

And the Word became 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 bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' " And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. (John 1:14-18)

Throughout the prologue to his gospel (1:1–18) John has declared the profound truths of Christ's deity and Incarnation, reaching a powerful crescendo in these last five verses. They summarize the prologue, which in turn summarizes the entire book. In his characteristically simple language, John expressed the glorious reality of the Incarnation by pointing out its nature, witnesses, and impact.

He says the most startling and incredible thing that he could have said. He says quite simply: 'This word which created the world, this reason which controls the order of the world, has become a person, and with our own eyes we saw him.' The Greek word that John uses for *beheld* is *theasthai*; it is used in the New Testament more than twenty times and is always used of *actual physical sight*. This is no spiritual vision seen with the eye of the soul or of the mind. John declares that the word actually came to earth in the form of a man and was seen by human eyes. He says: 'If you want to see what this creating word, this controlling reason, is like, look at Jesus of Nazareth.'

Verse 14 is the most concise biblical statement of the Incarnation, and therefore one of Scripture's most significant verses. This is one of the greatest single verses in the New Testament; we must therefore spend much time upon it so that we may enter the more fully into its riches. A lifetime of study and thought could not exhaust the truth of this verse.

The four words with which it begins, "the Word became flesh", express the reality that in the Incarnation God took on humanity; the infinite became finite; eternity entered time; the invisible became visible (cf. Col. 1:15); the Creator entered His creation. God revealed Himself to man in the creation (Rom. 1:18–21), the Old Testament Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20–21), and, supremely and most clearly, in Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1–2). The record of His life and work, and its application and significance for the past, present, and future, is in the New Testament.

Remember, the concept of the Word was one rich in meaning for both Greeks and Jews. John here clearly stated what he implied earlier in the prologue: Jesus Christ, God's final Word to mankind (Hebrews 1:1–2), became flesh. *Sarx* (flesh) does not have here the negative moral connotation that it sometimes carries (e.g., Romans 8:3–9; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 2:3), but refers to man's physical being. That He actually became flesh affirms Jesus' full humanity.

Ginomai (became) does not mean that Christ ceased being the eternal Word when He became a man. Though God is immutable, pure eternal "being" and not "becoming" as all His creatures are, in the Incarnation the unchangeable (Hebrews 13:8) God did become fully man, yet remained fully God. He entered the realm of those who are time and space creatures and experienced life as it is for those He created.

No wonder Paul wrote of the Incarnation,

*By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness:
He who was revealed in the flesh,
Was vindicated in the Spirit,
Seen by angels,
Proclaimed among the nations,
Believed on in the world,
Taken up in glory. (1 Timothy 3:16)*

The eternal Son not only became man; He also dwelt among men for thirty-three years. Dwelt translates a form of the verb *skenoo*, which literally means “to live in a tent.” Jesus Christ’s humanity was not a mere appearance. He took on all the essential attributes of humanity and was “made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7), “since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil” (Heb. 2:14). As the writer of Hebrews goes on to explain, “He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people” (Heb. 2:17). And He pitched His tent among us.

In the Old Testament, God tented with Israel through His glorious presence in the tabernacle (Ex. 40:34–35) and later in the temple (1 Kings 8:10–11), and revealed Himself in some pre-incarnate appearances of Christ (e.g., Gen. 16:7–14; Ex. 3:2; Josh. 5:13–15; Judg. 2:1–4; 6:11–24; 13:3–23; Dan. 3:25; 10:5–6; Zech. 1:11–21). Throughout eternity, God will again tent with His redeemed and glorified people:

And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:3-4)

Though Jesus manifested God’s divine glory during His earthly life with a clarity never before seen, it was still veiled by His human flesh. Peter, James, and John saw a physical manifestation of Jesus’ heavenly glory at the transfiguration, when “*His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light*” (Matthew 17:2). That was a preview of the unveiled glory to be seen at His return (Matthew 24:29–30; 25:31; Revelation 19:11–16) and the fullness of His heavenly glory as the only Light of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:23). But the disciples saw Jesus manifest God’s holy nature primarily by displaying divine attributes, such as truth, wisdom, love, grace, knowledge, power, and holiness.

Jesus manifested the same essential glory as the Father, because as God they possess the same nature (John 10:30). *Monogenes* (only begotten) does not imply that Jesus was created by God and thus not eternal. The term does not refer to a person’s origin, but describes him as unique, the only one of his kind. John alone uses *monogenēs* to describe the relation of Jesus, God the Son, to God the Father, presenting Him as the unique one, the only one (*mónos*) of a class or kind (*génos*), in the discussion of the relationship of the Son to the Father. *Monogenes* distinguishes Christ as the unique God the Son from believers, who are God’s sons in a different sense (1 John 3:2). B. F. Westcott

writes, "Christ is the One and only Son, the One to whom the title belongs in a sense completely unique and singular, as distinguished from that in which there are many children of God."

Jesus' manifestation of the divine attributes revealed His essential glory as God's Son, "for in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Colossians 2:9). The two attributes most closely connected with salvation are grace and truth. Scripture teaches that salvation is wholly by believing God's truth in the gospel.

We have already seen how John has certain great words which haunt his mind and dominate his thought and are the themes out of which his whole message is elaborated. Here we have three more of these words: (1) grace; (2) truth; and (3) glory.

(1) The first is *grace*. This word always has two basic ideas in it.

(a) It always has the idea of something completely undeserved. It always has the idea of something that we could never have earned or achieved for ourselves. The fact that God came to earth to live and to die for men and women is not something which humanity deserved; it is an act of pure love on the part of God. The word grace emphasizes at one and the same time our own helpless poverty and God's limitless kindness.

(b) It always has the idea of beauty in it. In modern Greek, the word means *charm*. In Jesus we see the loveliness of God. People had thought of God in terms of might and majesty and power and judgment. They had thought of the power of God which could crush all opposition and defeat all rebellion; but in Jesus we are confronted with the sheer loveliness of God.

(2) The second is *truth*. This word is one of the dominant notes of the Fourth Gospel. We meet it again and again. Here we can only briefly gather together what John has to say about Jesus and the truth.

(a) Jesus is the embodiment of the truth. He said: 'I am the truth' (cf. 14:6). Ever since human beings began to think about God, they have been trying to define just who and what he is – and their puny minds get no nearer a definition. But we can cease our thinking and look at Jesus Christ and say: 'That is what God is like.' Jesus did not come to *talk* about God; he came to *show* people what God is like, so that the simplest mind might know him as intimately as the mind of the greatest philosopher.

(b) Jesus is the communicator of the truth. He told his disciples that if they continued with him they would know the truth (8:31). He told Pilate that his object in coming into this world was to witness to the truth (18:37). to choose aright; who, amid the many voices which clamour for our allegiance, tells us what to believe.

(c) Even when Jesus left this earth in the body, he left us his Spirit to guide us into the truth. His Spirit is the Spirit of truth (14:17, 15:26, 16:13). He did not leave us only a book of instruction and a body of teaching. We do not need to search through some unintelligible textbook to find out what to do. Still, to this day, we can ask Jesus what to do, for his Spirit is with us every step of the way.

(d) The truth is what makes us free (8:32). There is always a certain liberating quality in the truth. The truth which Jesus brings liberates us from estrangement from God; it liberates us from frustration; it

liberates us from our fears and weaknesses and defeats. Jesus Christ is the greatest liberator on earth.

(e) The truth can be resented. They sought to kill Jesus because he told them the truth (8:40). The truth may well condemn people; it may well show them how far wrong they were. People may shut their ears and their minds to the truth; they may kill the person who tells them the truth – but the truth remains. No one ever destroyed the truth by refusing to listen to the voice that told it; and the truth will always catch up with us in the end.

(f) The truth can be disbelieved (8:45). There are two main reasons why people disbelieve the truth. They may disbelieve it because it seems too good to be true; or they may disbelieve it because they are so fastened to their half-truths that they will not let them go. In many instances, a half-truth is the worst enemy of the whole truth.

(g) The truth is not something abstract; it is something which must be done (3:21). It is something which must be known with the mind, accepted with the heart and acted out in the life.

(3) The third glory. Repeatedly, John uses this word in connection with Jesus Christ.

(a) The life of Jesus Christ was a manifestation of glory. When he performed the miracle of the water and the wine at Cana of Galilee, John says that he manifested forth his glory (2:11). To look at Jesus and to experience his power and love was to enter into a new glory.

(b) The glory which he manifests is the glory of God. It is not from human beings that he receives it (5:41). He seeks not his own glory but the glory of him who sent him (7:18). It is his Father who glorifies him (8:50, 54). It is the glory of God that Martha will see in the raising of Lazarus (11:4). The raising of Lazarus is for the glory of God, that the Son may be glorified thereby (11:4). The glory that was on Jesus, that clung about him, that shone through him, that acted in him is the glory of God.

(c) Yet that glory was uniquely his own. At the end, he prays that God will glorify him with the glory that he had before the world began (17:5). He shines with no borrowed radiance; his glory is his and his by right.

(d) The glory which is his he has transmitted to his disciples. The glory which God gave him he has given to them (17:22). It is as if Jesus shared in the glory of God and the disciple shares in the glory of Christ. The coming of Jesus is the coming of God's glory among his people.

What does John mean by all this? To answer that, we must turn to the Old Testament. To the Jews, the idea of the *Shechinah* was very dear. The *Shechinah* means *that which dwells*; and it is the word used for the visible presence of God among men and women. Repeatedly in the Old Testament, we come across the idea that there were certain times when God's glory was visible among his people. In the desert, before the giving of the manna, the children of Israel 'looked towards the wilderness, and the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud' (Exodus 16:10). Before the giving of the Ten Commandments, 'The glory of the Lord settled on Mount Sinai' (Exodus 24:16). When the Tabernacle had been erected and equipped, 'the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle' (Exodus 40:34). When Solomon's Temple was dedicated, the priests could not enter in to minister, 'for the glory of the Lord

filled the house of the Lord' (1 Kings 8:11). When Isaiah had his vision in the Temple, he heard the angelic choir singing that 'the whole earth is full of his glory' (Isaiah 6:3). Ezekiel in his ecstasy saw 'the likeness of the glory of the Lord' (Ezekiel 1:28). In the Old Testament, the glory of the Lord came at times when God was very close.

The glory of the Lord means quite simply the presence of God. John uses a family illustration. A father gives to his eldest son his own authority, his own honor. The heir apparent to the throne, the king's heir, is invested with all the royal glory of his father. It was so with Jesus. When he came to this earth, the splendor of God was visible in him, and at the heart of that splendor was love. When Jesus came to this earth, the wonder of God was visible in him, and the wonder was love. People saw that God's glory and God's love were one and the same thing. The glory of God is not that of a despotic tyrant, but the splendor of love before which we fall not in abject terror but lost in wonder, love and praise.

We can experience the loving glory of God when we recognize that there is no salvation grace except to those who believe the truth of the gospel message. Paul reminded the Ephesians, "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13). People are saved when they "come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). On the other hand, "those who perish" will do so "because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2:10). Everyone will "be judged who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness" (2 Thessalonians 2:12).

Jesus Christ was the full expression of God's grace. All the necessary truth to save is available in Him. He was the full expression of God's truth, which was only partially revealed in the Old Testament. What was foreshadowed through prophecy, types, and pictures became substance realized in the person of Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). Therefore He could declare, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. ... If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 14:6; 8:31-32).

A vague belief in God apart from the truth about Christ will not result in salvation. As Jesus Himself warned, "Unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). Those who think they are worshiping God, but are ignorant of or reject the fullness of the New Testament teaching about Christ, are deceived, because "he who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him" (John 5:23). In his first epistle John affirmed that "whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also" (1 John 2:23). Those who reject God's full revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ will be eternally lost.

"John [the baptist] bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, 'This was He of whom I said, "He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me."' And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace." (John 1:15-16)

In keeping with his purpose in writing his gospel (20:31), John brought in other witnesses to the truth about the divine, preexistent, incarnate Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. He first called on John the Baptist, who also 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.'" John's testimony will be related

in more detail beginning in verse 19. Here the apostle John merely summarizes it. John the Baptist, of course, had died long before this gospel was written. But as noted in [chapter 2](#) of this volume, there was still a John the Baptist cult in existence. So as he did in verse 8, the apostle notes John the Baptist's inferiority to Christ—this time in the Baptist's own words. In contrast to some of his followers, he understood clearly and accepted gladly his subordinate role.

That John cried out speaks of the bold, public nature of his witness to Jesus; he was “the voice of one crying in the wilderness, ‘Make ready the way of the Lord, make His paths straight!’” (Matt. 3:3). He was the herald, proclaiming the arrival of the Messiah, and calling people to repent and prepare their hearts to receive Him. Acknowledging Jesus’ preeminence John said of Him, “He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.” Jesus, the Expected (lit., “coming”) One (Matt. 11:3; Luke 7:19–20; John 6:14) came after John in time; He was born six months later (Luke 1:26) and began His public ministry after John began his. Yet, as John acknowledged, Jesus had a higher rank than he did, for He existed before him. The reference here, as in verses 1 and 2, is to Jesus’ eternal preexistence (cf. 8:58).

Then John called on the testimony of believers, including himself and all who have received the fullness of blessing from the one who is “full of grace and truth” (v. 14). Because in Christ “all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form” (Col. 2:9), He provides for all His people’s needs (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 4:12–13; Col. 1:28; 2:10; 2 Peter 1:3). That abundant supply will never be exhausted or diminished; grace will continually follow grace in a limitless, never-ending flow (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9; Eph. 2:7).

“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” (John 1:17-18)

First, grace triumphed over law. Since the Law was given by God through Moses (5:45; 9:29; Ex. 31:18; Lev. 26:46; Deut. 4:44; 5:1; Acts 7:37–38), it was imbued with His glory and reflected His holy and righteous character. Therefore Paul could write, “What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! ... The Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good” (Rom. 7:7, 12; cf. 2 Cor. 3:7–11). Yet though God was gracious in the Old Testament (e.g., Gen. 6:8; Ezra 9:8; Ps. 84:11; Prov. 3:34; Jer. 31:2; Zech. 4:7), the Law was not an instrument of grace. Rather, God granted grace and forgiveness to repentant sinners who violated His holy law, based on what Christ would do to provide atonement. The Law saves no one (Acts 13:38–39; Rom. 3:20–22; 8:3; 10:4; Gal. 2:16; 3:10–12; Phil. 3:9; Heb. 7:18–19; 10:1–4); it merely convicts sinners of their inability to keep perfectly God’s righteous standards, and condemns them to the eternal punishment of divine justice; and thus reveals their need for the grace of forgiveness. Paul wrote to the Galatians that “the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith” (Gal. 3:24).

Second, God was made visible with a clarity never before seen or known. Not merely because He is a Spirit who is invisible (Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:27), but more important because to do so would bring instant death (Ex. 33:20; cf. Gen. 32:30; Deut. 5:26; Judg. 13:22), no one has seen God at any time (John 6:46; 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 John 4:12, 20). It is through Jesus Christ, the “image of the invisible God” (Col. 1:15), that God is revealed.

The NASB follows the reading best attested in the Greek manuscripts, only begotten God (instead of the alternate reading, “only begotten Son” found in some English translations). It is a fitting conclusion to the prologue, which has stressed Christ’s deity and absolute equality with the Father.

God, who cannot be known unless He reveals Himself, became most fully known because Jesus explained Him. Jesus is the explanation of God. He is the answer to the question, “What is God like?”

“He has declared Him.” The word “declared” translates the Greek verb “exegeomai,” from which the English word “exegesis” (the method or practice of interpreting Scripture) derives. Jesus is the only one qualified to exegete or interpret God to man, since “no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him”(Matt. 11:27).

The first eighteen verses of John chapter one provides us with an introductory synopsis of John’s entire gospel. It introduces themes that will be expanded throughout the rest of the book. None are more important than this: Jesus, who existed in intimate fellowship with the Father from all eternity (v. 1), became flesh (v. 14), brought the full expression of grace and truth to mankind (v. 17), and revealed God to man (v. 18). How He did so will be seen in the remainder of John’s gospel.

Open your Bibles with me today to the Gospel of John, chapter 1. We are looking at verses 14 through 18, a passage that brings us right to the beating heart of the Good News.

Let's read what the apostle John writes:

"And the Word became 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 bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, 'This was He of whom I said, "He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me." ' And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."— John 1:14-18

Throughout the prologue to his gospel, John has declared the profound truths of Christ's deity and Incarnation, reaching a powerful crescendo in these last five verses. They summarize the prologue, which in turn summarizes the entire book. In his characteristically simple language, John expressed the glorious reality of the Incarnation by pointing out its nature, its witnesses, and its eternal impact.

He says the most startling and incredible thing that he could have said. He says quite simply: "This Word which created the world, this reason which controls the order of the world, has become a person, and with our own eyes we saw Him." The Greek word that John uses for "beheld" is *theasthai*; it is used in the New Testament more than twenty times and is always used of actual physical sight. This is no spiritual vision seen with the eye of the soul or of the mind. John declares that the Word actually came to earth in the form of a man and was seen by human eyes. He says, in essence: "If you want to see what this creating Word, this controlling reason, is like, look at Jesus of Nazareth."

The Nature of the Incarnation

John 1:14 is the most concise biblical statement of the Incarnation, and therefore one of Scripture's most significant verses. This is one of the greatest single verses in the entire Bible; we must spend time upon it so that we may enter more fully into its riches. A lifetime of study and thought could not exhaust the truth of this single verse.

The four words with which it begins—"the Word became flesh"—express the reality that in the Incarnation, God took on humanity. The infinite became finite; eternity entered time; the invisible became visible (Colossians 1:15); the Creator entered His creation.

God revealed Himself to man through creation (Romans 1:18-21), through the Old Testament Scriptures (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), and supremely and most clearly in Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-2). The record of His life and work, and its application and significance for the past, present, and future, is preserved for us in the New Testament.

Remember, the concept of the "Word" (*Logos*) was rich in meaning for both Greeks and Jews. John here clearly states what he implied earlier in the prologue: Jesus Christ, God's final Word to mankind (Hebrews 1:1-2), became flesh. The word *sarx* ("flesh") does not have here the negative moral

connotation that it sometimes carries (Romans 8:3-9; Galatians 5:13; Ephesians 2:3), but refers simply to man's physical being. That He actually became flesh affirms Jesus' full humanity.

The word *ginomai* ("became") does not mean that Christ ceased being the eternal Word when He became a man. Though God is immutable—pure, eternal "being" and not "becoming" as all His creatures are—in the Incarnation, the unchangeable God (Hebrews 13:8) did become fully man, yet remained fully God. He entered the realm of time and space and experienced life as it is for those He created.

No wonder the apostle Paul wrote of the Incarnation:

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory."— 1 Timothy 3:16

The eternal Son not only became man; He also dwelt among men for thirty-three years. "Dwelt" translates a form of the verb *skenoo*, which literally means "to pitch a tent." Jesus Christ's humanity was not a mere illusion or appearance. He took on all the essential attributes of humanity and was "made in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:7). As the writer of Hebrews explains:

"Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil."— Hebrews 2:14

And again:

"Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."— Hebrews 2:17

He pitched His tent among us. In the Old Testament, God tented with Israel through His glorious presence in the tabernacle (Exodus 40:34-35) and later in the temple (1 Kings 8:10-11), and He revealed Himself in pre-incarnate appearances of Christ (Genesis 16:7-14; Exodus 3:2; Joshua 5:13-15; Judges 2:1-4; Judges 6:11-24; Judges 13:3-23; Daniel 3:25; Daniel 10:5-6; Zechariah 1:11-21). Throughout eternity, God will again tent with His redeemed people:

"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.'"— Revelation 21:3-4

Though Jesus manifested God's divine glory during His earthly life with a clarity never before seen, it was veiled by His human flesh. Peter, James, and John saw a physical manifestation of Jesus' heavenly glory at the Transfiguration, when "His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light" (Matthew 17:2). That was a preview of the unveiled glory to be seen at His return (Matthew 24:29-30; Matthew 25:31; Revelation 19:11-16) and the fullness of His glory as the Light of the New Jerusalem (Revelation 21:23). But day to day, the disciples saw Jesus manifest God's holy

nature primarily by displaying divine attributes: truth, wisdom, love, grace, knowledge, power, and holiness.

Jesus manifested the same essential glory as the Father because, as God, they possess the exact same nature (John 10:30). The Greek word *monogenes* ("only begotten") does not imply that Jesus was created by God. The term does not refer to origin, but describes Him as unique, the only one of His kind—*mónos* ("only") and *génos* ("kind"). John uses *monogenes* to distinguish Christ as the unique God the Son from believers, who are God's children through adoption (1 John 3:2). Scholar B. F. Westcott noted that "Christ is the One and only Son, the One to whom the title belongs in a sense completely unique and singular, as distinguished from that in which there are many children of God."

Jesus' divine attributes revealed His essential glory as God's Son, "for in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

Grace, Truth, and Glory

The two attributes most closely connected with salvation are grace and truth. John highlights three massive themes in this passage: Grace, Truth, and Glory.

1. Grace

This word carries two vital concepts:

- Undeserved Favor: Grace is something we could never earn or achieve. That God came to earth to live and die for humanity is an act of pure love. Grace emphasizes our helpless spiritual poverty and God's limitless kindness.
- Divine Loveliness: In Jesus, we see the true loveliness of God. People often think of God only in terms of power, majesty, and judgment—power that could crush rebellion. But in Jesus, we are confronted with the sheer beauty of God's heart.

2. Truth

Jesus is the absolute center of truth in a world full of confusion:

- The Embodiment of Truth: Jesus declared, "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). He did not just talk about God; He showed us what God is like.
- The Communicator of Truth: He promised that if we continue in His Word, we will know the truth (John 8:31), and He told Pilate that He came to bear witness to the truth (John 18:37).
- The Guide into Truth: Through the Holy Spirit—the Spirit of Truth (John 14:17; John 15:26; John 16:13)—we are guided daily.
- The Liberator: Jesus said, "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Truth liberates us from fear, guilt, defeat, and spiritual death.

- The Reality to be Acted Upon: Truth is not merely intellectual; it must be believed with the heart and lived out in daily life (John 3:21).

Scripture makes it clear that salvation comes through believing the truth of the gospel. Paul reminded the believers in Ephesus:

"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise..." — Ephesians 1:13

God desires all people to "come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Timothy 2:4). Conversely, those who perish do so "because they did not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (2 Thessalonians 2:10; 2 Thessalonians 2:12).

A vague belief in God apart from the truth about Christ will not save. Jesus warned, "For if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). To reject the Son is to reject the Father (John 5:23; 1 John 2:23).

3. Glory

To the Jewish mind, glory was intimately tied to the *Shechinah*—the visible presence of God among His people (Exodus 16:10; Exodus 24:16; Exodus 40:34; 1 Kings 8:11; Isaiah 6:3; Ezekiel 1:28). In the Old Testament, God's glory appeared when He drew near.

In Jesus, the glory of God was fully displayed in human form—not as a tyrant driving us away in terror, but in the splendor of love that brings us to our knees in worship.

The Witnesses to the Word

"John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, 'This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.' ' And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.'" — John 1:15-16

John the Baptist was the herald, "the voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the LORD'" (Matthew 3:3). He proclaimed the arrival of the Messiah boldly and publicly. Though Jesus was born six months after John (Luke 1:26) and began His public ministry after him, John joyfully recognized Jesus' absolute preeminence because Jesus eternally existed before him (John 8:58).

Then John the Apostle adds the testimony of all believers: "And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace." Because "in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9), Christ provides for all our needs (Romans 5:2; Ephesians 4:12-13; Colossians 1:28; Colossians 2:10; 2 Peter 1:3). His supply never runs dry; it is an endless stream where grace continuously follows grace (2 Corinthians 12:9; Ephesians 2:7).

Law and Grace

"For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."— John 1:17-18

Notice the contrast:

1. Grace Triumphed Over Law: The Law given through Moses was holy, righteous, and good (Exodus 31:18; Romans 7:7; Romans 7:12). But the Law could never save anyone (Acts 13:38-39; Romans 3:20-22; Galatians 2:16). It acted as a mirror, exposing our sin and acting as a tutor to lead us to Christ (Galatians 3:24). Grace and truth—the power to forgive and transform—came through Jesus Christ.
2. God Made Fully Known: God is invisible Spirit (1 Timothy 1:17; 1 Timothy 6:16). But Jesus, who is in the very "bosom of the Father"—expressing the closest possible intimacy—has "declared" Him. The Greek word is *exegeomai*, from which we get our word *exegesis*. Jesus came to exegete God to us. He is the complete, perfect explanation of who God is (Matthew 11:27).

Practical Application

Because Jesus took on real flesh and blood, He understands every single trial, pain, and temptation you face today. The writer of Hebrews reminds us that we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:15). He pitched His tent in our world; He knows what it is to be weary, rejected, grieved, and tested.

When you pray, you are not crying out to a distant, unfeeling God. You are talking to God who knows what human life feels like from the inside out, and who promises an endless supply of "grace for grace" for every situation you encounter. Whatever burden you carry today, bring it to Him, knowing that His supply of grace will never run dry.

A Challenge for Believers

Look at verse 14 again: Jesus was "full of grace and truth."

As followers of Christ, we are called to reflect His character to the world around us. Yet, it is so easy for us to tilt too far in one direction.

- If we preach truth without grace, we become rigid, legalistic, and harsh—pointing out sin without offering the healing power of the Gospel.
- If we preach grace without truth, we slip into compromise—telling people God accepts them while ignoring the holiness that demands a changed life.

My challenge to you this week is to examine your heart, your words, and your witness. At home, at work, and in your community, are you standing firmly on the uncompromised truth of God's Word, while extending the overwhelming, loving grace of Jesus to those around you? Ask the Holy Spirit to make you a person "full of grace and truth."

An Invitation to Give Your Life to Jesus

Maybe you are reading this today and realizing that you don't truly know God. You may have tried religion, moral effort, or human philosophy, but you still feel an emptiness inside, carrying the heavy weight of sin and guilt.

The glorious message of the Gospel is that you don't have to climb a moral ladder to reach God. God came down to reach you. The eternal Word became flesh, lived a perfect life, and willingly took your place on the cross—paying the full penalty for your sin. Three days later, He rose physically from the dead, defeating sin and death forever.

Salvation is not earned; it is a gift of God's free grace (Ephesians 2:8-9). Jesus said:

"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me."— John 14:6

Right now, Jesus is offering you His grace, His forgiveness, and eternal life. If you will repent (turn from your sin) and place your faith in Him, He will forgive you, transform you, and make you a child of God.

If you are ready to surrender your life to Jesus Christ today, you can pray this prayer right now from your heart:

"Lord Jesus, I acknowledge that I am a sinner and that I cannot save myself. I believe that You are God who came in the flesh, that You died on the cross for my sins, and that You rose again from the dead. Today, I repent of my sin and I place my trust in You alone as my Lord and Savior. Forgive me, wash me clean, and fill me with Your Holy Spirit. Help me to walk in Your truth and live for You all the days of my life. In Jesus' name, Amen."

If you prayed that prayer with a sincere heart, God's Word promises that you have been born again into His kingdom. Begin reading His Word daily, talk to Him in prayer, and gather with other believers who will encourage you in your walk with Christ.