

The Gospel of John

1:14-18

I The Eternal Word Becoming Flesh

- A. When the Word as God became flesh, God acquired human life and human nature. However, this flesh only had the likeness of the flesh of sin. (Rom.8:3) Therefore, it did not have the sin of the flesh. It is the Word who became such flesh, and this Word was God, the complete Triune God (v.1).
- B. That the Word became flesh means that the Triune God became a man of flesh in the likeness of a sinful man. However, He had only the likeness of a sinful man and not the sin of a sinful man. Hence, He was a sinless God-man, the complete God and the perfect man, and had two natures, the divine nature and the human nature. Although His two natures were mingled to produce a God-man, the individual characteristics of the two natures remained distinct; the two natures did not intermix to form a third nature. Rather, the divine nature existed in the human nature and was expressed through the human nature, full of grace, which is God enjoyed by man, and reality, which is God obtained by man. In this way the invisible God was expressed so that men can obtain and enjoy Him as their life for the fulfillment of His New Testament economy.

II The Word Tabernacled Among Us in Glory

- A. The Word, by being incarnated, not only brought God into humanity but also became a tabernacle to God as God's habitation on earth among men. The incarnate God, came as the embodiment for God, as shown by the tabernacle (v.14, 2:21) so that man could contact Him and enter into Him to enjoy the riches contained in God
- B. Both the tabernacle and the temple had an outer court, a holy place and a Holy of Holies.
 - 1. Therefore, John points out that Christ was the Lamb (v.29) offered on the altar, which signifies the cross, in the outer court of the tabernacle
 - 2. Then He was like the bronze serpent (which caused man to have life) lifted up on the pole (3:14, Numbers 21:4-9), which signifies the cross. This shows how Christ in His redemption was received by His believers that they might be delivered from sin and obtain life and might enter into Him as the embodiment of God, typified by the tabernacle, to enjoy all the riches that are in God
 - 3. The foot-washing in ch.13:4-10 may be considered the washing in the laver in the outer court of the tabernacle, which washed away the earthly defilement of those who drew near to God, so that their fellowship with God and with one another could be maintained
 - 4. In ch.14 those who receive Christ are brought by Him into the Holy Place to experience Him as the bread of life (6:35), signified by the showbread, and as the light of life (8:12, 9:5), signified by the lampstand
 - 5. Eventually, in ch.17, through the highest and most mysterious prayer, which is typified by the burning incense on the golden incense altar, those who enjoy Christ as life and as light are brought by Him into the Holy of Holies to enter with Him into the deepest enjoyment of God and to enjoy the glory that God has given Him (17:22-24)
- C. John beheld the Word in glory when he saw Christ transfigured on the Mount. (Mtt.17:1-2, 5; Like 9:32, 2Peter 1:16-18)
- D. This Word was *from* the Father. The Greek word *from*, which is "para", means, "by the side of," implying "*with*". Hence, it means, "from with." The Son not only is from God but also is with God. On the one hand, He is from God and on the other hand, He is still with God. (8:16b, 29; 16:32b)

III The Incarnated Word with Grace in Fullness and with Reality

Grace is God in the Son as our enjoyment; reality is God realized by us in the Son. The law makes demands on man according to what God is; grace supplies man with what God is to meet what God demands. The law, at most, was only a testimony of what God is. No man can partake of God through the law, but grace enables man to enjoy God. Reality is God realized by man, and grace is God enjoyed by man

IV Declaring God in the Only Begotten Son of God

- A. The Father's only begotten Son declared God by the Word, life, light, grace and reality. The Word is God expressed, life is God imparted, light is God shining, grace is God enjoyed, and reality is God realized, apprehended. God is fully declared in the Son through these five things. The essence of them all is God Himself. It is by these things that God is declared.
- B. Although no one has ever seen God, the Son of God has declared Him in the way of being the Word, life, light, grace and reality. The more we receive the Word, have God as our life and let the light of this life shine within us, and the more we enjoy God as grace and apprehend Him as reality, the more God will be declared to us. To declare God means to express, explain, and define God. Christ declared, expressed, explained, and defined God by being incarnated as the Word with life, light, grace, and reality.