

## THE WORD BECAME FLESH

John 1:14-18

Lesson 2

Key Verse: 1:14

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

John described the pre-incarnate Jesus in verses 1-4. Jesus was in the beginning with God. He was God. He was the one through whom all things were made. He is the Creator God, the Possessor of all things. He came into the world. Verses 5 and 9 describe his coming as light shining into darkness. He is the true light that gives light and life to every man. John 1:14 says of his coming, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." God became man and lived among men for a while. This is called the incarnation. How could the almighty, eternal God lay aside his power and glory and step into time to become a part of human history? He came with all the helplessness and powerlessness of the most weak and vulnerable man. Luke tells us that he was born in a stable and laid in a manger. He contrasts him with the power and pomp of Caesar Augustus. Because he did not remain on his throne in heaven, but came down to dwell among us, he understands us. He is available to everyone who comes to him--anyone in any situation can come. Mark says that he did not come to be served, but to serve. (10:45) Paul says that, though he was in very nature God, he did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant...he humbled himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross.(Php 2:6-9) This is the meaning of the incarnation.

Jesus was the first missionary. He was sent by God. His mission was to die for the sins of the world. By his incarnation, Jesus taught us the first principle of a missionary life. A missionary must come into the culture and life of the people he wants to reach. He must learn their language and speak it. He should eat their food and be thankful for it. He must accept the culture and live the lifestyle of those he seeks to reach. He cannot stand above them and look down. He should not try to teach them to fit his cultural pattern. He must only give them God's living word and seek to plant faith in their hearts.

Verse 14 says, "We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." To see his glory means to recognize him for who he is. Even though he wore simple clothes and ate simple food and lived a humble life among needy people, his glory shone through. He was revealed to the eyes of faith. Those who received him, who believed in his name could confess, "We have seen his glory." To see his glory is to see him as he is. It is to recognize God in him. This is only possible when we see him with the eyes of faith.

In the Old Testament, God dwelt among his people in his sanctuary. The mercy seat or atonement cover of the ark of the covenant was his throne. His word of covenant was in the ark; the atonement cover which the priest sprinkled with blood from the altar once a year covered God's righteousness with his mercy. It was here that God met his people. The tabernacle was rough and ugly on the outside; but the inside was gold and blue and scarlet. It was beautiful beyond imagination. Jesus grew up like a root out of dry ground. "He had no beauty...to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him. But his inner beauty--his grace and truth, his love and mercy are beautiful beyond description. The word for "made

his dwelling" is actually "tabernacled." God in the Old Testament longed to come and make his dwelling among his people. He wanted to travel with them to the Promised Land. Jesus, God in the flesh, came and made his dwelling among us for a while. The Holy Spirit indwells us to lead us to the eternal "Promised Land", travelling with us all the way.

Jesus is full of grace. Grace is unmerited favor. It is free, because it cannot be earned. It is undeserved. Jesus didn't have to come. He didn't have to live such a simple, humble life. He didn't have to talk to a smelly Samaritan woman or go to the house of a greedy and despised tax collector. He didn't have to touch a leper or talk to an ungrateful paralytic. But he did. He helped these people--and me--not because they or I deserved it, but because he is full of grace.

Jesus is full of truth. He is light shining in darkness, exposing all the sin and dirtiness. He tells us the truth about God; the truth about ourselves; the truth about our society and world. He is truth. He said, "I am the way and the truth and the life." He promised, "If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; you will know the truth and the truth will set you free." (Jn 8:31,32)  
In the light of his truth, I must repent of sin. I cannot hold unrepented sins in my heart and live in his light.

Any person or nation that is built on a lie will crumble. God is the source of all truth. When we build our lives on his word, we build on a solid foundation that will stand. A nation or system built on lies will fall. May God grant men and women of truth to be shepherds and Bible teachers for our times.

The law came through Moses. It was a blessing to those who lived in lawless

times. But grace and truth came through Jesus. He fulfilled the law. He offers forgiveness, whereas the law can only offer a righteous and true standard. The Law exposes sin; Jesus saves us from it. When we meet Jesus, we meet God.