

Exposition of John

Message #5

John 1:14-18

A summary of what John writes in these verses today is this:

JESUS CHRIST WAS UNMISTAKABLY SEEN TO BE THE ETERNAL GOD, WHO CAME TO EARTH IN HUMAN FLESH, WHO LIVED WITH THE PEOPLE HE MADE, WHO BROUGHT THE FULL GRACE AND TRUTH OF GOD, AND WHO REVEALED GOD THE FATHER TO THE WORLD.

There are 8 facts in this text regarding Jesus Christ we learn from John.

Fact #1 - The Eternal, God, Light, Creator, and Life Giver came to earth in human flesh.
v. 14a

“And the Word became flesh”

The apostle John has been thoroughly and thoughtfully describing a Person so far in this prologue of the book, but he has yet say His name. At this point, he has called this Person the Word, the God, the Light, the Creator, the Life of men, and the True Light, but John has not yet named Him. John wanted to make abundantly clear that this Person is God Himself. No one can honestly read the opening 13 verses of this gospel without realizing that John is talking about God.

There are some who think that God is one who was a human first and then ascended to be God in heaven, but that is not at all what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches that God was always eternally God, but then He descended from heaven to become human on Earth. Jesus Christ, the eternal God, became a man.

Did Jesus stop being God when He became a man? No, Jesus added humanity to his deity (Phil. 2:5-8). Did Jesus stop being a human when He went back to the Father? No, when Jesus became a man, He made the choice to be a man forever. He must be a man to be the mediator (the one who reconciles two parties) between God and man (1 Tim. 2:5). He also must be a man forever because of the description of Him at His future return to Earth and His kingdom reign on Earth (Acts 1:11, Zech. 12:10).

Incarnation means God becoming man.

The condescension of Christ speaks the humility of Jesus to leave heaven's glory and come to Earth to take on human form.

Kenosis means self emptying of Christ where He veiled His visible glory and gave up the independent use of His attributes during the period of the incarnation.

The hypostatic union means that Jesus was fully God and fully man, being one person possessing fully two natures, Deity and humanity simultaneously.

The perpetuity of the incarnation mean Jesus became man forever.

Jesus clothed His deity in humanity, so that He was God in the flesh, but He looked like any other ordinary man.

Fact #2 - The Eternal, God, Light, Creator, and Life Giver lived a human life with the people He created. **v. 14b**

“and dwelt among us”

God lived among His own created people. This is amazing. Clearly in the Bible, God is said to be transcendent, which means that as the creator of all that is, He is completely above and separate from

everything. There is God and then there is everything else. He is in a class all by Himself. He transcends creation, and yet, He chose to step into creation.

The word dwelt is interesting and there has been much drawn from this word because the word is tabernacle, or tent. The idea is that He pitched His tent and roughed it here when He didn't have to.

Fact #3 - The Eternal, God, Light, Creator, and Life Giver revealed His Glory to those who could recognize Him for who He was. **v. 14c**

“and we have seen his glory”

John was Jesus' cousin. John's mother, Salome, is the sister of Jesus' mother Mary (Matt. 27:55-56; Mark 15:40). John was also very close friends with Jesus; he even called himself the one whom Jesus loved. So, we have the cousin and best friend of Jesus saying this: “We (the disciples) watched Jesus, we learned from Him, we studied Him, we traveled with Him, we watched His every move, and what we saw was the glory of God!” John was awestruck at Jesus, because when he saw the glory of God when he watched Jesus, he concluded that Jesus is God who deserves his trust and worship.

Not many were able to recognize Jesus for who He truly is back then, and not many are able to recognize Jesus for who He is now. Those who get to see His glory are shown by God when they look into who Jesus is (Rom. 10:17; John 1:12-13). Many people don't care to take the time to study Jesus, many people don't want to learn from Him, and many people don't want to see that He is God who deserves worship. May we be people who want to see the glory of God in studying Jesus.

Fact #4 - The Eternal, God, Light, Creator, and Life Giver's glory was unmistakable evidence that He is the unique Son of God the Father. **v.14 d**

“glory as of the only Son from the Father”

The Person that Jesus was as He lived on Earth gave a visible splendor of God that completely convinced John and the other disciples that Jesus had no other explanation than to be the Son of God that came into the world. In John's mind, as well as the mind of the Jews, to be the Son of God would make Jesus completely equal with God the Father (John 5:18).

Jesus is the unique Son of God that was sent into the world having come from the Father. Other English translations use the more complex phrase here “only begotten from the Father.” “Only begotten” does not mean He became the Son of God or that He is the offspring of God. To say this would contradict what was stated in the Bible of His eternality and His unchanging essence (John 1:1; Heb. 13:8). What “only begotten” does mean is that Jesus is the unique, one-of-a-kind Son of God. The word begotten (Gr. monogenes) literally has the idea of uniqueness. Jesus is the unique only Son of God because He is the only eternal Son of God.

The Bible may call angels “sons of God” (Job 1:6). The Bible may call people adopted “sons of God” (Rom. 8:14-18). But only of Jesus is He called the “only begotten Son of God” (John 3:16). Jesus stands alone in a class all by Himself. He is the unique one-of-a-kind Son of God (1:14), and He is God Himself (1:1).

John give 2 descriptions of the glory of Jesus.

(Description #1)- His glory is full of grace. v.14e

“full of grace”

The reason John knew that Jesus was the eternal Son of God was because His glory was revealed in His grace. The God-man, Jesus Christ, is the full source of grace. Grace is the great theme of the Church age. Grace means unmerited favor. Jesus made His glory known because He came full of grace. He came to offer God's grace. He offered Himself. God's grace is fully tied to the person and work of Jesus. God offers grace because Jesus became a man to save sinners from deserved, eternal death and give them undeserved, eternal life through faith in Him.

(Description #2) - His glory is full of truth. v.14f

“and truth”

What makes Jesus so glorious is that He offers grace within the context of complete full truth. Jesus is the full source of truth. Everything Jesus said was true. Everything Jesus did was true. Everything Jesus was is truth. This truth of Jesus revealed He is the righteousness of God, and it also revealed the truth about man. Jesus coming to the world to display full truth is what allows for Him to offer grace. Until a person recognizes the truth about himself, that he is a lost sinner in need of a Savior, he cannot grasp grace.

Fact #5 - John the Baptist spoke boldly about the Eternal, God, Light, Creator, and Life Giver's status. **v. 15a**

“John bore witness about him, and cried out ‘This is he of whom I said,’”

John the Baptist was a bold prophet of God who truly had a purposeful life and truly shined Jesus' light in the world. John the apostle says that John the Baptist gave an eye witness statement about Jesus.

There are 2 main statements John the Baptist needed to make clear to people as he was preparing the way for the Lord.

(Statement #1) - The Light that comes after me is more important than me. v. 15b

“He who comes after me ranks before me,”

According to Mark (Mark 1:5), John the Baptist was drawing huge crowds of people. He had a major following for a short amount of time. He was well aware that his popularity was going to be short lived and that he was only a forerunner to the actual Light of the World that would come and offer grace that saves people from death. John the Baptist made it very clear to everyone that the one who would come after him is far greater than him. John said “don't set your hope in me. Don't look to me for life. Look to the one I am preaching about. He will give you life.”

(Statement #2) - The Light that comes after me is greater than me because He is eternal.
v. 15c

“because he was before me”

John the Baptist declares the same thing as John the apostle. John the apostle has been claiming that the Son of God is the eternal God. John the Baptist declares the same thing. Jesus was born 6 months after John the Baptist, but John knew very plainly that Jesus was before him in time. Jesus existed before John, because John knew and declared that Jesus is eternal.

Fact #6 - Children of God have been given undeserved favor and knowledge of God from One who is full of grace and truth. **v. 16**

“For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.”

At first glance, what he appears to be saying is that all people on Earth have received of His fullness, but as I have analyzed this more and more, I don't believe John is referring to all people on Earth. I believe John is only referring to the camp of people on Earth who are believing receivers of Jesus.

"from his fullness we have all received"

But for those of us who have properly received Jesus by trusting in Him, let me explain the extent of what he is telling us! Jesus is full of grace and full of truth. From His full grace and truth, we who have trusted in Him have received.. The question though is received what? We have received His grace, which is the unmerited, undeserved favor of God that saves us and makes us children of God. We also have received the truth, which is a knowledge of the truth of God which only comes through faith in Jesus.

"grace upon grace"

Then John goes on to say that this past event of receiving God's grace is only the beginning. He says that receivers of His fullness continue to receive his compounding grace. Grace upon grace, or literally, grace instead of grace, or grace in the place of grace. What I understand this to mean is that once a person becomes a child of God in receiving Jesus' grace, God then pours out more and more grace on that person so that person gets to know God more and more intimately, and that person also becomes more and more distinct from the world because that person is living life with the Creator God within him, giving him insight for every moment of life. God's grace supplies us with all we need to really live the life the way the Creator of life intended life to be lived.

Go read Exodus 33:12-23 and compare that with John 1:14-18.

Fact #7 - Jesus Christ, the Eternal, God, Light, Creator, and Life Giver put an end to the law of Moses and brought grace and truth to life. **v. 17**

"For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

The law of Moses was given to a particular people, in a particular place, during a particular time, and for a particular purpose. The law was intended to show all mankind through the nation of Israel that all people are deeply involved in sin (Rom. 3:9-10) and are helplessly condemned by God's righteous standard (Gal. 3:23). The law brought death. The law could not bring life. The law's purpose was to bring people to a knowledge of their own sin (Rom. 3:20) and to seek a Savior for their sin. That Savior is none other than Jesus (Gal. 3:24). The Law brings death, but Jesus came offering life. He fulfilled all the demands of the law and died a death He didn't deserve so He could bring us to life out of death, giving us what we don't deserve.

Grace is Jesus Christ. Truth is Jesus Christ. Grace and truth had always been a theme of God and His Word for all of history, but grace and truth came to life when Jesus became a man.

Fact #8- Jesus Christ, the Eternal, God, Light, Creator, and Life Giver, is the revealer of God the Father to the world. **v. 18**

"No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."

"No one has ever seen God"

Moses at one point asked God to see God's glory. God told Moses that He would not allow Moses to see his face, and God even said to Moses that man cannot see God and live. God told Moses that back in Exodus 33. The full essence of God the Father cannot be seen by man. For one, God is invisible. That is what the Bible tells us (1 Tim. 1:17). Secondly, no man can see God and live because sinful mankind cannot be welcome face to face with God. For man to see God, there must be a mediator, a go between, one who has access to God the Father face to face, and also has access to us face to face.

"the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known."

John writes here that Jesus Christ, who has clearly been established so far as God and the Son of God is that mediator. Jesus Christ is the go between, between sinful humanity and the full essence of God the Father. John says that the only God who is at the Father's side is the unique Person who is fully God, fully the Son of God, and fully man. He is the only Person through whom any other man may have access to the Father, because John says Jesus has made God the Father known to the world.

The phrase "at the Father's side" is stated in other translations as "in the Father's bosom." The picture we get of this is like a father with his arm around his young boy, his boy is resting his head on his father's chest, and the father is sharing his heart, mind, and life with his son. That is the picture we get.

And John writes that it is only the Son, the God-man, who has been with the Father in perfect face to face fellowship for all eternity. This Son is the only Person who has come into the world to explain, to reveal and to make known to others the heart of God the Father. But it's even more than that. Jesus doesn't just explain the Father. He is the revealer of the Father to the world. Do you want to see God in all His glory? Look at Jesus.

The question is, have you believed in this Jesus?