

THE WORD BECAME FLESH

John 1:1-18

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.“

Today we would like to study the beginning of John's Gospel as the first Christmas lesson. We find John's Christmas message in one verse in John 1:14: "The Word became flesh." Let us reflect on the meaning of Jesus' birth and renew our love relationship with Jesus.

In today's text we get to know who Jesus is. Jesus is the creator of life. Jesus, who was God, left his glory in heaven and became man like us. He dwelt among us to free us from darkness and give us true light and life. I pray that we may deeply receive the incarnate Jesus and be used as witnesses of the light of Jesus.

1. Jesus, the Creator of life (1-5)

Let us read verse 1: " In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Word was already there when the beginning happened. The Word has eternity value. This eternal Word was with God and God Himself was the Word. Let's look at verses 2 and 3: "He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." With the word "He" Jesus is meant. It follows that 1) Jesus is the Word, 2) Jesus is God, and 3) Jesus is the Creator of all things. Colossians 1:16 says, "For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him."

John clearly says that Jesus is the Creator of life. Why did John call Jesus first "the Word" and then "He"? John wrote his gospel in a time of many false teachings. Gnosticism, in particular, sought to undermine Jesus' identity as fully human and fully divine. The "Word," in Greek "logos," is a highly philosophical term. Logos is more than just the word. It is what the pagans had been searching for: the question of the Creator, the question of the driving force in the universe, the question of the meaning of life. Even today there are many students who ask about the Logos: "Where do I come from? What is the meaning of my life? What is the goal of my life?" John answers the question about this Logos for the readers then as well as today.

Let's read verse 3 again: "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." Jesus is the Creator and we are His creatures. Every person wants to live a meaningful and happy life. But in fact, there are so many people who have not found the meaning and purpose of their lives. Why? Because it requires faith, that is, a decision to place oneself under God's Lordship and to trust the Word of God. Those who acknowledge Jesus as the Creator have a clear identity and purpose in life according to Ephesians 2:10: "For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." They can always be full of joy because they have found the goal of life to please their Creator God in all things.

Let us read verse 4a: „In him was life...“ Jesus is the origin of life. Life in Jesus is not biological life, but eternal life. Someone with a lot of money, a job and a family may be satisfied with his life. But in fact, without Jesus he has no eternal life. The biological life passes away. But the eternal life in Jesus is the spiritual life in the relationship with God, which never ends and has fullness.

How can a person whose gaze is always fixed on this earth recognize Jesus as the Creator and have eternal life? This is through the Word of God. Through Bible study based on the Word of God, God opens our spiritual eyes to the fact that Jesus is the owner of our lives. Our Bible study may be so serious and profound that it leads us to repentance for our ungodly, selfish life and we meet the Creator of our life in Jesus.

A young man received God's blessing to grow up in a Christian family. However, in his teenager age, he did not want to believe that Jesus was the Creator of his life. When he thought that his life would belong to him, he was often rebellious and ungrateful. Then God helped him to come to think about who Jesus is by writing his deep testimony on Hebrews 5:8,9. God worked in him so that he could acknowledge Jesus' ownership over his life and choose God's guidance by faith in his high school graduation. Now he wants to do his high school graduation with best marks for the glory of God and grow as a servant of God's word according to 1 Samuel 3:19 like Samuel in the Bible.

Let us read verse 4b: „...and that life was the light of men.“ Without Jesus, people are like cut flowers in a vase. They look alive, but in reality they suffer from fear, anxiety and insignificance. It is not philosophy, technical progress or human achievements that bring light into this world. Nor can a person's love or material success be the light of the people. Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness. (5a) Jesus, who gives eternal life, shines into the present until today. He is the true light for all people.

(9) Luke 1:78,79 say, "... by which the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the path of peace."

Let us look verse 5b: „...but the darkness has not understood it.“ The darkness refers to the evil in man. Then, as now, evil tries to extinguish the light. The darkness seems to be too overwhelming. But the darkness has not taken hold of the light. When Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, he defeated the power of death. Jesus, the light, overcomes everything. Everyone who builds his life on Jesus has the light and the victory over darkness.

In this passage, we learn that Jesus is the Creator of our lives. Therefore, we may place ourselves under his lordship by obeying one word of God. Let us lead the students and the next generations to believe in Jesus, the Creator of their lives, through 1:1 Bible study, so that they may have light and eternal life in Jesus.

2. Jesus, full of grace and truth (6-18)

Let us look at verses 6 to 8. John the Baptist was sent by God to testify about Jesus, the light. Before the Messianic ministry of Jesus, John prepared the people of that time for the coming of Jesus by preaching repentance. He was not the Messiah, but he was a witness to the light of Jesus. Although Jesus, the light, shines in the darkness, many people are spiritually blind. They need witnesses of the light of Jesus. That is why God uses His servants and maidservants today, too, to witness of the light of Jesus. I know someone who wanted to make a big name for himself, who should shine day and night in big letters. But through Mark 8:29, God changed him into a shepherd and Bible teacher who now testifies of the light of Jesus. May God use each one of you as a witness of the light of Jesus.

Let us look at verses 10 and 11. Jesus was in the world and came to that which was his own. But the world and even his own people did not receive Jesus. For they loved darkness instead of light. (3:19) Let us read verse 12: "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." One does not automatically become God's child because one is born into a Christian family. Those who believe in the name of Jesus become God's children. What does it mean to believe in the name of Jesus? 1 Peter 1:23 says, "For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God." Being born again into God's children is through the living Word of God. Verse 12 is God's wonderful promise: All who receive Jesus through a word of God are given power to become God's children. It is the greatest privilege to be God's children. We may come in confidence to our heavenly Father, as Galatians 4:6 says: "Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.'" We also have the new, living hope of the kingdom of God: "Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." (1 Peter 1:3) You, the baptized, in these ungodly times, have received the Word of God through Bible study with your parents and shepherds. You have testified your faith today. God is very pleased with your decision of faith not to be slaves of sin, but to live with faith in Jesus as God's children. He wants to bless you and raise a vast army through each of you.

Let's read verse 14 together: "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." "Flesh" here is in complete contrast to "Word." Flesh is that which degrades man, which is mortal and perishable. Jesus was God. He was the creator of all things. But he came on earth and became like men. (Philippians 2:6-8)

Jesus, the God of the universe, became flesh and dwelt among us. We call this incarnation grace (Latin: *incarnatio*, "becoming flesh").

Through Jesus' coming into this world, we see His humility. Jesus did not come as a powerful king, but was born in a manger. (Luke 2:7) He left all his glory, power and honor in heaven. When he dwelt among men, he served them and laid down his life for them. He healed the sick and gave eternal life to those lost in sins. In the midst of tribulations, Jesus lived as the good shepherd. Even when his hour had come to die on the cross for the sins of men, he loved his disciples to the end. He was their Lord and Master, but he humbled himself and washed their feet. Jesus, who was God, became flesh and dwelt among us, the sinners.

Jesus' incarnational grace shows us God's wonderful love for lost people. Jesus' coming into this world is the greatest sign that God loves us. That is why John 3:16 says: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."

John saw with the divine glory of Jesus, full of grace and truth. Jesus is full of grace. Grace is God's gift. (Ephesians 2:8) God has made us blessed in Jesus and given us new life. God has set us free from sin through Jesus. We often try to overcome sin with our own strength. Or we despair and condemn ourselves. But through faith in the power of Jesus' blood, we receive the grace of Jesus: the forgiveness of sins and salvation from our sins.

Jesus is also full of truth. Jesus says that God's word is the truth. (John 17:17) God's word is like a mirror that shows us our sinful nature. Many people suppress the truth because they do not want to repent. But whoever recognizes the truth through God's word becomes truly free from sin. That's why John 8:31,32 say, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then

you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

The disciples were witnesses that in Jesus God's grace and truth had come to them. They experienced the grace that Jesus saw them with the hope of God and called them to follow Him. He served them and finally gave his life for them. Jesus also served them with the truth through the Word of God. Through this, the disciples were changed from fearful men to courageous witnesses of Jesus to the ends of the earth. A Samaritan woman experienced Jesus full of grace, who had fellowship with her and gave her the living water. Through Jesus, she saw the truth so that she repented of her false worship problem. Through Jesus' grace and truth, the woman was changed from a thirsty man-worshipper to a witness of Jesus to her whole city.

I used to give my whole heart, soul and strength to misuse women for my lust and gamble away my money and others' money. I fell deeper and deeper and could not get out of the captivity of sin. Through Deuteronomy 6:5 I was allowed to see Jesus, full of grace and truth: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." I received the undeserved grace of forgiveness of sins and realized the truth of what a prideful sinner I was before God. Jesus became my Savior and my new true object of worship. Now I live my life with joy as a worker of the Word of God who serves the next generation and students with grace and truth.

Let us read again the key verse 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." Jesus came into this world and was born in a manger. He humbled Himself and dwelt among us to deliver us from darkness and give us eternal life. That is why we have great joy, isn't it? We may proclaim the great joy through the birth of Jesus to the young people on campus: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the peo-

ple. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10,11) We walked in darkness and had no hope. But Jesus came to us to save us from our sins and to give us the true light. May God bless us to develop our love relationship with Jesus and to share Jesus' incarnational grace with each other.

Jesus' incarnational grace moved Pastor Son's heart to visit the lepers and see them with the hope of God. He humbled himself to even live with the lonely seriously ill. Jesus' incarnational grace made him a spiritual father to more than 1000 lepers and to the murderer of his two sons. Later, the son of the murderer testified, "My father was the murderer of Pastor Son's sons. I am the fruit of Pastor Son's forgiving love."

Forty years ago, a house church came to Bonn, leaving its home country to serve the disciple making ministry. It took many years of humility to serve the German students who were living deceived by the godless teachings of the spirits of the time. With the grace of incarnation, they served the students through Bible study and common life. Through their humble servanthship, the hearts of many young people were moved and many disciples of Jesus were made. The native shepherds grew up as responsible leaders and the next generation as spiritual co-workers. To this day, through this house church, we see incarnational grace and Jesus, full of grace and truth.

Due to the current situation, quite a few students suffer from loneliness. Even during the Christmas season, many live in isolation and occupy themselves with useless things. They find themselves in darkness. Neither candle lights nor gifts nor great family celebrations can free them from this darkness. They need the true light and eternal life. With Jesus' incarnational grace, we may visit the hopeful and dwell among them, having common life with them and building 1:1 Bible study teams. Let us study the Christmas message together with the students and mobilize them to worship Jesus, the true King and Savior of the world.

In today's text we have learned that Jesus is the Creator of life. Our life belongs to him. In Jesus we have eternal life and no longer walk in darkness. We have also learned that Jesus, the Word, became flesh, in which He humbled Himself completely and served mankind in grace and truth. We may know Jesus' incarnational grace ever more deeply. With Jesus' incarnational grace, let us liberate the young people from the darkness of sin through 10,000 1:1 Bible study teams and raise them up as a vast army for world mission.

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