

SERMON 2  
JOHN 1:10-13

THE RECEPTION OF JESUS CHRIST

Last time we were introduced to the Gospel of John. And we discovered that John presents Jesus Christ in his deity. This is one of the great themes of the gospel. Jesus is God himself. He is not merely a god like the Jehovah's Witnesses would tell you. He is not simply godlike. He is not a little higher than man, but a little lower than God. He is God himself who has become a man to save us.

There is a key verse in the Gospel of John.

*But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.*

John 20:31

In this verse we saw first of all that this man Jesus is the Promised One. He is the Christ. He is the fulfillment of all those Scriptures that promised a deliverer. He is the fulfillment of all of the types. And these things are written that you might believe that He is that One who was promised.

But we also saw that this man Jesus is the Son of God. It says, "These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is . . . the Son of God. And the gospel of John is going to lay out proofs that Jesus is God himself.

We saw last time that Jesus existed before the creation of the world. It says,

*In the beginning was the Word.*

John 1:1

And we also saw that Jesus existed before the creation of the world as a distinct Person, for it says,

*And the Word was with God.*

John 1:1

He was side by side with God the Father. But, unless there would be any confusion about the deity of the Word, listen to what John clearly says.

*And the Word was God.*

John 1:1

This is a very appropriate beginning to the book of John, because John is going to take 21 chapters proving that Jesus is God. John goes on to declare that Jesus is the

Creator. Only God can create things out of nothing. And this power is attributed to Jesus in verse three.

*All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

John 1:3

Now notice that Jesus made all things. And furthermore, if anything was made, Jesus made it. This leaves no doubt that there is no created thing in the universe that was not created by the Word. There are those who would argue that Jesus himself was created. They would say that God the Father once existed alone, but that he created the Son. But John seems to lay that argument to rest. He says, "Without him was not any thing made that was made."

So, Jesus is the preexisting One. He is a separate person from the Father because he was with the Father. But he is one in essence with the Father because he was God. And he is the great Creator of the universe who created all things.

But there is more that John tells us about the Word.

*In him was life.*

John 1:4

Life is a part of the essence of Christ. He is alive. He is more than just a principle of life. He is a living being and life is in him. This is why he was able to create life. He is the source of life and He can impart life to whom he wills. He imparts physical life to all his creatures. And, he imparts spiritual life to whom he wills.

Jesus is also described as the Light. Now light is closely associated with knowledge and truth. And so, Jesus is our compass with regard to the truth of God. What Jesus says is truth. And therefore, when Jesus speaks, he sheds light. We stumble around in darkness, but when the Word speaks, it is like a light shining in front of our feet that lights our way. And when Jesus actually came to this earth as a man, it was as if a great light shone on the earth.

Now you would have thought that when this great Light appeared on the earth that men would have flocked to the light. You would have thought that everyone would have said, "Look over there, there is light. We can see. Let's go over there and live in the light instead of stumbling around every day in darkness. But no,

*And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.*

John 1:4

We said last time that the principle meaning seems to be that the darkness did not receive the light. And this leads us to the substance of the message this evening. And so now we consider how the Light was received when he came to this earth.

## The Reception of the Light

Now there is a principle at work here. And that principle is that those who are doing evil do not like the light to be turned on.

**Example: If a thief is in your living room, he does not want you to turn the lights on. If he trips the security device and the lights come on, he will run out the back door into the darkness.**

**Example: If you have a roach problem, they will always come out when it is dark so you can't see them. And if you turn on the light, they will scurry out of sight.**

And this is the nature of all fallen men. His deeds are evil. He knows that his deeds are evil. And he doesn't like anyone to shine light on those deeds.

*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*

John 3:19

And this is not true of only of some fallen men. it is true of all fallen men.

You know, some people have the idea that out of all the masses of fallen humanity, some are dark through and through, but others have yet a little light in them. Some will never come to God, but others have a spark of righteousness in them and they may come. And this idea is the doctrine of men and not of God.

There is nothing good in a fallen man. There is no more propensity to come to God in one man than there is in another. There is no more light in one man than in another. And we didn't come to God because we had some spark of goodness in us, or some special insight. All men were in the same condition under the fall.

*The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one.*

Psalm 14:2, 3

Many people think that there is yet some spiritual life in fallen men. They think that there is still a spark of life left. There is a chance that the sinner may of his own will come to God. They have no concept of the fact that the spirit of a fallen man is dead.

*And you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. Wherein in times past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among*

*whom we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath.*

Ephesians 2:1-3

And so, the simple truth is that the Word of God, the Light, Jesus, came to this world and he found a world full of darkness. And by very nature, darkness hates the light. I want you to see from our text that the rejection of Christ by fallen men was universal.

- I. You see first of all in verse 10 that the world did not recognize him.

*He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.*

John 1:10

Now here we have a general statement that Jesus came into the world. Jesus was the One who created the world and he then came into the world himself. This is a reference to the incarnation. It is a very miraculous and wondrous thing that the Creator would make an appearance in the created world. But this is exactly what Jesus did. Whereas before he sat above the world in majesty and sovereignty, now he is found in the world. And here is the amazing thing. Those that were created did not recognize the Creator. Those that were made for His glory didn't even know Him. Those who had all their lives eaten from his merciful hand did not know Him. And the implication is that they would have nothing to do with him. This was the general condition of the fallen world.

- II. You see in verse 11 that his own did not receive Him.

Surely there would be a favorable reception among the Jews, right? They were the Old Testament people of God. They had the Scriptures. They had the prophets. Surely they would recognize this great Light that had come into the world according to the Old Testament promises. But no,

*He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*

John 1:11

How discouraging this is! Even the Jews would not receive this Light who had come into the world.

What a condemnation this is upon fallen man. No one would receive the Light. They universally rejected Him.

I tell you this is the message that needs to be clearly understood by sinners everywhere. Sinners will not receive the Savior. Oh, they think they will. Perhaps they think they have already received Him because they perform a few rituals, or they do this or that. And they have convinced themselves that they have received Him even though

their lives are just as wicked as always. Or, they think that soon they will receive Him. They are not quite ready to make such a commitment now, but soon they will be. As soon as they get their house in order, they will receive Him. As soon as they sow a few more wild oats they will receive Him.

And the Scriptures cry out, “No you won’t. You will never receive Him. Your heart is desperately wicked and you will never receive Him. There is not one ray of light in your heart. There is not one spark of life. Your spirit is dead and thoroughly dark and you will not have anything to do with the Light.

So, we see that Jesus came into the world and he was universally rejected. And you might say then, “What hope is there for mankind? If sinners will never come, if sinners will never receive him, if this is the condition of the human heart, if darkness will never receive the light, then where is the hope? And I would give you the good news tonight. There is yet hope!

You see, there is a great contrast between verse eleven and verse twelve. In verse eleven there is no hope. He came unto his own and his own received him not. And then there is hope introduced in verse twelve. And we find in verse twelve that there are some who receive him after all.

### III. Some do receive Him.

You will notice a very huge word that leads off verse twelve, and that word is “But.” And this is the very nature of God. He takes all hope away and then he says “but. I am sure that we are all familiar with the “But God” in Ephesians 2:4.

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins . . . But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace are ye saved;)*

Ephesians 2:1,4

And the sense is the same in our text. It was hopeless. No one would receive him. “But . . .”

Once again, God interjects himself into a hopeless situation. Sinners cannot and will not receive Him. The universal darkness that pervades the hearts of men leaves them with no hope whatsoever. And then God intervenes.

Now we see here that some do receive Him after all and I want to show you first,

### The Method of Receiving the Light

Now look closely at verse twelve.

*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.*

John 1:12

And you see here that receiving is equated to believing. This is the method of receiving Christ. This is the only method of receiving Christ. It is by believing on his name. You don't receive him by going to church. You don't receive Him by performing a ritual. You receive him by believing.

Now this would appear to be the simplest way in all the world to get to heaven, wouldn't it? Simply believe. But it is actually not so simple at all. In fact, it is quite impossible.

**Example: Let's say that you hate someone with all your heart. This man has broken into your home and killed your family. He has stolen all your money and your possessions and he has left you destitute. And he is an evil man through and through and in your heart you despise him. And someone comes up to you and tells you that he will give you a million dollars if you will simply have love in your heart for this man. Why, it would be easier for you to dip out the ocean with a thimble than to love this man!**

And it is the same way with faith. You cannot believe what you do not believe, can you? Darkness cannot love the light. Evil cannot love the righteous.

So, you can easily see how it is actually easier to do something to attain salvation than it is to believe. If there was something we could do, then we would never need a change of heart at all. But salvation is a change of heart. And so, believing is actually not so simple after all. It is quite impossible for an unbeliever to believe.

And yet, John gives us the good news. Some do receive Him! And so, let's see next,

### The Reason Why Some Receive Him

*Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

John 1:13

Now the universal rule, without exception, is that none will receive Him. And yet, some do. That means that there must be some intervention; some change of principle; some miracle that makes the impossible possible. And we find that intervention in our text when it says, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Now you will notice here that all those who receive Christ, have had a birth. There is only one way that a dead sinner can believe, and that is to be born. This is the cause of faith. This is the reason for faith. And there is no faith without a birth.

#### I. How a Man is Not Born

Now when we are talking about being born, we are obviously not talking about a physical birth, but a spiritual birth. We are not quite as naïve as Nicodemus in chapter three to think that we are saved by entering a second time into our mother's womb. And so, we understand that John is speaking here of a spiritual birth.

Everyone who receives Christ has been born. This is the intervention that I spoke about. This is the change of principle. This is the miracle. And without this miracle, there is no receiving.

Now this is the great error of the Arminian. He says you must receive in order to be born. But the great truth of the Bible is just the opposite. You must be born to receive! This is grace. This is sovereign grace. And isn't this the very nature of salvation.

*For by grace are ye saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.*

Ephesians 2:8

It is God that gives and we receive. It is God that gives and we believe. He gives us our very faith by a birth. It is elsewhere called a quickening. He makes us alive, when before we were dead. It is called regeneration. It is called a new creation. And you can easily see by these terms that it is a creative act of a sovereign God that causes us to have a change of heart and to receive Him.

#### A. What the New Birth is Not

It is not by physical lineage. Notice in verse 13 where it says, "Not of blood." That word "blood" is in the plural in the original language. It might be translated, "Not of bloods." That is, it is not by your physical lineage. It is not by physical descent that you receive Christ.

This may have been bad news for the Jews, because they thought perhaps they were saved by being a physical descendant from Abraham. And of course Jesus corrected this false idea with the Pharisees. (John 8:39) So, receiving Christ has nothing to do with physical blood lines.

There are some denominations that baptize babies and they do this because they believe that if you are born to Christian parents you somehow partake of the saving covenant of God. But, God doesn't promise that all of your children will be saved. Did God save all of Abraham's children? No. Ishmael was not saved but Isaac was saved.

And we shouldn't presume that all of our physical children will be saved. And certainly, we shouldn't presume that they are saved automatically by being our child. And it seems that this is the idea here – 'Not of bloods.'" Also, the next phrase would seem to suggest that salvation is not by natural birth.

*Nor of the will of the flesh . . .*

John 1:13

Many commentators interpret this to merely reinforce the previous phrase, "Not of bloods." In other words, receiving Christ has nothing to do with natural generation. The flesh has nothing to do with it. The will of the flesh has nothing to do with it.

## B. What the New Birth Is

The new birth is an act of God.

*But of God.*

John 1:13

How much clearer could it really be? Those who receive the Word and believe in his name are those who were born of God. God takes the initiative. He generates life in the unbeliever. Then, as a natural consequence, you one who was an unbeliever believes and receives Christ.

This concept of the new birth is a major issue in the early part of this gospel. And we are going to see the great discourse between Jesus and Nicodemus in chapter three where Jesus told Nicodemus that he must be born again.

You know, the Arminian believes that this world is made up of two kinds of people. Some are whosoever willers. And there is something in them that will enable them to receive Jesus and come to the light. Others are whosoever won'ts. They just don't have that certain something and so they will never believe.

The Bible teaches that we are all whosoever won'ts. There is nothing in us that will allow us to come to the light. But . . .

There is a God in heaven who is a powerful God. And he is so powerful that he can generate life in a dead soul. And when he does, the heart of the sinner is changed. And suddenly, there is a disposition to run to the light. There is a craving in the soul for the Savior that was never there before. And they receive Him.

And this is the message of John in these early verses.