

Exegesis of John 1:14-18

The Word Became Flesh (vv. 14-16)

I. The Nature of Christ

A. Importance of “And the Word” (v. 14)

1. John’s Not-So-Subtle Emphasis (v. 14a):

- a) We cannot miss the emphatic nature of this usage, especially since this is the only other time the term “ὁ λόγος” = the Word is used and the last time it appears in the Gospel altogether.
- b) We are meant to tie this verse to the weight of verses 1-3.
- c) The God who Is and who is Two in One (The Word was with God and the Word WAS God) became flesh.
- d) Cross reference Philippians 2:5-8.
 - (1) Paul expands what John delivered to us in this Gospel with an early Hymn and Creed of the faith.
 - (2) This passage in Philippians (if you listen to the Wednesday Night study on 12/27/23) is one among many early creeds about Jesus that are within the earliest time frames and most likely from the Apostles!
 - (3) The high view of Jesus being God is not constricted only to the Gospels or the Epistles but also in the fact that the message of the Gospel and the nature of Jesus as well as His mission in the Atonement were attested to early and was taught early (as early as the same year of Jesus death in AD 30 or as late as Ad 55).

2. The Necessary Contrast (14a-b):

- a) The Word (ὁ λόγος) and became *flesh* (σὰρξ — “sarks”) is weighty in and of itself.
- b) There are other words in Greek which John could have used, just as “ἄνθρωπος” (anthropos — where we get the word “Anthropology” or the study of man).
 - (1) John could have simply said Jesus became a “man” with ἄνθρωπος but he chose to use σὰρξ — “sarks.” Why?
 - (2) The meaning of σὰρξ refers to not merely the humanity of a person but the contrast of “flesh” to the eternal nature of Jesus being “the Word.”
 - (3) That is, the Word is eternal (v. 1) and we know that human flesh, in its crudest sense, is corruptible, destructible, and vulnerable.

- c) John intentionally uses a crude description to give us the weightiness of the contrast and the sheer humility of Jesus taking on or becoming flesh in the full likeness of humanity (Hebrews 2:17).

3. The Beauty and Blessing of the Presence of God (v. 14b):

- a) Hopefully, something familiar!
- b) God's presence is with His people and will be in His people (John 14 and 16 on the Holy Spirit).
- c) This is a promise fulfilled from the prophets (Jeremiah 31:31-34).
- d) Interesting, we only see this concept one other time in the New Testament.
 - (1) Revelation 21:3.
 - (a) This Revelation passage is another verse of the same concept John is telling us.
 - (b) God's dwelling is with His people—not only in the presence of Christ on earth for His atonement but also in His second coming and New Creation.

B. Christology (14-16).

1. What does v. 14 tell us about the nature of Jesus?

- a) We know the simple answer is that Jesus is both God and man—literally, the God-man.
- b) Why is this important, though?
 - (1) Remember our references to Philippians 2 and Hebrews 2!
 - (a) If Jesus is going to be our savior, He must be both truly God and truly man to both punish sin as God and atone for man as a man.
- c) SIDE NOTE...
 - (1) Jesus being referred to as, “glory as of the only Son from the Father,” can also be translated as the “unique One from the Father.”
 - (a) This verse, alone, opens up a large discussion on the nature of Jesus which we do not have time to traverse.
 - (b) *It is enough to say, right now, that Jesus holds a special relationship as a distinct person to the Father while also having the same nature as the Father.*
 - (c) Christology is a deep conversation and there are many resources I can steer you toward if you want to know more, but v. 14 is emphasizing the Divine nature of Christ as well as the humanity He took on.

2. What does v. 16 tell us the implications are of Jesus being the Word-Flesh or the God-man?

- a) From His fullness we have received grace on upon grace!
- b) If Jesus is truly God and truly man (which He is), then all we need is in Him.
 - (1) The need, however, is the need for salvation and forgiveness due to the ugliness of our sin and disobedience to God as His image bearers.
- c) This atonement is one aspect of the mission of Christ on earth.

God's Revelation of Himself in Christ (vv. 17-18)

I. Moses and God's Revelation in Christ

A. Looking to Exodus 34:5-6.

- 1. Yahweh gives to Moses the Law, a revelation of God that was full of grace and truth.
 - a) The Law gave the people
 - (1) the standard by which they live
 - (2) The method for atonement (both in the day of atonement and the daily sacrifices for sin and such alike)
 - (3) The manner they are to treat each other
 - (4) Etc.
 - b) Moses describes this giving of the Law in Ex. 34:6.
 - (1) Notice, though that the giving of the Law comes with God revealing Himself to Moses directly, even though it was the "back side" of God.

B. Connection to John 1:17.

- 1. Further grace and truth are given in the person of Christ in such a way that even Moses did not get to experience!
- 2. This verse, the end of it that is, gives us the weight (again) of v. 18.

C. God's Revelation and Gospel Message (v. 18)

- 1. No one has ever seen God yet Jesus has not only made God known, He has shown all God in the flesh.

Application?

- The Gospel is unique with a unique God in Christ and the Father — we ought to respond in worship to the glory of God revealed in the person of Christ!
- We ought to equally recognize that if we are to have any hope at real life (v. 4), then we ought turn to Christ for that grace upon grace.