

Grace for Grace

John 1: 14-16

We have read a portion of one of the richest passages in all of Scripture. I am aware that all Scripture was given by inspiration of the Spirit and is profitable for our lives, but this passage exalts and confirms the very essence and deity of our Lord. One cannot truly see Christ as He is without considering this powerful passage.

John reveals Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God. He offers no genealogy; there is no mention of a manger or shepherds at His birth. John begins with a bold and absolute confirmation of deity. [John 1:1 – In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.](#) John Phillips introduced John's gospel this way: *His language is simple, his vocabulary small. There are about six hundred words in John's vocabulary. It is the vocabulary of a seven-year-old child (a child adds about a hundred words to his or her vocabulary every year). But if John's "coins" are few, their denomination is large; they are golden coins, royal sovereigns, the kind one would find in a rich man's purse.*

As I considered our text, I was moved by the grace extended through Christ our Lord. His grace is wonderful and marvelous, beyond human ability to comprehend. I am amazed that we are the recipients of such grace. We are familiar with the acronym: God's Riches At Christ's Expense. Grace is simply the unmerited favor of God. I want to examine the [undeniable truths](#) found within the text as we think on: [Grace for Grace](#). As we consider such grace we first encounter:

I. The Incarnation of Christ (14) – Although John doesn't repeat the account of Bethlehem and the manger, he does emphatically confirm the incarnation of Christ. He speaks of:

A. The Entrance of the Word (14a) – [And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.](#) Now we have already established that Jesus has always existed as the Word, with God, and as God. Here we find that the Word became flesh and dwelt among sinful men.

- This does not imply that Jesus came into being at Bethlehem; He simply transferred His state of being. It was at that moment in time when God robed Himself in a body of flesh and dwelt among His creation. The word [dwelt](#) means "*to pitch a tabernacle or to live in a tent.*" Isn't it amazing that the God of heaven would become man, condescending to our lowly estate and dwell upon the earth, robed in flesh? Jesus lived the life that we never could. He lived it facing the same adversities and emotions that we feel, yet He lived it free of sin.
- Consider for a moment the enormity of the incarnation. This was the God of heaven who became man. The Creator became dependent upon the creature. The sinless One came to bear

the sins of the world. The Innocent came to be declared guilty by wicked men. The eternal God allowed Himself to be directed by time. The supernatural Lord came to dwell among the natural. The Holy One of heaven dwelt among the vile. The Invisible revealed Himself in flesh for all to see. How could one not be touched by the tremendous sacrifice that Jesus made just to robe Himself in flesh?

- Philip.2:7-8 – But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ^[8] And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The phrase “made himself of no reputation” literally means that *Jesus emptied Himself of His glory*. This is not to say that He ceased to be God. He did not lose His deity to retain it again at the ascension, but rather laid it aside. He never ceased to be God, but rather chose to veil His glory in a body of flesh. (Deal with the remainder of verse.)

B. The Expression of the Word (14b) – (And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. Many who lived in that day experienced the Person of Christ in the flesh. He lived as a man, walking among men. John, no doubt, is reminded of the glory he beheld as He saw Jesus transfigured before him on the mountain. He saw a glimpse of Christ in His glory.

- As we ponder the experiences of those who lived in Jesus’ day, it is easy to become a bit jealous. I never got to look upon the Man who died for my sin. I never had the privilege to hear Him preach with authority. I was not there as He met the needs of countless souls. I was not in the boat as He stood and declared, **Peace, Be still**. But I have seen the Expression of the Word. I did behold the hill called Calvary through eyes of faith. I have heard the living Word speak through the written Word. I have experienced His power in my life when facing a storm. I have seen His mighty power bring healing and change to countless lives. I may have never seen my Lord in the flesh, but I have seen Him countless times. Each time I stand amazed at the grace and truth of my Lord.
- He came to this earth so men might know God and be restored unto Him. He came to reveal the glory of God to sinful men and provide the way of forgiveness and eternal life. He did that for me and He did that for you. That is nothing short of grace!

II. The Identification of Christ (15) – Here John speaks of the ministry of John the Baptist and his public identification of Christ. Notice:

A. His Presentation (15a) – John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake.

We know John stood as the forerunner of Christ, proclaiming Messiah had come just as the prophets of old had predicted. John presented Christ as the Lamb of God which would take away the sins of the world. John knew Christ was the One man had longed to see and he presented Him as such. Jerusalem and the surrounding areas were not without a witness.

- I rejoice that Christ was presented to me as the Savior of the world, the One in whom I must believe by faith in order to receive salvation. I am thankful for the preachers and Sunday school teachers who faithfully shared the good news of the gospel with me. I am thankful for the Holy Spirit coming to me, revealing my need for salvation, and introducing me to Christ!
- That ought to challenge us today. John was unashamed as he publicly presented Christ to the world. We need that same zeal and determination to proclaim Christ to a lost and dying world.

B. His Perfection (15b) – John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, **He that cometh after me is preferred before me**. John was simply the messenger, the herald that Christ had come. As he preached to the masses, John pointed humanity to Christ. John knew salvation was of the Lord and they needed to look to Christ if they were to be saved. He wanted the world to look to Jesus and receive Him as Savior!

- John knew this was always within the plan and will of God. The law was not given to save. At the appointed time, Christ would come to bear the sins of the world and provide atonement for sin. John pointed them to the source of salvation. It wasn't about the success of John's ministry or his following; it was all about Jesus and His finished work!
- We find much activity in religious circles today. Even in modern society, many claim to have the solution for men's problems. Religion presents activity and personal performance as a means of reconciliation to God. We are not here to represent ourselves. Grace was not extended based on our persistence or merit. The coming of Christ was the plan of God before the foundation of the world. Surely recipients of such grace would want to point others to the Lamb of God who alone can provide redemption. He is the source and sole means of salvation!

C. His Presence (15c) – John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, **He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me**. This was a point of debate and contention for many. John made a statement that was hard to be received by most. John was born prior to the birth of Christ in Bethlehem and yet he affirms that Christ was before him. John proclaims Jesus is the eternal God in flesh. The Pharisees debated Christ about this and viewed Him as a blasphemer for making such claims. **John 8:58 – Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say**

unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. This was difficult for men to comprehend, but John knew Christ did not come into existence at Bethlehem. He presented Jesus as the eternal God.

- That certainly comforts me today. I am not serving one who just showed up on the scene and generated a following. I am not serving a mere man who achieved great things while living upon this earth. I am serving the eternal God, Christ the Lord. He has no beginning and no end. He existed in eternity past and He will exist throughout eternity future. Our hope is settled in the eternal God. **Rev.1:18 – I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.**

III. The Investment of Christ (16) – John now describes the eternal investment Jesus made as He fulfilled redemption’s plan. The saved by grace are beneficiaries of His investment. Consider:

A. His Glory (16a) – **And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.** John speaks of the fullness of Christ. The literally means “*the sum total.*” He is speaking of the glory of Christ, the very essence of who He is. He came to this earth robed in a body of flesh, but through Christ we are introduced to the fullness of God. In Him is the wisdom, grace, mercy, power, sovereignty, glory, righteousness, redemption, the very essence of God. Through Christ we see God.

- Isn’t that amazing? Who are we that God would care to reveal Himself to? I know that we have not seen Christ in the flesh as John did, but by faith in Him, we experience the fullness of God. We have the privilege to know the Lord and experience all that He is through Christ! The mercies and eternal graces of God are ours through Christ! Through Him we experience the fullness God intended and the promise of eternal life.

B. His Grace (16b) – **And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.** This is the phrase that gripped my heart as I read this passage. John proclaims the believer receives grace for grace in Christ. That is an unusual statement, but what promise it reveals. It has the idea of “*grace upon grace; continual, uninterrupted grace.*” This reveals that the grace we receive in Christ is never in short supply; there is never any danger in it running low. The saved enjoy the grace of God continually, without interruption.

- Isn’t that wonderful and amazing? No wonder they call His grace amazing. It is constant in a world that isn’t. There is nothing we will ever face that grace will not be present. We will never encounter a problem or situation that grace will not be sufficient to provide. Each day I live, I am consumed by the grace of my Lord! Remember what Jesus said to Paul? **2 Cor.12:9 – And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly**

therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. That is grace for grace! Rom.5:2 – By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

C. His Gift (16a) – And of his fulness **have all we received**, and grace for grace. This marvelous grace is not reserved for a select few. It isn't something that only the elite experience. John reveals the fulness of Christ and the abundant grace He affords are available to all who come to Him by faith. Every born again believer can claim this promise. Each of us are the recipients of such glory and grace. Whatever we face and wherever He leads, we can rest assured knowing that His grace will be there to guide and sustain us!

- This grace was not reserved for those of John's generation. It is still being extended today. It is available to all who look to Christ by faith, receiving His glorious salvation.

Conclusion: I am certainly thankful for all the Lord did for us and every blessing He continues to provide. I rejoice for the grace we have received in Him. Christian, are you struggling in life today? Does it seem you are living in defeat? If so, the Lord has sufficient grace for your need. He has grace for grace. Maybe you are here and you've never been saved. You do not enjoy the grace of God in your life. Jesus stands ready to extend His grace to you through salvation if you will look to Him by faith. Grace is available in abundant supply for those who seek it!