

# Shadow of the Cross

John 1:1–3 (NIV)

**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was with God in the beginning.

<sup>3</sup> Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

1. Jesus

- a. Jesus has always been there.
- b. Jesus and God are the same but separate.

2. Man

- a. God gave everything to men except the fruit from one tree.
- b. Man ate the fruit of the forbidden tree.
- c. Man suffered the consequences.

3. God

- a. God suffered the consequences.
- b. God knows everything before it happens.

4. Review and look at life in the shadow of the cross.

## **Jesus has always been**

I'm going to start with John chapter 1 vs.1-3. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2)He was with God in the beginning.

(3)Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that had been made.

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When we read John's prologue there is no way to deny that the bible teaches that Jesus has always been there. The Word is referring to Jesus. If you look down at vs. 14 John shows us that. *The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us.* The word is Jesus and it says he was there in the beginning. He was there at creation.

Look at [Genesis 1:1](#), *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

Jesus was there.

Look at [Genesis 1:26](#) Then *God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.*

Jesus was there.

Look at **Daniel 3:25** Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are being thrown into the fiery furnace . Nebuchadnezzar looks and says **Daniel 3:25 (NIV) — 25** *He said, "Look! I see four men walking around in the fire, unbound and unharmed, and the fourth looks like a son of the gods."*

Jesus was there! The next thing I want us to see.

### **Jesus is God.**

So we have established that Jesus has always been around, now we are going to complicate matters a little more.

Jesus is God.

Go back to that first verse of John *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **The Word was God.***

**Jesus was God.**

Some cults try to remove the deity of Christ. The Jehovah Witnesses NWT says Jesus was a God. That is incorrect, Jesus was God. To deny that Jesus is God is to deny God. This is

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serious heresy to not believe. The apostles had a hard to getting this. Jesus constantly had to correct them. He was constantly having to explain this to them and they lived with Him.

Look at [John 14:9](#) *Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"*

**Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.**

Jesus was in the beginning and Jesus is God. Just some more verses to show this.

John 1:18 *No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.*<sup>1</sup>

John 8:58 *"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"*<sup>2</sup>

Romans 9:5 *Theirs are the patriarchs, and from them is traced the human ancestry of Christ, who is God over all, forever praised! Amen.*<sup>3</sup>

Even doubting Thomas got it in John 20:28 *Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"*<sup>4</sup>

Jesus and God are the same but separate.

Now I want to complicate things a lot. Look at verses 2 and 3 *He was with God in the beginning. (3)Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that had been made.* Notice two words **with** and **through**. He was with God. That shows that there is a

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<sup>1</sup> *The Holy Bible : New International Version.* electronic ed., Jn 1:18. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> *The Holy Bible : New International Version.* electronic ed., Jn 8:58. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

<sup>3</sup> *The Holy Bible : New International Version.* electronic ed., Ro 9:5. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

<sup>4</sup> *The Holy Bible : New International Version.* electronic ed., Jn 20:28. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

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separation there. John just stated that Jesus was God, but now he wants us to see that there is still a separation there. Now verse 3 through him all things were created. All things were created through Him. This word through also shows us that Jesus while being God was also separate from God.

I'm not going to go into explaining the trinity this morning and I realize saying that Jesus is God and saying Jesus and God are separate is confusing but it is true and there is a third part the spirit which also belongs in there. This is important God is three in one is how we often express this. To put it more bluntly, there is one God with three distinct persons, distinct not individual. All of these personalities are equal. We have to be careful that we don't overemphasize either of the three. We do not have to be able to understand this to believe it. The early church father Augustine stated, "Whoever denies the Trinity is in danger of losing his salvation; whoever tries to understand the Trinity is in danger of losing his mind."<sup>5</sup> The bible teaches it so we do what our human minds can to understand it while keeping in mind that God's ways are higher than ours. But let's not linger there too long let's just keep in mind that God and Jesus are the same but separate and that Jesus was there in the beginning.

### **God gave everything to man except the fruit from one tree.**

Now let's look at man and what God did in relation to Man. Verse 3 Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that had been made. Through Jesus God made everything. If your finger is still in Genesis look back at 1:26 Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.

God created Man. Then God gave man paradise. Let's look at some things real quick

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<sup>5</sup> Augustine on the Trinity, NPNF, 1<sup>st</sup> ser., 3:134-43 as quoted from Mosaic of Christian Belief, Roger Olson, p146

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- vs. 28 God blessed them
- vs. 29 I have given you plant and tree for food = He fed them
- chapter 2 verse 7 and 8 then the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living creature. = He gave them life.

And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.

God created man and put him in a garden. Man has it made Adam and Eve are in a garden paradise with a beautiful river flowing through it. If they get hungry they go and get food from a plant or tree.

Now look at verses 16 -17. **Genesis 2:16–17 (NIV)** — **16** *And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.”*

God says everything here is for your pleasure but stay away from the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil. If you eat it you will die. All right everything is good here except one tree that has poison and will kill you.

How many of you have ever told your kids to stay away from something? Where was the first place they went? Well let's go to chapter 3 verses 6-7 real quick. *When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he*

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*ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.*

**Man ate the forbidden fruit and now must suffer the consequences.** Okay let me make a clear distinction here so no one misunderstands me. The eternal consequence of sin is Hell. I'm going to repeat that the eternal consequence of sin is Hell. Today I'm discussing the earthly consequences. The Earthly consequence of sin is separation from God. The Earthly consequence of sin is the separation from God. When God told Cain his punishment for the murder of Abel was to be a nomad. Cain was concerned his punishment would be too great because he was hidden from God.

Look back up to verses 8 and 9 **Genesis 3:8–9 (NIV)** — *8 Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. 9 But the LORD God called to the man, “Where are you?”*

God was looking for Adam and Eve just to hang out. But now they are separated from that type of fellowship with God. When we sin, we slowly move away from God's presence.

### **God suffered the consequence of man's sin!**

Now listen carefully. God suffered the consequence of man's sin! Let's look at what God wanted. God created man in His image so that He could be in their presence in paradise. He placed a tree in the middle of this paradise and if they had chosen to eat it they would have lived forever in paradise with God. Look at this, both these trees were in the middle of Eden. God never said don't eat from the tree of life. Man could have chosen fruit from either tree, but

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instead of going for the one that would bring about eternal life man chose the one that brings about death. Man chose to bring evil into the world. Okay someone is going to push back and say that if God wanted us to live forever in His presence; He would not have placed the forbidden fruit there. God knew we would eat it. So He shouldn't have put it there.

In response to that let's look at the parable of the prodigal son. The father knew his son was not responsible. You don't live with a child for eighteen years and then suddenly say, "Oh wow! I never realized he wasn't going to be able to handle that money." The father knew the son would waste it. The father knew the son would wind up broken and broke.

So why did he do it? Why did he give him his inheritance early? You can tell a child that the stove is hot, but they do not understand it until they put their hand on it and get burnt. The father could have told this boy till he was blue in the face the value of money and righteous living. But until that boy was living in filth and eating the leftovers the pigs didn't even eat. He would not appreciate what he was given. Sometimes the only way to learn is the hard way. So God put that tree there so we would learn to appreciate the gift of eternal life in His presence. Does that make God the author of evil? No! That makes God a loving Father that wanted to save his children before it was too late.

But it hurt him. It hurts me to see my children hurt. When Katie was younger she had to have her tonsils out. I remember sitting in the room before surgery with her. The nurses were checking everything out and getting her ready for surgery. She looked scared and I hated seeing her that way. I tried to make her laugh; to ease her mind, but it hurt me to see her that way.

When surgery was over she was in pain and I hated it. I emotionally hurt because she was physically hurting. But I knew that this was what had to happen for her to get better. It did not stop the hurt though. Our separation from God because we chose sin hurt God. God suffered

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the consequence of our sin. God still suffers when you and I sin. Ephesians 4:30<sup>6</sup> tells us not to grieve the Holy Spirit. It hurts God when we sin.

### **God knows everything**

Okay I kind of jumped ahead of myself a minute ago with the story of the prodigal son.

Because my next point is God knows everything.

Let's review real quick:

1. Jesus has always been there.
2. Jesus is God but also separate.
3. God blessed man.
4. Man sinned.
5. Man suffered.
6. God suffered.
7. God knows everything.

*Isaiah 46:9–10 (NIV) — 9 Remember the former things, those of long ago; I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me. 10 I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please.*

1 John 3:20. *For God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.*

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<sup>6</sup> **Ephesians 4:30 (NIV) — 30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

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Psalm 139:1-2 O LORD, you have searched me and you know me. You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.<sup>7</sup>

The bible is our proof that God knows everything. There is prophecy after prophecy where God told the Israelites what would happen before it did and it happened exactly as he said.

God is the beginning and the end. The Alpha and Omega. He knows everything that will happen down from the number of hairs that will be on a baby's head to where a sparrow will find its next worm to eat. God knows everything. God knows the very thoughts in your head before you even think them. God knows everything. So like in the example earlier of the prodigal son the father knew what would happen and why it needed to happen but God takes that up a whole new level.

So now we are getting to my point. Jesus has always been there. Jesus is God but also separate. God blessed man. Man sinned. Man suffered. God suffered. God knows everything. Jesus knew everything. Jesus knew everything that would happen before it happened and this all the way back to In the beginning. Jesus knew man would sin. Jesus knew that man would suffer death because of his sin. Jesus knew He would be separated from man. Jesus knew that He would have to become flesh. Jesus knew he would have to live a sinless life because Jesus knew he would have to be the perfect sacrifice to atone for man's sin. Jesus knew that He, God would be beaten, spit upon, have his beard yanked out. Jesus knew that in his weakened, bloodied, beaten state he would then have to drag a heavy Roman cross through the street. Because He knew he would have to have His hands and feet nailed to it. Jesus knew he would hang on that

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<sup>7</sup> *The Holy Bible : New International Version*. electronic ed., Ps 139:1–2. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996.

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cross as men, not just men; but the very men that he came to save would laugh and mock Him. Jesus knew that he would have to push his body up to pull air into His lungs. Jesus knew that he would slowly and painfully die in front of the very ones he was saving; at the very hands of the ones he was saving. Jesus knew that God would forsake Him on the cross because a perfect and Holy God cannot look upon sin, and Jesus was carrying your and my sin on Him as he hung there dying in our place. And Jesus knew this all the way back when God said "Let us make man in our Image."

How does that make you feel? As you stand today in the shadow of that cross staring up as God suffers. As you watch Jesus push Himself up to draw in that last breath of air knowing that He knew He would have to do this, how does it make you feel knowing that Jesus said, "Yes Father Let's make them in our image, even though they are going to turn and rebel. Let's make them in our image even though I will have to pay the price for their sin."

You sit on a church pew today and think Am I living a life worth that price? Is the life I'm living a reflection that I truly understand what Jesus has done for me. When you cursed at your neighbor, were you reflecting an understanding of the cross? When you told that cashier at the fast food restaurant that she was stupid, were you reflecting an understanding of the cross? When you looked at porn, were you reflecting an understanding of what Jesus did for you? When you cheated on your husband, when you slept with your girlfriend, when you moved in with your boyfriend. Did you show that you were living your life standing in the shadow of a cross with THE GOD that created you hanging on it? Dying so that I would not have too!

What about you sitting there thinking Amen. Preach it to them. Where you staring up at that cross when you gossiped last week. When you told that little lie. What about when you

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looked down on that sinner sitting across the aisle and said just like the Pharisee (Luke 18)

‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men.

### **Sinner!**

We all need to be like the tax collector in Luke 18. On our knees staring at our God, at Jesus hanging on that cross. Dying and suffering God’s wrath, we should be staring and thinking you created me knowing you would have to do this for me. ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

As our ministers of music come up let’s look up at that cross. Do you see Jesus there. Now think to yourself. Before the Heavens and Earth were created this man, this God knew every sin I would commit. He knew every time I would stumble. He knew every time I would deny Him. He knew every time I would spit in His face, and there is not a one of us in here today that hasn’t spit in His face. He knew. He knew the price of my spitting in his face would be to hang naked on a cross slowly, painfully dying. And worse than that. Drinking the cup of God’s wrath. <sup>k</sup>“Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?”, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Look at him. Yet he said yes Let’s create them in our image. As the shadow of the cross falls on us we are granted forgiveness.