We Beheld His Glory
—Introduction to the human and divine nature of Jesus Christ

This introductory lesson, considers two statements in John chapter 1, about the Word which show him to possess fully the natures of both God and man. We also provide a CHART as an outline and index of the series of lessons entitled We Beheld His Glory.

The Two Natures of Jesus Christ

1. “The Word was God” (John 1:1),
2. “The Word became flesh” (John 1:14)

These two verses clearly state the two natures of Jesus Christ, divine and human.

Of course, some great heresies and schisms arose from philosophizing about these basic truths, because although they are simple truths, they are also profound.

Some aspects of these truths are simply stated in scripture, but not fully explained.

When people added their own explanation to God's revelation, heresies and schisms resulted. We try to go back to the basics.

Christ’s Fleshly Nature (Jesus is human)

In John 1:1 we are told, "The Word was with God and the Word was God." A little later, in John 1:14, we find, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." Taken together these verses say that God became flesh — God became a human being.

Docetism

In the second century, a heresy arose called Docetism (pronounced doe-set-ism). The name comes from a Greek word meaning "to seem". Docetists held that Jesus was not really a human being of mortal flesh, blood, and bone — he only seemed to be. There were many variations on this theme. For example, in the sixth century Monophysites believed that Jesus had only one nature. If he were to be regarded as divine, then he could not be regarded as truly human.

Virgin birth

The story of Jesus's birth emphasises that he was conceived and born of a virgin. This makes him unique. But there is nothing to suggest that he was less human than others born of woman. On one occasion when his disciples thought they were seeing a ghost, Jesus said to them, "Touch me. A ghost does not have flesh and bones. But you
see that I do" (Luke 24:39). Jesus was "made like his brothers in every way" (Hebrews 2:17). Although unique in being born of a virgin, he was still a human being in every way.

**Days of his flesh**

The lifetime of Jesus is called (literally translated) "the days of his flesh" which would be inappropriate if he were not flesh (Hebrews 5:7). The docetist argues that Jesus was "in appearance as a man" and was "made in human likeness" (Philippians 2:7-8). But far from proving that he was not truly human, and only seemed to be, this proves that he was indeed human. I am certain that my wife is a human being of flesh, only because I and others can touch her and see that she has every appearance of human flesh and human nature. If I disbelieved this evidence and claimed that my wife was really a ghost or an angel or a cabbage masquerading as a human being, you would call for the men in white coats.

**Appearance as a man**

Jesus had every appearance of human nature. You could touch and see his flesh, that it was indeed flesh. Many did, and have left us their testimony. We would be foolish in the face of such evidence to claim that Jesus nevertheless only seemed to be human and wasn't really human. John is not so kind. He doesn't call docetists merely foolish. He calls them antichrists. "Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus as having come in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist" (2John 1:7 NIV).

**Christ's Divine Nature (Jesus is God)**

John says, "We beheld his glory — the glory of the Unique One, who came from the Father full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Just as the disciples saw the human nature of Jesus, they also saw, and bore testimony to, another side of Jesus, his divine nature. They called this his "glory".

**Wholly man, wholly God**

Those who believed in Jesus, did not regard him as half man, half God. If Jesus were half man, half God, he would be neither man nor God but a composite of both, a hybrid creature somewhere between the two. This idea found acceptance in some quarters, but it is not taught in the scriptures by those who knew Jesus. There is no half man, half God about it. On one hand, Jesus was wholly human, as complete a person of flesh and blood as was his human mother. On the other hand he was wholly divine, no less God than his heavenly Father. As we said, this latter aspect, his divine nature, is called his "glory".

**His glory manifested**

Jesus manifested his glory in many ways. On the mountain he was transfigured (Luke 9:28-36). Peter was "an eyewitness of his majesty" on this occasion (2Peter 1:16-18). Jesus's first miracle in Cana "manifested his glory" (John 2:1-11). More than any other miracle, his resurrection from the dead demonstrated his glory (Ephesians 1:18-24).
The glory of Jesus Christ, which he manifested during his life in the flesh, is nothing less than the glory of God. If his glory were less than that, we could not worship him.

### Jesus is Lord

In 2Timothy 4:18, Paul mentions "the Lord" and then says, "To Him be glory forever and ever, Amen!". At the start of the same letter Paul mentions "God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord" (2Timothy 1:2). Note, that the title "Lord" is attributed to Jesus. If Jesus is not God, then it was blasphemy to call him "our Lord" and give him the glory which belongs to the Father alone. In the throne room of heaven (in John's vision) the Lamb (that is Jesus) received the same blessing and honour and glory as the One (that is God) who sat on the throne (Revelation 4:10-11 5:12-14).

### Glory Series ~ Outline Chart

#### What Next?

In our first lesson, we have compared and discussed two statements about Jesus in John 1:1,14, “The Word became flesh... and we beheld his glory”. Now we are going to look at John chapter one more closely, to examine five further statements which enlarge on this theme. The outline of our studies from now on is presented as an acrostic on the word GLORY, each letter standing for some important aspect of Jesus’s nature and work mentioned in John chapter one.

You should study the chart below carefully to help you take in the next five lessons.

**Christ’s Power, Perfection, Place, Proclamation, and Purpose.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The POWER of Jesus as the <strong>G</strong>od who created all things and for whom all things exist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:16)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>The PERFECTION of Jesus as the <strong>L</strong>amb of God unspotted, whose blood can take all sins away</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(John 1:29, 1Peter 1:18-21)</td>
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<tr>
<th>The PLACE of Jesus as the <strong>O</strong>nly begotten Son of God who has first place in God's family</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(John 1:14, Colossians 1:15,18)</td>
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<tr>
<th>The PROCLAMATION of Jesus as the <strong>R</strong>evealer who manifested God and proclaimed eternal life</th>
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</table>
The PURPOSE of Jesus to be
Your Saviour who can give you fellowship with God

(John 1:12, 1Timothy 1:15)