

GRACE FOR GRACE

John 1:1-18

The Eternal Word

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

John's Witness: The True Light

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: 13 who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

The Word Becomes Flesh

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" "And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

Here we have what many have considered to be one of the most profound books ever written. As it should be, at least in my humble opinion, as it lays out the foundation of creation, by our Creator, and of His plan of redemption for mankind and how we can have eternal life in Christ Jesus. The Apostle John, of whom we most rightly assume to be the author of this book, starts his narrative, his account, or better yet his gospel, which means good news, of Jesus Christ. What is in most Bibles, has as a heading, "The Gospel According to John" yet some say "The Gospel According to Saint John" and some just say "John". I looked it up in my vast collection of Bibles and that is what I found out (which by the way doesn't make me any more spiritual than someone with one Bible). That heading though is just what the publishers of the different translations chose to put as a heading. How unfortunate it is that the publishers of the different translations of the Bible didn't call it the Gospel of Jesus Christ according to John or something like that. Nevertheless, it is widely

accepted that this book of John was written by none other than the Apostle John. You can call him Saint John if you like or Brother John, as all who are in Christ, all who have believed on Christ and have received Him are then of the family of God and then are the saints of God-no miracles needed other than the miracle of rebirth in Christ. The Apostle John, or Brother John clearly tells us what is the purpose of his writing this gospel account. "And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name." (**John 20:30-31**) The Apostle John was not and is not the Messiah the Christ. How unfortunate it is, once again, that those who constructed temples or cathedrals called them Saint John's Cathedral or Saint Paul or Saint Peter. John the Baptist, of whom Jesus said, "Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (**Matthew 11:11**) There is but one of whom it can be said that is the Christ the Son of God and by believing on Him you may have eternal life in Him. His name is Jesus, the Christ the Son of the Living God!

There is Jesus [up high] and then there is us [down here]. There is but One who is the Messiah, the Savior of the world to all who will believe on Him. JESUS! Even so, I love my church family, don't you? I love my Brother, the Apostle John, as he was a living testimony to Jesus being the Christ, the Son of God and I love the gospel account that Jesus, the Word gave him to write for us that we too may believe on Him! How wonderful is the family of God! That doesn't mean, from time to time, we aren't wearied by our church family, or challenged by our brothers and sisters in Christ, or even sometimes grieved by our beloved spiritual siblings. Yet not only are we to love one another as Christ has shown His love for us, Jesus tells us to "love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." (**Matthew 5:44**) We are called, as children of God to be peacekeepers. In Jesus' sermon on the Mount sermon He claimed, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." (**Matthew 5:9**) Before anyone thinks that where we're heading in this message is just a message about works and do's and don'ts. Hang on, there's more. Nobody is recorded as having waved a hand at Jesus when He gave the sermon on the Mount and then saying "works, when are you going to preach on grace?" It's coming brothers and sisters and has come, and His name is Jesus, the Christ, the Messiah, the only begotten Son of God!

Usually **Hebrews 10:25** is quoted as being the reason we gather together in worship and in the Word, where it says that we to be "not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the

Day approaching". Our fellowship or gathering together goes deeper than that, so to speak. Jesus, who we'll look at in our passage of Scripture today as being the Word, tells us, in His Word, as He relayed it through our brother in Christ, John the Apostle, "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." As Jesus said to His disciples, as recorded once again by John, the beloved, "Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." (John 15:13) I love John, don't you? He's speaking of my Lord, my God, my Jesus, who was and is the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us and gave His life as a ransom to as many as would believe on Him and put their trust in Him. Take note of this, Jesus said, "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28) That word serve is diakonēsai in the Greek.¹ That word means to serve or minister to. You know where that word is also used? The form of that word is used for deacons. As we are to take up our cross, figuratively speaking, and follow Jesus we are called to serve, to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters in Christ. When we gather together we are serving one another, encouraging one another in the faith, praying for one another, and sharing the Word with one another. This isn't just a formal ritual that we are going through, right? I don't know how much longer we'll be able to convene here at this park. It does seem as though the city is moving towards certain plans for this property. Nevertheless, we keep praying just as Jesus prayed to our Heavenly Father, "not My will, but Yours, be done." (Luke 22:42)

John starts His letter or message or gospel in the tone of something quite similar to us, from the Old Testament and it is most intentional. He says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made." In the beginning was the Word, the Logos and He was with God. For comparison, say it with me if you know it, **Genesis 1:1**, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." In the beginning was God, Elohim, which is "plural in form but is singular in meaning."² As the Apostle John said in **1 John 5:7**, "For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one." In the beginning was God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit who are one God, three persons within the makeup of God. What is the first thing spoken by the Word in the Creation? "God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day." In comparison, John goes on to say, "In Him [the Word of

1 <https://biblehub.com/interlinear/matthew/20-28.htm>

2 C. I. Scofield, Scofield Study Bible, The (NKJV), pg. 2. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

God, Christ] was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it." One may ask, if Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness why do some choose not to believe. Why does it seem as though some are still in the darkness? There are two possible conclusions to that. One is that those persons hate the light, don't want any part of the light. That brings up possibility number two, that those persons want to be their own god, per se, make up their own rules, determine their own path. With all of the many religions that have come and gone, morphed into this or that way into what they claim to lead one into illumination or eternal life, there is but one God and Creator, who is the Eternal Word that said, "Let there be light" as He IS the light. **Isaiah 9:2** "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined." That light is none other than Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Living God! "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (**Acts 4:12**)

Jumping ahead in the gospel of John, let's look at what Jesus says in John chapter 3. I think perhaps most of you know where we are heading but there's some interesting things Jesus says before and after our much beloved passage of Scripture in **John 3:16-17**. Just before that Jesus said, "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life." (**John 3:14-15**) Jesus was referring to how the Israelites went after the Moabite women and were subjecting themselves to their false gods. There is God Almighty who is the Word and the Light of men and then there are the false gods that all fall under the jurisdiction of the devil, Satan, the Serpent. God brought forth a plague of snakes that were biting the Israelites and He had the Israelites be reminded of their following after other gods by having them look upon a bronze serpent in order to live. Yet now we are to look on the death & the sacrifice, that Jesus came to pay for our sins against God and then to know of His Resurrection and to believe on Him in order that we may live, eternally, in Christ. While we recognize that Jesus died on a cross for our sins, we can look at the cross but He's not there! As much as I can appreciate the song Old Rugged Cross, our true focus is not on a cross, it is on Jesus. The cross is meant to be symbolic of Jesus in that song as we sing of clinging to the Old Rugged Cross-which means we are clinging to Jesus for HE is our life, just as the Israelites were told to cling to God for He is their life. (**Deuteronomy 30:20**) Therefore, we are to be looking unto JESUS who is the author and finisher of our faith! (**Hebrews 12:2**) Jesus was lifted up on a cross but He also has been lifted up and is now seated at the right hand of God, our Heavenly Father to where He is now even making intercession for us. Jesus is praying for us! (**Romans 8:34**)

Say it with me if you know it, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." (**John 3:16-17**)

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." That is the gospel of Jesus Christ-the good news indeed! Getting back to our question as to why some would not recognize the light or honor the light, Jesus continues after explaining that He had to be lifted up and that He was sent here by our Heavenly Father so that we may have life eternal in Him! "He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God." (**John 3:18-21**) All of the false religions ultimately find their roots in what the Serpent told Eve in the garden of Eden, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (**Genesis 3:4-5**) Not only do we have a vast number of examples in the Old Testament of how the Israelites strayed from God and worshipped false gods and idols another early account of how man will rebel against God is the story of the Tower of Babel to where they chose to, in their words, "let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth." (**Genesis 11:4**) They wanted to be their own gods That's what getting illumined in the false religions or the mystery religions gets you. First a physical death and then, outside of accepting God's free gift of eternal life in Christ Jesus, is the second death, a spiritual death, a complete separation from God and His wonderful grace. (**Revelation 21:8**)

There is absolutely nothing though that we can do to save ourselves except to believe on Jesus and then receive Jesus into our hearts. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." (**Ephesians 2:8-9**) When we come to the Light, that is Christ Jesus, not just an emanation of His being, not an energy source that we tap into but to the Living Word of God who is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world to all who will believe on Him then we can begin bearing the fruit unto righteousness as we have Christ working in us. It is God who works in us "to will and to do for His good pleasure." (**Philippians 2:13**) It is Christ who works in us the fruit of the Spirit of " love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, [and] self-control." (**Galatians 5:22-23**) It is in Christ alone that we have Wisdom from God, and Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption. That is where it is said then, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord." (**1 Corinthians 1:30-31**) If that isn't enough to convince someone that we can't save ourselves at any time of our walk of faith, Ephesians 2:10, after saying that it is in grace alone that we are saved, Paul says, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." WE ARE HIS WORKMANSHIP! Christ Jesus alone is doing the work in us. It is only in His working in us that we can please God, be justified before God, and to be saved. One more Word from Jesus that we have to let sink into every fiber of our being. Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing." (**John 15:5**) If need be look over the fruit of the Spirit again in Galatians 5 to realize what is only possible with Christ working in us.

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." That word dwelt is the Greek word eskenosen. The root of that word is skenoo which means to "dwell as in a tent, encamp, to tabernacle.³ You know how we say, as it is true, that "we are the church?" There it is. In Christ, we are His church, where we take shelter in the tabernacle of the Almighty! In **Psalm 27:5**, David says, "For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me." "As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him." (**Psalm 18:30**) That takes us back to what God spoke to Abraham and He says to us to, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." (**Genesis 15:1**) Do you sometimes think that maybe you aren't going to make it? We aren't called to put our trust in ourselves but in Christ Jesus! **Psalm 146:3** says, "Do not put your trust in princes, Nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help." Remember we can't save ourselves, we aren't even to put our trust in ourselves. (**Proverbs 3:5-6**) Once again, Jesus tells us that without Him we can do nothing. Nothing! Lord Jesus save us from ourselves. Lord Jesus have mercy upon us and help us to turn to you for salvation and deliverance. Whoever believes on You Lord Jesus will not be put to shame! (**Romans 10:11**)

God has show and declared to us the salvation that comes from God which includes the beginning of our walk of faith to the ending. "The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them He has set a tabernacle for the sun

3 <https://biblehub.com/greek/4637.htm>

[God set His tabernacle among us through His Son, Christ Jesus], which is like a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoices like a strong man to run its race. Its rising is from one end of heaven, and its circuit to the other end; And there is nothing hidden from its heat. (**Psalm 19:1-6**) We are to keep looking unto Jesus, our bridegroom from the rising of the Son to His setting us into His eternal glory as He is the author and finisher of our faith. Amen?

"And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him." It could be said, from grace to grace to grace. I got a quote from gotquestions.org, that answers just about every question imaginable seemingly on topics of the Bible. "Jesus is full of grace, and John says that, from that fullness, we (John, his original readers, and the rest of us who have trusted in Christ) have received grace and more grace. One hallmark of any interaction with Jesus is grace. Christians receive grace and then more grace—grace served on top of grace—grace and then, in place of that, more grace. The point is that Christ is full of grace, and those who know Him get showered with grace."⁴ Another way of looking at that is, from God's grace to the grace in Christ Jesus to the grace we receive from God through Christ and then we continue to receive more grace for grace as we continue in our fellowship in Christ. Pretty awesome wouldn't you say? Have you received His grace that is in Christ Jesus? "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (**John 1:11-13**) That is, what Jesus explained is to be born-again or born of the Spirit of God. When we believe that Jesus shed His blood for the remission, or taking away of our sins, died on a cross, was raised from the dead on the third day, conquering death, so that for all who will believe on Him will have forgiveness of sins, be reconciled back to God, to be able to have fellowship with Him as our Heavenly Father, and then we too will also overcome death and have eternal life in Christ Jesus.

Some extra good news for all of us is that He doesn't leave it up to us to work out our salvation on our own, even though the Apostle Paul did tell the Philippians to "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." (**Philippians 2:12**) That does apply to us as well but we can only work out our salvation through putting our trust in Jesus from the beginning of our salvation to the end, to where He takes us home to be with Him in His glory—from faith to faith and from grace to grace and from glory [His glory] to glory, so that anyone who glories, let them glory in the Lord! AMEN.

4 <https://www.gotquestions.org/grace-upon-grace.html>