

## JESUS IS GOD

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."

John 1:1-18 is the prologue of John's gospel. In the prologue, the author tells us three things about Jesus through his own account and by the witness of John the Baptist. First, Jesus is the Creator God; second, Jesus is the true light; third, Jesus is full of grace and truth. At this moment, may God bless us to know that Jesus is God incarnate.

### I. Jesus is God (1-5)

First, Jesus is the first cause. (1-2). Look at verses 1 and 2. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning." John's gospel begins with a major premise that Jesus is God. The first part of verse 1 says, "In the beginning." If we say "at the beginning," it has a starting point and ending point. But in the beginning has no starting point or ending point. As St. Augustine defines, "in the beginning" is "in eternity." Our God is there in eternity before the creation.

Let's read verses 1 and 2. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the

beginning." The author uses a syllogism in developing his premise.

First, Word, second God, and third He. "Word" refers to God who was in the beginning. "He" refers to Jesus who is the one and only Son of God.

In this way the author testifies that Jesus is God.

According to John, the Word is the first cause. And the Word is personified by capitalizing "W." In Greek, "word" is "logos," which is relevant to human reason or transcendental knowledge. To the Hebrews, "Word" refers to the Creator God. Psalm 33:6 says, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made." By the same token, words are the means by which we express our thoughts and feelings to others. In verse 1, "In the beginning was the Word," is intended to emphasize that our God is a God who speaks. In other words, our God is not an impersonal God. Our God is a personal God.

Many thinkers were interested in the origin of the universe: What was the "first cause"? How did things come into being, and how did impersonal things become personal beings? Many people have suggested that the first cause was something impersonal, such as air, water, fire, or energy and so on. Later a scholar said the first cause of man was amoeba. Because of this theory, man was downgraded from the level of a man created by God to an amoeba, to the level of insect. The controversy is that no scholar could say how these impersonal things have developed into personal beings. But John's gospel answers all these questions in verses 1 and 2. Jesus is the first cause. Jesus is God.

Second, Jesus is the Creator God (3). Look at verse 3. "Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made." In this verse "him" refers to Jesus. This verse crystal clearly testifies that Jesus is the Creator God. This one premise, "God is the Creator," solves man's fundamental problem. For example, if anyone says, "I came from my parents," then his life can be nothing but an accident and a joke or a mistake. No one can find his absolute meaning in life without the Creator God. And there is a danger for anyone to fall into fatalism, questioning, "Why was I born? Why, why?" Many people attempt to overcome fatalism by becoming men of fame and wealth. But statistics tell us that it does not work that way. There are many who have committed suicide among Nobel Prize recipients: Yasunari Kawabata (Japan, 1968), Ernest Hemingway (USA, 1954), and many others.

But when we believe that God created the heavens and the earth and everything in them, we can say proudly, "I am a child of God. God created me according to his absolute purpose. I came from God and I go back to God (Jn 14:1-4). During my lifetime, I enjoy God and do the work of God and do something good to others" (Eph 2:10). With creation faith, even mountains and rivers find their meaning of existence. If we ask Niagara Falls, "Why are you falling?" They will answer, "I am falling down because God said, 'Fall!'" If we ask "Why are you sorrowful fallen leaves?" They would answer, "Because God made us fallen leaves."

Third, Jesus is the author of life (4). Look at verse 4. "In him was life, and that life was the light of men." In verse 4a, the phrase,

"In him was life," declares that Jesus is the author of life.

Throughout history innumerable people have sought the origin of life, but all of them failed. Three people fabricated theories about life's origin. But they are nothing but sophisticated theories. John's gospel teaches us that Jesus is the origin of life. Jesus bestowed upon us his life as a gift to each of us for a certain period of time, to some 10 years, to some 40 years, and to some 70 years. Therefore, our lives are not our own; they are God's life in us. What, then, is my relation to my own life? I am the steward of my life in God. Creation faith solves man's fundamental life problem.

Those who do not believe in God, the devil overtakes them. When they are ruled by the devil, they are oppressed by the devil. The devil also plants paralyzing fear and endless anxiety in their hearts. In 1975 in Switzerland, there was an American evangelist named Paul Little. He was happy to be an evangelist. But he worried about his two sons' future lives, because of his poor income as an evangelist. He loved his wife and two sons. One day, he went on a picnic to Canada. Strangely, only Paul Little was killed in a car accident, leaving behind his wife and two sons. He had worried about his wife and his two sons. But he could not be responsible for their lives. We cannot take care of our lives. Our lives are in God's hands. God gives and takes away according to his time schedule (Job 1:21).

Look at verse 4. "In him was life, and that life was the light of men." Verse 4 emphasizes that our lives are not our own, but God's. When we have Jesus' life in us, we can have the light of men. Here, the

phrase "the light of men," has the spiritual meaning that Jesus is the meaning of our lives. Without Jesus, we cannot have absolute meaning of life. Without Jesus, we don't know where we came from or where we are going back to. And our labor under the sun seems too hard and meaningless.

Fourth, Jesus gives us the power to become the children of God (5).

Look at verse 5. "The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it." Here, the light refers to Jesus, and the darkness refers to his chosen people and to the peoples of the world.

In this verse, "understood" implies first mankind's rejection of the light. Second, the word "understood" has the meaning of "overcome." To human eyes, the darkness seems to be prevailing over the world. But that is not the case. The true light, Jesus, defeats the power of darkness and brings the final victory. The nature of darkness is hostile to the light. The darkness hates the light, for the light overcomes the darkness. Without Jesus, the light, all men are in the shadow of death. What they labor for and what they achieved are all meaningless. It is no more than preparation of entering into the coffin or going to the funeral home. Those who are in the darkness have no direction at all, because in darkness everybody is only groping around without direction. Those who do not know Jesus are spiritually blind men. But those who receive Jesus, the heavenly sunlight shines upon them.

II. Jesus, the true light (6-13)

The author John upholds John the Baptist as Jesus' witness (6-8). At that time, John looked to many people as if he were the light, because of his spiritual influence and popularity to the suffering flock of God. He also looked as if he were the Christ (Lk 3:15). But John the Baptist clearly testifies that he himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light, Jesus.

John said in verse 9, "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world." He testifies that Jesus is the true light and that he gives light to men. As we know well, there have been many small lights. Some were flickers of truth; some, faint glimpses of reality. For example, Buddha can be compared to a kerosene lamp light. Socrates can be compared to a candlelight, who is now sitting in the second floor in hell. Confucius can be compared to lightning bugs. Mohammed can be compared to the flashing light of a sharpened sword. No one could be the true light, because they could not defeat the power of darkness or show the way to the glorious kingdom of God.

John the Baptist testifies in verse 9: "The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world." Jesus gives the true light to all those who come to him. John Newton was a slave dealer. In order to make money, he had lived in the darkness by selling or killing people's lives. One day by chance, he read a few Bible verses. Out of nowhere, the light of Jesus came into his heart. He was brought from darkness to the marvelous light of Jesus. Since then he became a hymn writer, "Amazing grace! How sweet the sound! That saved a wretch like me!"

What was people's response to the light? Look at verse 10. "He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him." Jesus is the Creator God. All men were created by Jesus. But when Jesus came to his people, they did not accept him because they loved the darkness more than the light (3:19). Even his chosen people did not accept him, because they also loved the darkness more than the light. Many turn to theological arguments when they don't want to accept the Light. Unbelief is not an intellectual problem: Unbelief is the love of darkness. Unbelief is rebellion against God.

Look at verse 12. "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God...." To these rebellious people, Jesus gave a wonderful promise. In this verse, the word "right" has the meaning of "power." We cannot become children of God by our own ability, nor by our willpower, nor by a husband's will. One proud Christian young man married a foxy woman, thinking that he would help her convert to Christianity after marriage. But she got worse after marriage. Only Jesus has power to change us when we believe in him. This is truly a great promise of God.

### III. Jesus is full of grace and truth (14-18)

First, Jesus is full of grace (14). Look at 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." We call this "the incarnation of Jesus." Jesus is God

incarnate. All fallen men want to climb up the ladder of success and they are proud and unforgiving. But when Jesus came down to this world to save men from their sins, he gave up all his glory, power and honor of his kingdom. Jesus gave up his righteousness as God. It is indeed unfathomable grace. In other words, Jesus as God humbled himself when he came to this world to save men from their sins. Jesus was born in a stable of an animal and was laid in a manger. His birth is full of grace. His birth shows us that Jesus is humble and lowly. Jesus, even though he is God, humbled himself to the degree of being a servant in order to save men from their sins. Jesus is full of grace. Why did Jesus do this? It was because he wanted to live among us as our friend and shepherd. We must come to know the grace of Jesus and practice it in our daily lives. Then we will be happy indeed.

Second, Jesus is also full of truth (14). What is truth? Truth is the most valuable thing. What is the most valuable thing? Of course it is one's life. Therefore, one who saves men from their sins is the truth. In the Bible, God's truth is to know where we came from and where we are going back to (Jn 14:1-4). Through Jesus we come to know that we came from God and that we are going back to God.

How can we know the truth? John 8:31 says, "To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples.'" We have no way to know the truth. But there is a way to know the truth. We must hold on to even one word of God in our hearts. Then the truth will set us free. Only the Word of God can set us free. True freedom comes from Jesus. If you want true freedom, please come to

Jesus.

Third, Jesus is God before the creation (15). Look at verse 15. "John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, 'This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.''" In ancient times, the older person was given more respect and regarded as greater than the younger ones. John the Baptist was senior to Jesus. But John testifies that Jesus is before him because Jesus is God.

Why did Jesus come to this world? Look at verse 16. "From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another." Jesus came to bless us. What kinds of blessings? When Moses gave the Law to his people who had a slave mentality and were lawless, it was a blessing to his people. To these slave people, the law of God was the best blessing. We are living in a confused world. The law of God might be the best gift to the suffering peoples of the world. But the Law restricts people. So, it is the second best blessing. But the grace and truth of Jesus are the best blessings because they give forgiveness of sins and eternal life and true freedom to men. Jesus is the source of blessings to all mankind.

Look at verse 18. "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known." Thus far no one has seen God. But we can see God and inherit the kingdom of God when we come to Jesus and accept him as our personal Savior. May God richly bless you to believe that Jesus is the Son of God.

