



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

John 1:1-18

"The Johannine Prologue: The Silence Broken, IV"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are turning again to the last of our studies on the Johannine prologue, "The Silence Broken" and I'm following the outline that I gave you last week. And I will, I hope, complete it tonight. John chapter 1 verse 1 through verse 18. And will you listen as I read verse 15 through verse 18 which is the section that shall study together tonight. John has just said, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." And then in verse 15 he writes,

"John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" For of His fullness we have all received, and upon grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth were realized (or came) through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him."

Now, we have been looking at these opening verses of the Gospel of John, a rather unique presentation of a Gospel because it does begin with this unusual prologue.

And we saw that the prologue was constructed in concrete fashion, that is the Apostle writes of the word in eternity and among men. And then he speaks of the word in history and among the Jews in verse 6 through 13. And finally, the word in history and among believers. And last time we looked at the incarnation and we want to pick it up tonight at the confirmation, verse 15 through 17.

But let me begin again with a few words by way of introduction. The final paragraph of the prologue is distinguished by the statement of the eighteenth verse, "No man hath seen God at any time," but it presents us with something of a dilemma in the light of the statements that are made in, for example, Exodus chapter 24. In Exodus chapter 24 it is distinctly stated, "They saw God." But here we read, "No man hath seen God at any time."

Now, of course, there are different ways in which we may say that we have seen God. For example, we might speak of seeing God as seeing him visibly in his essential being. Or secondly, we might speak of seeing God visibly as in a theophany, that is in an appearance of God such as some of the leading characters of the Old Testament, like Abraham, and Jacob, and Daniel, and Gideon, and Sampson's parents had. Or finally, thirdly, we might speak of seeing God spiritually in the sense that we have come to understand his person and his work. So there are three ways in which we might speak of seeing God.

And it is possible that these expressions are not contradictory. If in the one case when we read, "They saw God," and the, "No man hath seen God," they are speaking of seeing God in different ways. Regarding the first two, seeing God visibly as God in his essential being, we must say of course that we have not seen him in this sense. And then as far as seeing him in a theophany is concerned, in spite of the claims of some people today who claim to have had some kind of vision from God, it's generally accepted Christian doctrine that no man today has seen God in the sense of theophany. And so we must say with regard to these two senses, "Jesus, these eyes have never seen that radiant

form of thine. The veil of sense hangs dark between Thy blessed face and mine." But now, when we speak of seeing God in the third sense, in the sense of seeing him spiritually and coming to understand him by virtue of his person and his work, well that's something different. To those who have the cry of Job upon their lips, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him that I might come to his seat," we can say with Phillip who spoke to Nathaniel and said, "We have found him of whom Moses, and the law, and also the prophets wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." In that sense we can say that we have seen God because we have seen our Lord Jesus Christ and in seeing him we have seen God. He is the word who became flesh and we revealed the glory of an only begotten from the father, "full of grace and truth." And we now, because we're able to hold in our hands the divine revelation are able through the Scriptures to have the experience that the apostles had. We can truly say in that sense that we have seen God in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The words that follow the fourteenth verse confirm and corroborate what was stated there, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." These words that follow confirm, corroborate, explain that clause, "full of grace and truth." What did John mean when he said, "full of grace" and what did he mean when he said, "full of truth"? Well these verses, I think, explain that.

And so we look first at the confirmation and the Arabic on in the outline by the Baptist's words. Verse 15. Verse 15 reads, "John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'" These words give the proof that he was the only begotten Son and they contain a declaration and an explanation of his preexistence. Notice the opening word, "John bore witness of Him and cried." Now he is not speaking about something in the present time. He's talking about the fact that John the Baptist gave testimony to the ministry of the one who was to come after him. John was the

forerunner. The Lord Jesus was the king to come. His testimony was designed to point men to the Lord Jesus Christ. And so John says he, "bore witness of Him and he cried out saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I.'" What does he mean when he says, "He who comes after me?" Well, that is temporal in since because of course the Lord Jesus was born after John the Baptist. You go back and read the opening of Luke chapter 1 and you will discover that historically John the Baptist was born before the Lord Jesus.

Now, the thing that follows is rather noteworthy because in ancient times it was widely held that chronological priority meant superiority. In other words, if a person was older than someone else it was generally thought that that person had priority and superiority. And in Believers Chapel we always want to go back to what the ancients believed, and so I want you to realize that I have come into existence prior to most of you. So render to me the superiority that antiquity give to those who were more ancient than others.

Now seriously, it's rather strange. It is true that that was the case. And, of course, you know that we still have some of that in our own times because in lands like China age is respected more than it is respected in the United States. Maybe they have more reason to respect age over there. But the fact that John says here in verse 15, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I,'" was in itself a rather unique statement. It would have immediately attracted attention to it. Incidentally, this passage is the passage that George Whitefield used when he asked John Wesley to take over the work in Bristol that he had begun. I'm sure that most of you know this, but George Whitefield was a great Calvinist and John Wesley was an Arminian in his theology but the men were very close friends. And while they differed on certain things and Whitefield didn't mind telling Wesley that they differed and Wesley didn't mind telling Whitefield that they differed, they remained very good friends. And when Mr. Whitefield came to the United States and was preaching over here he wrote to Wesley and asked

Wesley to come to Bristol and take up the preaching that he had begun there. And it was out of this taking over of Mr. Whitefield the Calvinist evangelistic work that the Arminian John Wesley was responsible for the Wesleyan revivals of the 18th Century, so that really those great revivals rose out of an original Calvinistic beginning. But when Mr. Whitefield wrote to Mr. Wesley and asked him to take over that he wrote him these words, he said, "I beseech you, come next week. It is advertised in this day's journey. I pray for a blessing on your journey and in our meetings. The people expect you much. Though you come after, I heartedly wish you may be preferred before me. Even so, come Lord Jesus. Amen."

And he was expressing his hope that Mr. Wesley would have a great response and that truly God would honor him by giving him even greater blessing than he had experienced. The last clause of verse 15 expresses the reason why the Lord Jesus is greater. For he says, "He who comes after me has a higher rank than I for (because) he existed before me." So in other words, the Lord Jesus is both the successor of John the Baptist and he is also the predecessor of John the Baptist. He is the one who follows John the Baptist, who testified to him as the king, and takes up the ministry and goes out preaching, "Repent for the kingdom of the heavens is at hand. But while he picked up the ministry to the coming king and kingdom from John the Baptist, John says that, "He has existed before me." So he is both his successor and his predecessor. He was his predecessor not only in the fact that he minister in the Old Testament as the angel of Jehovah, but he was his predecessor because while John is finite, he is infinite. While John is a temporal human being, he is the eternal son. And while John is a lamp, he is a light or "the light". So "He was before me."

And incidentally, that verb that he uses in that last clause, translated in the New American Standard Bible, "For He existed before me," is a word that really means something like, "He was being before me." It's the very same word that is used in the first verse, "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and the word was

God." "He was before me." So he refers to the preexistence of the Son of God and in the other accounts you remember that John goes on to say, "He has greater dignity than because I'm not worthy to lose the latches of his shoes. So that's the first confirmation by the Baptist's words.

And then in the 16 verse his statements of verse 14 are confirmed by the disciples experiences. We read in verse 16, "For of His fullness we have all received, and upon grace for grace." Now, if you have an Authorized Version you'll notice the sixteenth verse begins with an "and" but the more ancient Greek transcripts have the word "because", translated "for" correctly in the New American Standard Bible. So this is giving the grounds of the preceding statement, "For of His fullness we have all received." Christians can support what I have been saying, John is saying, because they have received good gifts from him. He is greater than John the Baptist because he preceded them and evidence of that is that of his fullness have all we received. Now, it's possible also to relate this sixteenth verse to the fourteenth verse. He is full of grace and truth, because of his fullness have all we received and grace for grace. So we have all drawn upon the treasury of grace and truth that exists in our Lord Jesus Christ is John the Apostle's meaning.

Let's look at a couple of things in this sixteenth verse. He says, "For of his fullness," what a beautiful expression that is. What he is simply saying is that there are inexhaustible resources in the Son of God and in having him we have all of his fullness. Now, isn't that an amazing statement. "Of his fullness have all we received." When I was going through theological seminary Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer used to love to compare this text, the sixteenth verse, with the verse in Colossians chapter 2 verse 9 where the Apostle Paul is speaking about the Lord Jesus says, "For Him dwells all the fullness, the pleroma of the Godhead bodily. The fullness of the Godhead bodily." Now, he went on to point out that, "the fullness of the Godhead bodily speaks of all that our Lord Jesus Christ is."

Now, Dr. Chafer didn't know Greek but he knew how to use a concordance. And he used to pronounce it with the accent on the wrong syllable. He would say "play-roma" and I can still hear him saying it. And he would say "play-roma". "We have all the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwells in him. All the "play-roma" dwells in Christ." And then he would turn over the passage in John and he would say, "Do you notice here that John says, 'Of His fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. "All of the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwells in our Lord Jesus. That is in bodily form. And we who are believers have received of this fullness of the Godhead in bodily fashion, grace upon grace.

Now, to spell it out, he's talking about the fullness of grace or the fullness of perfect redemption, and the fullness of truth, the fullness of perfect revelation. Guy King, in one of his book illustrates what it means to be united to the Lord Jesus by a simple little illustration of a beggar who is hungry and needs food, but who is walking down a street and looks into a room. And as he looks into the room he looks into the dining room. Now, this wouldn't happen in Texas, but it would happen in Charleston, South Carolina because the houses are half-houses. And so the houses often face horizontally to the street and so you can walk down the sidewalk and look right in the living room or the dining room. That was a lot of fun when were kids. [Laughter] We would walk down the street of these old, old houses and look into the living room; beautiful furniture, all of the beautiful things that the people in Charleston had, especially the antiques. Many of them were very lovely. But you sometimes could look in and you would see the dining room. Well, you can just imagine a beggar walking down the streets looking in and seeing on the table a lavish meal and he has a great need. "And then let's just imagine, "Mr. King says, "that the owner of the house sees the beggar looking in at the window, and goes out and invites him in." And that which he saw as something unattainable now is attainable. So he says his great need and the fullness of the table meet in the dining room. Now, it is like that, through union with Christ, that we have come to experience the fullness of the

Godhead through the Lord Jesus. The inexhaustible resources of the Lord Jesus are ours because we have become united to him through the atoning work that he accomplished as our representative on the cross at Calvary, "of his fullness."

Now, of course, we could not have this fullness were it not for the fact that the Lord Jesus went to the cross in order to die. So there must be not only incarnation but there also must be the suffering of the cross. The alabaster box had to be broken before the house could be filled with the odor of the ointment. And so, as someone has put it, if I may so sack, the core spun sack of Christ's humanity, had to be cut asunder in order that the wealth that was stored in it might be poured into our hands. God came near to us in the life, but became ours in the death of his dear son. Incarnation was needed for that great privilege, "We beheld his glory." But the crucifixion was needed in order to make possible the more wondrous prerogative, "of his fullness of have all we received."

So it is true. It is as a result of the incarnation that we can say, "We have beheld the glory of the only begotten Son, full of grace and truth." But to behold his glory is not a saving experience. When he goes on to say, "Of his grace have we received," then he speaks not only of incarnation, but of crucifixion and the appropriation of the benefits which are ours as a result of redemption. And he concludes the sixteenth verse by saying, "Grace upon grace." Now, when he says, "Grace upon grace," I think that what he means is, "grace in exchange for grace." This preposition is a very common word in Greek and it may be rendered in different ways. It may be rendered "for", "grace for grace." It may be rendered "after". It may be rendered "in exchange for" or "in place of", but the idea of an exchange for, I think, is what is involved here. So we have received of his fullness and grace in exchange for grace. In other words, as grace comes to us and as grace is appropriated there is still more grace after that.

It's like a gardener who's watering his plants and he takes his water pot and he pours his water in the plants, and he waits until the ground has absorbed the water. And then he waters some more. So in the case of the grace of God we receive grace in

exchange for grace. There is always grace available for all of the experiences of life. And even in those experiences that lead to ultimately death, there is grace still. "Of his inexhaustible resources we have received," the apostle says.

Now finally, the confirmation by the Lord's ministry. And notice again the seventeenth verse begins with a "for". "For," we read, "For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ." Now, again, we may be retuning to verse 14 in thought. He has just been speaking about full of grace and so it's natural that we should continue, "For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth were (reached, or realized, or came to be) through Jesus Christ."

Now, Johnny Calvin was an interpreter of the word of God. And Johnny Calvin has said this concerning this verse, "But we must notice the antithesis in his contrasting of the law to grace and truth for he means that the law lacked both these." Now, that is an interesting statement from John Calvin, "the law lacked both grace and truth." Now, of course, he did not mean that in the law we did not have pointers to grace and pointers to truth. But what he meant was, and what I think John the Apostle means, is that in the law itself we do not have grace and we do not have truth. It is only insofar as we see the law in the light of the fulfillment in Jesus Christ that we have grace and truth. The law itself is not grace and it does not give us the truth. We need the revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

Now, Paul says much the same thing. He says, "The law is not of faith." So the law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. It is obvious if grace and truth came by the law John couldn't say, "The law came by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." He's contrasting these. We don't intend to say, therefore, that the law is not of value or of significance for us. We merely point out that the law as a legal code is not a gracious code and it does not give us the truth of redemption, except in so far as it is seen in the light of the fulfillment in Jesus Christ. What was the law? Well, the law was preparation. We have seen in Galatians, while grace is divine provision the law

gives the knowledge of sin. The grace of the Son of God puts it away. The law commands and makes its demands of us, but grace offers and gives us the remedies. The law is a shadow. As Paul states in the epistle to the Colossians, "The law is a shadow, but the substance belongs to Jesus Christ." So the law is a shadow pointing forward to the fulfillment in Christ, the substance has to do with the ministry of the Son of God. The writer of the epistle of the Hebrews says much the same thing. When he opens his tenth chapter and says in the tenth chapter, "For the law, having a shadow of God things to come and not the very image of the things could never with those sacrifices which were offered continually put away sin." So the law is shadow, the substance belongs to Christ. The Old Testament system pointed to grace, but it was powerless in itself.

Notice another antithesis in that verse. He says, "The law came (it was given) through Moses. Grace and truth came to be (or were realized) through Christ." So the grace and truth came into being through the Lord Jesus. Moses brought the law, but the Son of God authored grace. The different verbs stress the closer relationship the Lord Jesus had to grace and truth in comparison with the relationship of Moses, who was an external means. But grace and truth actually came from our Lord Jesus Christ, from God through him in a most intimate way.

And finally, the third antithesis in this verse is the antithesis of Moses and Jesus Christ. This, as you've noticed no doubt, is the first mention of the term Jesus Christ in the Gospel of John because he has now spoken of the incarnation. And it is by virtue of incarnation that he, the Messiah, came to be known as Jesus. So the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came to be through Jesus Christ. That's a very important statement on the nature of the Law of Moses. What's the use of standing by a lame man and pointing him off to a summit of a beautiful mountain and saying, "If you'll just climb that mountain and sit on the top of it you'll be able to breathe the purist and finest, most healthful atmosphere that you possibly can." It is of no help for the command carries no enabling power with it. The law is weak in itself because unfortunately it has only you

and me to deal with. As Paul says and Romans chapter 8, "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh," that's the trouble with the law. It could only work with you and me. In itself it was holy, just and good, but it didn't have anything with which it could work.

Capital C, the revelation in his coming, or of his coming, verse 18. Oh, by the way, I should have said something about the fact that this redeeming ability of the Law of Moses has been one of the things that the enemies of Christianity have never been to properly understand. When Selsius, an ancient heretic, jeered at Jesus Christ, he jeered at him on the ground that, "While every reputable teacher naturally appears to the wise and noble to come to him this impossible person Jesus Christ," he said, "calls to the down and outs, to the scum of society to rally to him." And the early church gave the devastating answer to him in a very unabashed and exultant way. They said, "Thank God that is true." Only, he does not leave them down and out, but out of the material you would have tossed away as useless he makes real mean living a life that is to be called life indeed. That really is the glory of Christianity and always has been from the beginning. It's not that it appeals to the wise, and the noble, and the highborn because generally speaking the wise, and the noble, and the highborn do not see their need. They do not know that they have any need. They think that by their wisdom they shall get to heaven. They think that by their culture they shall get to heaven, by their good works, by their standing in influence in the community and all of the other things that characterize the natural man. The Gospel appeals to those who have the sense of need. And it is much more likely, of course, that a person who knows his sin and who has been brought under conviction for it is a candidate for the Gospel.

Now, of course, Paul says it's not one hundred percent universal. Not everybody in the Christian faith has belonged to the scum of the earth. But a great number of the saints have had that experience. Now, Paul says, "Not many mighty, not many noble, not

many wellborn are called." But he doesn't say, "Not any." There are some who do see their sin and know that the sin of being proud and arrogant is probably greater than the other kinds of fleshly sin. So the law came by Moses, but thank God grace and truth came through Jesus Christ, now the revelation of the father.

Now, we have up to this point stressed grace, full of grace. Now, in the eighteenth verse it is truth that comes to the foreground. "No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten God who is in the bosom of the father, He has explained Him." The grace was the grace of perfect redemption by which all of our needs are met. The truth is the truth of perfect revelation. Here is the answer to Job's cry, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him that I might come unto his seat." Why Job, the answer to the cry of the soul that wishes to come to the throne of God is Jesus Christ. To come to him is to come to God.

Now, he begins this verse by saying that man has a limitation, "No man has seen God at any time." Now, of course, he refers to the visible sight of God as God." He's not saying, "No man has seen God in the since that he's come to understand God." But he means, "No man has seen God in the since that he as looked upon his unveiled essence. That's something that we cannot see. The Old Testament tells us if we should see the unveiled essence of God we should die, "No man hath seen me and has lived," the Old Testament says.

The opening word, incidentally, in the Greek text is the word "God". Such a person as God is the force of the *anarthros*, that is the expression is without the article. The *anarthros* God, such a person as God, no one has ever seen. Now, we've talked about this before and so I pass it by with only a comment. The Old Testament and the New Testament agree that we cannot see God in his unveiled essence. In the New Testament he is spoken of as being invisible. In 1 Timothy chapter 6, after the statement in chapter 1 that he is invisible it says that, "No man can see Him." What about those instance in the Old Testament in which God was seen? Like Genesis chapter 3? Genesis 2?

Well, they were evidence of Old Testament theophanies in which God veiled his essence and fellowshiped with men in bodily form. These theophanies were anticipations of the incarnation of the Lord Jesus. But no man has seen God, so far as his unveiled essence is concerned, at any time. That's the explanation of these things. That's why you can read in the Old Testament, "They saw God." It's like standing before a mirror. If I were looking at a little child that was dirty I might say, "Look at your face in the mirror. Look at the dirt all over it." I might even say, "Look at yourself in the mirror." And he would look at himself in the mirror, but he really wouldn't be seeing himself. He would be seeing the reflection of himself in the mirror. So we can speak of seeing someone when we don't actually see them directly. That's, I think, what is meant when it says, "No man hath seen God at any time." The direct view, or vision, is referred to.

Now, the qualifications of the son for doing this are expressed in the middle part of the verse, "The only begotten son or God who is in the bosom of the father." Now, we have a little bit of a textual problem here, and of course I'm assuming that the majority of the audience is not able to understand a discussion of the textual problem of the Greek text. That doesn't mean, incidentally, that you're not intelligent. But most of you haven't studied textual criticism. It doesn't mean that you're not intelligent. Most of you are certainly more intelligent than I. But let me just summarize what is involved here. "No man has seen God at any time. The only begotten," now some of the ancient manuscripts have "God", "the only begotten God." That's a strange expression. It only occurs here. There is a law of textual criticism, a most important law that that reading is to be preferred, which best explains the origin of another. In other words, if you can show how a scribe might have arrived at a particular reading then the chances are that you are on your way to solving the textual problem. Well, I think you can see how a scribe seeing "only begotten God," and since that doesn't occur anywhere else, might have tended to want to change it saying, "It surely must be only begotten Son," because that is an expression used. And so he would change it to, "only begotten Son." That would be

an argument for the genuineness of, "only begotten God." On the other hand, it is possible to make unintentional errors and the term "Son" and the term "God" look very much alike in an ancient manuscript with unsealed letters. They look something like this. Well, not like that. Let's see if I can write this. Yes.

Now, this is the word for "Son" abbreviated. And this is the word for "God" abbreviated. Incidentally, these expressions occur in a couple of our most ancient manuscripts of the Gospel of John. You can see that they're very similar and consequently it would be easy for an error of the eye to take place and a scribe coming and seeing "only begotten Son," might in light of the fact that God has been used all ready in this section he might say, "only begotten God," just unthinkingly. So we're not certain exactly what is the rendering. If it is only begotten God, it's a very interesting reading since he begins the section by saying, "In the beginning was the word and the word was with God, and the word was God." And then in the fourteenth verse he said, "The word became flesh and dwelt among us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father," so that in verse 18 the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father would be a beautiful combining of God and only begotten. And if, of course, that is the genuine reading then it is a clear statement again of the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand if the term son is the genuine reading, "Only begotten Son of God" is also a confession of deity as we have pointed out. He would possess the nature of the Father in Heaven. The only begotten of the Father, the only begotten of the Son, and he goes on to describe him here as, "one who is in the bosom of the Father." No, that would fit the style of the passage very well.

So I'm leaving you up in the air on purpose. It is possible that it is, "only begotten God." It is possible that it is, "only begotten Son." Why don't you think about it and see what you think the contexts would demand? It's one of those cases where we as yet do not have sufficient textual material to solve that problem convincingly. Now, you'll here some people make convincing statements concerning it very dogmatically. You just mark

it down in your mind, "He's trying to snow me, but Dr. Johnson has all ready enlightened me." So the important thing is it doesn't make a bit of difference so far as the doctrine is concerned and it is an expression of the deity of the Lord Jesus. "The only begotten Son, (the only begotten God) who is in the bosom of the Father."

Now notice that Luther says, commenting on that verb to be, "is" because it is a verb that stresses continuous action, "is ever and ever is bosom of the Father." What a beautiful expression that is. "My bosom friend, my closest friend," this is possibly a picture of a son sitting on a father's knee and leaning back against his breast. And the father communing with the son in that posture, who is in the bosom of the Father. His eternity is, ever and ever is, and then the intimacy that exists between the Father and the Son.

Now, why does he say that he is the "only begotten Son who ever and ever is in the bosom of the Father." What's the point? He wants to point out that this person is therefore the person who can most fully, completely, and truthfully reveal the Father in heaven. You could never find a better interpreter of a father than a son. A son who possesses the nature of the father and at the same time lives in the age with which the father would have difficulty communicating. So the ideal biographer is the son of a great man. And in the past, of course, that is true. In the case of our Lord, he is the ideal biographer of the father.

Now finally he has said, "The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has explained Him." That's the word from which we get exegesis. He has excogitated him. He has interpreted him. He has rehearsed the facts concerning him. In Josephus it was used of those who interpreted the Law of Moses. In the mystery cults it was used of the mystagogue who interpreted the mystery religion to the initiates. So he is the true mystagogue who has laid open the breast of God for us in the Gospel and he has laid him forth as God the Father to us, the Lord Jesus Christ. Now, if you want to understand all that is involved in explaining him why then read the rest of the Gospel of

John. That's what John tells us. He tells us how the son has laid open the vest of the Father for us.

May I conclude? I began by saying that the silence of a God who does not speak was known in ancient times. Ignatius started with the presupposition that God was silent before he sent Jesus Christ. God's silence was a notion that originated in Judaism. In the Hellenistic world silence became a symbol of the highest deity. We have even a prayer, which we have discovered, addressed to silence. In the great Parisian magical papyrus, the so-called mytherus liturgy, the mystic who is on his way to heaven is threatened by hostile Gods or star powers, almost like ancient star wars. And he's advised to put his finger on his mouth and to ask silence for help. Silence, the god Silence, and this is what he prays. "Silence, Silence, Silence, symbol of the eternal immortal God. Take me under they wings. Oh, silence." What a moving prayer. God is silence. He is utterly removed. He does not speak. He's the hidden God. To this inscrutable silence man can only lift his hands and cry, "Take me under Thy wings of silence." And so it is in a world which knew of God's silence as a token of his inexpressible majesty that the message of the Christian church rings out, "The silence has been broken in the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." The only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the father, he has revealed him. God has spoken and he spoken in grace and in truth. And in response to grace and truth, and in the beholding of him, and in the receiving of him, and in the seeing of him there is this line of appropriation throughout these eighteen verses. "We have Him who is full of grace and truth." Do you have him? Is he really yours? Have you believed in him and are you resting on him and on him alone?

Let's bow together in word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are so thankful to Thee for this great section from the word of God. And we thank Thee that the silence has been broken. God has spoken...

“The Johannine Prologue: The Silence Broken, part IV” by S. Lewis Johnson
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[AUDIO ENDED ABRUPTLY]