

The Greatest Story (Part 51):

The God That Can Be Seen

1 John 1:1-4

Memory Verses: 1 John 1:2

MANUSCRIPT

Introduction (Me, We, & the Struggle)

How Can You Believe In Something That You Cannot See?

A couple weeks ago my kid's school had a Christmas concert and they had a man and a woman posing as Santa and Mrs. Claus. Well, we don't do Santa in our house... but we have shared with our kids the real story of Saint Nicholas and we have watched all the Christmas movies about Santa and such.... so you know where we are coming from. Up to this point Vera has heard from her brothers that Santa, the way he is portrayed in the movies, is not real. In fact, she's been told that the guys who pose as Santa in the malls have fake beards and fake hair... they are just fake. So now you know the context of our family and Santa... Okay. So anyway... Vera goes to her school concert thing and she sees this guy who looks a lot like Santa... and Lisa convinces her to go sit on his lap for a picture. **Here's the picture.** And guess what happens. Vera pulls on his beard and it's real. And she tugs on his hair and it's real too... And so the rest of the night Vera was not only convinced that Santa was real... but that that very man was indeed the Santa Claus. Even to the point that she was yelling at her brothers that he was real and that his beard is real and that his hair was real... and he is the real Santa. You see, she didn't really believe in Santa until she saw Santa. I don't know if I could even convince her otherwise now.

I was leading a Bible Study at the Jail a couple of weeks ago and one of the men in attendance stopped me in the middle of my talk and said... "but how can you expect me to believe in a God that I can't see... you have no facts... and I only believe in facts." Somehow this led to a conversation about whether or not man has ever really been to the moon, and whether or not 9/11 was an inside job. I tried to sidestep those conspiracies as well as I could so we could get back on track... But the point was taken... it is very hard to believe in a God that can't be seen. There are many who say that God is not real... and the number one evidence they present is that you cannot see him. Vera saw Santa and believed... if only we could see God.

There is tons of evidence historically, archaeologically, and logically that I could have presented to try to win this man to my side. I could have presented a very compelling argument but in the end I could not have shown him a physical God.

Perhaps you are here this morning and you find yourself in the same position as this man. You say... "in the end, it's all conjecture and circumstantial... I could only really believe in a God that I could see." Well, then I'm glad you are here this morning. You see that's what Christmas is all about. It's about showing you God. This morning I want to present to you a God that can be seen... and my hope is that by the time we are through this morning... that you will have trusted in him for salvation.

So go ahead and turn over to **1 John 1:1-4** which is our Christmas passage for this morning, and I want to briefly show you two ways you can see God. **God Can Be Seen In The Flesh, But You Must Show Him**

Teaching (Expand on the Problem, God)

The first thing I want us to see in this passage is that... **God Came To Earth In The Flesh As Jesus Christ.** Look again at **vs1a.** God has existed from the beginning. The foundation of the Bible is the existence of an all powerful, all knowing, all present being called God. He has no beginning and he has no end... he has and will always exist. He made the universe, the earth, and everything that occupies the earth... including all of mankind; you and me. And, God has made his creation aware of his existence through his creation and miracles that could have no explanation apart from his existence. He has also appeared periodically throughout history in human form or in the form of angelic figure. He appeared to Abraham as a human type figure twice. He wrestled as a man with Jacob. He appeared as a human in the fiery furnace with the three Hebrew children.

But regardless, through most of history God has not taken any form and has been seen to most as more of an invisible force rather than a person who can be seen. No doubt this lends credence to those who say he doesn't exist... simply because he can't be seen. Well, that was until Christmas morning 2020 some years ago.

Look at the rest of the **first verse into verse 2.** The word of Life (God) was made manifest... meaning he was made in form. A form that could be heard. A form that could be seen. A form that could be touched. The word is manifest. The eternal life qualities of God were incarnated into a form that could be physically seen. **God is eternal life and that eternal life was made manifest to us.**

Get this, ... On Christmas morning Jesus was born as a physical human, but he was no mere human, he was God in the flesh manifest so that we could actually hear, see, and touch God. Turn over to another one of John's books... the Gospel of John **John 1:1-4,14**. Here we see that the word was God, with God, and it was made flesh so that we could see the glory of God in physical form. That's what Christmas is all about.

Christmas definitely isn't about Santa, but it's not even about a baby in a manger. It's about the almighty, everlasting, holy, all powerful,

sovereign God of the universe coming to Earth incarnated in the form of a man to reveal to us his Glory! So... For everyone who says I won't believe in God until I see God... God said alright I'll show you myself in the only form you can hear, see, touch and understand me – Jesus Christ. For those who won't believe until they see him... God showed up! And get this... He didn't just stick around for a couple of minutes either... he lived among us for 33 years. And he proved to us that he was God. How so? Well the historically accurate and trustworthy document we call the Bible testifies that He never sinned, that He performed miracles that only God could perform, that He forgave sins that only God could forgive, that He died and rose from the Grave, and that He ascended into the sky.

But perhaps the Bible isn't a trustworthy document. Would you believe a historical description of these events from someone who lived during that time and was not a Christian? Yes? Well then I present to you the historian Josephus who wrote this... *"About this time lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man. For he was the achiever of extraordinary deeds and was a teacher of those who accept the truth gladly. He won over many Jews and many of the Greeks. He was the Messiah. When he was indicted by the principal men among us and Pilate condemned him to be crucified, those who had come to love him originally did not cease to do so; for he appeared to them on the third day restored to life, as the prophets of the Deity had foretold these and countless other marvelous things about him, and the tribe of the Christians, so named after him, has not disappeared to this day."*

So... If Jesus was real, the world has seen God in the flesh and the historical record proves this. He was a real person. He did miracles. And most of all... he died and rose again. In the light of this... **There is no legitimate reason to doubt whether Jesus really existed, or that he was who he said he was; God with us. God Can Be Seen In The Flesh: Jesus Christ... But You Must Show Him**

Which is our second point... **God Is Revealed To The World Through His Followers.** Jesus after his resurrection ascended into the sky. He is alive, but he is no longer alive on Earth in the flesh. This once again presents the same problem for those who say they won't believe unless they can see him.

Well let me ask you this... do you believe in the Arctic Circle? Shevi, are you really asking us at Christmas time if we believe in the North Pole? Hey, Vera believes in Santa now... so anything is possible right? No, do you believe that there is a place here on Earth called the Arctic Circle? You do? Really? How many of you hear have been there? None? But you all believe in it? But you've never seen it. So how do you know? The point is this. Where something is... even if you can't see it... doesn't negate that it exists.

Just because Jesus isn't here anymore... doesn't mean he doesn't exist. In fact, the fact that Jesus doesn't live here on Earth in the flesh where we can see him.. actually enforces the fact that he exists.

Look at **verses 2 & 3**. What eyewitnesses saw and heard... they have reported it. Just like explorers from the arctic circle have reported that it exists... eyewitnesses of Jesus reported his existence and his journey into the sky. When we tell people about Jesus we aren't reporting hearsay or heresy... we believe in the report of credible eyewitnesses. The Bible tells us that 500 people saw the resurrected Christ after his death. They and every New Testament author is a credible witness who's reports do not vary in the slightest. And, they have written the New Testament for us to carry on the tradition of reporting the truth of Jesus Christ our Lord. So... **We place our faith in the Bible as the true word of what Jesus did and what Jesus said and how we are to live in the light of that**

Now we proclaim it to a lost and dying world that does not believe in Jesus. We tell the eyewitness reports of the God who was seen, died, resurrected, and ascended into heaven. But even more so... we tell the story of how Christ has changed our lives personally. You ask how can the fact that Christ lives in heaven be credible to our witness? Because had he not ascended we would not have the Holy Spirit in us testifying to our spirit's that Jesus is real. We would also not have the power of the Holy Spirit to share the story credibly. Get this... our testimony is the most powerful eyewitness testimony we have to share. If you really believe it people will see that belief and it will be convincing.

So we show the world the truth of the God in the Flesh by sharing the story of eyewitnesses... by sharing our story through the power of the Holy Spirit... but most of all... we share the truth of Jesus as we share the love of Christ. Look at **vs4**. We must be concerned for their joy. True joy comes in belief in Jesus... but also through care and love. Get this... **we love people the way Christ would love them so they can hear the words that Christ wants to say to them. God Can Be Seen In The Flesh, But You Must Show Him.** If you really want people to see God then you must show them how God has changed you, and you must love them with a desire to see their joy.

Application (Resolution, You)

God can be seen. Jesus was a real person who was God manifest in the flesh. He was here and people heard him, saw him, and touched him. But, You are also a real person who has the Holy Spirit living inside of you as a believer. If you want people to see God you can tell them the truth of Christ and show them the love of Christ. You are now the representation of Jesus to the world. If you want people to see God... show them the God in you! **Christmas isn't just about God coming to Earth... it's also about**

God coming to You and there is nothing more Christmas than the God of heaven being displayed through your life.

Conclusion

So how are you going to tell people about Jesus this Christmas?
So how are you going to show people the love of Jesus this Christmas?
It's as simple as that. This is what Christmas is all about... Showing the world the God who came to Earth. **God Can Be Seen In The Flesh, But You Must Show Him**