

The Glory of Christmas

John 1:14-18

There are no lines from the God of heaven so gigantic, so stupendous, so wonderful and so amazing – as those before us today in John 1:14.

The Word!

- who in the beginning was with God, and was God,
- the maker of heaven and earth,
- the light and life which shines and conquers the darkness and death of our world

– that Word became flesh and dwelt among us!

With the heavenly adoption for hell-deserving enemies and the new birth by God in 12 and 13 ringing in our ears, how could the Lord possibly top all of that?

But so it is! God becomes man and tabernacles with us! “God with Us!”

What soul, what mind, what tongue is equal to expounding or explaining this? It is beyond the reach of highest angels to fully illuminate or illustrate!

Yet here is another wonder! John says we have **SEEN** it – this glory, His Glory! We gazed upon Him!

Elsewhere he says:

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, concerning the Word of life-- ² the life was

manifested, and we have **SEEN**, and bear witness, and declare to you **that eternal life** which was with the Father and was manifested to us- (1Jo 1:1-2)

A word is usually heard. When you speak, you don't see a speech balloon emerging above your head unless you are in a cartoon!

The Word made flesh, full of grace, full of glory, is observed! **We are to see Christmas!** We are to see the Word made flesh at Christmas!

Today and next Sunday, we are in this brightest of this temple – adoring the two pillars of the **Glory** of Christmas and the **Grace** of Christmas.

And we begin our message on a sad note now, that not everyone receives this gift of Bethlehem.

The Word, who is God, became flesh.

Jesus is fully God, fully man, in one person forever.

He did not set aside his deity but took to himself a complete and sinless human nature, to identify with all the race of Adam.

So we have seen that some cannot see this.

There are those who tried to make Jesus all God, and denied he was also human. He only *appeared* human but he wasn't really so.

This was the Donatists in the second century.

There was an opposite group who made him out to be all man, and denied he was God. The Arians of the 4th century and modern day Jehovah Witnesses, were false witnesses, denying all the evidence of Christ's glorious person.

Then a third group explains away the union of the two in one Person.

Nestorianism taught the two natures were just next to one another. And Gnostics said that the deity came on Jesus at his baptism and left before the cross.

All of these groups would not believe what John says in four simple little words – the Word became flesh!

The Christian story is precisely the story of one grand miracle, said CS Lewis.

“The Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, unable to do more than lie and stare and wriggle and make noises, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets.” JI Packer

It is staggering but not unbelievable. It is the very cornerstone of the whole Bible! God became man in order to save man from his sins, and to bring us to heaven! He who made man was made man!

So as high and heavenly as this is, it is also here and available to all.

This infleshed God tabernacled, or dwelt as in tent, with us!

This brings us to our second point – the glory that was seen.

What glory? It is the glory of God to be sure, the glory of the only begotten One, that is, the Son of God.

Verse 18 tells us no one has seen God at any time. How could they? He is the invisible God – He does not have a body like humans. How then can God’s glory be made seeable, visible?

The answer is – the only begotten from the Father (14); the only begotten Son – John 3:16; or in 18, the only begotten God, as the earlier manuscripts read.

He is the One whom John the Baptist saw and testified, that He is much higher in rank, and existed from eternity!

But John the Apostle goes further. He can explain the Father – why? Because He is in the bosom of the Father!

So three, closely tied things to take in:

1. First, the only begotten God, the Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, is the same as in verse 1 – the Word was God but the Word was also WITH God. And that term ‘with’ as we saw, means he was face to face with the Father from all eternity. Here is the oneness with the Father, equality with the Father, eternal with the Father.
2. Second, He and He alone is able to show us the Father. No man has seen God the Father at any time. No man can see the face of God and live. Even Moses only saw the afterglow of God’s glory. But Jesus is able to reveal the Father. No man knows the Son but the Father nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Paul says He is the image of the invisible God – Col. 1:15. Jesus is the fulness of Deity in bodily form – Col. 2:9. And he told Philip when asked to show them the Father, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father!”
3. Third, then, Jesus the Word at Christmas came to explain the Father, to narrate the Father – John 1:18. And He does it by showing us Himself! He is the exact representation of God the Father. The Son is the second self of the Father. It is like the Father gave his whole heart to us in His Son, who is in His bosom.

The question then is this: how does the Son, the only begotten God, He who is One with the Father, shows us Himself and so shows us God the Father too?

He comes to us as God the Son sent from the Father. He is beheld by the Apostles and many others as God with us, God on earth, in humbled form, who then died to take our sins away, and rose triumphantly over death and Satan, and bears up to heaven where He is preparing a place for us!

Our message next time is going to be on the fullness that is in Him.

He is full of grace and truth – v. 14. Of his fulness we have all received, and grace upon grace – v. 16. There is a superiority over Moses in 17. And in 18, we see God only as the only begotten explains Him, or narrated Him, or unfolds Him.

This is a compound word, to ‘lead out’. The exposition is found in Jesus alone; and this exposition is seen.

So this is our third and final point today: how may we join John and the Apostles and see God in Christ?

Jesus said, “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Well who has a pure heart? And how can we see that which is invisible?

More is here than seeing by sight, by our eyes. Moses is said to have left all the wealth and power of Egypt, not fearing the king’s wrath and enduring all things – by seeing him who is unseen, invisible, unseeable!

It is by faith in the Word of the Bible, from the Word who is God, about the only begotten Son who shows us the Father, brings us to the Father, saves us from our father the Devil, and as in 12 and 13, have the right to be called the children of God!

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved, said Paul to the Jailer.

John says receive the Son and you receive the Father.

In two verses from his letters, he says:

Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also. (1Jo 2:23)

And, Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. (2Jo 1:9)

The message of Christmas is that Christ the Savior has come, the Word made flesh, who dwelt among us, that we might dwell forever with Him. We receive him as we trust him as our Redeemer, and how willing he is to come and tabernacle in you by His Spirit!

Another offshoot here is that to have the Son is also to have His Spirit. "No man can call Jesus Lord except by the Holy Spirit." 1 Cor. 12:3

You have the Door to heaven revealed to you who come to Christ Jesus. You see His glory as the One perfectly fitted to do all that is needed in abundance, in fulness, to become children of God, born of God.

Christmas is about His Glory; the glory of His salvation; the glory that outshines the glory of all the angels combined, not to speak of all the

glory of this creation – the stars above, or the lights which twinkle in man's dark night.

In Him is life, and the life is the Light of men!

You behold him with unveiled faces, the face of Jesus Christ in which shines the perfect knowledge of the glory of God, which transforms us into the same image from glory to glory.

Jesus is the path of the righteous by faith, which shines more and more to the perfect day.

And one day you will behold his face – whom now you love though you do not see him – but yet you greatly rejoice with joy inexpressible and full of glory – right?

We only do so when the fulness of His grace is in and upon us!

That's our next message – the Grace of Christmas. No glory of Christmas without the Grace of Christmas.

See you next Sunday; keep your eyes on Him, by faith!