

The One and Only Son

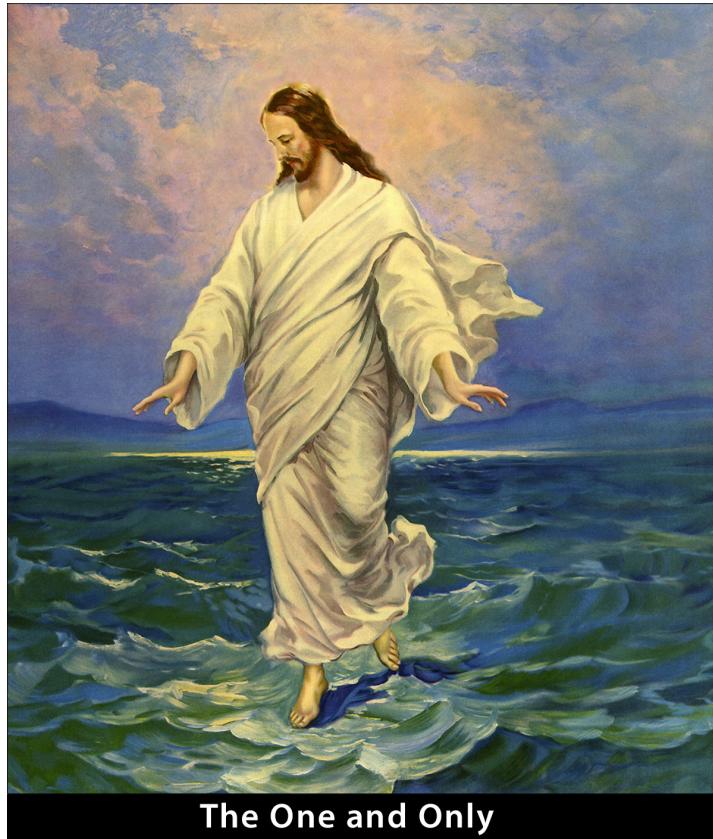
There are some very unusual things in our world. They are so unusual that there is nothing else like them. All we can say is that they are unique. The pyramids in Egypt are one such example. While a few pyramids can be found in other parts of the world, we cannot find five pyramids grouped together in any other place. Where else can we find a Sphinx? There is also only one Masada. It is found in the Middle East. There is nothing like it. There is also only one set of Dead Sea Scrolls. The Dead Sea Scrolls were found in 1947 in some caves at Qumran, which was a Jewish community of the Essenes. These ancient Hebrew scrolls, which have a date range of before Jesus Christ through A.D. 68, contain some very incredible statements about the existence of Jesus Christ. They are proof that Jesus existed and walked this planet. There is nothing else like them, and there is nothing like Jesus, as we will soon discover.

Dead Sea Scrolls. The Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered by an Arab shepherd boy. The scrolls contain hundreds of ancient biblical and secular manuscripts which existed before Herod's Temple was built until after the death of Jesus Christ. The scrolls were not published for almost 45 years after they were found, because a group of secular scholars did not want them released to the world. But in 1991 the unpublished scrolls were finally released and translated by Dr. Robert Eisenman, Professor of Middle East Religions at California State University. He discovered that one scroll referred to the Prophet Isaiah and his prophecy about a Messiah who would suffer for the sins of his people (Isaiah 53). This scroll indicated

the "Root of Jesse," the "Branch of David," and declared that He would be pierced and wounded. These are references to Psalms 22:16 and Jeremiah 23:5 which predicted the coming of the Messiah. But the most amazing statement was that the Messiah was a "leader of the community" and was "put to death." This is a clear reference to Jesus Christ and what He taught.

Word Became Flesh.

In our study of the gospel of John, we have been told that the Word was in the beginning, was with God, and was God. That is, God was the Word. We have been told that the Word was Light, but the Light was rejected by the world. We have already been told that the Light was "coming into the world" (John 1:9), "was

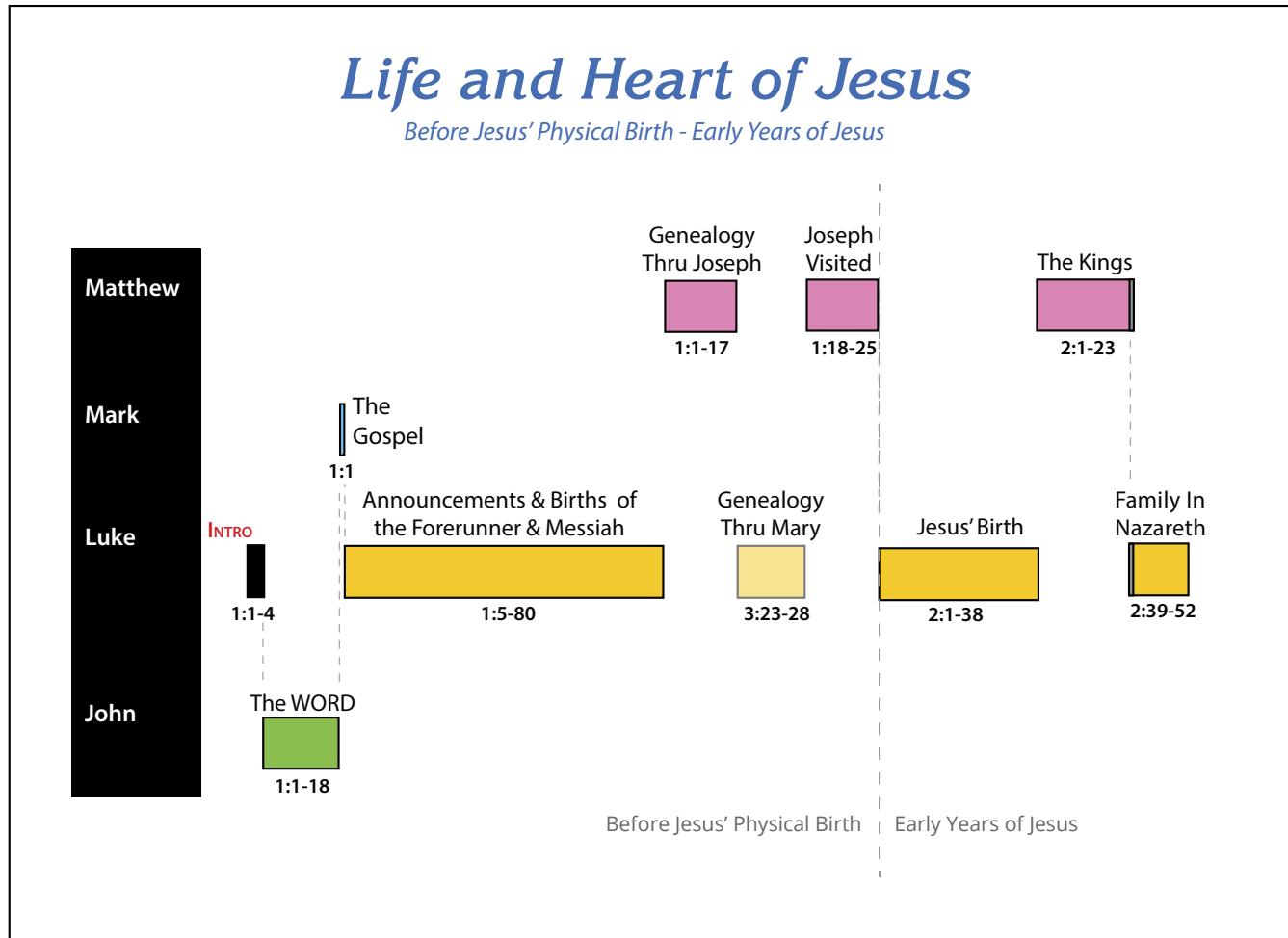


that they believed the Messiah would die and then return at a later time to rule the world. It identified the Messiah as

"in the world" (John 1:10), and had "come to His own" (John 1:11).

Life and Heart of Jesus

Before Jesus' Physical Birth - Early Years of Jesus



But how did the Word, that is the Light, come into the world? Did He come as a force? The scriptures have already revealed the following answer,

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 (NASB)

The Word, or the Light, became a human being. He clothed Himself with human flesh. This divine being put on human flesh like a garment. The Word changed His appearance. He changed Himself and took on human flesh and lived among us. He was God in human flesh.

How was He recognized? How can anyone recognize such a being? The apostle answers the question with this comment, “we saw His glory!” Now we should ask, “In what way did the world see His glory?” The answer is found in that He

was “full of grace and truth.” The world saw Him do miracle after miracle, and perform incredible wonders. His teachings were astonishing, and the people said that no one spoke as He did. That was His glory - His character, His grace, His deeds. His glory was seen by those who watched Him, who touched Him, and who spoke with Him! There was no one else like Him.

Only Begotten. We will speak more about His grace and truth in the next few verses. But first we want to focus on the Holy Spirit’s statement that the Word was the “only begotten from the Father.” What does this mean? To some it sounds like Jesus became a baby god and grew up into an adult god. To others it appears that Jesus was simply created. But the Greek word *monogenes*, which is poorly translated in many English Bibles as “only begotten,” does not have either meaning.

The meaning of the Greek word *monogenes* can be dis-

covered without even using a Greek lexicon by looking at Hebrews 11:17 where we read,

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son . . . Hebrews 11:17 (NASB)

The Greek word *monogenes* is translated in this verse as “only begotten.” If we say that *monogenes* refers to someone who is the only born child this would imply that Abraham had only one son - Isaac. But Genesis 16:15; 25:8-9 says that Abraham had two sons: Isaac and Ishmael. Abraham had more than one son. This illustrates the fact that *monogenes* means something more than “only begotten.” In fact, *monogenes* means “unique one” or “one and only.” That is why the New International Version Bible (NIV) translates John 1:14 as follows:

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14 (NIV)

This captures the meaning of the Greek text. The Word was the One and Only or the Unique One. There was and is no other being like Him! He is the One and Only.

Existed First. We will also discover in our coming studies that the Word became flesh after John the Baptist was born. That is, the Word became flesh six months after John the Baptist (Luke 1:26-2:7). Yet in the next verse, John the Baptist says that the Word existed before he (John) was born.

John testified

Masada - Only One Like It

about 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.’” John 1:15 (NASB)

No one else has existed before he or she came into existence on this planet. But the Word did. He existed before anything or anyone started to exist, because He sustains His own life. The Word was in the beginning and took human flesh at a later time. No one else has done this! John wanted us to know that the human being called Jesus had always existed. This is an incredible statement. Jesus is truly the “One and Only.”

Full of Truth. John has another incredible statement to make. We know that the apostle had spent three to four years with Jesus before His physical body died. Therefore, he can accurately make the following statement,

For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. John 1:16 (NASB)

Have you ever met someone who is full of grace and truth? John did. Most of us have met some nice people over the years. They spoke kind words and expressed love for those around them, but eventually we have discovered that they were only partially full of grace and truth. Eventually we discovered a flaw in their characters. We discovered a bad attitude or a wrong

perspective. But that was not true about the Word. Jesus was full of truth! Jesus was full of grace! He was FULL of grace and truth!

Later in the apostle’s memoirs he wrote this,

Jesus said



to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.” John 14:6 (NASB)

And to the saints in Ephesus the Apostle Paul adds,

But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus . . . Ephesians 4:20-21 (NASB)

They knew Him. They knew that Jesus spoke the truth. He was FULL of truth!

Full of

Grace.

The Apostle John and Jesus' neighbors and friends personally experienced His gracious character and conduct. A wonderful example of what they thought about Him occurred on a sabbath in a synagogue just after Jesus had read from the scroll of Isaiah. Here is what they thought about Him,

And He began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, “Is this not Joseph’s son?” Luke 4:21-22 (NASB)

When a blind man asked Jesus for mercy (Luke 18:35-43), Jesus graciously and mercifully healed him. Jesus did this for thousands of people. The people who knew Him best said

that He was gracious and that He demonstrated it by His words and conduct. Jesus was and still is gracious!

His Glory. His truthfulness and grace displayed His glory. Jesus’ glory was displayed when He spoke the truth, when He treated people with grace, and when He performed signs and wonders. Jesus’ glory was demonstrated when He walked on water and calmed the wind and waves. His glory was displayed when He told a fig tree to stop producing figs and the tree then died. His glory was revealed at the moment He turned water into wine. His glory was observed when He disappeared from the middle of a crowd without anyone seeing Him slip out. Jesus’ glory was shown on the Mount of

Transfiguration.

His glory was shown on the day He physically died. The sky was darkened; an earthquake occurred, and dead people came out of graves and walked the streets of Jerusalem.

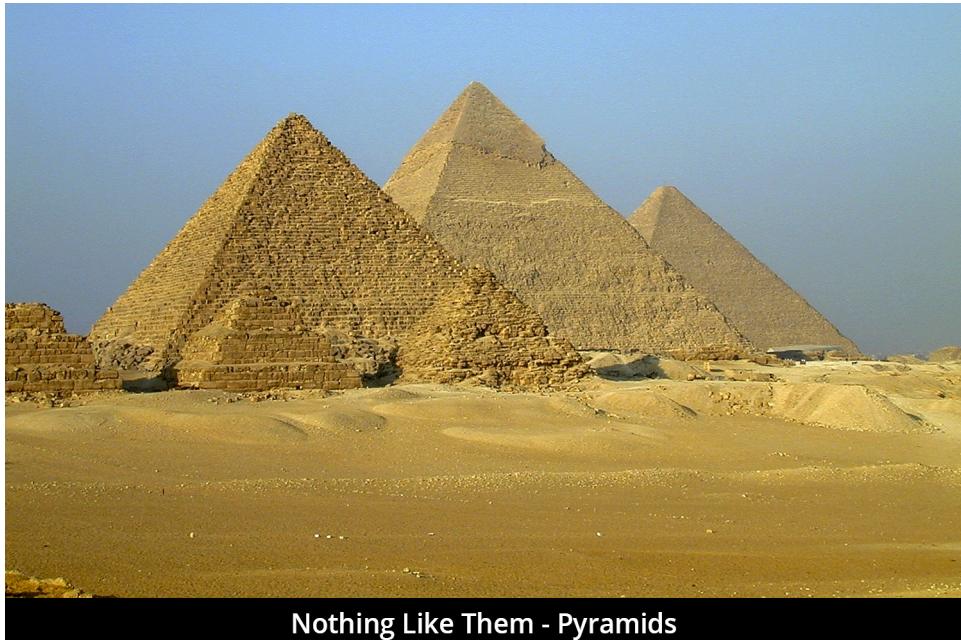
There was no one like Him. There is no one

like Him. He is unique. He is the One and Only.

Not Like Moses. But to whom should we or can we compare Jesus? Comparisons always help us. They are like word pictures. Word pictures help us understand. So the apostle compares Jesus to one that the Jews highly honored. The man’s name was Moses.

For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. John 1:17 (NASB)

For the first time in his introduction, the apostle gives us a name for the being who was the Word in human flesh. This



Nothing Like Them - Pyramids

person is Jesus. Early in this introduction we knew this was about Jesus and so we have used His name, but the apostle waited until now. Moses gave the Jews the Law, but Jesus gave them grace and truth. Jesus is greater than Moses! This is awesome stuff. Jesus is truly unique!

Jesus Saw Him. Now John comes to the climax of the introduction to his gospel,

No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. John 1:18 (NASB)

No one has seen God. No one! No one - except Jesus! No one - except the only begotten God! Notice that John does not say that Jesus is the “only begotten from the Father.” This time he refers to Jesus as the, “only begotten God.” It is clear that John believed Jesus was and is God.

Therefore, it is obvious that Jesus knows God the Father. It is obvious that He would be full of grace and full of truth. It is obvious that He would be greater than any human being, including Moses. It is obvious that only Jesus could help us really know God. Only Jesus could “explain” Him, and He did. He did it again and again.

Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.” Jesus said to him, “Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? “Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own

initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works. “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; otherwise believe because of the works themselves. John 14:8-11 (NASB)

We will see Him explain the Father throughout our study in the Life and Heart of Jesus. No one else can do this - only Jesus!

Conclusion. Jesus was not a force. He was not a concept in someone’s mind. Jesus was not a theory, an idea, a philosophy, a dream, a wish, a guess, an extraordinary human, or someone’s desire. Jesus was and is the Word which became flesh. He is the One who is greater than any human being.

He was and IS the Light that gives us truth and grace. He IS truth and grace. Therefore it should not be a surprise that God encourages us to be truthful and gracious too!

Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices . . . Colossians 3:9 (NASB)

Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person. Colossians 4:6 (NASB)

He wants us to speak truth. He wants us to be gracious towards others. He wants our words to be carefully chosen so that they encourage others. These are things that please the Lord.

Jesus did this. He was gracious in His teaching and His mercy. His words were seasoned with grace. He was the One and Only. He is the One and Only God, and there is no one else like Him! He is the One and Only!