupt relationship with God. He would inspire them to build the highway in the heart, so that there would be a highway in the wilderness.

Isaiah's message also stood as a prophecy of the ministry of John the Baptist. It was John's mission to prepare the hearts of the Jews for their king and for their new covenant. Malachi 3:1 also predicted the ministry of the Baptist

The text of Isaiah's message. "Behold, I am going to send My messenger, and he will clear the way before Me. And the Lord, whom you seek, will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight, behold, He is coming, says the Lord of Armies."

Isaiah 40:35 contains an excerpt from one of Isaiah's sermons. It has a command, and an explanation of that command.

The command comes from verses 35, while the explanation from verses 68.

Verses 35 read like this: "A voice is calling, 'Clear the way for the Lord in the wilderness; make smooth in the desert a highway for our God. Let every valley be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; and let the rough ground become a plain, and the rugged terrain a broad valley; then the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all flesh will see it together; for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.'"

The Jews would have responded to this message immediately, for the wilderness journey was a vital part of their national heritage.

Isaiah's message is about the wilderness of the souls of the people of Judah, for because of their rejection of God, and their love affairs with the idols of the Gentiles, they had created an imposing wilderness indeed.

It is up to them to smooth out the rough places through confession of sin, and a humble orientation to God's plan for their lives.

It is only when the hearts of wilderness are smoothed out that the glory of the Lord is revealed.

This revelation is the millennial rule of the king of kings and lord of lords, the bright morning star, Jesus Christ. But first the people must humble themselves to the king and his plan for their lives.

To illustrate the clever nature of Satanic propaganda, observe:

The Jews rejected the millennial king and His kingdom from their distrust of the Gentile world.

The Gentiles now futilely attempt to bring in that kingdom when it cannot come without the king bidding.

Verses 68 explain: "a voice says, 'Call out.' Then he answered, 'What shall I call out?' All flesh is grass, and all its loveliness is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the Lord blows upon it; surely the people are grass. The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."

Isaiah makes the issue of soul leveling clear in these verses.

Isaiah communicates the mortal and fading nature of the human body, as contrasted with the word of God.

This is really a 'you can take it with you' verse. Everything in this life will be left behind except the word of God in your soul.

On the basis of this truth, make your priorities straight. Once they are on the level, your life will become straight as well.

Bible truth is the bulldozer in the soul. Sin and death and Satanic propaganda are the great mountains and gullies.

### Jesus and John the Baptist

John the Baptist had a ministry from God to prepare Israel for the millennial kingdom and its king.

The ministry of John the Baptist had nothing to do whatsoever with the church. In essence it is in its own watertight compartment apart from the church. It drew its precedence from the dispensation of Israel.

John drew his sense of destiny from an Old Testament prophecy concerning his ministry. Isa. 40; Mal 3:1.

Since John and Jesus were cousins, it is likely that they knew one another as children and young men. John knew exactly who the Messiah was, and probably long before he ever preached his message.

John began his ministry of repentance and baptism in the Spring of 26 A.D.

So far, we have eliminated confusion concerning the relation of John's baptism and the baptism which occurs in the church age.

Now, let us contrast John and Christ.

You must understand that John was the greatest prophet of the age of Israel. His person and message were greater even than Isaiah or Jeremiah or any other. Our Lord testified to this in Matthew 11:11.

John had a great following; he was wildly popular among the people of Israel and even among some Romans.

His mission was to point the way to one even greater. From the seeming greatest to the very greater.

Long after John was gone, people still gravitated towards his ministry, even to the exclusion of Christ. In some ways, people still do, whenever they are legalistic and place great value on outward acts of piety.

Therefore, John 1:1-18 will serve well to teach us some general truths about Christ and the contrast between he and John the Baptist. In no small part it was what John the apostle was trying to accomplish in this passage.

John 1:1-18 picks up the issue from the beginning and also describes John's relationship to Christ.

Verse 1 translation: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and God was the Word."

This verse is divided into three clauses, each of which make a statement concerning Jesus Christ.

John (the writer of this gospel) uses the term 'the Word' to describe Christ. This term has quite a history in Greek and Hebrew thought (to doctrine of logos).

The first clause places the existence of the Word in eternity past.

The phrase *en arche*. emphasizes the qualitative aspect of the beginning. This is the beginning of Gen. 1:1; the beginning before the heavens and the earth were created.

The imperfect tense of the verb *emi* reveals the eternity of the Word in the beginning. The existence of the Word went on and on.

The term *ho logos* shows the personification of order and wisdom existing on and on before the creation of the heavens and the earth. This is a person, and not just a principle.

Thus from the beginning of John's gospel you know that we are talking about God.

The second clause indicates the coexistence of the Word with the God. The proper noun *Theos* is preceded by the definite article *ho*. It points out that this is the one and only God; not just one God among many. Thus we know of at least two persons in the Godhead. The preposition *pro*

shows the face to face presence of one with the other.

The third clause is one which clarifies the divine nature of the Word. There is no doubt from this clause that the Word was always God. Again the imperfect tense testifies to the timeless nature of the Word.

So the first contrast: with Christ we have God; John is man, created by God.

The second verse offers even more clarification on the trinity and the preexistence of the Word: "This one was in the beginning with the God."

The demonstrative pronoun *houtos* points back to the *logos*. It is translated 'this one'.

The imperfect tense of the verb to be makes the action timeless, eternal in nature.

The phrase *en arche* is used again to point to the time before the creation, eternity past.

The phrase *pros Theos* again shows the face to face presence of the *logos* and the *theos*.

Verse three turns to the creation. Up to this point all activity has been in precreation eternity past. "All things came into being through him, and outside of Him not one thing that came into being came into being."

This verse describes the *logos* as the agent of the creation.

All things is from the Greek *panta*. It refers to both creatures and the material universe apart from living creatures.

Whether the material universe or living creatures, all were created by God the agency of Jesus Christ.

Along with this creation is the responsibility of maintenance, which is also handled by the deity of Jesus Christ, Col. 1:16-17.

Notice that God is apart from the material universe; he created it, but it is not Him.

The inchoative aorist tense of *ginomai* reveals that the creatures and material universe had a definite beginning. *ginomai* itself describe the 'becoming' of something its beginning. This is contrasted strongly with the being of the Godhead in the previous verses.

Again, John is very thorough by his repetition of the idea. He wants his readers to make no mistake about what he is saying, so he clarifies the original statement by stating the absolute in the negative. 'and outside of Him not one thing that came into being came into being.'

The second contrast to John the Baptist is the creator contrast the Word created; John could not.

Verse 4 turns back to eternity past and then marches forward into the time of men. "In Him was life, and that life was the light of men."

There was always life in Jesus Christ: this is indicated by the imperfect tense of the Greek verb to be, *eimi*.

This life, *zoe*, is much more than the principle of biological life it was soul life. *zoe* rises above animal instinct and behavior to the independence of the soul. And not just the function of volition, but the soul as it was designed to enjoy God and His provision.

From eternity past Christ had this life, and this life was given to Adam and the woman.

That same life was surrendered to the slavery of Satan at the fall, but it was never lost by Christ.

Christ is life, real life, personified. The life of Christ was the light of men.

At last the Word and the Life enter into time.

Although it always existed and always will exist, the Word of Life entered into time and was the light of men.

Light is the opposite of darkness. Light always destroys darkness, but darkness cannot overcome the light. Darkness is the result of obscuring the light, but the light always exists. Light and darkness are incompatible mutually exclusive. The Sun always shines, but there are times when we do not see it.

God the Holy Spirit provides the light so that we can comprehend the Word. In order to see the Word we must have light.

This life was the light of men in the past. It kept on shining. This sums up the first incarnation.

Verse five gives the final description of Christ, bringing Him into present times (for John and for

us). "And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not grasp it."

There is a nice little double entendre here with the *katalambano*. It has the dual meaning of overcome and comprehend. Had the forces of darkness truly comprehended the intrinsic good of the light, then it would not have tried to put it out.

John uses the present tense of the verb *phaino* to portray Christ's present shining. Even though he died on the cross he still shines now.

Christ is the Sun (1 Cor 15:41), and the Morning Star (Rev 22:16). The Morning Star shines just before sunup. It shines as the darkness is about to end.

The darkness is the darkness of the devil's world.

Verse six turns to our man, John the Baptist. "There came a man, the side of God, his name, John;" Even the style of this verse differs from that of the previous five. It is very spare and understated, as if to downplay the nature of this man, especially when compared to Christ. Although John's writing style is almost always simple, here it become hyper-simple, and less elegant than John's brief discourse on Christ.

The verb *egeneto* is used here to describe the arrival of John. Again it is the inchoative aorist that John uses to describe the beginning of an action. John had a definite beginning. It is also the same verb that John has used previously to describe the creation by the Word. John was one created by the creator. But this verb more describes the arrival of John's public ministry than the creation of his soul.

The noun *anthropos* leaves no doubt about the true nature of John. He is a man of the human race.

The participle *apestalmenos* portrays the action of God in sending John the Baptist. It is from the verb *apostello*, 'to send forth'. It is the perfect participle, so it shows that before John arrived someone sent him. It is the passive participle, so it shows that it was not John who was the ultimate source of arrival, but someone else.

The preposition *para* points to the source of the sending it is God. This shows that John came from the side of God. A figure of speech that reveals how very close John the Baptist was to God.

Before John began his ministry he was close to God he prepared himself in a very thorough manner by laying aside the distractions of everyday life.

The final phrase of the verse is to the point of being laconic. Three nouns lay alongside one another to identify the name of the man sent from the side of God.

Verse seven continues John's description of John. "He himself came as a witness that he might testify concerning the light, that all might believe through him."

The aorist verb *elthen* describes again the arrival of John on the scene. It is translated, 'he came'.

The subject of the verb is *houtos*, the demonstrative pronoun used to intensify the source of the action in the verb. It points strongly to John in contrast to Jesus Christ.

The preposition *eis* plus the accusative case of the noun *marturian* is translated, "as a witness." John was a witness, a man who pointed to the truth of the matter.

John then goes on to give the twofold purpose of the Baptist's ministry, using the particle *hina* twice to introduce two purpose clause.

The first clause is *hina marturese. peri tou photos*. "that he might testify concerning the light."

The potential subjunctive mood of the verb *marture.se*. indicates that John had a responsibility to fulfill in his ministry. This mood lays the emphasis on human volition, or choice.

John's responsibility was in area of testimony he was to give his testimony about the light. The light, of course is Jesus Christ.

Notice that this passage does not say it was John's responsibility to convert people. That is addressed in the next clause.

The second clause is *hina pantes pisteuso.sin di' autou*. "that all might believe through him."

The subject of the clause is all those who were alive at the time of John's ministry.

The responsibility of the potential subjunctive lies squarely on the shoulders of John's audience. Their responsibility is to believe in what John has



to say. This responsibility is not John's. They believe through him, but John does not do the believing.

This summarizes very well the issue in personal evangelism. It is our responsibility to testify concerning the light; it is their responsibility to believe. You have completely and totally succeeded in your mission if you get the word out, regardless of how your audience responds.

If this is true, then do not fear rejection does not matter to the messenger. You should always be glad when someone believes on account of your testimony. However, you should be objective about your duty no matter what the response. The accomplishment of your mission should never depend on whether you are getting positive results.

Verse eight makes a clarification for the sake of being thorough: "He himself was not the light, but came that he might testify concerning the light."

The far demonstrative is used to point to John the Baptist. Used in conjunction with the verb to be, an emphatic contrast is set up between the light and the witness to the light.

John's purpose in life is reiterated in the second clause. There he quickly goes over what he has already communicated.

All of this adds up to a very thorough and even redundant statement about John's role in relation to Christ.

Since John has gone so far out of his way to put the Baptist into his place, it is fair to assume that there was a problem with Baptist worship at the time.

Verse nine turns back to Christ, and begins to add some details about Him, "He was the true light, who illuminates every man, coming into the world." This is very poorly translated into your English Bible, and so we must make some corrections.

There is first an addition of one adjective to the idea of light: *ale.thinon*, true. There were many false messiahs at the time of Christ, and even the Baptist was thought to be the Messiah himself, he was so magnificent. Therefore the light is qualified as the true light.

The next statement reveals a function of the light related to creation. It begins with the definite article used as the relative pronoun *ho*, which simply picks up the true light from the previous clause and makes it the subject of the verb of this sentence.

The verb *pho.tizei* describes the action of illumination. This is a transitive verb, so the translation shining does not work as well as illumination. This is the light shining on someone or something giving its light.

This is a figure of speech which refers to the availability of Divine illumination from birth.

The idea of illumination, when used as a figure of speech, always describes the process of understanding.

The object of the verb is *panta anthro.pon*. This is translated "every man". John chooses to emphasize the individual by using the singular of *anthro.pon*. The illuminated truth is available to every man from the moment that he enters the world.

The third clause of the verse indicates the moment of illumination.

Grammatically, the participle can only describe the coming of every human being into the world. The phrase *eis ton kosmon* describes a transition from one place to another.

Verse ten reveals the relationship between Christ and the world. "He was in the world, and the world came into being through him, but the world did not know him." There are three parts to this verse: The incarnation; eternity past; and a comment on the two.

He was in the world. This testifies to the incarnation that God came into the world. That he came as a human is revealed in a later verse. For right now it is enough to know that God came into the world.

The world here is planet earth, the habitation for humanity.

And the world came into being through him. This is a repetition of an idea already introduced, but now there is more of a context for it.

Because God created the world, He is truly outside of it. He exists completely independent of space

and time. Now the world is planet earth and all its inhabitants.

But this is significant on the basis of the first clause of the verse he was in the world, the same world that he created. God is responsible towards his creation.

The conjunction *kai* sets up a mild contrast to that which has come previously in the verse. The contrast has to do with the difference between what God has done for man and how man responded.

God came into the world the greatest sacrifice and expression of love in history.

God created that same world.

But the world did not know him. This is a description of the response of humanity to the incarnation. They did not know him describes both recognition and acceptance. Although Christ presented himself as the Son of God, the world did not accept Him as such.

Here *ho kosmos* is identified with the human race at the time of the incarnation.

Verse 11 tells of the coming of the Word to a chosen people, "He came unto His own, and His own did not receive Him."

This of course is a reference to the Jews and their rejection of Him.

The Jews were the chosen people of the Messiah, and they did have a long association with Him, going back to the very beginnings of their history.

He came to them; He was the Messiah; and yet they did not receive Him. The objective negative adverb *ou* makes it clear that this was a complete rejection. Of course what rejection is more complete than death?

Verse 12 identifies the shift in Christ's ministry: "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the authority to become children of God, to those who believe unto His name."

The correlative pronoun *hosoi* describes a direct correlation between those who receive Christ and what they receive as a result. The number is an exact correlation, so that no one is short changed.

The aorist tense of the verb *lambano* describes the action. It is past action, summed up in one moment

of time. It is translated "received", and it is a synonym for trust or belief in Christ.

The accusative direct object *auton* identifies the object of belief, who is Christ: Him.

The second clause of the verse puts down what those who receive Christ receive in return.

The dative indirect object of the personal pronoun *autois* identifies the receivers as those who receive Christ. "to them".

The aorist tense of the verb *didomi* identifies a past action that is seen in one moment of time. It is translated "He gave." The 'He' here is Jesus Christ, the living Word.

What is given is a right, *exousia*. This word describes legitimate authority, and individual rights. Since this is given to individuals, it is better to call this a right given by God.

The right is related to a potential. The right implies responsibility. The infinitive verb *genesthai* is from the verb *ginomai* 'to become'. It is the aorist infinitive, which is the complement of *exousia*. A right always has a direction. It may take the direction of free speech or bearing arms. Rights are divided into realms. Here the realm is related to a potential: the potential to become children of God.

Becoming a child of God is not something which occurs at salvation; it is there only in the form of potential. At salvation God gives you the right to become a child of God; whether you do so is entirely up to the free expression of your volition.

Therefore, being a child of God is not synonymous with salvation. It is identified here as the goal of post salvation life. In this case, being a child of God is equal to being a mature believer in Christ.

As a child imitates the parents, so the adopted child of God is to become an imitator of Him.

Verse thirteen is the follow up to the twelfth: "who have been born not from bloodshed nor from the will of flesh nor from the will of man but from God."

This verse comments on how one becomes a child of God. You must be born first.

The aorist passive verb *egennethesan* makes it clear that the birth is outside of the choice of the

one being born. The objective negative adverb *ouk* shows that the three things listed before God are definitely not the way.

John sets up this verse in anticipation of the guesses of his readership.

When he says 'who have been born', he anticipates them thinking of a change in life, as illustrated by birth.

There are three types of changes cited by John: change by violence; change by self; and change by someone else's will.

Remember that the context of verse twelve is not salvation, but post salvation spiritual growth. The context is change, not salvation. John uses the figure of birth to portray post salvation spiritual growth in his epistle.

The word *haimaton* is translated, 'bloodshed'. It is in the plural here, and the plural of this noun always depicts the shedding of innocent blood. It could easily be translated 'violence'. This is emphatically not a portrayal of the physical birth of a child, but instead of attempting to bring change about through violence. The threat of physical violence to a person does not bring about true change.

The next possibility of the means of change is from the Greek phrase *ek thelematos sarkos*. This is change from the will of the flesh. *sarkos* is the Greek word for flesh, and it often describes the activity of the Old Sin Nature. It certainly does here.

What comes from the sin nature may be change in the sense of 'different', but never in the sense of 'better'.

Changing the trend of your sin nature from self-righteous moral degeneracy to immoral overt degeneracy or vice versa is definitely not a change for the better. In fact, sometimes it is a change for the worse.

The noun *thelematos* outlines the function of volition. Here it is the human volition as controlled by the Old Sin Nature.

It is impossible to bring about change in your life by your own efforts.

No campaign of self-improvement apart from the grace of God can accomplish intrinsic and lasting good.

The appearance of good may be achieved by self, but underneath the appearance remains a wicked heart.

Do not allow yourself to fall prey to anti-grace sentiment about self.

The third possibility for change is *ek thelematos andros* 'from the will of man'.

This phrase contrast the previous one by emphasizing dependence on others as a viable means for personal change.

Again, this may bring about a change in the sin nature trend; a change of outward appearance, but underneath remains the wicked heart.

Welding your own will to that of another may effectively stop a pattern of overt behavior, but it is not in any way the means to true change.

This phrase includes counseling and discipling in the bad sense of the word. Those things do not bring about true change any more than the sin nature can.

The only real catalyst for change is God, as explained by the Greek phrase *alla ek Theou*.

The conjunction *alla* indicates a very strong contrast with what has gone previously. What is to follow is the right and true way to the change of heart. It is the true post salvation change.

*ek Theou* tells us that true change only comes from God, and this is the set up for what is to follow in verse 14.

Get it through your heads that you can only bring about true change through the change of heart that is brought on by faith perception of the truth.

Faith perception is what makes Christianity distinct from all religions.

Faith perception is what makes Christianity distinct from all worldly means of false change.

Faith perception is what makes Christianity work, period.

Verse 14 now defines how the change was brought about: "And the Word became flesh and camped among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as a

unique and only born one from the side of the Father, full of Grace and Truth."

The verse begins with the conjunction *kai* which continues the train of thought from the previous verse.

The noun *logos* is next, and with the definite article *ho* it is translated "the word". It is the subject of the sentence, and of course it is describing Christ.

The verb of the sentence is *egeneto*, which describes the beginning of the hypostatic union at the virgin birth. It is in the aorist tense, so it portrays one moment of time in the past. It is translated, "became".

*sarx* is the Greek word for flesh, and in this case it describes the physical human body, with no sin nature.

The conjunction *kai* shifts the thought to another fact about the incarnation. It is translated "and".

The aorist verb *skenosen* depicts an action from the past as occurring in one moment of time. It describes the temporary dwelling in a tent. "Camped" is a good way to translate this.

The preposition *en* plus the locative of place is translated here "among us".

Again the conjunction *kai* is used by John to shift to another fact about the incarnation, this time a more personal one.

The verb *etheasametha* is in the first person plural and so it reveals that John was an eyewitness to these events. It is in the aorist tense, and so it sums up the past action into one moment of time. The verb itself describes the act of witnessing an event with your own eyes. It is translated "we beheld" or "we eyewitnessed".

The object witnessed was *te.n doxan auton.*, which is translated "His glory".

This may be taken in the narrow sense of the transfiguration, or in the wider sense of His entire life, but we will go with the latter, as it seems to fit the context a little better.

Glory is a synonym for the essence, capabilities and attributes of God, as well as His actions toward mankind.

Glory here represents the reflection of the glory of the Father in the life of the Son.

This glory is further described with the phrase *doxan hos monogenous para patros*.

The comparative conjunction *hos* makes an exact comparison between the status described and the glory itself. This is translated "as".

The status is *monogenes*, which contains the idea of "unique and only born".

Completing the idea is the preposition *para* and the noun *patros*. The preposition indicates that the action proceeds from the very side of the person named, which in this instance is the Father.

The final description of the incarnation *isple.re.s charitos kai ale.theias*.

*ple.re.s* describes a state of being completely full, and it is translated "full".

The genitive of description of the noun *charitos* is translated "grace".

The connective conjunction *kai* is translated "and".

The noun *ale.theias* is in the genitive case, and translated "truth".

This is the full explanation of our birth from God.

This verse progressively explains the statement in the previous verse about being born from God.

Verse 13 gave three ways in which the salvation birth is not accomplished, and then goes on to state that it instead comes from God.

The salvation birth is based on the following:

That the word became flesh. This defines the person through whom our salvation was accomplished.

That the word camped, or temporarily lived among us. Our salvation was accomplished while Christ was living on planet earth.

That the word was observed by other human beings, even the writer of this gospel.

That the life of the word was glory and this glory was related to the Father as the only born Son. Our salvation was accomplished by the Son of God.

The Son of God was full of grace and truth. Grace and truth are the opposites of the three things on

the list in verse thirteen: violence, self reliance, and reliance on others.

If an unbeliever can use it or do it, it is not a part of God's plan for salvation or the post salvation life.

Christ represents both our salvation and the secret to the post salvation life.

It all depends on Divine provision, and the key to that provision is the truth. You cannot possibly access divine provision without knowing the truth, and therefore the truth must be the first priority in the Christian life.

Just as you cannot become a believer without the gospel, so also you cannot reach maturity without the Bible.

Just as you cannot perceive the gospel without the ministry of the Spirit, so also you cannot perceive the truth without.

Just as you must believe in the gospel in order to be saved, so also you must believe the truth in order to reach maturity.

Verse 15 turns back to the testimony of John: "John testified concerning him and cried out saying, "This was he about whom I said 'The one coming after me has attained rank above me, because He was (always) first with reference to me.'""

This is John's statement of humility. It confirms from his own mouth what John the apostle has already stated in verses 6 through 8. At the time of his ministry John the Baptist knew exactly where he stood with reference to his second cousin, the Messiah.

This verse forms a link between verses 14 and 16, so that Christ's rank is confirmed before turning back to the subject of grace.

Most of the difficulty in translating this verse comes in John the Baptist's statement itself, and we will concentrate our efforts in exegesis there. The rest of the verse is well translated and needs no tweaking.

John's statement begins with the definite article **ho**, which is attached to the participle *erchomenos* at the end of the verse. Together they are translated "the one coming". The participle is in

the present tense and so portrays its action at the same time as the main verb.

The adverb **opiso** is translated "after". It is a temporal adverb showing Christ's appearance as following that of John. John is identifying the Messiah, and those who followed John would have known that, since it was the force of his ministry.

The second phrase is **emprosthen mou gegonen**. We have translated this "has attained rank above me."

The preposition **emprosthen** here describes the status of rank. Although it is normally translated 'before' with reference to face to face presence, it takes up the idea of one being before another in a line. But we will not forsake the personal nature of this preposition. John and Jesus are second cousins according to the flesh. They at least knew one another as acquaintances growing up.

The perfect tense of the verb **gegonen** shows that the attainment of rank happened in one moment of time, and that moment is portrayed as having an impact forever.

With the preposition *mou* John the Baptist identifies himself as the lower ranked one of the two.

The explanation comes in the third phrase, which is translated, "because He was always first with reference to me".

The explanatory use of the conjunction **hoti** points to the last few words of the verse as the explanation of what has just been said.

The imperfect tense of the verb *to be* describes the eternal existence of the rank of Jesus Christ.

The built in third person singular 'he' identifies Jesus Christ as the one who produces the action of the verb.

The adverb **protos** indicates the highest rank of all: first.

The personal pronoun in the genitive case takes the adverbial genitive of reference, and so is translated, 'with reference to me.' This is not a statement of the priorities of the Baptist, but of comparison.

The comparison is valid with reference to every human being.

John's statement of the supreme rank of Christ fits into the overall narrative.

Christ is God.

The Word became flesh.

Jesus Christ was always first, relative to John and to the whole world.

Only God could become flesh; flesh could never become God. Only the first could become last, the highest ranking die for all those of lower rank.

John's testimony confirms Christ's preeminent rank. John 1:7; John 1:27.

Christ's self testimony does the same thing. Rev 1:17; Rev 22:13.

Verse 16 makes the grace of God a personal thing. It too is an explanation of verse 14, and it is translated "For of His fullness we have all received, even (superior) grace in exchange for grace." This is also the setup for verse 17 which explains this one in even fuller detail.

The fullness referred to here is the fullness of Jesus Christ presented in verse 14. It is the fullness with reference to grace and truth.

That same fullness was received (aorist tense) by John and others, and of course is available to us.

The ascensive use of the conjunction *kai* leads up to a literary climax, *charin anti charitos*. It is translated, "even grace in exchange for grace". Note that the ascensive use points to a further description of the same thing, and does not add a new thing to another. It is not "and grace..."

The final three words describe a trade up; one thing for another, but the thing received is far superior to the thing exchanged. It is one grace for a superior grace.

This is a description of the tradeout of dispensations brought about by the first advent.

It is very important to realize that the dispensation of Moses was also a dispensation of grace and that the Law was a grace provision of God.

The plan of God for the church is very superior to the ritual plan for Israel, but it is not a complete change of policy on God's part. Grace always has and always will be the policy of God toward mankind. It must be that way.

Verse 17 continues the thought: "For the Law was given through Moses, the grace and the truth came through Jesus Christ."

The real comparison in this verse is between Moses and Christ. Of the two, Christ is far superior.

The two dispensations find their distinctions for that very reason: their human leaders and administrators.

God was the one who gave the law; Moses was the human agent.

Now let us turn to a comparison between the Law and Christ.

Christ is the fulfillment of the Mosaic Law, Matt 5:17.

Belief in Moses' Law led to a belief in Christ, John 5:45-47.

Verse 18 finishes the discourse, "No one has ever seen God; the only born God who is unto the bosom of the Father He explains."

The nominative case of the pronoun *oudeis* forms the subject of the first phrase of this verse. It is translated, "no one".

The verb *heo.raken* is in the perfect tense, describing a past action that has lasting results into the present and even future. It is the verb which describes the faculty of sight, and so is translated, "has seen"

Inserted between the subject and verb is the adverb *po.pote*, which is translated "ever".

The object of the sentence is the proper noun *theon*, which is in the accusative case. It receives the action of *heo.raken*, and is translated "God".

No one has ever seen God. This is a complaint that so many unbelievers have. They do not see God, and therefore they do not see a relationship with Him as important or relevant.

Up to the moment in history when John wrote, there had been theophanies of various kinds, but never a direct revelation of the person of God.

But then the word became flesh and dwelt among us.

The subject of the next phrase of the clause is *monogene.s theos*. These two, the adjective and

noun, are both in the nominative case, and produce the action of the sentence. *monogene.s* denotes a unique birth. Only one man was ever born a virgin, as only one has received the resurrection. The proper noun *theos* concentrates on the hypostatic union. This is translated, "the only born God". Jesus Christ is the unique person of the universe, the God man.

Next there is the definite article *ho* and participle *o.n*. These are translated together "the one who is" There is an eternal nature to these words conveyed by the combination of the present tense of the participle and the nature of its subject, God the Son. Furthermore, the prepositional phrase *eis ton kolpon tou patros* follows. The preposition *eis* describes the Son as being in a constant state of motion. This motion is directed toward the bosom of the Father.

*kolpon* is the Greek word for bosom and it portrays fellowship of the closest nature. "like a child at rest on its mother's breast", or John resting

on our Lord's chest at the last supper. Complete trust is required.

The Son is always in the closest of fellowship with the Father. This describes their coequal and coeternal status, and the reliance of the Son on the Father throughout the incarnation.

The verb of this final clause is *exe.ge.sato*. This is the aorist tense, which portrays a past action and sums that action up into one moment of time. It means to draw out or explain something, and it is the Greek word on which is based our English exegesis. We will translate it "explained"

The demonstrative pronoun *ekeinos* is inserted as a duplication of the subject. There is no object.

The Word became flesh and explained the Father. In just what way the Son explains the Father we are about to study.