

JESUS CHRIST: THE REVELATION OF GOD

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2He was in the beginning with God. 3All things were made through him; and without him nothing was made that has been made. 4In him was life; and the Life was the light of men.

5The Light shines in the darkness; and the darkness did not extinguish it. 6There came a man, sent by God, whose name was John. 7He came as a witness, so that he might bear testimony about the Light, so that all men might believe through him. 8He [himself] was not the Light; on the contrary, he came so that he might bear testimony about the Light. 9The true Light, [the Light] that enlightens every man, was coming into the world. 10He was in the world, and the world was made through him, but the world did not know him. 11He came to his own [people], yet those who were his own did not receive him. 12But to all who did receive him, to those who believe on his name, to them he gave the right to become children of God—¹³[they] were born, not by natural descent, nor by human will, nor by a husband's desire, but by God. 14The Word became flesh, and lived among us. We saw his glory, his glory as the one and only [Son who came] from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

15John bears testimony about him, crying out, This was he of whom I said, He who comes after me has surpassed me; because he was before me. 16From his fullness we all received, grace upon grace. 17The law was given through Moses; the grace and the truth came through Jesus Christ. 18No man has seen God at any time; the one and only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known. (Jn. 1:1-18)

**Literally, "tabernacled among us"*

A note on the Scripture text that accompanies each individual message: The *American Standard Version* and the *New International Version*, along with the original Greek and Hebrew, have been used in an effort to achieve the greatest degree of accuracy and clarity. Where words or phrases have been added to the original text in an effort to better express its meaning, those words or phrases have usually been indicated by means of [brackets].

Introduction

Back in 1971 Jan was a young woman in her early twenties. She had been brought up in a Bible-believing Christian home, but had never personally accepted the faith of her parents. Now she found herself heavily involved in the radical lifestyle of the seventies. She wore beads, sandals, a floppy hat over long straight hair, and blue "granny" glasses. She attended outdoor rock concerts where many of the young people smoked pot and some engaged in immoral conduct. Her life was permeated with an attitude of abandonment; she had a job, but most of her free time was spend pursuing fun. Whenever someone mentioned God, she felt an emptiness in her heart, a void—but she was in no hurry to deal with it.

In time she met a young man named Mark. After a few months they were living together—Mark felt an emptiness in his life, too. They were invited to a

Transcendental Meditation lecture, and they went, hoping to find peace and a way to become better people. As they became involved with TM, Jan discovered two things. She was not being transformed into a stressless person; furthermore, she and Mark were beginning to have frightening supernatural experiences.

Nine months later Mark ran into an old navy drinking buddy who had become a Christian. Mark soon rededicated his own life to Christ. After that, Jan saw Mark change; he gave up TM, and he learned to control his temper.

In 1976 Jan agreed to join Mark at a Jesus Rally in Pennsylvania. She testifies concerning the people she met there: Two days of their love were all the Holy Spirit needed to remind me that I was a sinner and that Jesus Christ was the only One who offered true salvation.

Her testimony continues:

I could not deny that Jesus was God's Son as He had claimed, because I had seen how He had changed Mark. As a result, I accepted Christ as my Savior, too. I came home from the "Jesus '76 Rally" a joyful person. I no longer had to seek for God. (POWER, 3/16/86)

Jan's story is not only a true personal testimony of what happened in the life of one young lady, it is also a testimony of what has happened to the whole human race: departure from the God of heaven, ...pursuit of one's own self-centered existence, ...the sense of estrangement from God, ...the failure to find God and be restored to Him by means of the religions and philosophies of the world.

We need to have God reveal Himself to us. If you look to Jesus, you will find the revelation of God: *"No man has seen God at any time; the one and only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known"* (Jn. 1:18.)

I. Look to Jesus, and You will Meet the Person of God (Jn. 1:1-3,14,18)

John begins his gospel by stating, *"In the beginning was the Word."* *"In the beginning"* is an unmistakable reference to Genesis 1:1, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* *"The beginning"* is the beginning of time, the beginning of the creation. Thus, the Bible is telling us that when God brought the creation into existence, *"the Word"* was already existing; in other words, *"the Word"* is eternal. Note: *"The Word"* is a title for the Son of God whom we know in His incarnate state as Jesus Christ—by means of this title it is being emphasized that just as words reveal to others our inmost thoughts, so the incarnate Son of God communicates and reveals God to us.

John goes on to declare, *"the Word was with God."* *"The Word"* was living in the presence of God throughout eternity. Indeed, *"the Word"* (i.e.; the second Person of the Trinity) enjoyed the most intimate communion and fellowship with God His

Father. He shared in the divine glory of God; note Jesus' prayer just prior to His return to glory via the cross, resurrection and ascension: *"And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I shared with you before the world began"* (Jn. 17:5.) He was the object of the Father's love: *"Father, I desire that those whom you have given me may also be with me where I am, so that they may see my glory—[the glory] that you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world"* (Jn. 17:24.)

Then John declares, *"the Word was God."* The Greek text states this truth in the most emphatic way, literally reading, *"God [is what] the Word was."* In Philippians 2:6 the Apostle Paul elaborates on the absolute deity of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Word, by identifying Him as *"existing in the form of God."* Paul teaches that Christ Jesus, prior to His incarnation, was *"existing in the form of God."* The Greek word translated *"form"* (μορφή) was a philosophical term, not referring to the external appearance of a thing—as we would be inclined to use the term, speaking of "the form of a thing,"—but to the essence, or better, the specific character, of the thing or person. The New Testament commentator, Jac. J. Muller, writes, "by *'form of God'* is meant ... His divine nature, which is inseparable from His person and in which the Divine Being realizes Himself [i.e.; knows and expresses Himself] in His ... inherent, divine glory and godly attributes" (Jac. J. Muller, "The Epistle of Paul to the Philippians, *The New International Commentary of the New Testament*, Wm. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids MI, pp. 78-79.) The New Testament scholar, John Murray, concurs, "the *form of God* would refer to the sum of those characterizing qualities that mark God off as specifically God" (John Murray, *Christology*, unpublished classroom notes, Westminster Theological Seminary Library, Philadelphia, p. 36.) By way of illustration: the "form" of an apple is not merely the shape of the apple, it includes all those qualities that make an apple an apple and distinguish it from every other fruit and every other thing in all of creation. Thus, *"the form of God"* includes all those attributes and qualities and characteristics that make God what He is, and that distinguish Him from everyone and everything else. When the apostle informs us that our Lord Jesus Christ was *"existing in the form of God"* he is telling us in the strongest possible terms that the Lord Jesus Christ possesses all the attributes and the very identity of God—all that defines God defines Christ Jesus, as the Lord Jesus Himself declared, *"whoever has seen me, has seen the Father"* (Jn. 14:9.)

The Apostle John rounds off his opening statement regarding the person of the divine Word by repeating, *"He was in the beginning with God."* Taken together, verses 1-2 form a great pyramid-type literary structure with the statement, *"the Word was God,"* found at the very apex of the pyramid: the Word was with God, the Word was God, the Word was with God.

Then, in verse 14, John further describes and defines the divine Word by declaring, *"The Word became flesh."* Here is the wonder of the incarnation: God, the Creator, came into His creation, came into history, and identified Himself with those whom He had created in His own image—He became one of us. *"The Word became flesh"* (σάρξ). The use of this Greek word (σάρξ) presents the incarnation in the strongest

possible terms. To the readers of John's day his choice of words would almost have sounded crude or vulgar when he says that the divine Word became "*flesh*." John does not politely write, "the Word took on a human body," or "the Word became a man;" he bluntly asserts, "*the Word became flesh*."

In becoming "flesh," in becoming truly God incarnate, the Word "*lived among us*." The Greek text literally reads, "*the Word tabernacled* (σκηνώω) *among us*." In the beginning, God walked in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. Then, when He brought the people of Israel out of Egypt, He lived among them in the wilderness in **the tabernacle**. In the Person of Jesus Christ, God lives among us in human form. We read in Matthew 1:23, "*the virgin will be pregnant, and she will give birth to a son; and they shall call him Immanuel; which, being interpreted, means, God with us*." Contrast the biblical testimony of Matthew 1:23 with the pagan testimony recorded in Daniel 2:11. When asked to interpret the king's dream without first being told of the features of that dream, the Babylonian astrologers replied, "*It is an extraordinary thing that the king requests, and no one can fulfill it for the king except the gods, but they do not dwell with men*."

Look to Jesus, and you will meet the Person of God: "*No man has seen God ... the one and only Son ... he has made him known*" (Jn. 1:18.)

II. Look to Jesus, and You will See the Life Required by God (Jn. 1:4-5)

Writing of the incarnate Son of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Apostle John declares, "*In him was life*" (vs. 4a.) Note that life is not merely spoken of as being created by God; rather, life is spoken of as existing in God and in His Son. Life does not exist apart from God and independent of God, note Acts 17:28, a passage in which the Apostle Paul testifies, "*in him [God] we live, and move, and have our being*." Life is the exclusive possession of God, it is inseparably related to who God is, it is part of His identify: "*And God said to Moses, 'I AM THAT I AM'* (or, '*I AM BECAUSE I AM*')" (Ex. 3:14.) God is the One who is self-existent, the One who has life in Himself and the One from who life comes. The Lord Jesus Christ in His incarnate identity as the Servant of the LORD, declares, "*just as the Father has life in himself, so also has he granted the Son to have life in himself*" (Jn. 5:26.)

God is the only Source and Sustainer of life. What does this mean for us in practical terms? It means that our life is totally dependent upon God; He bestows life and He terminates life as He sees fits: "*See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me. I put to death, and I bring to life; I have wounded, and I will heal. And there is no one who can deliver out of my hand*" (Deut. 32:39.) It means that life is sacred: we may not arbitrarily take life by murder, abortion, euthanasia, or suicide.

The Apostle John now goes on to declare, "*the Life was the light of men*." In verse 4a John spoke about life in general terms, now he is speaking about one specific life: the life of Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. This Life was "*the light of men*." In Scripture "light" is often used in the sense of knowledge, understanding, and

illumination: *“The unfolding of your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple”* (Psl. 119:130.) In biblical terms, to give light is to impart understanding, to illuminate; and to be light is to be an example. Because the Son of God is the Source of life, He is, therefore, the true Illuminator and Interpreter of life.

Look at the life of the Lord Jesus Christ and we will discover the meaning of life, and we will see the way life was meant to be lived. First, what we see is that life was meant to be lived in fellowship with God, a fellowship based upon obedience and submission to God. Jesus testifies, *“The One who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone; because I always do the things that are pleasing to him”* (Jn. 8:29.) Life was not meant to be lived for self-gratification. Furthermore, life was meant to be lived for the glory of God. Again, Jesus testifies, *“I have glorified you on the earth, by accomplishing the work that you have given me to do”* (Jn. 17:4.) Life was not meant to be lived for self-glorification.

“The Light shines in the darkness” (vs. 5a.) That is to say, the life and witness of the Lord Jesus Christ enlightens us as to the true meaning of life, in distinction to the false interpretation of life presented by the devil:

But the serpent said to the woman, You shall not surely die; ⁵for God knows that in the day you eat [the fruit of that tree] your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be like God, knowing good and evil. ⁶And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired [or, covete] as a means of making one wise, she took of its fruit, and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband with her, and he ate it.
(Gen. 3:4-6)

The devil sought to convince Adam and Eve that their life was independent of God (Gen. 3:4)—God might threaten them, but He could not touch their lives, He could not carry out His warning that in the day they disobeyed they would surely die, as He has stated in Genesis 2:16-17, *“in the day that you eat of [the forbidden tree] you shall surely die.”* The devil sought to convince Adam and Eve that they could attain the life of God, they could become like God (Gen. 3:5)—they should strive for self-glorification. The devil sought to convince Adam and Eve that they should live their lives for themselves (Gen. 3:6)—they should pursue the course of self-gratification. Adam and Eve, and the entire human race in Adam and after him, followed the course suggested by the devil and, consequently, suffered the judgment of God and became slaves to sin, as the Lord Jesus testifies, *“I tell you the truth, Every one who commits sin is the slave of sin”* (Jn. 8:34.) Thus, by heeding the lies of the devil, all mankind in Adam and descending from Adam, were plunged into spiritual darkness and made liable to the righteous judgment of God.

Not only does *“the Light shines in the darkness,”* but *“the darkness did not extinguish it”* (vs. 5b.) Here John is declaring the victory of the Light over the darkness: By His life, climaxing in His crucifixion, Jesus conquered the devil by resisting his false interpretation of life, and by remaining faithful to God His Father. Now the risen

Lord Jesus invites each of us to personally trust in Him and receive the benefits of His atoning work; namely, the forgiveness of our sins, reconciliation to God, and everlasting life in the kingdom of God: *“this is my Father’s will; [namely,] that every one who looks upon the Son, and believes on him, should have eternal life; and I will raise him up on the last day”* (Jn. 6:40.)

III. Look to Jesus, and You will Find the Grace Offered by God (Jn. 1:14, 16)

In verse 14c Jesus is described as being *“full of the grace and the truth.”* In the Lord Jesus Christ there is found a superabundant supply of divine mercy, compassion, and blessing.

In verse 16 John testifies, *“From his fullness we all received, grace upon grace.”* Of whom is John speaking when he writes, *“we all received”*? As verse 12 indicates, he is referring to all those who receive the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior and who entrust their lives to Him: *“to all who did receive him, to those who believe on his name, to them he gave the right to become children of God.”*

What do such people receive from the Lord Jesus Christ? Literally, they receive *“grace against grace,”* or, *“grace upon grace.”* In other words, a superabundant experience and supply of divine grace that is renewed day by day, but shall only be experienced in its full dimension in the heavenly kingdom of God. By way of illustration, the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ bestowed upon those who believe in Him is comparable to the waves of the ocean at high tide as they pour themselves out upon the shore, constantly replacing and replenishing each other as they cover the beach.

Conclusion

Look to the Lord Jesus Christ and you will find the revelation of God: You will meet the Person of God; you will see the life required by God; and by believing in Him you will find the grace offered by God.