The Word Became Flesh

(John 1:14-18)

INTRODUCTION:

1. In John 1:1-18 John presents a most astounding introduction to his gospel.
   1. In the first lesson on this introduction, we considered verses 1-5 where we learn that Jesus, the Word, is God, existing in eternity as the One through whom all things were created, and the giver of life and light to the world.
   2. In the last lesson, that was preached in December, we looked at how John came to the Jews testifying of Jesus’ light, how they had this light among them and rejected it, and yet to all who received him was given the right to become a child of God.
2. Today, in verses 14-18, we find John addresses how the Word came into the world and what his presence and work in this world means for us.
   1. Within this section some of the most profound realities of this earthly world are presented.
   2. The first and foremost is…

BODY:

1. **The Word Became Flesh** (Jn. 1:14-15 – “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. 5 John testified 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.’”).
   1. Here John presents in few words the most astounding truth ever written—that the *Word*, the *Eternal God* and *Creator*, in whom is *life* and *light*, **became flesh** (1:14).
      1. John is not speaking of God *disguised* as man, or a man claiming to be God, but God living in the flesh as a human, living as absolutely God (He forgave sins – Lk. 5:20-21) and absolutely man (He became hungry and tired – Mt. 4:2).
      2. This is what God had promised all along through the prophets, even as early as when Moses spoke of it to Satan after Adam and Eve committed the first sin (Gen. 3:15 – “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; **He shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel**.”).
      3. This should begin to cause you to think about how much God must loves you that He would be willing for His Son to take on humanity that we might know Him and be saved!
   2. John adds that the **Word** *dwelt*, or literally *tabernacled/tented*, among us, allowing us to behold his *glory*. In stating this John connects for us some amazing things.
      1. First, he connects the *Word* that is the *infinite Creator God* of 1:1-5 with the *Word* that took on the *finite* nature of His *creation* in the form of *human flesh*.
      2. Second, he connects the **Word** that *dwells with God* in *eternity* in 1:1-5 with the the **Word** that entered the *temporal*, the realm of time and decay, to *dwell with us*.
      3. Third, John connects the *glory* of Jesus seen when He“dwelt/tabernacled” with us with *God’s glory* seen among the Israelites in the *tabernacle* and then ultimately in the *temple*.
         1. The **tabernacle** (Ex. 40:33-35 – “He erected the court all around the tabernacle and the altar, and hung up the veil for the gateway of the court. Thus Moses finished the work. 34 Then the **cloud** covered the tent of meeting, and the **glory of the LORD** **filled the tabernacle**. 35 **Moses was not able to enter the tent** of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and **the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle**.”).
         2. This happened again when Solomon dedicated the Temple (2 Chron. 7), when, again, people were unable enter the temple because of it being filled with the glory of the Lord.
         3. Israel rightly understood God’s presence and glory to be an expression of God’s grace (2 Chron. 7:3 – “All the sons of Israel, seeing the fire come down and the glory of the LORD upon the house, bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave praise to the LORD, saying, “Truly He is **good**, truly His **lovingkindness** is everlasting.”).
      4. Yet, I want you to notice something important.
         1. When God’s glory filled the tabernacle and the temple, **man could not abide within it**, indicating a separation between man and our holy, glorious God.
         2. And this separation was emphasized by the Law itself where only the Levite priesthood could enter the temple, and how only the High Priest could enter the “holy of holies,” and that only once a year.
         3. Now, however, through Jesus God himself has entered the world and sought to live among us, interacting with His creation, and allowing all to see His glory.
         4. John describes this amazing change brought about through Jesus (1 John 1:1-3 – “What was from the beginning, what we have **heard**, what we have **seen** with our eyes, what we have **looked** at and **touched** with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— 2 and the life was manifested, and we have **seen** and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was **with the Father and was manifested to us**— 3 what we have **seen** and **heard** we proclaim to you also, so that **you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ**.”).
      5. This glory of the Word in the flesh was seen in two ways:
         1. First, His glory was seen in being the “**monogenēs**,” the “one and only” from the Father.
            1. Many translations, including the NASB, NKJV, have “the only begotten from the Father,” indicating Jesus was God’s Son. But the more correct translation is “the one and only [Son] from the Father” (NET, HCSB).
            2. **Mongenēs** – “being the **only one of its kind within a specific relationship**, one and only, only; being the **only one of its kind or class**, **unique** (in kind)” (**BDAG**)
            3. Thus, Jesus showed God’s glory because He was the one and only, the one like no other, being the very **Son of God**.
         2. Second, his glory was seen in Him being **full** **of** **grace** **and truth**.
            1. It is no coincidence that this was how God chose to show Jesus’ glory, seeing grace and truth have always been the seat of His glory.
            2. For example, when we go back to Mt. Sinai and the giving of the Law, etc., we see this when Moses had **asked to see God’s glory** and God granted this (Ex. 34:6 – “Then the LORD passed by in front of him and **proclaimed**, “The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and **gracious**, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and **truth**”).

For Moses to see God’s glory meant knowing God’s grace and truth, which is how we see His glory today—knowing God’s grace and truth through Jesus!

Does not this amaze you—that what God presents as His crowning glory is not His power to destroy His enemies, etc., but rather His compassion, **grace**, forbearance, love, and **truth**?

* 1. In 1:15 John reminds us that John the baptizer testified of the Word’s uniqueness.
     1. John testimony spoke of how the Word who was to come **after him** (historically) is greater than him because He was before Him (actually).
     2. John’s testimony addressed two important points:
        1. It addressed the Jews’ belief that chronological priority meant superiority, or that to be born before another meant one was superior to the other.
        2. John’s testimony also showed that the physical birth of Jesus, the Word, did not tell the whole story of who the Word is, seeing He existed before John in eternity, as 1:1-2 says.

1. **The amazing results of the incarnation (1:16-18):** 
   1. In 1:16 John returns to the Word’s fullness of grace and truth (1:14) and states that “For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.”
      1. When we receive **Jesus** by faith (1:12), we come to enjoy the totality (**fullness**) of that which He **is** and **has** that benefit us.
         1. There is, of course, the truth that sanctifies us (John 17:17).
      2. John emphasizes the fullness of our blessings in Him by stating we have received “grace upon grace.” This phrase is interesting in that it can be translated various ways.
         1. NASB, ESV – “Grace upon grace,” meaning we receive through Jesus God’s grace heaped upon His grace—grace lavishly supplied.
         2. NET – “one gracious gift after another,” indicating that as even as one favor of God is received another is soon to follow.
         3. NIV – “grace in place of grace already given,” indicating that the supply of God’s grace is unending—one act of God’s grace replacing another!
      3. This is an eye-opening reminder of the wonderful God we know through Jesus and of the amazing life we live in Him—a live characterized by abundant and unending grace!
   2. John explains that this “grace upon grace” was seen in how the Law given by Moses was replaced by Christ bringing grace and truth (1:17-18 – “For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.”).
      1. John intends for us to understand that the **Law** was a **gift of God’s grace**.
         1. God’s grace is found on most every page of His dealings with sinful Israel!
         2. Yet, in the end the Law was full of legal decrees and precedents which Paul says could not justify the sinner (Rom. 3:20 – “because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”).
         3. So, despite the great good the Law did in bringing the people to God, more was needed!
      2. Jesus’s work far surpassed that of Moses in that He is how **God’s grace and truth became reality**.
         1. God had promised that the old Law/covenant of Mt. Sinai would be replaced with a new one written on the hearts of His people who would know God because He, according to His grace, would forgive their sins (Jer. 31:31-34 – “Behold, days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, 32 not like the covenant which I made with their fathers in the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, although I was a husband to them,” declares the LORD. 33 “But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,” declares the LORD, “**I will put My law within them and on their heart** I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. 34 They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for **they will all know Me**, from the least of them to the greatest of them,” declares the LORD, “**for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more**.”).
         2. How was God to be true to His word and bring about this great grace to forgive?
         3. John tells us it was through Jesus that God’s **truth**, or faithfulness to His word, that this **grace** became reality (Rom. 8:1-2 – “Therefore there is now **no condemnation** for those who are **in Christ Jesus**. 2 For the **law** of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has s**et you free from the law of sin and of death**.”).
      3. Finally, Johns states that the grace and truth of God was realized in Christ because He brought unparalleled revelation of the Father to the world (1:18).
         1. I think it is important to keep Moses at Mt. Sinai in this picture because there is a connection found in that when the Law was revealed Moses *asked to see God’s glory* (Ex. 3:18).
            1. Yet, God’s reply was that although Moses could see His goodness, etc., God went on to say that “You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!” (Ex. 33:20).
            2. God’s holiness limited him from being seen in His fullest sense by sinful man.
         2. So, and it is very important that we get this, what John tells us is that now through Jesus we have gone from the inability to see the unveiled essence of deity and live, to God being fully explained, unfolded, and declared before our eyes in the solitary flesh of Jesus!

CONCLUSION:

1. As we conclude, I hope this has helped you see what an amazing **God** and **plan** for our salvation that God both created and worked in Jesus.
2. And I hope this study has helped you realize what is **offered** to you as a sinner and what you **have** if you are a Christian is the **means of partaking of the fullness of God**—the fullness of grace and truth, “grace heaped upon grace”—in Jesus.
3. The question to you is what will you do with this offer provided by such amazing love and at such an unfathomable cost—that God’s Son took human form and died on the cross to save you?
4. Will you accept this offer today and receive by faith in Christ that truth and grace given to all who will repent, confess Jesus as their risen Lord, and be baptized into Him for the forgiveness of your sins?