

COMMENTARY ON JOHN

LESSON NUMBER 6

“ JOHN 1:14 *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*”John 1:14)

THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH

INTRODUCTION

Remember, the purpose for which John is writing is, *“that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name”* (John 20:31). When it comes to God’s dealings with men, everything hinges upon Jesus Christ. First, it is to be believed that He is *“the Christ”* – the One who did what needed to be done, and through whom God has productive relationships with men. Second, it is to be believed that He is *“the Son of God,”* the One who perfectly depicts God, and in whom all the fulness of the Godhead dwells bodily. God can neither be known nor accessed apart from His Son. Jesus is not primarily related to men, but to God – and secondarily to men. Further, only He can give to men a proper understanding of God (Matt 11:27; 1 John 5:20), which understanding is essential if any eternal benefits are to be received from Him. In fact, both life and death are defined within the parameters of the knowledge of God. Those who know God in the sense required of Him, are alive, living through the Son of God (1 John 4:9). Those who do not know God in that sense are *“dead in trespasses and sins,”* having no recourse to God (Eph 2:1,5). Christ suffered for sins, not only to put them away (Heb 9:26), but in order to *“bring us to God”* (1 Pet 3:18). That was in order that we might come to know God, **which knowledge “is life eternal”** (John 17:3; 1 John 5:20) – the appointed means through which God gives us *“all things that pertain to life and godliness”* (2 Pet 1:3), and through which *“we have escaped the pollutions of the world”* (2 Pet 2:20). Men must see that the lingering ignorance of things pertaining to life and godliness is the direct result of not sufficiently knowing the Lord. By *“not sufficiently,”* I mean not to the measure that is possible for them. Also, when professed believers keep falling into sin, it is owing to their ignorance of God, for it is through the knowledge of God that we realize an effective escape from the world’s pollutions. Therefore, John will now teach us concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This is in order that we might believe He is the Christ, the Son of God, and that we might *“have life through His name.”* None of these objectives are fixed as to measure, and all of them are areas in which significant growth can be realized. The Gospel of John is for all believers – seasoned veterans, novices, and all between. I do not believe this has been seen by the majority of professing “Christians.”

THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH

“ John 1:14a *And the Word was made flesh . . .* ”

THE WORD. Other versions read, *“the same word,”* ^{PNT} *“Christ,”* ^{LIVING} and *“the Word*

(Christ). " ^{AMPLIFIED} This refers to a Person – a member of the Godhead. It does not refer to a fiat, or a saying. This is One *"whose goings forth have been from old, from everlasting"* (Mic 5:2). John has already taken us to the threshold of creation and announced, *"In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with God, and the **Word** was God"* (John 1:1).

Here some versions muddy the waters – particularly the Living Bible and the Amplified Bible. Let it be clear, the words *"Jesus," "Son,"* and *"Christ"* refer to our Lord's humanity, and do not apply to Him before He was sent into the world. Some theologians refer to *"the eternal Son,"* but this is not an expression used in Scripture.

WAS MADE FLESH. Other versions read, *"became,"* ^{NKJV} *"became human,"* ^{GWN} *"became a human being,"* ^{LIVING} *"came,"* ^{WEYMOUTH} *"became a man,"* ^{ERV} *"became flesh and blood,"* ^{GOODSPEED} and *"became flesh (human)."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

The word translated *"was made"* means, *"TO BECOME, I.E. TO COME INTO EXISTENCE, BEGIN TO BE, RECEIVE BEING; TO ARISE, APPEAR IN HISTORY, COME UPON THE STAGE."* ^{THAYER}

The idea here is that the Word is being made known, revealed, or brought into the vision of men. The Word appeared, so that He could be seen by men, and participate in the human experience. His Person did not change. His character did not change. The Psalmist foretold this appearance, and the Spirit moved it to be written in the letter to the Hebrew believers. *"The Word"* being revealed required a body – something He did not have by nature. Thus the Psalmist wrote of His entrance into the world, *"a body hast Thou prepared Me"* (Psa 10:5). This is quoted in Hebrews 10:5, and is said to have occurred when He entered into the world. *"Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared Me"* (Heb 10:5). Unlike men, *"the Word"* did not come into the world at birth, but in conception. Therefore it was announced to Mary, *"The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God"* (Luke 1:35). Other versions read, *"that Holy One,"* ^{NKJV} *"the Holy Offspring,"* ^{NASB} *"the one,"* ^{CEB} *"holy child developing inside you."* ^{GWN}

One might imagine that this remarkable condescension would make *"the Word"* apparent to everyone. But it did not! John has already told us that *"the world knew Him not,"* and *"His own received Him not."* Men did not see Jesus as showing them how to live. In fact, the Jews and the Gentiles finally conspired together to rid themselves of the Holy One, whom they regarded as nothing more than a pretender. There you can clearly see that reducing the glory, making the truth more palatable to the flesh, and veering away from profundity to simplicity does not clarify the truth at all. And yet, this erroneous postulate is almost universally adopted when it comes to bringing the Word of God to the people.

The word did **not** become flesh so we could see Him more plainly, or in order that the mystery of godliness could be cleared up, God seen more precisely, and the marvelous nature of salvation clarified and seen more clearly.

WHAT DROVE THIS REQUIREMENT? Why, then, was a *"body"* prepared for *"the Word?"* While every other birth is in order that the person might live, the Word had a body prepared for Him in order that He might die. And, there was a reason for this – a revealed reason. *"Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, But a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure"* ^{NKJV} (Heb 10:5-6). Although those sacrifices were voluminous beyond imagination, it is said they were *"sacrifices, which can never take away sins"* (Heb 10:11). In fact *"it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins"* (Heb 10:4) – And yet, that is what had to be done if anyone was going to be

justified, and received and made acceptable by God. *"Christ Jesus,"* Paul affirmed, *"came into the world to save sinners"* (1 Tim 1:15). He did not come to save them by a word, but by His death, which required a special body. His body could have no taint of sin, either by thought or deed. The only iniquity in that body would be that which was laid upon Him – *"the iniquity of us all"* (Isa 53:6).

That is why *"the Word became flesh."* His commission was to lay down His life and take it up again (John 10:17-18). All of His life was really a preparation for that work. As Jesus approached the time when He would, lay down His life, He spoke, and then prayed: *"Now is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour"* (John 12:27).

The reason the Word became flesh is also stated in these words, *"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."* (Heb 2:14-15).

HE DWELT AMONG US, AND WE BEHELD HIS GLORY

" 1:14b . . . and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father . . . "

When our Lord began His ministry, following His baptism and 40-day temptation (Mk 1:9-13; Lk 4:1-13), *"Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of Him through all the region round about. And He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all"* (Luke 4:14-15). It is this particular phase of the Savior's life that is here referenced. Prior to this, there was a sense in which He was occasionally among the people, such as when He was twelve years old, attending the Passover Feast in Jerusalem with His parents (Lk 2:42-49), and on the Sabbath days, when He was regularly found in the synagogue (Lk 4:16). **However, this is not the time referred to by the words "dwelt among us."** During that time He was not yet made known to the people. The *"great light"* of Jesus began to shine when He started His ministry in Galilee, fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy of Him. That is when His light *"sprung up"* (Matt 4:13-16).

AND DWELT AMONG US. I want to emphasize that this refers to His ministry among the people, when Jesus no longer stayed with His parents in Nazareth. He left Nazareth, and *"came and dwelt in Capernaum"* (Matt 4:13). As it is written, it is then that *"The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up"* (Matt 4:16). Then He was particularly known as He *"began to preach"* (Matt 4:17).

This is why there is not much said about Jesus until He was thirty years old (Lk 3:23). When He turned thirty years of age, and was baptized by John in the River Jordan, for the first time **publicly**, *"the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased"* (Luke 3:22). The dwelling of reference began at that point. He was then to become a public figure – He of whom the people said, *"Is not this **the carpenter**, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him"* (Mark 6:3). Until His ministry, the people saw nothing in Jesus that distinguished Him from the other people. However, when He began to preach, and to *"do good, healing all who were oppressed of the devil"* (Acts 10:38), His distinctiveness became very apparent, even though the people did not see the

brightness of His light.

There is a reason why Jesus was made known in this manner. In the economy of redemption, Jesus was never intended to be known *"after the flesh,"* or merely as a Fellow-man. Paul made this clear when he wrote, *"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if One died for all, then were all dead: And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more."* (2 Cor 5:14-16). While there is no question about Jesus being in every way distinct from other men, that distinction is not intended to be reflected in His earthly life alone. Rather, it is seen most clearly in His death and resurrection. **Had the daily life of Jesus prior to Him being thirty years of age, been chronicled in Scripture, it would have obscured the real reason for Him coming into the world.** In fact, to this very day, an emphasis of living in this world tends to hide the Person of Christ, and the reason for Him coming into the world.

WE BEHELD HIS GLORY. Other versions read, *"we have seen His glory,"* ^{NIV} *"we have beheld His glory,"* ^{NRSV} *"we saw his glory,"* ^{BBE} *"We observed His glory,"* ^{CSB} *"we have contemplated His glory,"* ^{DARBY} *"we saw the glory thereof,"* ^{GENEVA} *"we saw the glory of it,"* ^{TNT} *"some of us have seen his glory,"* ^{LIVING} *"We gazed on his glory,"* ^{ISV} *"we actually saw His glory"* ^{WILLIAMS} *"We saw His true glory,"* ^{CEV} *"We saw His divine greatness,"* ^{ERV} *"we saw the honor God had given Him,"* ^{GOODSPEED} *"We saw His splendor,"* ^{PHILLIPS} *"we saw the glory with our own eyes,"* ^{MESSAGE} and *"we [actually] saw His glory (His honor, His majesty)."* ^{AMPLIFIED}

When Jesus performed His first miracle, turning water into wine, it is written that He *"manifested forth His glory"* (John 2:11). When Jesus was about to raise Lazarus from the dead, He said to Martha, *"Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"* (John 11:40). **Yet, this is not the glory to which our text refers,** for that glory was not seen with their eyes.

John is referring to what he, together with Peter and James, had witnessed when Jesus *"was transfigured before them"* (Matt 17:2). Writing shortly before his death, Peter recalled this occasion. We *"were eye witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased"* (2 Pet 1:17).

THE GLORY AS THE ONLY BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER. At that time, His inner glory burst through, and for a moment He as seen in all of His uniqueness – transcendent to flesh and blood, and unlike any other man. This is the only Man that was begotten by the Father, and yet *"made of a woman"* (Gal 4:4). That glory soon faded from their natural vision.

FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH

" 1:14c . . . full of grace and truth. "

What can be said of *"the only begotten of the Father"*? What will God the Father give to men through this now glorified Man? What should men expect to realize in Him? What is made accessible to us through such an One? The Spirit will now use precise and weighty words, for **nothing mediocre can proceed from such an One as Jesus Christ, the Son of God.** It is unfortunate that so much mediocrity is being associated with the *"only begotten of the Father."*

FULL. Other versions read, *"all the,"* ^{CEV} *"abounding in,"* ^{GOODSPEED} and *"generous*

inside and out." MESSAGE The meaning of the word translated "*full*" is, "FULL, I.E. FILLED UP (AS OPPOSED TO EMPTY); COVERED IN EVERY PART OF THE SOUL, THOROUGHLY PERMEATED WITH." THAYER **That is, there is no aspect of Christ's Person where grace and truth cannot be found.** Whether He is by the sea-side, in the Temple, in a synagogue, on a mountain, or in a boat, He is "*full of grace and truth.*" Whether He is being tempted by the devil, preaching and teaching, working miracles, in Pilate's hall, or on a cross – He is "*full of grace and truth.*" Whether He is answering a question, asking a question, making an observation, commending someone, or rebuking someone, He is "*full of grace and truth.*" He will always express these matchless qualities, which men can rarely put together. In Jesus grace never contradicts the truth, and the truth never contradicts grace. They work together.

GRACE. Other versions read, "*kindness,*" GWN "*unfailing love,*" NLT "*loving forgiveness,*" LIVING "*gracious love,*" IE "*spiritual blessing,*" WILLIAMS "*favor,*" ABP "*blessing,*" GOODSPEED "*grace (favor, loving-kindness).*" AMPLIFIED The lexical definition of the word translated "*grace*" is, "GOOD-WILL, LOVING-KINDNESS, FAVOR PRE-EMINENTLY OF THAT KINDNESS BY WHICH GOD BESTOWS." THAYER
But grace is infinitely more than a Divine attitude.

- It is a Divine enabler, causing an individual to be productive like Paul (1 Cor 15:10)
- Enabling people to believe (Acts 18:27)
- Distributing spiritual gifts (Rom 12:6; 1 Pet 4:10)
- Enabling one to live properly in the world (2 Cor 1:12)
- Saving sinners (Acts 15:11; Eph 2:5)
- Enabling men to be justified (Rom 3:24)
- Freeing men from the dominion of sin (Rom 6:14)
- Enabling one to speak the truth (Rom 12:3)
- Enabling people to give beyond their means (2 Cor 8:1-3)
- Can cause men to have "all sufficiency in all things," that they may "abound unto every good work" (2 Cor 9:8)
- Is sufficient to make a person able to glory in their infirmities (2 Cor 12:9)
- Makes men "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph 1:6)
- Gives us "redemption through Christ's blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph 1:7)
- Enables one to speak unto edification (Col 4:6)
- Causes the name of Christ to be glorified in us (2 Thess 1:12)
- Brings us everlasting consolation and good hope (2 Thess 2:16)
- Is "exceeding abundant with faith and love" (1 Tim 1:14)
- Is an environment in which we can be strong (2 Tim 2:1)
- Teaches us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world (Tit 2:11-12)
- Helps us in the time of need (Heb 4:16)
- Enables us to serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear (Heb 12:28)
- Establishes the heart (Heb 13:9)
- Is an environment in which we stand (1 Pet 5:12)
- Is the environment in which we grow (2 Pet 3:18).

If Jesus is full of grace, then we can expect the kind of benefits listed above to be found in abundant measure in the church, which is His body. We know this is true, because the church is His "*fulness,*" or the repository in which the things that fill Him are poured out and translated into godliness. Where these things are missing, grace is not

present, and where grace is not present, the Son of God is not ministering. I do not know how this can be effectively contradicted.

TRUTH. The Christ, who is the Son of God, is also full of *"truth."* Jesus said He came into the world to *"bear witness unto the truth"* (John 18:37) – that is, to declare it. He also made known that He Himself was the embodiment of truth: *"I am . . . the Truth"* (John 14:6). This truth, when known, makes men free from the dominion of sin (John 8:32). It is truth that sanctifies the people, setting them apart for God (John 17:19). Truth is to be obeyed (Gal 3:1; 5:7; 1 Pet 1:22). It is the truth that is to be spoken in love (Eph 4:15). In order to be saved, men must receive *"the love of the truth"* (2 Thess 2:10). God chooses men unto salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth (2 Thess 2:13). God desires that all men *"come to the knowledge of the truth"* (1 Tim 2:4). The church is *"the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1 Tim 3:15).

These things being true, where Jesus is found, these Kingdom realities will be found. Where they are lacking, Jesus has not been received, and He is not ministering to the people. No man or group of men can have a single benefit from Jesus without the absolute dominance of grace and truth. These will never be absent where Jesus is received.