

John 1:14-18 Commentary

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John 1:14: And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: Kai o logos sarx egeneto (3SAMI) kai eskenosen (3SAAI) en hemin, kai etheasametha (1PAMI) ten doxan autou, doxan os monogenous para patros, pleres charitos kai aletheias.

Amplified: And the Word (Christ) became flesh (human, incarnate) and tabernacled (fixed His tent of flesh, lived awhile) among us; and we [actually] saw His glory (His honor, His majesty), such glory as an only begotten son receives from his father, full of grace (favor, loving-kindness) and truth. [Isa. 40:5.]([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

ESV: And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

KJV: And the Word was made 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.

NLT: So the Word became human and lived here on earth among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son of the Father. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: So the word of God became a human being and lived among us. We saw his splendour (the splendour as of a father's only son), full of grace and truth.

Wuest: And the Word, entering a new mode of existence, became flesh, and lived in a tent [His physical body] among us. And we gazed with attentive and careful regard and spiritual perception at His glory, a glory such as that of a uniquely-begotten Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. ([Erdmans](#))

Young's Literal: And the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only begotten of a father, full of grace and truth.

- **The Word:** Jn 1:1 Isa 7:14 Mt 1:16,20-23 Lk 1:31-35 2:7,11 Ro 1:3,4 9:5 1Co 15:47 Gal 4:4 Php 2:6-8 1Ti 3:16 Heb 2:11,14-17 Heb 10:5 1Jn 4:2,3 2Jn 1:7
- **We:** Jn 2:11 Jn 11:4, 40 Jn 12:40,41 Jn 14:9 Isa 40:5 53:2 60:1,2 Mt 17:1-5 2Co 4:4-6 Heb 1:3 1Pe 2:4-7 2Pe 1:17 1Jn 1:1,2
- **The only:** Jn 1:18 Jn 3:16,18 Ps 2:7 Acts 13:33 Heb 1:5 Heb 5:5 1Jn 4:9
- **Full:** Jn 1:16,17 Ps 45:2 2Co 12:9 Eph 3:8,18,19 Col 1:19 Col 2:3,9 1Ti 1:14-16
- See [John 1:14 Commentary for additional notes](#)
- [John 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Related Passages:

1 Timothy 3:16+ By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

GOD BECAME MAN WITHOUT CEASING TO BE GOD!

John 1:14 summarizes the entire book of John and as such is the focal point of this Gospel! God in the flesh. God "con carne" as my Latin American brothers might say! Divinity and humanity indivisible and incomprehensible, but full of truth. Believe it and live forever. Reject the God-Man and be separated forever from His glorious presence. (2Th 1:8, 9)

This passage refutes the false teaching of Docetism ([see below](#)).

J C Ryle - The passage of Scripture now before us is very short, if we measure it by words. But it is very long, if we measure it by the nature of its contents. The substance of it is so immensely important that we shall do well to give it separate and distinct consideration. This single verse contains more than enough matter for a whole exposition. The plain meaning of these words is, that our divine Saviour really took human nature upon Him, in order to save sinners. He really became a man like ourselves in all things,

sin only excepted. Like ourselves, he was born of a woman, though born in a miraculous manner. Like ourselves, He grew from infancy to boyhood, and from boyhood to man's estate, both in wisdom and in stature. (Luke 2:52.) Like ourselves, he hungered, thirsted, ate, drank, slept, was wearied, felt pain, wept, rejoiced, marveled, was moved to anger and compassion. Having become flesh, and taken a body, He prayed, read the Scriptures, suffered being tempted, and submitted His human will to the will of God the Father. And finally, in the same body, He really suffered and shed His blood, really died, was really buried, really rose again, and really ascended up into heaven. And yet all this time He was God as well as man! This union of two natures in Christ's one Person is doubtless one of the greatest mysteries of the Christian religion. It needs to be carefully stated. It is just one of those great truths which are not meant to be curiously pried into, but to be reverently believed. Nowhere, perhaps, shall we find a more wise and judicious statement than in the second article of the Church of England. "The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin of her substance: so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and the manhood, were joined together in one Person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man." This is a most valuable declaration. This is "sound speech, which cannot be condemned." ([Expository Thoughts on John](#))

The Word - The definitive article ("the") is present in Greek -- This not just any "logos" but is "the Logos," the specific, unique Logos Who is God, not a philosophical idea. Here John unveils the Logos of John 1:1, where it is an abstract term to many. John is stating that the Logos is clearly a Person, the God-Man, Christ Jesus. God in the flesh. God "con carne."

Word ([3056](#)) (**logos** from **lego** = to speak with words; English = logic, logical) means something said and describes a communication whereby the mind finds expression in words. Although **Lógos** is most often translated **word** which Webster defines as "something that is said, a statement, an utterance", the Greek understanding of **lógos** is somewhat more complex. To the Greek secular and philosophical mind, **lógos** was not merely the name of an object but was an expression of the thought behind that object's name.

Related Resources:

- Holman Bible Dictionary [Logos](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Logos](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Logos](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Logos](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Logos](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Logos](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Logos](#)
- [Logos - a lengthy description in John 1:1 of Vincent's Word Studies](#)
- [What is the Logos?](#)
- [What do John 1:1, 14 mean when they declare that Jesus is the Word of God?](#)
- [What does it mean that the Word became flesh \(John 1:14\)?](#)

Barclay - The Greek term **lógos** does not only mean **word**; it also means reason. For John, and for all the great thinkers who made use of this idea, these two meanings were always closely intertwined. Whenever they used **lógos** the twin ideas of the Word of God and the Reason of God were in their minds.

Robert Lightner - The designation **Word** (Logos) attracts our attention. What does it mean? What picture does it convey of the Lord Jesus? Let me illustrate: I might have all kinds of ideas, thoughts, suggestions in my mind, all kinds of emotions in my heart, but unless there was some way, some means by which I could convey them to others, they would not know them. This is where words derive their value. Words are vehicles for conveying thoughts to others, and if it is true that "as a man thinketh in his heart so is he" then my words will be vehicles for conveying to others what I am. The Lord Jesus is the Word, the conveyor to men not only of the thoughts of God and the wisdom of God, but the conveyor of what God is. He is the vehicle to reveal God to men, thus "no man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father (who has His being in the bosom of the Father), he hath declared him" (John 1:18). As the "Word" our Lord Jesus revealed God in His power in the creation (John 1:3) and upholding of the world (Heb. 1:1-3). He has revealed Him through incarnation (John 1:14) and redemption to the guilty sons of men. Did He not say: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John 14:9)?

W E Vine discusses the two main thoughts of Logos..

(1) **"the expression of thought," not the mere name of an object** (a) as embodying a conception or idea, e.g., Luke 7:7; 1Co 14:9,19; (b) a saying or statement, (1) by God, e.g., Jn 15:25; Ro 9:9; 9:28 , RV, "word" (AV, "work"); Gal 5:14; Heb4:12; (2) by Christ, e.g., Mt 24:35 (plur.); John 2:22; 4:41; 14:23 (plur.); Jn 15:20. In connection with (1) and (2) the phrase "the word of the Lord," i.e., the revealed will of God (very frequent in the OT), is used of a direct revelation given by Christ, 1Th 4:15; of the gospel, Acts 8:25; 13:49; 15:35,36; 16:32;

19:10; 1Th 1:8; 2Th 3:1; in this respect it is the message from the Lord, delivered with His authority and made effective by His power (cp. Acts 10:36); for other instances relating to the gospel see Acts 13:26; 14:3; 15:7; 1Co 1:18; 2Co 2:17; 4:2; 5:19; 6:7; Gal 6:6; Ep 1:13; Php 2:16; Col 1:5; Heb 5:13; sometimes it is used as the sum of God's utterances, e.g., Mk 7:13; Jn 10:35; Rev 1:2,9; (c) discourse, speech, of instruction, etc., e.g., Acts 2:40; 1Cor 2:13; 12:8; 2Cor 1:18; 1Th 1:5; 2Th 2:15; Heb 6:1.; doctrine, e.g., Mt 13:20; Col 3:16; 1Ti 4:6; 2Ti 1:13; Titus 1:9; 1Jn 2:7;

(II) "The Personal Word," a title of the Son of God; this identification is substantiated by the statements of doctrine in John 1:1-18 , declaring in verses Jn 1:1,2 (1) His distinct and super finite Personality, (2) His relation in the Godhead (pros, "with," not mere company, but the most intimate communion), (3) His deity; in John 1:3 His creative power; in Jn 1:14 His incarnation ("became flesh," expressing His voluntary act; not as AV, "was made"), the reality and totality of His human nature, and His glory "as of the only begotten from the Father," RV (marg., "an only begotten from a father"), the absence of the article in each place lending stress to the nature and character of the relationship; His was the Shekinah glory in open manifestation; Jn 1:18 consummates the identification: "the only-begotten Son (RV marg., many ancient authorities read "God only begotten,"), which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him," thus fulfilling the significance of the title "Logos," the "Word," the personal manifestation, not of a part of the Divine nature, but of the whole Deity ([Word - Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words](#)).

Became - Not "made" but "**became**." Jesus was not created, but was the Creator (Col 1:16, Heb 1:2) Who condescended to become part of His own creation, a thought too profound to fully comprehended by our mind, and yet a truth that can be fully received by our faith.

Compare the verb "**was**" in John 1:1 with the verb "**became**" here in John 1:14...

Verse 1 In the beginning WAS the Word... Imperfect tense indicates continuing action in the past. Language of continuing existence

Verse 14 The Word BECAME flesh... Aorist tense indicates an action that took place in a point in time. Language of change as the Word became something that He previously was not.

The Word took on flesh and, in doing so, brought about a change that will have eternal repercussions. The One who became God and man stayed that way. The One who was touched by a band of Galilean disciples is today worshiped by angels. (From [John Stevenson](#))

John Trapp - Put himself into a lousy, leprosy suit of ours, to expiate our pride and robbery, in reaching after the Deity, and to heal us of our spiritual leprosy; if he had not assumed our flesh he had not saved us.

Illustration - The story is told of a little girl who cried out to her mother from her bedroom, "Mommy, I'm afraid to be in my dark room alone." Her mother replied, "It's okay, Honey. The Lord is with you." She called back, "Yes, but I want someone with skin on." Jesus is God "with skin on." And He has come so that we never have to be afraid again.

Became flesh - "The same verb as in John 1:3. All things **became** through Him; He in turn **became** flesh. "**He became that which, first became through Him.**" In becoming, He did not cease to be the Eternal Word. His divine nature was not laid aside. In becoming **flesh** He did not part with the rational soul of man. Retaining all the essential properties of the Word, He entered into a new mode of being, not a new being. The word **sarx, flesh**, describes this new mode of being (cp Php 2:6-8-note). It signifies human nature in and according to its corporeal manifestation. Here, as opposed to the purely divine, and to the purely immaterial nature of the **Word**. He did not first become a personality on becoming **flesh**. The prologue throughout conceives Him as a personality from the very beginning — from eternal ages. The phrase **became flesh**, means more than that He assumed a human body. He assumed human nature entire, identifying Himself with the race of man, having a human body, a human soul, and a human spirit. See Jn 12:27; 11:33; 13:21; 19:30. He did not assume, for a time merely, humanity as something foreign to Himself. The **incarnation** was not a mere accident of His substantial being. "He became flesh, and did not clothe Himself in flesh." Compare, on the whole passage, 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7.

MacArthur quotes the fifth-century church father Cyril of Alexandria,

We do not... assert that there was any change in the nature of the Word when it became flesh, or that it was transformed into an entire man, consisting of soul and body; but we say that the Word, in a manner indescribable and inconceivable, united personally... to himself flesh animated with a reasonable soul, and thus became man and was called the Son of man.... The natures which were brought together to form a true unity were different; but out of both is one Christ and one Son. We do not mean that the difference of the natures is annihilated by reason of this union; but rather that the Deity and Manhood, by their inexpressible

and inexplicable concurrence into unity, have produced for us the one Lord and Son Jesus Christ. (cited in Bettenson, *Documents*, 47)

Flesh (4561)(**sarx**) Ryle says that the use of this word, instead of “man,” ought not to be overlooked. It is purposely used in order to show us that when our Lord became incarnate, He took upon Him nothing less than our whole nature, consisting of a true body and a reasonable soul... When “the Word became flesh,” He did not take on Him “peccable flesh.” It is written that He was made in “the likeness of sinful flesh.” (Ro 8:3.) But we must not go beyond this. Christ was “made sin for us.” (2Cor 5: 21.) But He “knew no sin,” and was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and without taint of corruption. Satan found nothing in Him. Christ’s human nature was liable to weakness, but not to sin. The words of the fifteenth Article must never be forgotten, Christ was “void from sin, both in His flesh and in His Spirit.”

Ray Stedman- Sarx is the Greek word for **flesh**; the meat, the soft, yielding flesh of our human bodies. **The Word**, the energy of the universe, was contained in a baby’s body. et, in the mind of God, that is what he intended from the beginning. The most remarkable thing about our race is that God designed man to be the bearer of himself. Man has a capacity for God; and that makes him unique. No animal has that capacity; no animal has any idea or concept of God as men have and share universally. Let evolution explain that if it can! Why is it that we are so different from any animal? Every human being has a capacity for God and a hunger after God. Whether we know it or not, we are longing, searching constantly all through our life for something that will meet what Pascal called, “the God-shaped vacuum” in the human heart. That capacity was designed of God, for God intended man to be the dwelling place of God. Now, at last, in human history that actually takes place: God becomes man; God becomes flesh, in an amazing blending together of these two concepts. In his letters, John the Apostle says that fact is so fundamental to our faith that a denial of it constitutes an anti-Christian heresy: “If any man deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, that is the spirit of anti-Christ,” (1 John 4:3). That truth is so central to our faith that if you want to test any other religion or cult, ask yourself, “What do they teach about Jesus? Was he God made flesh, or not?” That is the test of heresy. The glory that John saw in Jesus was the shining out into the darkness of the world of the eternal glory of the Word of God. ([The Stranger of Galilee - John 1:14-18](#))

J C Ryle applies the truth that the **Word became flesh - Did the Word become flesh?** Then He is One who can be touched with the feeling of His people’s infirmities, because He has suffered Himself, being tempted. He is almighty because He is God, and yet He can feel with us, because He is man. **Did the Word become flesh?** Then He can supply us with a perfect pattern and example for our daily life. Had he walked among us as an angel or a spirit, we could never have copied Him. But having dwelt among us as a man, we know that the true standard of holiness is to “walk even as He walked.” (1 John 2:6.) He is a perfect pattern, because He is God. But He is also a pattern exactly suited to our wants, because He is man. Finally, **did the Word become flesh?** Then let us see in our mortal bodies a real, true dignity, and not defile them by sin. Vile and weak as our body may seem, it is a body which the Eternal Son of God was not ashamed to take upon Himself, and to take up to heaven. That simple fact is a pledge that He will raise our bodies at the last day, and glorify them together with His own. For want of a clear understanding of this union of two natures in Christ’s Person, the heresies which arose in the early Church were many and great. And yet Arrowsmith points out that no less than four of these heresies are at once confuted by a right interpretation of the sentence now before us. “**Arianism** holds that Jesus Christ was not true God. This text calls Him the Word, and makes Him a Person in the Trinity. “**Apollinarianism** acknowledges Christ to be God, yea, and man too; but they hold that He took only the body of a man, not the soul of a man, while His divinity supplied the room of a soul. We interpret the word ‘flesh’ for the whole human nature, both soul and body. “**Nestorianism** grants Christ to be both God and man: but then they say the Godhead made one person, and the manhood another person. We interpret the words ‘was made’ as implying an union, in which Christ assumed not the person of man, but the nature of man. “**Eutychianism** held but one person in Christ; but then they confounded the natures. They say the Godhead and manhood made such a mixture as to produce a third thing. Here they also are confuted by the right understanding of the union between the Word and flesh.” He then goes on to show how the ancient Church met all these heretics with four adverbs, which briefly and conveniently defined the union of two natures in Christ’s person. They said that the divine and human natures when “the Word was made flesh,” were united truly, to oppose the Arians,—perfectly, to oppose the Apollinarians,—undividedly, to Oppose the Nestorians,—and unmixedly, to oppose the Eutychians. ([John 1 Commentary](#))

Webster (1828) defines **incarnation** as - The act of clothing with flesh. 1. The act of assuming flesh, or of taking a human body and the nature of man; as the incarnation of the Son of God. 2. In surgery, the process of healing wounds and filling the part with new flesh.

Related Resources:

- [Incarnation - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible](#)
- [Bridgeway Bible Dictionary Incarnation](#)

- Charles Buck Dictionary [Incarnation](#)
- CARM Theological Dictionary [Incarnation](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Incarnation](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Incarnation](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Incarnation](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Incarnation \(2\)](#) [Incarnation](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Incarnation](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Incarnation](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Incarnation](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Incarnation](#)
- [What is the meaning of the Incarnation of Christ?](#)
- [Hypostatical Union - Watson's Biblical & Theological Dictionary](#)
- [The Person of Christ - Outline from Dr Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology](#)
- [The Person of Christ - Pt 1-3 Dr Wayne Grudem-in Depth Mp3's - Highly Recommended](#)

Dwelt ([skenoo](#)) **among us** - God truly came to dwell in our midst, even as He dwelt in the midst of Israel in the Tabernacle (Ex 24:8, 40:34-35) and later in their Temple (1Ki 8:10-12). **Among us** (en hemin) is more literally "in the midst of us."

John MacArthur - Verse 14 is the most concise biblical statement of the Incarnation, and therefore one of Scripture's most significant verses. The four words with which it begins, the Word became flesh, express the reality that in the Incarnation God took on humanity; the infinite became finite; eternity entered time; the invisible became visible (cf. Col. 1:15); the Creator entered His creation. God revealed Himself to man in the creation (Rom. 1:18-21), the Old Testament Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21), and, supremely and most clearly, in Jesus Christ (Heb. 1:1-2). The record of His life and work, and its application and significance for the past, present, and future, is in the New Testament. (See [MacArthur New Testament Commentary – John 1-11](#) scroll up and down for more comments)

Vincent - The reference is to the eye-witnesses of our Lord's life. "According as the spectacle presents itself to the mind of the Evangelist, and in the words among us takes the character of the most personal recollection, it becomes in him the object of a delightful contemplation" (Godet).

Steven Cole - John could have said, "The Word lived among us," but instead he used the unusual word, translated **dwelt** ([skenoo](#)), which means "to pitch a tent" or "to tabernacle." It is used of the tabernacle in the Old Testament, where God **dwelt** with His people in the wilderness. John does not mean by this term that Jesus' humanity was temporary, but rather, His stay on earth was temporary. By using the word that was used of the tabernacle, coupled with seeing Jesus' glory, John wants us to make some connections. Just as the tabernacle was the place where God dwelt with His people and manifested His glory, so Jesus is **Immanuel, God with Us**. Just as the tabernacle was at the center of Israel's camp, so Christ is to be at the center of the church. Just as sacrifices and worship were offered at the tabernacle, so Jesus is our complete and final sacrifice, and we have access to God through Him. Every aspect of the tabernacle speaks of Christ (See [Christ in the Tabernacle by Louis T. Talbot](#)). The bronze altar for sacrifice and the bronze laver for cleansing point to Christ. The table of showbread in the holy place speaks of Christ, the living bread. The golden lampstand points to Christ, the light, who illumines the things of God. The altar of incense reminds us of Christ's making intercession for us. In the holy of holies, the ark of the covenant, made of wood covered with gold, points to the two natures of Christ. On top of the ark was the mercy seat, where the blood of atonement was sprinkled. Inside were the tablets of the law, pointing to Christ, the fulfillment of God's law for us; the jar of manna, pointing to Christ as our sustenance; and Aaron's rod that budded, pointing to Jesus as "the branch," who was raised from the dead and gives new life to those who were dead in their sins. Jesus, our tabernacle, "dwelt among us"! ([The Word Became Flesh John 1:14](#))

Ray Pritchard - In the Bible three kinds of people lived in tents—shepherds, sojourners, and soldiers. They lived in tents because they never stayed in one place very long. Jesus lived in the "tent" of his humanity for 33 years on the earth because he too was a shepherd, a sojourner, and a soldier. He came to be the Good Shepherd, he came as a visitor from heaven, and he came as the Captain of our Salvation to defeat the devil once and for all. Jesus was God's rescue mission to the human race. He came on a mission from God. When his mission was over, he went back to heaven. While he was here, he pitched his tent among us. When his time was up, he took his tent of human flesh and rejoined his Father in heaven. ([Sermon](#))

Ray Stedman - The key to John 1:14 is the word "dwelt": "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." That is an interesting word. It declares that Jesus "tented," he "tabernacled," among us. He came and lived in a tent in our midst. John saw that human tent. ([The Stranger of Galilee - John 1:14-18](#))

Dwelt ([4637](#)) (**skenoo** from **skenos** = tent, abode) means to dwell literally in a tent, to reside, to take up one's residence, to pitch one's tent, encamp, to live in a tent (as God did in the Tabernacle of old, a symbol of protection and communion). In Revelation

skenoo describes God tabernacling with men and in Jn 1:14 **skenoo** describes Jesus the Eternal Logos tabernacling, a fulfillment in a sense of God's OT **Shekinah glory** (cp Ex 40:34-35, cp "cloud" in Lk 9:34) now among men in the person of Jesus, Who is fully (100%) God and fully (100%) Man (Mysterious? Yes. Truth? Absolutely! John explains how vital for one's salvation (Read Jn 1:11, 12, 13) is it that one believe this mysterious truth "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come **in the flesh** is from God." (1Jn 4:2)

MacArthur has some interesting thoughts on the root word **skenos** (tent) - A tent is an apt metaphor for the human body, which is a temporary home for the eternal souls of those whose real home is in heaven (Php 3:20) and who are aliens and strangers in this world (Ge 47:9; 1Chr 29:15; Ps 119:19; Heb 11:13; 1Pe 1:1, 17; 2:11). Just as the tabernacle of Israel's wanderings in the wilderness was replaced with a permanent building when Israel entered the Promised Land, so the temporary tent in which believers now dwell will be replaced one day in heaven with an eternal, imperishable body (1 Cor. 15:42, 53-54). (2 Corinthians Commentary)

Köstenberger notes that **skenoo** "suggests that in Jesus, God has come to take up residence among his people once again, in a way even more intimate than when he dwelt in the midst of wilderness Israel in the tabernacle (Ex 40:34-35). Moses met God and heard his word in the "tent of meeting" (Ex 33:9); now, people may meet God and hear him in the flesh of Jesus (Mowvley 1984: 136). Jesus' "pitching his tent among us" is here related to the incarnation, that is, his being made human flesh; according to John, Jesus took the place of the temple (Schlatter 1948: 23; cf. Hoskins 2002: 170-74; Kerr 2002: 122-23). The aorist tense of σκηνώω could be viewed as ingressive ("began to dwell") or complexive ("dwelt" in its totality); perhaps both are in view: the Word took up residence, and then stayed (Ridderbos 1997: 51; Morris 1995: 91). (John. Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament).

Skenoo - 5x in 4v - **NAS Usage**: dwell(3), dwelt(1), spread His tabernacle(1).

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and **dwelt** among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Revelation 7:15+ "For this reason, they are before the throne of God; and they serve Him day and night in His temple; and He who sits on the throne **will spread His tabernacle** over them.

Revelation 12:12+ "For this reason, rejoice, O heavens and you who **dwell** in them. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has come down to you, having great wrath, knowing that he has only a short time."

Revelation 13:6+ And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, that is, those who **dwell** in heaven.

Revelation 21:3+ And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will **dwell** among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them,

Skenoo - 3x in Lxx - Ge 13:12, Jdg 5:17, 8:11

Genesis 13:12+ Abram settled in the land of Canaan, while Lot settled (yashab; Lxx - katoikeo) in the cities of the valley, and **moved his tents** (Heb = ahal = move or pitch a tent; **skenoo** = pitched his tent) as far as Sodom

Judges 8:11+ Gideon went up by the way of those who **lived** (Heb = shakan = settle down; Lxx = **skenoo**) in tents (skenos - tabernacles) on the east of Nobah and Jogbehah, and attacked the camp when the camp was unsuspecting.

In Ex 33:7-11 we see the OT parallel , where the Tent of Meeting (Tabernacle) was the OT picture which was fulfilled when Jesus tabernacled among men...

Ex 33:7+ Now Moses used to take the TENT and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the camp, and he called it the **TENT** (Hebrew = ohel; Lxx = skenos) OF MEETING (Lxx = Marturion [verb = martureo] literally the "testimony tent" - the Tent gave "witness" to the reality of God, even as the incarnation of Jesus, the "Tabernacling" of Jesus among men gave witness to the unseen God - see Jn 1:18) . And it came about, that everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the TENT OF MEETING (Tabernacle) which was outside the camp. 8 And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent. 9 And it came about, whenever Moses entered the tent, the **PILLAR OF CLOUD** (Visible manifestation indicative of the presence of God, the Shekinah Glory) of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the LORD would speak with Moses. 10 When all the people saw the **PILLAR OF CLOUD** standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent. 11 Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

Marvin Vincent's note on "**dwelt**" - Literally, tabernacled, fixed, or had His tabernacle: from skene, a tent or tabernacle. The verb is used only by John: in the Gospel only here, and in Rev 7:15; 12:12; 13:6; 21:3. It occurs in classical writings, as in Xenophon, "he **pitched his tent** in the plain" ("Anabasis," vii. 4, 11). So Plato, arguing against the proposition that the unjust die by the inherent destructive power of evil, says that "injustice which murders others keeps the murderer alive — aye, and unsleeping too; "literally, so far has her **tent been spread** from being a house of death" ("Republic," 610). The figure here is from the Old Testament (Lev 27:11; 2Sa 7:6; Ps 78:67 sqq.; Ezek 37:27-note). The tabernacle was the **dwelling-place** of Jehovah; the **meeting-place** of God and Israel. So the Word came to men in the person of Jesus. As Jehovah adopted for His habitation a dwelling like that of the people in the wilderness, so the Word assumed a community of nature with mankind, an embodiment like that of humanity at large, and became flesh. "That which was from the beginning, we heard, we saw, we beheld, we handled. Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (1Jn 1:1-3. Cf Php. 2:7, 8-note). Some find in the word tabernacle, a temporary structure (see the contrast between skenos = tabernacle, and oikodome = building, in 2Cor 5:1-note), a suggestion of the transitoriness of our Lord's stay upon earth; which may well be, although the word does not necessarily imply this; for in Rev 21:3-note, it is said of the heavenly Jerusalem "the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will **set up** his **tabernacle** (skensei) with them." Dante alludes to the incarnation in the seventh canto of the "Paradise:" [John 1 Word Studies](#)

— "the human species down below
Lay sick for many centuries in great error,
Till to descend it pleased the Word of God
To where the nature, which from its own Maker
Estranged itself, He joined to Him in person
By the sole act of His eternal love."

Spurgeon - Now, Christ's human flesh was God's tabernacle, and it is in Christ that God meets with man, and in Christ that man hath dealings with God... we, having been washed in the precious blood of Christ, have access with boldness unto God, even the Father through Christ, who is our tabernacle and the tabernacle of God among men... Over the mercy-seat stood the cherubim, whose wings met each other, and beneath the wings of the cherubim there was a bright light, known to the Hebrew believer by the name of the Shekinah. That light represented the presence of God. Immediately above that light there might be seen at night a pillar of fire, and by day a spiral column of cloud rose from it, which no doubt expanded itself into one vast cloud, which covered all the camp, and shielded all the Israelites from the blaze of the broiling sun. The glory of the tabernacles, I say, was the Shekinah. What does our text say? Jesus Christ was God's tabernacle, and "we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." Jesus is not the tabernacle without the glory; he is not as the temple when the voice was heard with the rushing of winds before the siege of Jerusalem, crying, "Arise, let us go hence," but it was a temple in which God himself dwelt after a special manner; "for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." (Col 2:9-note) ([John 1:14 The Glory Of Christ - Beheld](#))

Arrowsmith - Three sorts of men are described in the Bible as living in tents: shepherds, sojourners, and soldiers. The phrase here used has reference to the calling of all these three, and that it points to Christ's life on earth being that of a shepherd, a traveler, and a soldier. ([The Biblical Illustrator](#))

G. J. Brown - The Jews in the wilderness had a tabernacle or tent, wherein they worshipped God, and there the glory of God was seen. Over the mercy seat hovered the Shechinah. A glorious light, the symbol of the Divine presence, shone ever in the sanctuary. In like manner Christ, who is "the brightness of the Father's glory," the true Shechinah, tabernacled among us. His flesh, that is, His body of human nature, was as a tabernacle, in which resided that Divine nature of which the glory in the Jewish tabernacle was the symbol. Thus the Tabernacle of God was with men, and He dwelt among us. ([The Biblical Illustrator](#))

We saw His glory - Glory (*doxa*) in simply terms speaks of a manifestation of God's true nature, presence, or likeness. He is glorified when He is allowed to be seen as He really is. To be where God is will be glory. To be what God intended will be glory. To do what God purposed will be glory. The basic idea in the word doxa is that of manifestation. The glory of God is the manifestation of His Being, His character and His acts. The glory of God is what He is essentially. It also includes the idea of to give a proper opinion of. Indeed Jesus gave a proper opinion of His Father. Indeed John 1:18 says Jesus "has explained" the Father!

As noted below "**we**" probably refers to John and the other disciples. Those who had spiritual eyes to see, saw! Have you seen His glory? He is the Word and when we read His Word, we in a sense behold His glory, but only if we have eyes to see! Eyes of faith are the only requirement. A heart like a little child. Then you will see His glory and one day live forever with Him in the radiance of His glory (cf Rev 21:3, Rev 21:23). His **glory** was veiled to be sure, and yet the **glory** could not be completely hidden. And yes for a moment 3 disciples were allowed to see his unveiled glory (see [transfiguration](#).)

Who are the "**we**?" The possibilities are (1) Humanity; (2) John and the prophets; (3) Most favor this to refer to the apostle John and

the early Christians. He does allude to John the Baptist so the we could certainly include him.

Norman Geisler explains the **glory** of Jesus - Jesus "pitched His tabernacle" among us harkens back to the OT tabernacle of Israel's wilderness wanderings. God's people had been instructed to erect the tabernacle as a reminder that God's dwelling-place was among them. Ex 25:8 quotes God as saying, "Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may **dwell** (Ed: Heb = **shakan** = root of **Shekinah** = glory cloud; **Shakan** means to settle down, to abide) among them". Hence, as God formerly dwelt among his people in OT times in the tabernacle that was erected for him, so now in a fuller sense he has taken up residence on earth in a tabernacle of human flesh. Furthermore, John's use of the Greek word *eskēnōsen* ("pitched his tabernacle") becomes even more significant when it is realized that the **glory** that resulted from the immediate presence of the Lord in the tabernacle came to be associated with the **Shekinah**, a word that refers to the radiance, glory, or presence of God dwelling in the midst of his people. When Christ became flesh (John 1:14), the glorious presence of God was fully embodied in Him, for He is the true **Shekinah**. The same **glory** that Moses beheld in the tabernacle in Ex 40:34–38 was revealed in the person of Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17). (Geisler, N. L., & Rhodes, R. When cultists ask : A popular handbook on cultic misinterpretations).

Beheld (theaomai) "denotes calm, continuous contemplation of an object which remains before the spectator." (Vincent)

Beheld (2300) (**theaomai** from **thaómai** =to wonder, from **thaúma** = wonder, admiration <> English = theatrical spectacular performance) denotes "calm, continuous contemplation of an object which remains before the spectator." (Vincent) **Theaomai** implies an intent contemplative gaze. The point is that it is not a mere glance or quick look, but a long, searching gaze (e.g., Lk 23:55). It describes intelligent beholding, a "careful and deliberate vision which interprets its object" (G. Abbott-Smith). **Theaomai** can mean to gaze at a show or demonstration or to watch as in a theater. (English word *theater*).

Related Resources:

- Shekinah glory cloud
- Glory of God
- [What is the Shekinah glory?](#)

Theaomai - 23v in NT and 6 times by John in his gospel, three times in his first epistle...

(John 1:14) And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we **saw** His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

(John 1:32) John testified saying, "I have **seen** the Spirit descending as a dove out of heaven, and He remained upon Him.

(John 1:38) And Jesus turned and **saw** them following, and *said to them, "What do you seek?" They said to Him, "Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?"

(John 4:35) "Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and **look** on the fields, that they are white for harvest.

(John 6:5) Therefore Jesus, lifting up His eyes and **seeing** that a large crowd was coming to Him, *said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, so that these may eat?"

(John 11:45) Therefore many of the Jews who came to Mary, and **saw** what He had done, believed in Him.

(1John 1:1) What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have **looked** at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—

(1John 4:12) No one has **seen** God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

(1John 4:14) We have **seen** and testify that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

William Barclay writes that "**theaomai** means to gaze at someone or something until something has been grasped of the significance of that person or thing. So Jesus, speaking to the crowds of John the Baptist, asked: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to look at [**theaomai**]?' (Luke 7:24); and in that word He describes how the crowds flocked out to gaze at John and wonder who and what this man might be. Speaking of Jesus in the prologue to his gospel, John says: 'We have seen his glory' (John 1:14)... and the idea is not that of a passing glance but of a steadfast searching gaze which seeks to discover something of the mystery of Christ. (The Daily Study Bible)

Glory (whether in the OT - **Kabod** /Lxx - **doxa** or the NT - **doxa**) is commonly used in both Testaments to denote the visible manifestation of God's presence. God's **glory** is the sum of all His attributes and perfection. It is sometimes displayed as a bright or

overpowering light. The rabbis used the word **Shekinah** in the Targums (Aramaic paraphrases of the OT Hebrew text) to describe the presence of God.

Steven Cole on **glory** of Jesus - When John says, "We saw His glory," he may have been referring in part to the transfiguration, when he and James and Peter saw Jesus in His glory. John could not have forgotten that event, although he doesn't tell about it in his gospel! But he is also referring to Jesus' glory as revealed in His miracles, but only to those who had eyes to see. After Jesus turned the water into wine, John reports (Jn 2:11), "This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His disciples believed in Him." Before Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He said (John 11:4), "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified by it." And yet, even after that amazing miracle, the Jewish leaders increased their efforts to kill the one who is the resurrection and the life! But John also shows that Jesus' glory was supremely revealed in the cross. When Judas went out of the Upper Room to betray the Savior, Jesus said (John 13:31), "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." The cross displayed God's perfect justice and amazing love like no other event in history. ([The Word Became Flesh](#))

Vincent explains John's use of **glory** in his description of Jesus the God-Man - This **glory** is not the absolute glory of the Eternal Word, which could belong only to His pre-existent state, and to the conditions subsequent to his exaltation (**Ed**: And at which no man could look at and live - see Ex 33:20-23); but His **glory** revealed under human limitations both in Himself and in those who beheld Him. The reference is again to the OT manifestations of the **divine glory (Shekinah)**, in the wilderness (Ex 16:10; 24:16, etc.); in the temple (1Ki 8:11); to the prophets (Isa 6:3; Ezek 1:28). The **divine glory** flashed out in Christ from time to time, in His transfiguration (Lk 9:31; compare 2Pe 1:16, 17) and His miracles (Jn 2:11; 11:4, 40), but appeared also in His perfect life and character, in His fulfilment of the absolute idea of manhood.

Ray Stedman - What caught John's attention was the **glory** that he saw inside. That is what he says was remarkable. Have you ever walked around a campground at night and seen lights inside the tents glowing like jewels in the darkness as they shone through the fabric? That is descriptive of what John saw when he saw Jesus: he saw a glory inside... I never had the privilege of meeting Dr. R. A. Torrey, the founder of the Church of the Open Door, in Los Angeles, and the founder of the Bible School of Los Angeles (now Biola University). Dr. Torrey was an associate of D. L. Moody, and was one of the great Bible teachers of the past generation. He died while I was yet a baby, but I met his son one day. I took a picture of him and had a conversation with him. Everyone who knew both the father and the son were in agreement that the son looked exactly like the father; that the timbre of his voice, his expressions, his personality, reflected his father. Because I knew his son, I have always felt that somehow I knew Dr. R. A. Torrey. That is what John is saying here: the glory that he saw in Jesus was the exact reproduction of the glory of the Father, because the Son reflects the Father. ([The Stranger of Galilee](#))

Glory (1391)(**doxa** from **dokeo** = to think, root of **Docetism**, a first century belief that Jesus did not have a real body) in simple terms means to give a proper opinion or estimate of something and thus the **glory** of God expresses all that He is in His Being and in His nature, character, power and acts (the sum of His attributes). To be what God intended will be glory. To do what God purposed will be glory.

All of John's uses of doxa - John 1:14; 2:11; 5:41, 44; 7:18; 8:50, 54; 9:24; 11:4, 40; 12:41, 43; 17:5, 22, 24; Rev 1:6; 4:9, 11; 5:12, 13; 7:12; 11:13; 14:7; 15:8; 16:9; 18:1; 19:1, 7; 21:11, 23, 24, 26

(John 1:14) And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His **glory, glory** as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

(John 2:11) This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His **glory**, and His disciples believed in Him.

(John 5:41) "I do not receive **glory** from men;

(John 5:44) "How can you believe, when you receive **glory** from one another and you do not seek the **glory** that is from the one and only God?"

(John 7:18) "He who speaks from himself seeks his own **glory**; but He who is seeking the **glory** of the One who sent Him, He is true, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

(John 8:50) "But I do not seek My **glory**; there is One who seeks and judges.

(John 8:54) Jesus answered, "If I glorify Myself, My **glory** is nothing; it is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, 'He is our God';

(John 9:24) So a second time they called the man who had been blind, and said to him, "Give **glory** to God; we know that this man is a sinner."

(John 11:4) But when Jesus heard this, He said, "This sickness is not to end in death, but for the **glory** of God,

so that the Son of God may be glorified by it.”

(John 11:40) Jesus *said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you believe, you will see the **glory** of God?”

(John 12:41) These things Isaiah said because he saw His **glory**, and he spoke of Him.

(John 12:43) for they loved the **approval** of men rather than the **approval** of God.

(John 17:5) “Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the **glory** which I had with You before the world was.

(John 17:22) “The **glory** which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one;

(John 17:24) “Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My **glory** which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world.

(Rev 1:6-[note](#)) and He has made us to be a kingdom, priests to His God and Father—to Him be the **glory** and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

(Rev 4:9-[note](#)) And when the living creatures give **glory** and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever,

(Rev 4:11-[note](#)) “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”

(Rev 5:12-[note](#)) saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and **glory** and blessing.”

(Rev 5:13-[note](#)) And every created thing which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, “To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and **glory** and dominion forever and ever.”

(Rev 7:12-[note](#)) saying, “Amen, blessing and **glory** and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might, be to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

(Rev 11:13-[note](#)) And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave **glory** to the God of heaven.

(Rev 14:7-[note](#)) and he said (Read what this message is called in Rev 14:6 - now compare this worldwide message at the midpoint of the Seven Year Tribulation coinciding with the appearance of the Abomination of Desolation in Mt 24:15 with Jesus' words in Mt 24:14. Do you think they are associated? How is Mt 24:14 usually used in mission's conferences? Just something to ponder! - [Read the comments on the "Gospel" in Rev 14:6](#)) with a loud voice, “**Fear** (command) God, and give Him **glory**, because the hour of His judgment has come; worship Him who made the heaven and the earth and sea and springs of waters.” (As an aside could this global proclamation of the Gospel have anything to do with the great multitude John sees in Rev 7:9-[note](#)? And where do they come from? See Rev 7:14, keeping in mind that the **Great Tribulation** is the last 3.5 years of the Tribulation. Notice that the harvest of souls during this horrible time when men must really "count the cost" [see Rev 13:16-18-[note](#)] is the greatest harvest in the history of the world, "a great multitude, which no one could count, from every nation and all tribes and peoples and tongues! Rev 7:9-[note](#)". Finally every unreached people group will be reached by the worldwide proclamation of the Gospel and the results will be incredible!)

(Rev 15:8-[note](#)) And the temple was filled with smoke from the **glory** of God and from His power; and no one was able to enter the temple until the seven plagues of the seven angels were finished.

(Rev 16:9-[note](#)) Men were scorched with fierce heat; and they blasphemed the name of God who has the power over these plagues, and they did not repent so as to give Him **glory**.

(Rev 18:1-[note](#)) After these things I saw another angel coming down from heaven, having great authority, and the earth was illumined with his **glory**.

(Rev 19:1-[note](#)) After these things I heard something like a loud voice of a great multitude in heaven, saying, “Hallelujah! Salvation and **glory** and power belong to our God;

(Rev 19:7-[note](#)) “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the **glory** to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.”

(Rev 21:11-[note](#)) having the **glory** of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper.

(Rev 21:23-[note](#)) And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the **glory** of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.

(Rev 21:24-[note](#)) The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their **glory** into it.

(Rev 21:26-[note](#)) and they will bring the **glory** and the honor of the nations into it;

Charles Ryrie says that the **glory of God** "is the manifestation of any or all of His attributes. In other words, it is the displaying of God to the world. Thus, things which glorify God are things which show the characteristics of His being to the world."

Puritan **Thomas Watson** rightly remarked that "A sight of God's glory humbles. The stars vanish when the sun appears."

Vincent comments that John does not refer to "the absolute glory of the Eternal Word, which could belong only to His pre-existent state, and to the conditions subsequent to his exaltation; but His glory revealed under human limitations both in Himself and in those who beheld Him. The reference is again to the Old Testament manifestations of the divine glory, in the wilderness (Ex 16:10; 24:16, etc.); in the temple (1Ki 8:11); to the prophets (Isa 6:3; Ezek. 1:28). The divine glory flashed out in Christ from time to time, in His transfiguration (Luke 9:31; compare 2Pe 1:16, 17-note) and His miracles (Jn 2:11; 11:4, 40), but appeared also in His perfect life and character, in His fulfilment of the absolute idea of manhood.

Swindoll - Jesus traveled through the country as a common, unglazed earthenware bottle, corked until those special occasions when His glory was manifested & the fragrant beauty of deity filled the air with its aromatic presence.

For example **John** records manifestations of **Jesus' glory**...

John 2:11 This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His **glory**, and His disciples believed in Him.

John 11:4 But when Jesus heard it, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be **glorified** by it."

Spurgeon explains that we as believers in Christ have something (Someone) far better than the Shekinah Glory that Israel had in the Old Testament and then explains how we are able "see" His glory today...

In and around the tent (The OT Tabernacle) wherein the Lord dwelt in the center of the camp there was a manifestation of the presence of God. This was the glory of that house: but how scanty was the revelation! A bright light... the **Shekinah** is said to have shone over the [Mercy-Seat](#); but the high priest only could see it, and he only saw it once in the year when he entered with blood within the veil. Outside, above the holy place, there was the **manifest glory of the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night**. This sufficed to bear witness that God was there; but still, cloud and fire are but physical appearances, and cannot convey a true appearance of God, Who is a spirit (Jn 4:24). God cannot be perceived by the senses; and yet the fiery, cloudy pillar could appeal to the eyes only. The excellence of the indwelling of God in Christ is this — that there is in Him a glory as of the only begotten of the Father, the moral and spiritual glory of Godhead.

This is to be seen, but not with the eyes — this is to be perceived, but not by the carnal senses: this is seen, and heard, and known, by spiritual men, whose mental perceptions are keener than those of sight and hearing.

In the Person of the Lord there is a glory which is seen by our faith (2Cor 5:7, 2Cor 4:18), which is discerned of our renewed spirits, and is made to operate upon our hearts. The glory of God in the sanctuary was seen only by the priest of the house of Aaron; the glory of God in the face of Christ is seen by all believers, who are all priests unto God (1Pe 2:9). That glory the priest beheld but once in the year (Lev 16:2, Heb 9:7); but we steadily behold that glory at all times (**Ed**: In His Living Word), and are transformed by the sight (2Cor 3:18). The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (2Cor 4:6) is not a thing of outward appearance, to be beheld with the eyes, like the pillar of cloud and fire; but there is an abiding, steady luster of holy, gracious, truthful character about our Lord Jesus Christ, which is best seen by those who by reason of sanctification are made fit to discern it (cf Col 3:10).

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God (Mt 5:8); yea, they do see Him in Christ Jesus. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." (John 1:18) Many of us besides the apostles can say, "We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) We have not seen Jesus raise the dead; we have not seen Him

cast out devils; we have not seen Him hush the winds and calm the waves; but we do see, with our mind's eye, His spotless holiness, His boundless love, His superlative truth, His wondrous heavenliness; in a word, we have seen, and do see, His fullness of grace and truth; and we rejoice in the fact that the tabernacling of God among men in Christ Jesus is attended with a more real glory than the mere brilliance of light and the glow of flame.

The condescension of Christ's love is to us more glorious than the pillar of cloud, and the zeal of our Lord's self-sacrifice is more excellent than the pillar of fire. As we think of the divine mysteries which meet in the person of our Lord, we do not envy Israel the gracious manifestations vouchsafed her when "a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord covered the tabernacle" (Ex 40:34); for we have all this and more in our incarnate God, Who is with us always (Ed: Immanuel, God with us), even to the end of the world. ([The True Tabernacle and Its Glory of Grace and Peace](#))

D A Carson on glory: In the **Septuagint (Lxx)**, the word for 'glory', **doxa**, commonly renders Hebrew **kabod**, a word used to denote the visible manifestation of God's self-disclosure in a theophany (Ex. 33:22; Dt. 5:22), or even of the 'glorious' status of God's people when he rises to save them (Isa 60:1). Small wonder that all in the temple, aware of the presence of the LORD, cry '**Glory!**' (Ps 29:9)—which also shows how the word almost means 'praise' in some contexts (e.g. Jn. 5:41). Jesus' glory was displayed in his 'signs' (Jn 2:11; 11:4, 40); he was supremely 'glorified' in his death and exaltation (Jn 7:39; 12:16, 23; 13:31–32). This does not mean he had no glory before he began his public ministry, for in fact he enjoyed glory with the Father before the incarnation, and returned to take up that glory again after his resurrection (Jn 17:5, 24). Other men seek their own glory (Jn 5:44; 12:43); by contrast, the peculiar relationship the incarnate Word had with the Father was such that He never sought glory for Himself, but only God's glory (Jn 5:41; 7:18; 8:50). In the context of incarnation, the **we** who saw the Word's glory must refer to the Evangelist and other Christians who actually saw Jesus in the days of his earthly life. Cf. Stephen in Acts 7:55, where **kai** may mean 'even': Stephen, 'full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, even Jesus standing at the right hand of God.' The glory John and others saw was the glory of the One and Only. The underlying expression was rendered 'only-begotten' Son in earlier translations, but despite the efforts of some to restore that rendering, the NIV is a little closer to what is meant. The glory displayed in the incarnate Word is the kind of glory a father grants to his one and only, best-loved Son—and this 'father' is God Himself. Thus it is nothing less than God's glory that John and his friends witnessed in the Word-made-flesh. ([The Gospel according to John Pillar New Testament Commentary- D. A. Carson](#))

He came with **grace and truth**, not law and judgment. **Does that reflect your "brand" of Christianity?**

Boa comments that this verse is "One of the most important verses in the entire bible... It's radical. It would stun the Greek mind for who the separation of the divine spirit and the mundane world would be the idea of the complete separation. It would also stun the Jews to claim that this Word actually came among us and became flesh. It's an incredible and awesome idea that He became flesh... He pitched His tent (skenoō is the word and it means to tabernacle). In other words it speaks of the Old Testament tabernacle... God manifested Himself there- the glory, the pillar of cloud, the pillar of fire and the Most Holy Place. He pitched His tent in our midst and manifested Himself in a very personal way. This is localized divine presence." ([John 1 Commentary](#))

Preacher's Analyst on Christ's Glory - CHRIST'S GLORY. Amid all His humiliation, His glory burst forth and manifested itself—"We beheld," etc. Clad as our Saviour was in the garments of a man, it was impossible entirely to veil His higher nature. Neither was it advisable. It was necessary that the world should know that He was God. His Divine glory was constantly manifesting itself—when the star led the wise men—when He taught the doctors in the Temple—when He healed the sick and raised the dead. But the chief glory was only visible to spiritual eyes. **1. Divine wisdom.** The world considered His wisdom to be folly. It was not His outward manifestation, not His miracles or acts, but the plan of salvation, and the scheme He accomplished when He said, "It is finished." **2. Divine love.** There is more glory in the love of God than in all the universe of material creation. This can only be discerned by the eye of faith. When a sinner is brought to find peace, he realizes the glory of Christ. We have seen. Have you seen? ([The Biblical Illustrator](#))

Christ's glory in the flesh

I. His **OUTWARD GLORY**. When a Jew heard this he must have denied it, inasmuch, as there was little in Christ which answered to his conception of Messianic glory. Yet lowly as was our Lord's life in general, there were occasional gleams of it.

1. At the Incarnation.
2. At His Baptism.
3. At His Transfiguration.
4. When the Greeks had an interview with Him.

5. At His Resurrection.

6. At His Ascension.

II. But His INTERNAL GLORY far surpassed this. Love, compassion, justice, truth. Add to these an existence which has neither beginning nor ending, and a power which nothing can resist, and this is God. And such as is the Father, such was the Son. 1. This glory is that to which man, in his fallen condition, is most blind. Offer man a Saviour crowned with visible power, or who shall secure wealth or pleasure, who would not acknowledge Him? Christ did indeed offer these. They who should come to Him should conquer sin and reign in heaven; should have spiritual riches and celestial pleasures--but who would purchase these at the price demanded? 2. Pray to God that He may open your eyes to see the glory of Christ and your glorious privilege. (J. Garbett, M. A.) ([The Biblical Illustrator](#))

Horatio Bonar - WHAT IT TEACHES. God's thoughts of peace. The message is a decided but not a finished one. You must associate Bethlehem with Calvary. 1. Would you learn the way to God? Go to Bethlehem: the Infant in the manger is the way. 2. Would you learn the vanity of earth? Go to yon manger where the Lord of Glory lies. 3. Would you have a safeguard against worldliness and sin and error? Keep the child's companionship. 4. Would you learn to be humble? Go to Bethlehem; there the Highest is lowest. 5. Would you learn self-denial? See the Word made flesh. (H. Bonar, D. D.) ([The Biblical Illustrator](#))

Alexander Maclaren - THE VARIOUS PURPOSES WHICH THIS MIGHTIEST OF ALL MIRACLES SERVES IN THE WORLD. Here is a five-fold star, with five rays. **1. To show God.** As the Shekinah glory abode in the Tabernacle, so God tabernacled in Christ's flesh. Christ shows God as He was never seen before, full of grace and truth. The mightiest and brightest light that makes God known, is that of gentleness, tenderness, self-oblivion, patience. If you want to know God, and not to guess Him, not to shrink from Him, and not merely to see the fringe of brightness about the Infinite heart, you must turn away from everything else to Christ. **2. To show what man ought to be.** How perfect Christ's example is we may gather from the admission of enemies, from our own hearts and consciences. Instead of being handed over to a mere law "Do this and live," it means "Do as I do, because I love you and you love Me." **3. That He might die.** You cannot understand Christmas without Good Friday, the meaning of the cradle unless we see the shadow of the Cross. Christ came to bear our sins that we might be born again unto newness of life. **4. That He might have sympathy with us.** He has trodden all the road before us, and is near us to help us on. **5. That manhood might be glorified.** He has stooped down that thereby He might befit us to be like Him. Where He is, He will lead us. What He is, He will make us. (A. Maclaren, D. D.) ([The Biblical Illustrator](#))

Beloved, do you pray for the salvation of friends or relatives? I have heard the story of two young rebels who were encouraged to read John 1:1 and then associate that passage with John 1:14, and this simple exercise resulted in one of the two young men breaking into tears as God's Spirit swept him into the Kingdom of Heaven! So I encourage you to consider the same approach to those whose hearts are now hardened, if God should open a door. Here is another ancient testimony of [Franciscus Junius \(the younger\)](#) regarding how the Spirit used the simple reading of the first chapter of John to bring about regeneration in another infidel...

My father, who was frequently reading the New Testament, and had long observed with grief the progress I had made in infidelity, had put that book in my way in his library, in order to attract my attention, if it might please God to bless his design, though without giving me the least intimation of it. Here, therefore, I unwittingly opened the New Testament thus providentially laid before me. At the very first view, although I was deeply engaged in other thoughts, that grand chapter of the evangelist and apostle presented itself to me — 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God.' I read part of the chapter, and was so greeted that I instantly became struck with the divinity of the argument, and the majesty and authority of the composition, as infinitely surpassing the highest flights of human eloquence. My body shuddered; my mind was in amazement, and I was so agitated the whole day that I scarcely knew who I was; nor did the agitation cease, but continued till it was at last soothed by a humble faith in him who was made flesh and dwelt among us."

THE CHALCEDONIAN CREED (AD451) is generally regarded as the most orthodox "definition" of how the Bible describes the Person of Jesus Christ

"We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable soul and body; consubstantial with the Father according to the Godhead, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, unconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably; the distinction of natures

being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning have declared concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us. ([Chalcedonian Creed](#))

ONE OF A KIND

Only begotten (One of a Kind, One and Only) ([3439](#))(**monogenes** from **monos** = alone + **genos** = birth, race, kind <> from **ginomai** = to come into being, to become) means that which is the only one of its kind of class or specific relationship and thus is unique or "one and only." Monogenes stresses Jesus' absolute uniqueness of the Christ, Who was incarnated as God into flesh and does not focus on His physical birth per se. Monogenes conveys the truth that Jesus is unique ("one-of-a-kind"), reflecting that Christ is eternal, emerging into time from eternity through His incarnation (Jn 1:14,18). Monogenēs conveys the truth that the Christ, the God-Man, stands apart from all other people, being fully divine and authentically physical (human, cf. Jn 1:1-18; Phil 2:6,7). Christ emerged from eternity, coming into time through His incarnation. His birth was absolutely unique for it was the only birth free from original sin and the only birth that was joined with deity (Christ's eternal divine nature)/

The only begotten (monogenes) - Most modern scholars agree that monogenes **does not refer to the "begetting" aspect of Jesus' sonship, but rather to His uniqueness.** As explained below NET Bible favors the translation "of the one and only." ESV = "the only Son", NIV = "the One and Only," NLT, HCSB = "the One and Only Son" ESV Study Bible note - The Greek word underlying "only," **monogenes**, means "one of a kind, unique," as in the case of Isaac, who is called Abraham's "one-of-a-kind" son in Heb. 11:17 (in contrast to Ishmael; cf. Ge 22:2, 12, 16). Thus "only" is a better translation than "only begotten" (made familiar through its use in the kjv)."

Leon Morris says monogenēs "is derived from gínomai, not gennáō – monogenēs has one 'n,' not two. Etymologically, monogenēs is not connected with begetting (see also D. Moody, BT, 10, 1959, pp 145-147)" (Borrow [John.105](#)).

Monogenes was used of an only son (Lk 7:12), of a son who was "unique" (Isaac - Heb 11:17 = son of promise, not son of flesh as was Abraham's first biologic son Ishmael) or an only daughter (of Jairus - Lk 8:42). BDAG says **monogenes** "pertains to being the only one of its kind or class, unique (in kind) of something that is the only example of its category... Of a mysterious bird, the [Phoenix \(mythology\)](#) (1 Cl 25:2). The phrase "**monogenes huios**" is used only of Jesus. Jesus is the only unique, "one of a kind" Son of God.

Moulton-Milligan - Monogenes is literally "one of a kind," "only," "unique" (unicus), not "only-begotten," which would be **monogenetos**. Monogenes is applied in a special sense to Christ in Jn 1:14, 18, 3:16, 18, 1Jn 4:9, where the emphasis is on the thought that, as the "only" Son of God, He has no equal and is able fully to reveal the Father.

Monogenēs is used of "the only child" in a family throughout antiquity, both in Greek and Jewish literature (see DNTT, 3, 1202).]

Monogenēs conveys Christ, the God-man, stands apart from all other people – fully divine and authentically physical (human, cf. Jn 1:1-18; Phil 2:6,7). Christ emerged from eternity, coming into time through His incarnation. His birth therefore was absolutely unique – the only birth free from original sin and joining deity (Christ's eternal divine nature) to a flawless, human nature.

Monogenēs is used of Christ's "unique descent" from heaven to earth declaring Him as "absolutely unique" (TDNT IV, 738).

Monogenēs "is centered in the Personal existence of the Son, and not in the Generation of the Son" (B. F. Westcott, The Epistles of St John [1883] 1966, 170).

Richard Longnecker, "The word **monogenēs**, with its variants mounogeneia (an early feminine poetic form) and mounogonos (a later masculine form), occurs first in extant Greek literature in the writings of the eighth-century bc poet Hesiod. . . . Literally monogenēs means 'sole descent' or 'the only child of one's parents.' It is a stronger term than the simple monos, for it denotes that the parents have never had more than this one child.

This is one way it was used by Hesiod (Works and Days 376; Theogony 426), Plato (Critias 113d), Herodotus (History 7.221), and Antoninus Liberalis (Mythographi Graeci, ed. E. Martini, II [1896], 32.1). "The word, however, was also used by Hesiod (Works and Days 374; Theogony 448) and the writers of the Orphic Hymns (29:2; 32:1; 40:16) in the sense of 'peerless,' 'matchless,' 'unique,' 'of singular importance,' or 'the only one of its kind,' which ideas have more to do with quality than derivation or descent. The sixty-fifth century bc philosopher Parmenides spoke of Being as 'ungenerated [agenēton], imperishable, whole, unique

[monogenēs], and without end' (Frag. 8.3-4), thereby ignoring – particularly in parallel with agēnēton – any idea of generation in the word as might be found etymologically in genos. "The translation 'only begotten Son,' though venerable, fails to capture adequately John's point in his use of monogenēs huios (or monogenēs theos in Jn 1:18), . . . in Johannine usage monogenēs is an adjective connoting quality, which should be translated in a manner signaling primarily uniqueness, and that huios as a christological appellative in John's gospel and Letters connotes primarily divine nature. So, to be true to John's intent, monogenēs huios is best translated into current English as 'one and only Son'" (The NIV, BORROW [The Making of a contemporary translation](#), 120-126, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1986).

NET Note - "of the unique one." Although this word is often translated **'only begotten,'** such a translation is misleading, since in English it appears to express a metaphysical relationship. The word in Greek was used of an **only child** (a son [Lk 7:12, 9:38] or a daughter [Luke 8:42]). It was also used of something **unique (only one of its kind)** such as the mythological Phoenix (1 Clem. 25:2). From here it passes easily to a description of Isaac (Heb 11:17 and Josephus, Ant., 1.13.1 [1.222]) who was not Abraham's only son, but was **one-of-a-kind** because he was the child of the promise. Thus the word means "one-of-a-kind" and is reserved for Jesus in the Johannine literature of the NT. While all Christians are children of God, Jesus is God's Son in a unique, one-of-a-kind sense. The word is used in this way in all its uses in the Gospel of John (1:14, 1:18, 3:16, and 3:18)

Barclay - The Greek word is **monogenes** which the King James Version translates only-begotten. It is true that that is what **monogenes** literally means; but long before this it had lost its purely physical sense, and had come to have two special meanings. It had come to mean **unique** and **specially beloved**. Obviously an only son has a unique place and a unique love in his father's heart. So this word came to express **uniqueness** more than anything else. It is the conviction of the New Testament that there is no one like Jesus. He alone can bring God to men and bring men to God.

Boice - In France every child who goes to Sunday school learns John 3:16, as children do the world over. He recites it like this: "Car Dieu a tant aimé le monde qu'il a donné son Fils unique." Literally translated this means: "For God loved the world so much that he gave his **unique** Son." **Unique** means being without a like or equal, single in kind or excellence, matchless. It is an important word, and it is particularly important at just this point in our study since it occurs twice in the space of five verses. In Greek the word is **monogenes**; the New International Version says "One and Only"; the French say unique. In each case, however, the same teaching is in view... We see at once, then, that Jesus is unique because there is no one quite like him (in fact, with the exception of the Father himself, not at all like him) and because he can do for men what no one else can do. Jesus is unique in every aspect of his being. He is unique in his person, birth, doctrine, works, miracles, death, resurrection, and future triumphs. (The Gospel of John : An expository commentary)

Vine explains why some versions translate monogenes as **"only begotten"** - **Monogenes** is translated "only begotten" in Hebrews 11:17 of the relationship of Isaac to Abraham. With reference to Christ, the phrase "the only begotten from the Father," John 1:14 indicates that as the Son of God He was the sole representative of the Being and character of the One who sent Him. In the original the definite article is omitted both before "only begotten" and before "Father," and its absence in each case serves to lay stress upon the characteristics referred to in the terms used. The Apostle's object is to demonstrate what sort of glory it was that he and his fellow Apostles had seen. That he is not merely making a comparison with earthly relationships is indicated by para, "from." The glory was that of a unique relationship and the word "begotten" does not imply a beginning of His Sonship. It suggests relationship indeed, but must be distinguished from generation as applied to man. We can only rightly understand the term "the only begotten" when used of the Son, in the sense of **unoriginated relationship**. "The **begetting** is not an event of time, however remote, but a fact irrespective of time. The Christ did not **become**, but necessarily and eternally **is** the Son. He, a Person, possesses every attribute of pure Godhood. This necessitates eternity, absolute being; in this respect He is not 'after' the Father" (Moule). The expression also suggests the thought of the deepest affection, as in the case of the OT word **yachid**, variously rendered, "only one," Genesis 22:2,12; "only son," Jeremiah 6:26; Amos 8:10; Zechariah 12:10; "only beloved," Proverbs 4:3 , and "darling," Psalm 22:20; 35:17 . In John 1:18 the clause **"the only begotten son, which is in the bosom of the Father,"** expresses both His eternal union with the Father in the Godhead and the ineffable intimacy and love between them, the Son sharing all the Father's counsels and enjoying all His affections. In John 3:16 the statement, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son," must not be taken to mean that Christ became the only begotten son by incarnation. The value and the greatness of the gift lay in the Sonship of Him who was given. His Sonship was not the effect of His being given. In John 3:18 the phrase **"the name of the only begotten son of God"** lays stress upon the full revelation of God's character and will, His love and grace, as conveyed in the name of One who, being in a unique relationship to Him, was provided by Him as the object of faith. In 1 John 4:9 the statement "God hath sent His only begotten son into the world" does not mean that God sent out into the world one who at His birth in Bethlehem had become His Son. Cp. the parallel statement, "God sent forth the Spirit of His Son," Galatians 4:6 , RV, which could not mean that God sent forth One who became His Spirit when He sent Him. ([Vine's Expository Dictionary of Old Testament and New Testament Words](#))

Robert Yarbrough - Recent translations correctly reflect that Jesus' status as "only begotten" underscores his uniqueness rather

than his place or mode of origin—it does not directly refer to his virgin birth. Both as unrivaled expression of the Father's glory and as distinct from any created human, he holds preeminence (Colossians 1:18). He is monogenes [Psalm 2:7; Acts 13:33], while "only" left room for affirmation of his divine nature. Through the Vulgate's influence on early English versions of the Bible, the traditional translation "only begotten" still rings true for many today. ([Jesus Christ, Name and Titles of - Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#))

Related Resources:

- [The Meaning of Monogenes in the Gospel of John - 23 page paper - Don Caffese](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [One and Only, Only Begotten](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Only Begotten](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Only Begotten](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Only Begotten](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus is God's only begotten son?](#)
- [What is the doctrine of eternal Sonship and is it biblical?](#)
- [What is the Athanasian Creed?](#)

Monogenes - 9x in 9v - **NAS Usage:** only(3), only begotten(6). 4 uses in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - Jdg 11:34; Ps 22:20 (only - Heb = yachid); Ps 25:16 (lonely - yachid); Ps 35:17 (only - Heb=yachid);

Luke 7:12 Now as He approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the **only** son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her.

Luke 8:42 for he had an **only** daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. But as He went, the crowds were pressing against Him.

Luke 9:38 And a man from the crowd shouted, saying, "Teacher, I beg You to look at my son, for he is my **only** boy,

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the **only begotten** from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the **only begotten** God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His **only begotten** Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

John 3:18 "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the **only begotten** Son of God.

Note: While the NAS and KJV translate **monogenes** as "**only begotten**" most other recent translations do not - ESV, NIV, NLT, NKJV "**only Son**", HCSB = "**His One and Only Son**". The Latin Vulgate translated **monogenes** as "only begotten" and, unfortunately, the older English translations followed this. The focus of **monogenes** is on singularity and uniqueness.

Norman Geisler - JOHN 3:16—Does "**only begotten Son**" indicate that Jesus Christ is a created being? **MISINTERPRETATION:** This verse refers to Jesus as God's "**only begotten Son**." The Jehovah's Witnesses tell us that Jesus is God's only begotten son in the sense that he was directly created by the hand of God (Aid to Bible Understanding, 1971, 918). He is thus a lesser god than God the Father. **CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION:** The words only begotten do not mean that Christ was created but rather mean "unique" or "one of a kind" (Greek: **monogenes**). Jesus was uniquely God's son by nature—meaning that he has the very nature of God. It is significant that when Jesus claimed to be the Son of God, his Jewish contemporaries understood him to be claiming deity in an unqualified sense and sought to stone him: "We have a law, and according to that law he [Jesus] ought to die, because he made himself out to be the Son of God" (John 19:7 nasb, insert added). They thought Jesus was committing blasphemy because he was claiming deity for himself. Many evangelicals believe that Christ's sonship is an eternal sonship. Evidence for Christ's eternal sonship is found in the fact that he is represented as already the Son of God before his human birth in Bethlehem (John 3:16–17; cf. Prov. 30:4). Hebrews 1:2 says God created the universe through his "Son"—implying that Christ was the Son of God prior to the Creation. Moreover, Christ as the Son is explicitly said to have existed "before all things" (Col. 1:17; compare with vv. 13–14). As well, Jesus, speaking as the Son of God (John 8:54–56), asserts his eternal preexistence before Abraham (v. 58). Seen in this light,

Christ's identity as the Son of God does not connote inferiority or subordination either of essence or position. (When cultists ask : A popular handbook on cultic misinterpretations).

Hebrews 11:17-note By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his **only begotten** son;

1 John 4:9 By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His **only begotten** Son into the world so that we might live through Him.

Wuest - Only begotten" is monogenēs, "single of its kind, only." Thayer says: "Used of Christ, denotes the only Son of God or one who in the sense in which He Himself is the Son of God has no brethren." Our Lord is the uniquely begotten Son of God in the sense that He proceeds by eternal generation from God the Father as God the Son in a birth that never took place because it always was, possessing co-eternally with God the Father and God the Spirit, the essence of Deity.

Gilbrant - Monogenēs occurs in the Septuagint 10 times (**ED**: ACTUALLY ONLY 4 TIMES DEFINITELY - Jdg. 11:34; Ps. 22:20; Ps. 25:16; Ps. 35:17), although some of these texts are questionable (e.g., Psalm 35:17 [LXX 34:17]; Baruch 4:16). The Hebrew translated by monogenēs is yāchīdh, which is also rendered by agapētos (27), "beloved," quite regularly in the Septuagint (e.g., Genesis 22:2,12,16). Agapētos and monogenēs appear together in Judges 11:34. Jephthah's daughter is described in the Septuagint as "beloved and an only-child." Under most circumstances the term monogenēs suggests an emphasis upon the relationship between the "only-begotten" one and his/her parents (cf. Tobit 6:10ff.; 8:17; cf. in the New Testament John 1:14,18; 3:16,18 of Jesus; see Büchsel, "monogenēs," Kittel, 4:739). The uniqueness of the only-begotten makes it possible that monogenēs stresses the incomparable aspect without necessarily making reference to a child's genealogical status (e.g., Psalm 22:20 [LXX 21:20]; 35:17 [34:17]). ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

From the Father - From is the preposition para, which primarily means near or nearby, expressing the idea of immediate vicinity or proximity.

Steven Cole cautions - Sadly, many supposedly evangelical missionaries to Muslims are producing and endorsing translations of the New Testament that replace the terms "**Father**" and "**Son**" with other terms that are less offensive to Muslims. They argue that Muslims wrongly think that Christians believe that Jesus is the result of God having sexual relations with Mary. To remove that stumbling block, they change the terms. But in so doing, they change the very nature of God as He has revealed Himself to us in Scripture. God is the eternal Father and Jesus is His eternal Son. The Holy Spirit is also eternal God; three persons but one God. While it is humanly impossible to fully understand it, we dare not tamper with it to somehow make the message less offensive.

Bob Utley - Jesus takes this analogy (of God as Father) and deepens it into full family fellowship, especially in John 1:14, 18; 2:16; 3:35; 4:21, 23; 5:17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 26, 36, 37, 43, 45; 6:27, 32, 37, 44, 45, 46, 57; 8:16, 19, 27, 28, 38, 42, 49, 54; 10:15, 17, 18, 25, 29, 30, 32, 36, 37, 38; 11:41; 12:26, 27, 28, 49, 50; 13:1; 14:2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 28, 31; 15:1, 8, 9, 10, 15, 16, 23, 24, 26; 16:3, 10, 15, 17, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 32; 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25; 18:11; 20:17, 21! ([John 1 Commentary](#))

Full of grace and truth - Jesus was abounding in these attributes. Vincent adds that this phrase "is connected with the main subject of the sentence: "**The Word — full of grace and truth.**" A common combination in the OT ("lovingkindness and truth" - see Ge. 24:27, 49; 32:10; Ex. 34:6; Ps. 40:10, 11; 61:7). In these two words the character of the divine revelation is summed up. "**Grace** corresponds with the idea of the revelation of God as Love (1John 4:8, 16) by Him who is Life; and **Truth** with that of the revelation of God as Light (1John 1:5) by Him who is Himself Light" (Westcott)."

Steven Cole on grace and truth - His **grace** offers love and compassion to guilty sinners (John 4:1-26). His **truth** means that He warns of God's judgment if sinners do not repent and believe in Him (John 3:16, 18, 36; 5:27-29; 8:24, 40, 45-47). **Grace and truth** reach their culmination at the Cross, where the **truth** of God's holiness and justice was satisfied in the death of the perfect Substitute, so that He now can offer **grace** to guilty sinners who trust in Jesus. It is only by believing the **truth** as it is in Jesus that you can experience God's **grace** and forgiveness. Since Jesus is **full of grace**, you can come to Him and know that He will welcome you (John 6:37). Because He is **full of truth**, you can trust His promises. ([The Word Became Flesh](#))

Ray Pritchard - **Grace and truth** are two attributes that don't often appear together (speaking of human beings). We humans tend to err on one side or the other. If we stress grace, we are often too quick to forgive without demanding true repentance. If we stress truth, we often sound harsh and unloving. We need both, don't we? If we forgive too quickly, we make light of wrongdoing. If we judge too harshly, we make forgiveness impossible. Grace and truth. These two words explain why Jesus came to the earth. They go to the very heart of the gospel. Because he was full of grace, he died for you and me while we were yet sinners. Because he was full of truth, he was able to pay for our sins completely. He forgives the sinner because he bore the sin himself. Here is truly good news for people like us. Because he is Grace-full, you can come just as you are. He is easy to approach and you don't have to clean

yourself up first. This week we saw a prominent Republican congressman resign because a smut peddler offered one million dollars to anyone who could provide salacious details regarding the sexual sins of our national leaders. While I think the congressman did well to resign, I remind you that few of us could withstand such withering scrutiny. Who among us has lived such a pure life that no dirt could be found in our past? It is precisely at this point that the gospel message becomes so relevant. No matter how checkered your record may be, no matter what sins you have committed, Christ invites you to come just as you are—with no preconditions except a sincere desire to be forgiven. When you do, you will be abundantly pardoned. Because he is **truth-full**, you can come in complete confidence that he will keep his promises. When he promises a complete pardon for your sins, he means it. You can take that to the bank. Do you need a trustworthy Savior? Fear not. Jesus is full of truth. Do you need a forgiving Lord? Come to him for he is full of grace. [Sermon](#)

QUESTION - [What does it mean that Jesus is God's only begotten son? \(SEE VIDEO\)](#)

ANSWER - The phrase "only begotten Son" occurs in John 3:16, which reads in the King James Version as, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." The phrase "only begotten" translates the Greek word *monogenes*. This word is variously translated into English as "only," "one and only," and "only begotten."

It's this last phrase ("only begotten" used in the KJV, NASB and the NKJV) that causes problems False teachers (**ED: LIKE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES**) have latched onto this phrase to try to prove their false teaching that Jesus Christ isn't God; i.e., that Jesus isn't equal in essence to God as the Second Person of the Trinity. They see the word "**begotten**" and say that Jesus is a created being because only someone who had a beginning in time can be "**begotten**." What this fails to note is that "**begotten**" is an English translation of a Greek word. As such, we have to look at the original meaning of the Greek word, not transfer English meanings into the text.

So what does *monogenes* mean? According to the *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG, 3rd Edition), *monogenes* has two primary definitions.

The first definition is "pertaining to being the only one of its kind within a specific relationship." This is its meaning in Hebrews 11:17 when the writer refers to Isaac as Abraham's "only begotten son" (KJV). Abraham had more than one son, but Isaac was the only son he had by Sarah and the only son of the covenant. Therefore, it is the uniqueness of Isaac among the other sons that allows for the use of *monogenes* in that context.

The second definition is "pertaining to being the only one of its kind or class, unique in kind." This is the meaning that is implied in John 3:16 (see also John 1:14, 18; 3:18; 1 John 4:9). John was primarily concerned with demonstrating that Jesus is the Son of God (John 20:31), and he uses *monogenes* to highlight Jesus as uniquely God's Son—sharing the same divine nature as God—as opposed to believers who are God's sons and daughters by adoption (Ephesians 1:5). Jesus is God's "one and only" Son.

The bottom line is that terms such as "Father" and "Son," descriptive of God and Jesus, are human terms that help us understand the relationship between the different Persons of the Trinity. If you can understand the relationship between a human father and a human son, then you can understand, in part, the relationship between the First and Second Persons of the Trinity. The analogy breaks down if you try to take it too far and teach, as some pseudo-Christian cults (such as the **Jehovah's Witnesses**), that Jesus was literally "begotten" as in "produced" or "created" by God the Father.

Full (4134) (**pleres** from **pleos** = full, **pletho** = to fill) means filled up as opposed to empty (as of a hollow vessel - Mt 14:20, 15:37, Mk 6:43). Of a surface, covering every part (leprosy in Lk 5:12). Figuratively, of one full of, filled with, abounding in, thoroughly endowed with (Lk 4:1 full of the Holy Spirit, Acts 9:36 abounding in deeds, Stephen full of grace and power Acts 6:8)

Pleres is repeatedly associated with the Holy Spirit - Lk 4:1, Acts 6:3, 5, 7:55, 11:24. Clearly the state of being filled with the Spirit was of great import in the life of Jesus and the lives of the disciples in the Book of Acts. When **pleres** is used in this figurative sense, it conveys something more than simply "filling up to the brim" so to speak. It also conveys the truth that what fills a person, controls the person. For example, notice what filled Elymas the magician (Acts 13:8) in Acts 13:10 - all deceit and fraud. And what was the "effect?" He made "crooked the straight ways of the Lord." (Acts 13:10). As an aside notice how Paul was "enabled" to confront this man who seems in essence to be enabled or to be even demonically controlled and empowered ("you son of the devil" Acts 13:10)? "Paul, filled with (controlled by, enabled by) the Holy Spirit, fixed his gaze upon him." (Acts 13:9). The upshot is that to be filled with the Spirit is to be controlled by the Spirit and thus supernaturally empowered or enabled to accomplish what cannot be accomplished naturally (by relying on my human "power"). That was the example Jesus left us to follow (Read 1Cor 11:1, 1Jn 2:6-note, 1Pe 2:21-note) This is why Eph 5:18-note (**Memorize this verse**) is so critical to the Christian life, for there is simply no other way to live this "Christ life," this supernatural life, then the same way Jesus as a Man lived it-**filled with the Holy Spirit!** (See also comments on Luke 4:1 below). As further support of the truth that what **fills** you, **controls** you, note that the pagans in Ephesus

were "filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" (Acts 19:28) **Rage** filled them and **rage** controlled them. Every believer is either being controlled by the Spirit or the fallen flesh. These two are in continual opposition, like oil and water (Gal 5:17). And because of this principle, believers are commanded to continually **walk** (present imperative) by the Spirit, for then (and only then) we will **absolutely not** (as emphasized by a strong double negative in Gal 5:16!) fulfill the desires of our **flesh** (Notice that Paul does not say we won't **have** these sinful desires! He says they won't control us!) (**Memorize** Gal 5:16-note).

Pleres - 16x in 16v - **NAS Usage:** abounding(1), covered(1), filled(1), full(12), mature(1).

Matthew 14:20 and they all ate and were satisfied. They picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve **full** baskets.

Matthew 15:37 And they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets **full**.

Mark 4:28 "The soil produces crops by itself; first the blade, then the head, then the **mature** grain in the head.

Mark 8:19 when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets **full** of broken pieces you picked up?" They said to Him, "Twelve."

Luke 4:1 Jesus, **full** of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led around by the Spirit in the wilderness

Comment: Beloved, this is a very important verse because it marks the beginning of Jesus' 3+ year ministry leading up to the Cross. The first Adam sinned and failed to fulfill his purpose. The Last Adam, Jesus, did not sin and fulfilled His purpose as a Man. Clearly Jesus was always fully God, but for a time, He chose to "empty" Himself of His divine prerogatives (something we cannot fully grasp or explain), and thus lived His life as an example of the perfect life Adam should have lived and the "ideal life" to which all believers today should aspire and seek to imitate (1Cor 11:1). But you say "He was Jesus. He was God. It was no problem for Him to live a holy life." Yes, He was God, but what Luke alludes to is that Jesus relied on the same Source of power, the Holy Spirit, that you and I have access to today, for the Spirit of Christ indwells every believer (Read Ro 8:9). Every believer has all of the Spirit that he or she will ever have (and I personally believe He will inhabit us forever in eternity) for we are complete (**pleroo** in the perfect tense - speaks of the permanence of this state) in Christ (Col 2:10-note). The issue is not how much of the Spirit we have, but how much of "us" (our heart, our will, our submission, etc) He has! Luke says Jesus was "full of the Holy Spirit" indicating Jesus had surrendered to the Spirit's full control. While this truth is indeed mysterious, it is Biblical and it is the way that we too can live the so-called "victorious Christian life." - full of the Holy Spirit. Compare Luke 4:14 = "And Jesus returned to Galilee in the power (**dunamis**) of the Spirit, and news about Him spread through all the surrounding district."

Luke 5:12 While He was in one of the cities, behold, there was a man **covered** with leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and implored Him, saying, "Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean."

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, **full** of grace and truth.

Comment: If one compares this passage with Luke 4:1, it would be fair to say that just as the Spirit controlled Jesus, so too grace and truth "controlled" Jesus. To be sure, He was the living personification of both of these attributes (eg Jn 14:6). Compare Stephen "full of grace and power."

Acts 6:3 "Therefore, brethren, select from among you seven men of good reputation, **full** of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task.

Acts 6:5 The statement found approval with the whole congregation; and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch.

Acts 6:8 And Stephen, **full** of grace and power, was performing great wonders and signs among the people.

Acts 7:55 But being **full** of the Holy Spirit, he gazed intently into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God;

Acts 9:36 Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was **abounding** with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did.

Acts 11:24 for he (Barnabas) was a good man, and **full** of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord.

Acts 13:10 and said, "You who are **full** of all deceit and fraud, you son of the devil, you enemy of all righteousness, will you not cease to make crooked the straight ways of the Lord?"

Acts 19:28 When they heard this and were **filled** with rage, they began crying out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!"

2 John 1:8 Watch yourselves, that you do not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive **afull** reward.

Pleres - 112v in the non-apocryphal Septuagint - Ge 25:8 ("ripe old age" is translated with pleres and hemera = "full of days"); Ge 27:27; 35:29; 41:7, 22, 24; Ex 9:8; 16:33; Lev 2:2; 5:12; 16:12; Nu 7:13f, 19f, 25f, 31f, 37f, 43f, 49f, 55f, 61f, 67f, 73f, 79f, 86; 22:18; 24:13; Dt 6:11; Jdg 6:38; 16:27; Ruth 1:21; 2:12; 1Sa 2:5; 2Sa 23:7, 11; 2Kgs 4:39; 6:17; 7:15; 20:3; 1Chr 11:13; 23:1; 29:9, 28; 2Chr 15:17; 16:9; 19:9; 24:15; 25:2; Ezra 4:20; Neh 9:25; Job 7:4; 10:15; 14:1; 21:24; 32:18; 36:16; 39:2; 42:17; Ps 33:5; 48:10; 73:10; 75:8; 119:64; 144:13; Prov 17:1; Song 5:5, 13; Isa 1:4, 11, 15, 21; 6:1, 3; 30:27; 51:20; 63:3; Jer 5:27; 6:11; Ezek 1:18; 7:23; 10:12; 17:3; 26:2; 36:38; 43:5; 44:4; Dan 4:27; 5:31; Joel 3:13; Nah 3:1; Hab 3:3;

(Ruth 1:21) "I went out **full**, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?"

(Ruth 2:12) "May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be **full** from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge."

(Hab 3:3) God comes from Teman, And the Holy One from Mount Paran. Selah. His splendor covers the heavens, And the earth is **full** of His praise.

Grace - Marvin Vincent on Grace - From the same root as chairō = to rejoice. **(1)**. Primarily that which gives joy or pleasure; and hence outward beauty, loveliness, something which delights the beholder. Thus Homer, of Ulysses going to the assembly: "Athene shed down manly grace or beauty upon him" ("Odyssey," ii., 12); and Septuagint, Ps. 45:3, "grace is poured into thy lips." See also Pr. 1:9; 3:22. Substantially the same idea, agreeableness, is conveyed in Luke 4:22, respecting the gracious words, lit., words of grace, uttered by Christ. So Eph. 4:29. **(2)**. As a beautiful or agreeable sentiment felt and expressed toward another; kindness, favor, good-will. 2Cor. 8:6, 7, 9; 9:8; Luke 1:30; 2:40; Acts 2:47. So of the responsive sentiment of thankfulness. See Luke 6:32, 33, 34; 17:9; but mostly in the formula thanks to God; Ro 6:17; 1 Cor. 15:57; 2 Cor. 2:14; 2 Tim. 1:3. **(3)**. The substantial expression of good-will; a boon, a favor, a gift; but not in New Testament. See Rom. 5:15, where the distinction is made between charis, grace, and dorea en chariti = a gift in grace. So a gratification or delight, in classical Greek only; as the delight in battle, in sleep, etc. **(4)** The higher Christian signification, based on the emphasis of freeness in the gift or favor, and, as commonly in New Testament, denoting the free, spontaneous, absolute loving-kindness of God toward men, and so contrasted with debt, law, works, sin. The word does not occur either in Matthew or Mark.

Ray Stedman on grace and truth - There are many definitions for **grace**. Someone has defined it as "that which God does within you, without you." I have always liked the acrostic that defines grace: God's Riches At Christ's Expense -- G-R-A-C-E. Perhaps the simplest definition of all is that grace is "the generosity of love." Grace is love giving itself. The greatest evidence of grace in the Bible is contained in the words, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life," (John 3:16). That is grace: Love giving itself. **Truth is the manifestation of reality**, the unveiling of what is actually there, the stripping off of all the illusions, veils, shams, phoniness, the facades, and getting down to what is actually there. Jesus was full of both grace and truth. He was the ultimate revelation of what is really there in life; and he is the fullest expression of love giving itself, pouring out, reaching out to others. That is the glory that John saw in Jesus. These words relate back to Verse 4, to the words, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." Grace and truth are really nothing more than life and light. What is life if it is not love? Life at any level is a revelation of the love of the Creator, the giving of the Creator to his creatures, the sharing of his life with them. We have come to understand that love is an absolute necessity for human beings. We cannot function without it. Those who are deprived of love, either by circumstances or by their own mis-choices, lose the capacity to perform, to live, to do anything; they huddle in a corner, or they assume a fetal position, unable to do anything, because love is life. Grace, therefore, is the source of life. And what is light if it is not truth? Light is the comprehension of reality. Have you ever said, "I wish I had more light on this subject"? By that you mean, "I wish I understood it better; I wish I saw more clearly what was there." Truth is light. The glory within the tent of Jesus was gra ([The Stranger of Galilee - John 1:14-18](#))

*"I am the way, and the **truth**, and the life;
no one comes to the Father but through Me.
-- Jesus (Jn 14:6)*

John MacArthur on grace and truth - Jesus' manifestation of the divine attributes revealed His essential glory as God's Son, "for in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2:9). The two attributes most closely connected with salvation are **grace and truth**. Scripture teaches that salvation is wholly by believing God's **truth** in the gospel, by which one receives His saving **grace**....There is no salvation grace except to those who believe the **truth** of the gospel message. Paul reminded the Ephesians, "In Him, you also, after listening to the message of **truth**, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Eph. 1:13). In Colossians 1:5 he defined the gospel as the "word of **truth**" (cf. James 1:18 "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of **truth**, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures."). Paul expressed to the Thessalonians his thankfulness that "God ha[d] chosen [them] from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the **truth**" (2 Thess. 2:13). People are saved when they "come to the knowledge of the **truth**" (1 Tim. 2:4; cf. 2 Tim. 2:25). On the other hand, "those who perish" will do so "because they did not receive the love of the **truth** so as to be saved" (2 Thess. 2:10). Everyone will "be judged who did not believe the **truth**, but took pleasure in wickedness" (2 Thess. 2:12). (See [MacArthur New Testament Commentary, – John 1-11](#))

Illustration - Dave and his wife Sue were asked about the delicate art of constructive criticism. Sue said, "I think Christ's example in John 1:14 is helpful. That verse describes Jesus as being 'full of grace and truth.' I see a mother with her child. If the child has a dirty face, the mother doesn't scold her for having a dirty face. She does the loving thing. She gets out the washcloth, and as she is gently applying soap and water she may say, 'My, what a dirty face you have! Tell me how you got your face so dirty.' But all the time she is washing her child's face. If I'm going to be honest with Dave, I need to be sure that I'm acting in loving, gracious ways—in a sense, getting out the washcloth—even while I'm talking about the dirt."

Truth (225) (**aletheia** from **a** = indicates following word has the opposite meaning ~ without + **lanthano** = to be hidden or concealed, to escape notice, cp our English "latent" from Latin = to lie hidden) has the literal sense of that which contains nothing hidden. **Aletheia** is that which is not concealed. Aletheia is that which that is seen or expressed as it really is. The basic understanding of aletheia is that it is the manifestation of a hidden reality (eg, click discussion of Jesus as "the Truth"). For example, when you are a witness in a trial, the court attendant says "Raise your right hand. Do you swear that you will tell the truth and nothing but the truth so help you God?" And you say, "I do" and you sit down. The question the court attendant is asking is "Are you willing to come into this courtroom and manifest something that is hidden to us that only you know so that you will bear evidence to that?" Therefore when you speak the truth, you are manifesting a "hidden reality". Does that make sense?

All of John's uses of Aletheia in his Gospel - John 1:14, 17; 3:21; 4:23, 24; 5:33; 8:32, 40, 44, 45, 46; 14:6, 17; 15:26; 16:7, 13; 17:17, 19; 18:37, 8; 1John 1:6, 8; 2:4, 21; 3:18, 19; 4:6; 5:6;

(John 1:14) And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

(John 1:17) For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.

(John 3:21) "But he who practices the **truth** comes to the Light, so that his deeds may be manifested as having been wrought in God."

(John 4:23) "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

(John 4:24) "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

(John 5:33) "You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth.

(John 8:32) and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

(John 8:40) "But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do.

(John 8:44) "You are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

(John 8:45) "But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me.

(John 8:46) "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?

(John 14:6) Jesus *said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me.

(John 14:17) that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you.

(John 15:26) "When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me,

(John 16:7) "But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

(John 16:13) "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

(John 17:17) "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.

(John 17:19) "For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they themselves also may be sanctified in truth.

(John 18:37) Therefore Pilate said to Him, "So You are a king?" Jesus answered, "You say correctly that I am a king. For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice."

(John 18:8) Jesus answered, "I told you that I am He; so if you seek Me, let these go their way,"

Steven Cole concludes John 1:14 - **J. C. Ryle**, in his wonderful Expository Thoughts on the Gospels [Baker], 3:26-27) draws several practical lessons from John 1:14. He points out that the constant undivided union of two perfect natures in Christ's person gives infinite value to His mediation for sinners, to His imputed righteousness to believers, to His atoning blood, and to His resurrection. Then he adds (pp. 27-28),

Did the Word become flesh? Then He is One who can be touched with the feeling of His people's infirmities, because He has suffered Himself, being tempted. He is almighty because He is God, and yet He can sympathize with us, because He is man.

Did the Word become flesh? Then He can supply us with a perfect pattern and example for our daily life.... Having dwelt among us as a man, we know that the true standard of holiness is to "walk even as He walked" (1 John 2:6). He is a perfect pattern, because He is God. But He is also a pattern exactly suited to our needs, because He is man.

Finally, did the Word become flesh? Then let us see in our mortal bodies a real, true dignity, and not defile them by sin. Vile and weak as our body may seem, it is a body which the Eternal Son of God was not ashamed to take upon Himself, and to take up to heaven. That simple fact is a pledge that He will raise our bodies at the last day, and glorify them together with His own.

As **Charles Wesley** put it ("Hark, the Herald Angels Sing"),

**"Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate Deity."**

"A Great Debt. Who Can Pay?" - Harry Ironside liked to tell a story about Czar Nicholas I of Russia. It seems that the czar had a good friend who asked him to provide a job for his son. This the czar did, appointing the son as paymaster for a barracks in the Russian army. However, it turned out that the son was morally weak and soon gambled away nearly all the money entrusted to him. When the word came that the auditors were going to examine his records, the young man despaired, knowing that he was certain to be found out. He calculated the amount he owed and the total came to a huge debt—far greater than he could ever pay. He determined that the night before the auditors arrived, he would take his gun and commit suicide at midnight. Before going to bed, he wrote out a full confession, listing all he had stolen, writing underneath it these words, "A great debt. Who can pay?" Then he fell asleep, weary from his exertions. Late that night, the czar himself paid a surprise visit to the barracks as was his occasional custom. Seeing a light on, he peered into the room and found the young man asleep with the letter of confession next to him. He read the letter and instantly understood what had happened. He paused for a moment, considering what punishment to impose, then he bent over, wrote one word on the paper, and left.

Eventually the young man woke up, realizing that he had slept past midnight. Taking his gun, he prepared to kill himself when he noticed that someone had written something on the ledger. Under his words "A great debt. Who can pay?" he saw one word: "Nicholas." He was dumbfounded and then terrified when he realized that someone knew what he had done. Checking his records, he found that the signature was genuine. Finally the thought settled in his mind that the czar knew the whole story and was willing to pay the debt himself. Resting on the words of his commander-in-chief, he fell asleep. In the morning a messenger came from the palace with the exact amount the young man owed. Only the czar could pay. And the czar did pay. Only Jesus could pay our debt to God. That and that alone explains why "the Word became flesh and lived among us." He pitched his tent with us for 33 years that he might pay in his own blood the debt we owed because of our sin. We stand this morning precisely where that young man did. When we look at our sins and realize our hopeless condition, we say, "A great debt. Who can pay?" Then the Lord Jesus Christ steps

forward and signs his name to our ledger: “Jesus Christ.” Only Jesus could pay. And he does. ([Sermon by Ray Pritchard](#))

Gerald Borchert gives a summary of John 1:14 writing...

In analyzing this crucial verse of the Prologue it becomes quickly apparent that this verse is like a great jewel with many facets that spreads its rays of implication into the various dimensions of Christology—the theology of Christ. As a summary of this verse it may be said that the evangelist recognized and bore witness to the fact that *the characteristics ascribed only to God by the Old Testament were present in the incarnate Logos, God’s unique messenger to the world, who not only epitomized in person the awesome sense of God’s presence in their midst as a pilgrim people but also evidenced those stabilizing divine qualities God’s people had experienced repeatedly.* (See [New American Commentary - New American Commentary – Volume 25a: John 1-11](#))

QUESTION - [What is Docetism?](#)

ANSWER - Docetism was an early Christian heresy that promoted a false view of Jesus’ humanity. The word *Docetism* comes from the Greek *dokein*, which meant “to seem”; according to Docetism, Jesus Christ only *seemed* to have a human body like ours.

Docetism allowed that Jesus may have been in some way divine, but it denied His full humanity. Hardcore Docetists taught that Jesus was only a phantasm or an illusion, appearing to be human but having no body at all. Other forms of Docetism taught that Jesus had a “heavenly” body of some type but not a real, natural body of flesh. Docetism was closely related to [Gnosticism](#), which viewed physical matter as inherently evil and spiritual substance as inherently good.

The problem with Docetism is that it denies the core truths of the [gospel](#), namely, the death and resurrection of Christ. If Jesus did not have a real body, then He did not really die (Docetism teaches that His suffering on the cross was mere illusion). And, if Jesus had no physical body, He could not have risen bodily from the dead. Without the actual death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we have no salvation, we are still in our sins, and our faith is futile (1 Corinthians 15:17). Docetism also denies the ascension of Christ (since He had no real body to make the ascent).

On the matter of Jesus’ humanity, the Bible could not be clearer. Jesus went out of His way to prove His [bodily resurrection](#) to the disciples who thought at first they were seeing a ghost: “Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have” (Luke 24:39).

The apostle John warned the early church against the false doctrine of Gnosticism, which embraced Docetism’s error: “This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist” (1 John 4:1–2). Note the apostle’s emphasis on Jesus being “in the flesh.” Denial of Jesus’ humanity was heresy. John repeats the warning in another epistle: “Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming **in the flesh**, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist” (2 John 1:7, emphasis added).

Early church fathers fought valiantly against Docetism, especially [Ignatius of Antioch](#) (c. AD 35–107). Ignatius rightly taught that, if Jesus had not actually shed His blood on the cross, then His death was meaningless. Ignatius saw that there was no possible way to align the deception of Docetism with the truth of Christianity.

Docetism must be rejected because it is not a biblical view of Jesus’ nature. In fact, Docetism stands in flat denial of biblical truth. Jesus Christ did not simply *appear* human; He was [truly human](#), as well as truly God. He came from heaven and took on human flesh and bone, and He lived the life of a normal man in this world—a Spirit-filled man, to be sure, and a man who always obeyed the Father, but a man nonetheless. His suffering on the cross was real, and His death was an actual death. He shed real blood to pay the real price for our real sin in order to grant us real forgiveness.

Devotionals Related to John 1:14

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Each year it seems that Christ's birth is acknowledged less and less during the Christmas season. An editorial in a British newspaper stated, "Christ has been detached from Christmas, and the season is now apparently just a time for being kind and ensuring that no one is lonely."

We have a magnificent opportunity to spread the good news that Jesus is the reason for the season. Here are three perspectives on the true meaning of Christmas that we can share with others:

* Christmas is a birthday celebration, honoring Jesus. God's Son took on human flesh and "dwelt among us" (John 1:14).

* Jesus came for our sake. He was born to die on a cross for our sins, and He was resurrected to give us forgiveness and eternal life (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

* We can urge people to respond to Jesus with faith, accepting His offer of salvation (John 1:12; 3:16).

This time of year is more than just a season to be kind. Christmas is about Jesus—the real reason for the season. So let's take the opportunity to tell others the miraculous story of Jesus, God's Son. And let's pray that many, like the wise men who came to worship the promised Savior (Matthew 2:1-2), will seek Him and find Him this year.

When we look beyond the manger
To the cross of Calvary,
We will know the reason Christmas
Brings such joy to you and me.
—D. De Haan

Bethlehem's stable was the first step in God's journey of love to the cross.

Contact With The Almighty - By Herbert Vander Lugt

After spending millions of dollars in a 40-year project, scientists have still made no contact with extraterrestrial beings. But their search continues. Robert Jastrow, director of the Mount Wilson Institute, says that he expects to find "beings superior to us ... , not only technically, but perhaps spiritually and morally."

Jastrow and his fellow scientists hope that an alien civilization billions of years old will be able to tell us why we are here and how to overcome our destructive tendencies, which make advances in weapons technology so terrifying. This fear that humanity might destroy itself, as well as the innate desire for meaning in life, may account for the many popular books and movies about extraterrestrial beings.

In his book *Show Me God*, Fred Heeren says of this interest in alien beings: "People want a higher companion, but not too high... People are looking for an intermediate, ... but someone who can still identify with us as a fellow creature."

How sad that they search in the wrong places for what God has already provided in Christ! The Bible says there is "one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all" (1 Timothy 2:5-6). Jesus has revealed God to us and opened the door to life eternal.

To get a clear view of God, focus on Jesus Christ.

Something Happened Here By Haddon W. Robinson

Christians are divided in their views of Christmas. Some want to give up on it and hand it over to the stores. Others want to salvage it and use it to say something important about the birth of Jesus to a weary secular world. I, for one, would like to take my place with the second group.

Years ago an old pioneer journeyed westward across the Great Plains of North America until he came to an abrupt halt at the edge of the Grand Canyon. He gawked at the sight before him—a vast chasm 1 mile deep, 18 miles across, and stretching out of sight. He gasped, "Something must have happened here!"

At the Christmas season, anyone who stops to look and listen must ask what the hustle and bustle is all about. A thoughtful man or woman, seeing the lights, the decorations, the festivities, and the religious services might also conclude, "Something must have happened here!"

Of course, something did happen. We need to tell the world about it. God has visited our planet. His Son Jesus Christ came to

reveal God and to die for our sins (John 1:1-14). It's the best news ever! The Lord came and lived among us that we might live forever with Him.

That's why we can rejoice at Christmas.

One day has left its mark in time

For all mankind to see;

It is the day when Christ was born—

That day made history.

—D. De Haan

To make the most of Christmas, focus on Christ.

Bah! Humbug! By David C. Egner

Many Christians do a lot of complaining about Christmas. "Too commercial," they say. "It has pagan origins. We've got to put Christ back into Christmas." The only thing they haven't said is, "Bah! Humbug!"

Yes, Christmas has become very commercial. But as we purchase and wrap gifts, every present can be a silent testimony to the supreme gift, God's "only begotten Son" (Jn. 3:16).

Yes, we know that Santa is a myth and that reindeer don't fly. It's pure fiction. But instead of griping about these nonessentials, which only focuses on them, we need to call attention to the truth of the Baby who was born in Bethlehem.

And what about the cry to put Christ back into Christmas? Well, He never left. Listen to the words of the carols heard over and over in stores, malls, and on the streets. They proclaim more truth in one holiday than many pulpits do in 3 months. They put into the minds of young and old the wonderful truth that "the Lord is come" and that He is to be adored.

Christmas is not humbug; it's a season of opportunity to point others to the Savior. It gives us a chance to say to friends and loved ones, "Do you know the real meaning of the season? I do, because I believe in Christ."

Hark! the herald angels sing,

"Glory to the newborn King;

Peace on earth, and mercy mild—

God and sinners reconciled."

—Wesley

To see the real meaning of Christmas, focus on Christ.

Earth Walk By Mart De Haan

After the Apollo XV mission, Colonel James Irwin related some of the high points of his experience. He told of weightless bodies floating free in the space capsule, the rising crescent of the earth as seen from the moon, and the triumphal splashdown before a watching world.

Irwin also spoke of the impact the experience had on his spiritual life. He said that from the lunar surface he sensed both the glory of God and the plight of earthbound man. As he came back to earth, he realized he couldn't content himself with being merely a celebrity. He would have to be a servant, telling his fellowman of a better way to live. Irwin concluded by saying that if we think it a great event to go to the moon, how much greater is the wonder that God came to earth in the person of Jesus Christ!

Because man walked on the moon, science and technology have made tremendous advances. But because God walked on earth, we know both our origin and our destiny. We can know our Creator personally (Jn. 1:1,14,18), and we can live in His light (v.9). Through Jesus' sinless life and sacrificial death we have the joy of sins forgiven and an abundant life—all because God walked on earth.

Down from His glory, ever-living story,

My God and Savior came, and Jesus was His name.

Born in a manger, to His own a stranger,

A Man of sorrows, tears, and agony.

—Booth-Clibborn

God made His home with us that we might make our home with God.

Bridging The Gap By Joe Stowell

When my kids were young, I thought they would be impressed with what few accomplishments I may have had—that they would read my books and be impressed by my speaking engagements. But then I discovered that they hadn't read any of my books and had no idea where I had been on a speaking gig. When my oldest son finally read one of my books, he told me that the only reason he read it was so that I would stop telling people that my children have never read my books!

Let's face it—for the most part, kids are not impressed with our accomplishments. So the only way to bridge the gap is to meet them where they are, to get into their world—like getting into a game of Chutes and Ladders or playing catch in the backyard.

Jesus did this with us. John said of Jesus, "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory" (John 1:14). In other words, He stooped down to our level when He came to this earth, which led to His greatest accomplishment of all: bridging the gap between His world and ours once and for all. Only then could we begin to understand how worthy He is of our utmost adoration and praise!

Our Lord is worthy all our days
Of all our love and highest praise;
He died to take our sin and shame—
Oh, bless the Savior's holy name!
—Egner

Jesus bridged the gap between the infinite God and finite man.

INCARNATION - Reverend Nico Smith and his wife, Ellen, are the only whites in the black township of Mamelodi near the South African city of Pretoria. Going to a community of 300,000 blacks was a "complete change in his life, a rejection, in fact, of everything that his life had been until then and everything fundamental in Afrikaner society and Afrikaner belief." Smith has begun to see life and people in a completely new way. As Time put it, "Nico Smith is almost one of them—not exactly, but almost."

The incarnation is about how Jesus became almost one of us. In one sense, He was like any other man—completely human. In another way, He was totally different—completely God. The birth of Jesus was not the first time God appeared as a human; the Old Testament records a number of times when God briefly appeared in some bodily form. Yet the Bethlehem birth was unique; God became a member of the human family and stayed around for thirty-three years.

In those thirty plus years, Jesus grew physically and mentally. He got hungry, tired, and thirsty. He slept and wept. He was tempted with typical human desires. He felt anguish. He showed concern. And His veins flowed with blood. Like every human, He died.

In His humanity Jesus was not just God with skin, but He wasn't just a person without sin either. He was like us, but different, and that made all the difference in the world. He could save us from ourselves, gather up the broken images, and make us like Himself.

He Was One Of Us - Robert Stevenson, the famous Scottish engineer and grandfather of the well-known writer, Robert Louis Stevenson, was born in 1772. One hundred years after his birth, a great demonstration was held in Newcastle. There was a huge procession with banners honoring the distinguished engineer. In the procession was a group of peasants who carried a small banner on which were written the words: **He was one of us**. They were citizens of the tiny village of his birth, and they had come to do him honor. They had a right to call him one of them because he, who was so highly honored, was really one of them. Indeed, Jesus became "**one of us**" and is even more deserving of highest honor and praise!

ONE OF THEM - Pastor Walter Hoyer went to jail in April 2009 for standing too close to an Oakland, California abortion clinic during a protest. The prosecutor gave Hoyer the choice of accepting a stay-away order or two years in jail. Hoyer refused the offer and the judge sentenced him to 30 days in jail. Hoyer is not sorry for his choice. In fact, he sometimes wishes he could have stayed in jail longer. "I have been a jail chaplain in jail before, and even had the privilege of being a guest preacher at San Quentin. Being an inmate is completely different. I was actually one of them and it gave me a different kind of credibility." --World Magazine, May 9, 2009 p. 54. Illustration by Jim L. Wilson and Rodger Russell

GRACE AND TRUTH - In their book *Influencer*, the authors tell the story of King Rama IX of Thailand who performed an exceptional act of grace on his 60th birthday in 1988. He granted amnesty to over 30,000 prisoners, releasing them from jail. His intent was to be gracious, but removing discipline from these criminals did not turn out to be gracious for his country. Up until then, AIDS was not a problem among the public, but was rampant in the prison system.

As you know, Thailand is infamous for its sex trade and it didn't take long for the prisoners to find the prostitutes, who contracted AIDS and spread it to straying men who gave it to their wives who spread it to their newborn children.

Within 5 years, an estimated 1 million people living in Thailand were HIV positive.

All because a sympathetic, King ignored truth while practicing grace on his 60th birthday.--Patterson, et al, *Influencer: The Power to Change Anything*, 26 Illustration by Jim L. Wilson

Grace can never be divorced from truth. That's why when Jesus came, he came full of both grace and truth.

EMMANUEL/CHRISTMAS - When the Walt Disney Company planned a yearlong celebration marking the 100th anniversary of Walt Disney's birth, they encountered a unique problem. A survey of visitors at Walt Disney World in Florida found that many of the park's guests under the age of 15 did not know Walt Disney was a real person. Those young people thought "Disney" was just another company name. After the discovery the company made a special effort to highlight the life and impact of the real Walt Disney.

To many, the Christmas season is a holiday filled with presents, lights, and family. They are not aware that Christmas gets its name from God's gift to the world, Jesus Christ. Many people do not know that the baby in manger scene was and is the real Savior of the world. The challenge for believers is to celebrate the birth of Jesus in a way that helps others know Jesus, the real man who walked on earth, and still transforms lives. When people who know Jesus is real chose to live as a forgiven, transformed person, they demonstrate that Jesus was the Son of God, a real person who changes the lives of all who trust in Him.—Our Daily Bread, *Celebrate The Man*, December 2, 2002. Illustration by Jim L. Wilson and Jim Sandell

PERSONAL TOUCH - In many ways, technology is making it possible to be two places at the same time. Some parents are setting up a baby cam in the nursery so grandparents can log on the Internet and watch their grandchild sleep.

Have you seen the commercial on TV where a father watches his son play a championship soccer game from his motel room while he's away on business? Using high speed connectivity, the father is able to "be there" with his son as he scores the winning goal.

But is it the same? Grandparents don't just want to watch their grandchildren, they want to hold them, and fathers don't want to just watch their son score the winning goal, they want to go to the victory party too.

Nothing replaces the personal touch. When God wanted to bring his message of salvation and forgiveness to us, he didn't "phone" it in. He came.-- Illustration by Jim L. Wilson

Today in the Word

The Invisibility of God

The classic hymn begins, "Immortal, invisible, God only wise, / in light inaccessible, hid from our eyes." This echoes 1 Timothy 6:15–16, which says that God is: "immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see." Earlier this epistle describes God as "the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God" (1 Tim. 1:17).

How should we understand this? Is God literally invisible? When Moses asked to see God's glory, the Lord warned him that no one could see His face and live (Ex. 33:20). Yet according to Exodus 24:11, the elders of Israel "saw" God on Mount Sinai. The Lord said that He spoke to Moses "face to face" (Num. 12:8). But Moses did not see a face in the literal sense. God the Father is spirit and is immaterial by nature (John 4:24). He does not possess a face, body, or limbs. Even when He revealed Himself as the Angel of Jehovah to the Old Testament Patriarchs, they saw only the appearance of a human form and not a literal body made of flesh and bone (Gen. 18:1).

The miracle of the Incarnation is that in the person of Jesus Christ "all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form" (Col. 2:9). Jesus was not a mere man who was somehow elevated to divine status in the virgin birth. He already existed as God before He was born in Bethlehem. Employing the language of Genesis 1, the Gospel of John states that in the beginning Jesus was with God and was God (John 1:1). In the Incarnation, the Word who already existed as God with the Father took to Himself a human nature and was "born of a woman" (Gal. 4:4). Genuine humanity did not make Jesus less divine as a result of this experience. Likewise, the union of two natures in one person did not make Him less human or superhuman. Instead, it ensured that He would be able to serve as a sinless and compassionate high priest for us. Because Jesus had both a human and divine nature, He was "tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin" (Heb. 4:15).

As the God “who became flesh and made his dwelling among us,” Jesus is uniquely qualified to show us the invisible Father (John 1:14). Prior to the Incarnation Jesus was one with the Father. He came from the Father (John 16:28). He alone has “seen” the Father (John 6:46). It is only through Jesus that we can know God as our Father (John 14:7–9).

FOR FURTHER STUDY - To learn more about the miracle of Incarnation, read Incarnation by Alister E. McGrath (Fortress).

Dialogue in the Dark - Dialog in the Dark is not a typical exhibition. All the tour guides are visually impaired. All the visitors are in the dark—literally. Instead of relying on sight, visitors must use other senses as they navigate darkened galleries that replicate familiar environments like a grocery store. Wind, temperature, sounds, smells, and texture have increased importance for determining one’s environment when sight can no longer be utilized. Similarly, John awakens our senses and nudges our curiosity in the opening lines of his letter. He emphasizes his eyewitness testimony: he has heard, seen, and even touched the Word of Life “from the beginning” of Jesus’ earthly ministry (Jn 1:1). We reflect on another “beginning” when God spoke and it was; His word brought forth life; it was the word of life (Ge 1:1ff). It is shocking to hear that this eternal Word of Life has appeared (Jn 1:2); “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us” (John 1:14). Notice John mentions “seen,” “looked at,” and “appeared” five times in the first two verses. He is astonished that the Life is no longer simply a word to be heard, but now someone to be seen. Jesus Himself is the “Word of life” about which John writes. In his Gospel, John refers to Jesus as “the Word” (cf. John 1:1-2, 14), and Jesus Himself claims to be “the life” (John 14:6). Did you notice that John’s own experience hearing, seeing, and touching Life in Jesus compels this letter? Consider how many times John uses words like “proclaim” and “testify.” In other words, John’s mission is a natural and vibrant outflow of his personal encounter with Jesus. He is not merely proclaiming a message, but a person. Today, reflect on your personal relationship with Jesus and the joy it brings you to invite others into intimate fellowship with the Word of Life, Jesus Christ.

Keith Getty and Stuart Townsend penned the popular modern hymn, “In Christ Alone.” In its second verse, this hymn reflects on the wonder of the Incarnation: “In Christ alone / Who took on flesh / Fullness of God in helpless babe! / This gift of love and righteousness / Scorned by the ones He came to save. / Till on that cross as Jesus died / The wrath of God was satisfied / For ev’ry sin on Him was laid / Here in the death of Christ I live.

Oswald Chambers - It is easy to get vague when we think about the thought of God; the poet talks about hearing God’s voice on the rolling air, or as coming to us in the love of our friends; it sounds beautiful, but it may be all nonsense. Our sense of the beautiful has to take shape somehow, an ideal is of no use to me unless it has become incarnated. Nowhere in the Bible is there any notice taken of the worship of abstractions. We may talk about God as the Almighty, the All-powerful, but He means nothing to us unless He has become incarnated and touched human life where we touch it; and the revelation of Redemption is that God’s Thought did express itself in Jesus Christ, that God became manifest on the plane on which we live. (He shall glorify me)

QUOTES RELATED TO INCARNATION OF CHRIST

The incarnation of Christ is the clearest affirmation of the truth that man is created in the image of God.
Lawrence Adams

Christ veiled his deity but he did not void it. **Anon.**

The Son came out from the Father to help us to come out from the world; he descended to us to enable us to ascend to him. **Anthony of Padua**

Christ became what we are that he might make us what he is. **Athanasius**

Filling the world he lies in a manger! **Augustine**

The Son of God became the Son of Man in order that the sons of men might become the sons of God. **John Blanchard**

When Jesus came to earth, it was not his Godhood he laid aside, but his glory. **John Blanchard**

In the creation, the Lord made man like himself; but in the redemption he made himself like man. **John Boys**

Christ voluntarily took upon him everything that is inseparable from human nature. John Calvin

The incarnation is the pattern for all evangelism. Jesus Christ was totally in the world yet wholly

uncontaminated by it. **Everett L. Cattell**

The earth wondered, at Christ's nativity, to see a new star in Heaven; but heaven might rather wonder to see a new sun on earth. **Richard Clerke**

Jesus Christ is perennial and he who makes his boast in him stays fresh for ever. Vance Havner

He took the form of a servant while he retained the form of God! It is exactly that which makes our salvation possible and achieves it. **William Hendriksen**

It was to save sinners that Christ Jesus came into the world. He did not come to help them to save themselves, nor to induce them to save themselves, nor even to enable them to save themselves. He came to save them! **William Hendriksen**

The early Christians did not say in dismay, 'Look what the world has come to,' but in delight, 'Look what has come to the world!' **Carl F. H. Henry**

The incarnation was a necessary means to an end, and the end was the putting away of the sin of the world by the offering of the body of Christ. **Thomas Hewitt**

Rejoice that the immortal God is born that mortal men may live in eternity. **Jan Hus**

God became man to turn creatures into sons; not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man. **C. S. Lewis**

The Christian story is precisely the story of one grand miracle. **C. S. Lewis**

The mystery of the humanity of Christ, that he sunk himself into our flesh, is beyond all human understanding. **Martin Luther**

To the human mind there is something almost illogical in the assertion that God became a man. It is like speaking about a square circle. Yet this is what Christmas says—and we take refuge from our bewilderment not in explanation but in adoration. **Ralph P. Martin**

The Incarnation is not an event; but an institution. What Jesus once took up he never laid down. **Vincent McNabb**

The divine Son became a Jew; the Almighty appeared on earth as a helpless human baby, unable to do more than lie and stare and wriggle and make noises, needing to be fed and changed and taught to talk like any other child. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. **J. I. Packer**

The Son of God... came to seek us where we are in order that he might bring us to be with him where he is. **J. I. Packer**

Before Christ could marry us he must be born in our nature, for the husband and the wife must be of one nature. **Richard Sibbes**

Christmas is the day that holds all time together. **Alexander Smith**

The hinge of history is on the door of a Bethlehem stable. **Ralph W. Sockman**

He that made man was made man. **C. H. Spurgeon**

The awful majesty of the Godhead was mercifully sheathed in the soft envelope of human nature to protect mankind. **A. W. Tozer**

The glory of the incarnation is that it presents to our adoring gaze not a humanized God or a deified man, but a true God-Man—one who is all that God is and at the same time all that man is: one on whose almighty arm we can rest, and to whose human sympathy we can appeal. **Benjamin B. Warfield**

Christ took our flesh upon him that he might take our sins upon him. **Thomas Watson**

Let earth and heaven combine, Angels and men agree, To praise in songs divine The incarnate Deity, Our God contracted to a span, Incomprehensibly made man. **Charles Wesley**

(From [The Complete Gathered Gold- A Treasury of Quotations for Christians- John Blanchard](#))

Greek: loannes marturei (3SPAI) peri autou kai kekragen (3SRAI) legon, (PAPMSN) houtos en (2SIAI) on eipon, (1SAAI) O opiso mou erchomenos (PMPMSN) emprosthen mou gegonen, (2SRAI) hoti protos mou en. (3SIAI)

Amplified: John testified about Him and cried out, This was He of Whom I said, He Who comes after me has priority over me, for He was before me. [He takes rank above me, for He existed before I did. He has advanced before me, because He is my Chief.]

ESV: (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.' ")

KJV: 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.

NET: John testified about him and shouted out, "This one was the one about whom I said, 'He who comes after me is greater than I am, because he existed before me.'"

NLT: John pointed him out to the people. He shouted to the crowds, "This is the one I was talking about when I said, 'Someone is coming who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before I did.'"

Phillips: And it was about him that John stood up and testified, exclaiming: "Here is the one I was speaking about when I said that although he would come after me he would always be in front of me; for he existed before I was born!"

Wuest: John is constantly bearing witness concerning Him and calls out aloud, saying, This One is He concerning whom I said, The One who comes after me was in existence before me because He preceded me,

Young's Literal: John doth testify concerning him, and hath cried, saying, 'This was he of whom I said, He who after me is coming, hath come before me, for he was before me;'

- **Testified:** A.M. 4030, A.D. 26, Jn 1:7,8,29-34, 3:26-36 5:33-36 Mt 3:11,13-17 Mk 1:7 Lk 3:16
- **He was:** Jn 1:1,2,30, Jn 8:58, Jn 17:5 Pr 8:22 Isa 9:6 Mic 5:2 Php 2:6,7 Col 1:17 Heb 13:8 Rev 1:11,17,18 2:8
- See [John 1:15 Commentary for additional notes](#)
- [John 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CAN I HEAR A WITNESS?

John the Gospel writer first calls **John the Baptizer** to the witness stand to give his testimony. Recall that the **purpose** of John's Gospel is to testify that Jesus is the long expected Messiah...

But these (Contrast = Jn 21:30) have been written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name. (John 20:31)

Testified (3140) (**martureo** from **martus** = witness = one who has information or knowledge of something and can bring to light or confirm something. English = martyr) in its most basic sense refers to a legal witness. Thus the verb **martureo** means to be a witness, to testify, to give evidence, to give testimony, to bear record, to affirm that one has seen or heard or experienced something. The words testified related to fact, not opinion, as in a courtroom setting. As discussed below in the passive voice **martureo** takes on the sense of to be well testified of or to have a good report.

Vincent notes that testified is in the present tense - Present tense. Rev., correctly, beareth witness. The present tense describes the witness of the Baptist as abiding. The fact of the Word's becoming flesh is permanently established by his testimony.

John uses **martureo** more than any other NT writer (44/72 verses) - **Martureo** is translated "witness," "testimony," "record," "report," "martyr"

Jn. 1:7, 8, 15, 32, 34; 2:25; 3:11, 26, 28, 32; 4:39, 44; 5:31, 32, 33, 36, 37, 39; 7:7; 8:13, 14, 18; 10:25; 12:17; 13:21; 15:26, 27; 18:23, 37; 19:35; 21:24; 1Jn. 1:2; 4:14; 5:6, 7, 9, 10; 3 Jn. 1:3, 6, 12; Rev. 1:2; 22:16, 18, 20

John records his **eye witness testimony** in his first epistle..

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we beheld and our

hands handled, concerning the Word of Life--and the life was manifested, and we have seen and **bear witness** (martureo) and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was **manifested to us**--what **we have seen** and **heard** we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things we write, so that our joy may be made complete. (1Jn 1:1-4-note)

Comment: If John's proclamation of God's Son Jesus Christ is what made his joy complete, how should this apply to us? Could it be that the lack of joy we are experiencing is because we are failing (even refusing) to bear witness to the only One Who is Worthy of eternal praise, the only One Who can be called the Word of Life, the only One Who can give life to our lost relatives, neighbors, colleagues, random contacts, etc. **May God's Spirit embolden us even as He did to the disciples in the book of Acts, so that we might be faithful to proclaim His Name, while today is still called today. Amen Don't waste your life, beloved! God has given each of us "witnesses" the opportunity of a lifetime!**

Cried out (2896)(**krazo**) refers to a loud cry or vociferation, expressing deep emotion. Krazo is one of those onomatopoeic words, the very pronunciation of which imitates the hoarse cry (or "croak") of the raven. Clearly John the Baptizer gave a bold, public witness that the Messiah had arrived...

For this is the one referred to by Isaiah the prophet when he said, "THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING (not **krazo** but **boao**) IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT!'" (Mt 3:3)

In the NT the first use of **krazo** is out of the mouths of the demons (Mt 8:29). Then we see **krazo** used by those in great need - Two blind men "crying out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" (Mt 9:27, cp Mt 20:30-31). The disciples on seeing Jesus walking on water "cried out in fear." (Mt 14:26) As Peter was sinking in the water he "cried out, "Lord, save me!" (Mt 14:30). A Canaanite woman whose daughter was demon possessed cried out, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David." (Mt 15:22-23). The Jewish crowds went from crying out "Hosanna to the Son of David" (Mt 21:9) to "Crucify Him." (Mt 27:23). And the greatest use of **krazo** in all eternity was by the Lord Himself Who "cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit." (Mt 27:50)

Vincent - The verb denotes an inarticulate cry; a shriek. Aristophanes uses it of the frogs, and of the bawling of a boor. The verb denotes an inarticulate utterance as distinguished from words. When used in connection with articulate speech, it is joined with legein or eipein to say. A stronger word than boao which is merely to cry or shout, while this is to cry clamorously; to scream or shriek.

A T Robertson - Second perfect active indicative of **krazo**, old verb for loud crying, repeated in dramatic form again for emphasis recalling the wonderful Voice in the wilderness which the Beloved Disciple can still hear echoing through the years. (**Ed Note:** The perfect tense pictures his voice as still crying out even in our day to all who would hear his voice in the wilderness! Cp Jesus crying out [also **krazo**] in Jn 7:37-39!)

Krazo - 55x in 54v - **NAS Usage:** cried(20), cries(2), cry(5), crying(12), screaming(1), screams(1), shout(1), shouted(4), shouting(8). Mt. 8:29; 9:27; 14:26, 30; Mt 15:22-23; Mt 20:30-31; Mt 21:9, 15; Mt 27:23, 50; Mk. 3:11; 5:5, 7; 9:24, 26; 10:47f; 11:9; 15:13f; Lk. 9:39; 18:39; 19:40; Jn. 1:15; 7:28, 37; 12:44; Acts 7:57, 60; 14:14; 16:17; 19:28, 32, 34; 21:28, 36; 23:6; 24:21; Rom. 8:15; 9:27; Gal. 4:6; Jas. 5:4; Rev. 6:10; 7:2, 10; 10:3; 12:2; 14:15; 18:2, 18f; 19:17

Here are all of John's uses of **krazo**...

John 1:15 John *testified about Him and **cried out**, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me.'"

John 7:28 Then Jesus **cried out** in the temple, teaching and saying, "You both know Me and know where I am from; and I have not come of Myself, but He who sent Me is true, whom you do not know.

John 7:37 Now on the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and **cried out**, saying, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink.

John 12:44 And Jesus **cried out** and said, "He who believes in Me, does not believe in Me but in Him who sent Me.

Rev 6:10 and they **cried out** with a loud voice, saying, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, will You refrain from judging and avenging our blood on those who dwell on the earth?"

Rev 7:2 And I saw another angel ascending from the rising of the sun, having the seal of the living God; and he **cried out** with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea,

Rev 7:10 and they (**Beloved, while this is primarily identified as those who come out of the Great Tribulation, I think this cry probably includes the saints of the church age -- why not rehearse it today in your devotional time!**) **cry out** with a loud voice, saying, "Salvation to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

Rev 10:3 and he **cried out** with a loud voice, as when a lion roars; and when he had cried out, the seven peals of thunder uttered their voices.

Rev 12:2 and she was with child; and she (Israel personified as a woman for out of "her" would come the Messiah) ***cried out**, being in labor and in pain to give birth.

Rev 14:15 And another angel came out of the temple, **crying out** with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, "Put in your sickle and reap, for the hour to reap has come, because the harvest of the earth is ripe."

Rev 18:2 And he **cried out** with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.

Rev 18:18 and were **crying out** as they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, 'What city is like the great city?'

Rev 19:17 Then I saw an angel standing in the sun, and he **cried out** with a loud voice, saying to all the birds which fly in midheaven, "Come, assemble for the great supper of God,

He who comes after me has a higher rank than I - Jesus was born after John the Baptist, but "birth order" was trumped by Christ's eternal existence (**See God's Attribute of Eternality**) with the Father, which is what John goes on to explain.

D A Carson says this could be translated, "He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me," or "he was first with respect to me"

For - Always stop and interrogate this small but strategic **term of explanation**.

He existed before me - John came into existence in time, being born some 6 months before Jesus (Lk 1:24-31 speaks of the gestation and parturition of John's mother Elizabeth). Jesus has been in existence for eternity, outside of time. Clearly John the Baptist (and John the writer of this Gospel) is inspired to present this revelation (something he could not have known, had the Spirit not revealed it to him) and in so doing he testifies to the Deity of Jesus Christ (whether he fully understands he is doing or not). Why would this statement speak to the Deity of Jesus? Because as a medical doctor I know that before the ovum is fertilized, the egg is incomplete, and only comes into existence as a human being when united with the seed of the man. Yes, as a medical doctor I know from the moment of conception that life comes into existence, and as a believer I know that this life is sacred and unique and to carry out a voluntary abortion is to take a human life, regardless of its age or size! Embryology 101 (independent of the Bible) substantiates fact this regardless of how stridently the so-called "experts" argue it is not so! John is saying that Christ did not come into existence in this manner. The implication is not only that He pre-existed, reaffirming what he had already said about Christ's pre-existence in John 1:1-3

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 came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Donald Grey Barnhouse - The history of every other human being begins at birth: but the Lord Jesus Christ exists eternally as the Second Person of the Godhead. Before He was born at Bethlehem, He lived; He was one with the Father in essence and being. Before He came to earth as a baby, He walked among men and revealed Himself to them. The Old Testament, which was completed four centuries before His birth, contains many stories of His appearing among men before He came as babe, child, and man. (The Cross through the Open Tomb)

Before me - A T Robertson - "In rank and dignity." (cp Mk 1:7, Mt 3:11) In John 3:28 (emprosthen ekeinou = before him, the Christ) does mean priority in time, but not here. This superior dignity of the Messiah John proudly recognizes always (John 3:25-30).

Steven Cole - John the Baptist began his public ministry before Jesus' ministry. So by the first part of that declaration, John was dispelling the common cultural view that the older man had greater honor than the younger one. He is saying that Jesus is the greater one... So, the apostle John wants us to see that Jesus is greater than John the Baptist and all the other prophets because, whether the Baptist fully recognized it or not, Jesus is the eternal Word. He had a higher rank than John because He existed before John, although he was younger than John. Jesus said that there were none greater than John the Baptist (Mt. 11:11). So if John himself testified that Jesus was greater than he, and if John's words about Jesus may be taken to point to His preexistence, then Jesus is greater than all the prophets. Thus we should believe in Him. ([Why You Should Believe in Jesus - John 1:15-18](#))

Jesus affirmed that He existed before John by testifying that He even existed before "father Abraham," in his confrontation with the Jews who had "believed" with the "belief of unbelief" in John 8 (Compare Jn 8:30 with Jn 8:45 - it could not be clearer for Jesus Himself says their "belief" is "unbelief!") for...

Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, **I am.**" (John 8:58)

Comment: "I Am" is the identical "ego eimi" statement with which God identified Himself to Moses in Ex 3:14 (as recorded in the Greek Septuagint): " God said to Moses "I Am Who I Am" ("ego eimi [present tense] hos on [present tense of eimi]") (Yhwh is Commonly known as the "**tetragrammaton**", the "four letters" which Jews over the ages have zealously avoided pronouncing). While scholars might argue on the meaning of "I Am" falling from the lips of Jesus was crystal clear in the ears of the Jewish audience. They recognized that He had just claimed to be Jehovah, to be God, and that they considered blasphemy and for that they sought to stone Him to death (Jn 8:59)!

Passages on Pre-existence of Christ

John 1:1+ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

John 8:56-59+ "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." 57 So the Jews said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" 58 Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." 59 Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.

John 16:28+ "I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; I am leaving the world again and going to the Father."

Philippians 2:6-7+ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Colossians 1:17+ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

John 17:5 "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

Comment: In the night before He was crucified, in His high priestly prayer to His Father Jesus prayed this prayer. Clearly Jesus is testifying to His eternal existence. Those who say Jesus never claimed God simply have not read and interpreted the Word of God in its natural, literal, plain sense. To conclude anything else is utter nonsense!

QUESTION - [Does the Bible support the pre-existence of Jesus?](#)

ANSWER - The biblical argument for the pre-existence of Jesus is certainly multi-faceted. *Pre-existence* is defined as "existence in a former state or previous to something else." In the case of Jesus Christ, His pre-existence means that, before He became a man and walked upon the earth, He was already in existence as the second Person of the triune God. The Bible not only explicitly teaches this doctrine but also implies this fact at various points throughout the Gospels and Epistles. In addition, Jesus' own actions reveal His divine identity and, as a consequence, His pre-existence.

Several places in the New Testament explicitly teach Jesus' pre-existence. Jesus said, "And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began" (John 17:5). This passage alone is sufficient to show that the Scripture supports Jesus' pre-existence, but it is just one of many such passages. Jesus Himself explicitly taught His own pre-existence (John 3:13; 6:33, 38, 62; 8:23; 16:28). Christ even said that [He existed prior to Abraham's birth](#) (John 8:58–59) even though Abraham's birth preceded Jesus' own birth by many centuries! Several texts present Jesus as pre-existing with His Father (Romans 8:3; 1 John 1:2; Galatians 4:4). Several passages even identify Jesus as the Creator (John 1:2–3; Colossians 1:16–17; Hebrews 1:2).

Probably the most powerful evidence for the pre-existence of Christ was the very behavior of Jesus Himself. He was often doing and saying things that only the God of Israel had the right or power to do. Jesus' healing of the paralytic in Mark 2 was done to demonstrate His authority and His ability to forgive sins (Mark 2:3–12). Jesus' Jewish audience was well aware that such actions were reserved only for Yahweh. Jesus' actions in Luke 7 drew a similar reaction (Luke 7:48–50).

That Jesus pre-existed in His divinity is further proven by His being the object of worship repeatedly in the Gospels (Matthew 28:9, 17; Luke 24:52; John 9:38; 20:28). Never did Jesus reject such adoration. He saw such worship as entirely appropriate. Jesus

implied that He had authority over the Sabbath (Mark 2:28) as well as the authority to abolish the Law (Ephesians 2:14–15). Such behavior is sheer blasphemy coming from anyone short of a divine (and therefore pre-existent) Person.

In addition, Jesus identified Himself as the divine Son of Man (Mark 14:61–64) and claimed to be able to raise Himself from the dead (John 10:17–18)! This turned out to be the very miracle that He claimed would authenticate His radical claims and ministry (Matthew 12:38–40; 16:1–4). Jesus accomplished this grand miracle and gave convincing proof of it (Luke 24:36–43; John 20:26; 21:1–14; Acts 1:3–6). This miracle established Jesus' claim to deity and thus provides further confirmation of His pre-existence.

John 1:16 For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace.

Greek: hoti ek tou pleromatos autou hemeis pantes elabomen, (1PAAI) kai charin anti charitos;

Amplified: For out of His fullness (abundance) we have all received [all had a share and we were all supplied with] one grace after another and spiritual blessing upon spiritual blessing and even favor upon favor and gift [heaped] upon gift.

ESV: And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

KJV: And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

NLT: We have all benefited from the rich blessings he brought to us--one gracious blessing after another.

Phillips: Indeed, every one of us has shared in his riches - there is a grace in our lives because of his grace.

Wuest: for out of His fulness as a source we all received, and grace in exchange for grace.

Young's Literal: and out of his fulness did we all receive, and grace over-against grace;

- **Of his:** Jn 3:34, Jn 15:1-5 Mt 3:11,14 Lk 21:15 Acts 3:12-16 Ro 8:9 1Co 1:4,5 Eph 4:7-12 Col 1:19, 2:3,9,10 1Pe 1:11
- **Grace upon grace:** Zec 4:7 Mt 13:12 Ro 5:2,17,20 Eph 1:6-8 2:5-10 4:7 1Pe 1:2
- See [John 1:16 Commentary for additional notes](#)
- [John 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

RECIPIENTS OF HIS FULLNESS

Note: Origen and Luther took these words as John the Baptist's words. Indeed, John the Baptist was just quoted in the preceding passage, but most modern scholars feel that Jn 1:16-18 represents John the Gospel writer's comments.

For - Always stop and interrogate this small but strategic **term of explanation**. Steven Cole favors John 1:16 as explaining John 1:14.

Of His fullness ([pleroma](#)) - To what does this refer? John has just stated that Jesus is "full of grace and truth," and it certainly is reasonable that these blessings are those to which John refers, especially in view of his repetition of "grace upon grace" a phrase which speaks of abundant, sufficient grace.

Barclay adds that **fullness** or **pleroma** is "the sum total of all that is in God." Christ is fully God (Col 2:9) and we are fully complete in Him (Col 2:10).

Vincent - John's meaning (of His fullness) is that Christians receive from the divine completeness whatever each requires for the perfection of his character and for the accomplishment of his work (compare Jn 15:15; Jn 17:22).

As discussed more below in the word study on pleroma, Christ is the **pleroma** of God, and we are filled with His **pleroma**. As John MacArthur says "As a result of the Fall, man is in a sad state of **incompleteness**. He is **spiritually incomplete** because He is totally out of fellowship with God. He is **morally incomplete** because he lives outside of God's will. He is **mentally incomplete** because he does not know ultimate truth. At salvation, believers become "partakers of the divine nature" (2 Pet. 1:4) and are made complete. Believers are spiritually complete because they have fellowship with God. They are morally complete in that they recognize the authority of God's will. They are mentally complete because they know the truth about ultimate reality." (Colossians Commentary).

Utley - The gnostic false teachers used it to describe the angelic aeons between the high god and lesser spiritual beings. Jesus is the only mediator between God and man (cf. Col. 1:19; 2:9; Eph. 1:23; 4:13) and the angelic levels. Here again it seems John the Apostle is attacking an early gnostic view of reality. ([John 1 Commentary](#))

D A Carson explains John's use of *pleroma* in this context - John 1:14 described the glory of God manifest in the incarnate Word as full of grace and truth. Picking up on the term, John says that it is from this fullness that we have received grace after grace. Thus 'fulness' here bears no technical, gnostic sense.

Fulness (4138)(*pleroma* from *pleroo* = make full, fill, fill up) means fullness, full measure, abundance, completion or what fills. **Pleroma** describes a full measure or abundance with emphasis upon completeness. **Pleroma** is completion and describes what is fulfilled or is completed without any gap. The sum total. The totality. **Pleroma** speaks of the total quantity and emphasizes completeness. *Pleroma* was a recognized technical term in theology, denoting the totality of the Divine powers and attributes. (Lightfoot)

See discussion of this word group [Online article in NIDNTT - pages 733-741](#) - *Pleroo* - fill, complete, fulfil, accomplish, carry out; (*plérés*) , full, filled, complete; (**pléroma**), that which has been completed, fullness; (*anapléroo*), fill up; (*plérophoreo*), bring in, full measure, fulfil, accomplish, persuade, assure, satisfy fully; (*plérophoria*), fullness, full assurance; (*pimplémi*), fill, complete, fulfil; (*empimplémi*), fill full, fill up, satisfy.

There are several nuances of **pleroma** in the NT uses...

(1) Literally full or filled up - contents. what fills something up (of earth and all it **contains** [that fills it] - 1 Cor 10:26, of baskets (Mk 8:20). In the Parable of the Patched Garment *pleroma* is translated "**to patch**" which means to complete or fill out the torn garment (Mt. 9:16; Mk 2:21) In classical Greek *pleroma* described a ship, as it is filled (manned) with sailors, rowers, and soldiers;

(2) Figuratively - fullness, a total quantity, with emphasis upon completeness, full number, full measure, fullness, completeness, totality (of divinity, the divine nature in Christ = present in totality! "The whole total of the Godhead" was pleased to dwell in Christ = Christ has ALL the divine attributes in himself. Col 1:19, Col 2:9), fullness of persons (Ro 11:25 full number of Gentiles; Eph 1:23 speaking of the Church, the body of Christ). Fulfillment of a goal (Eph 4:13 = Paul is speaking in the context of the believers in the Church, where God wants every believer to manifest the qualities of His Son, Who is Himself the standard for their spiritual maturity and perfection. Christ is the totality of God and that is every believer's goal in this life, which of course we can never attain, but toward which we continually strive [our part in sanctification] = the process of sanctification by the Spirit and the Word [God's provision for sanctification or growth in Christ-likeness, into the "fullness of Christ."].).

(3) Fulfillment, full performance (Ro 13:10 speaking of love);

(4) Fulfillment of time - the totality of a period of time, a period of time, when all intended within it has been accomplished (Gal 4:4, Eph 1:10). **Pleroma** means the full realization in time of God's predestined plans revealed in the Scripture.

(5) As what is beyond measure = overflowing amount, wealth, abundance (Ro 15:29);

The Dictionary of Paul and His Letters - Paul uses fullness (*pleroma*) with different shades of meaning in both the passive sense "that which is completed or filled" (as object) and the active **sense "that which completes or fills up" (as subject)**. -- **1. Totality of Space** - 1 Cor 10:26; **2. Totality of Quantity** - "full inclusion" of Israel (Ro 11:12) after "the total number of the Gentiles have come in" (Ro 11:25); **3. Totality of the Law** - Another passive use is Paul's reference to love as "the sum of the Law's demands" (Rom 13:10), which believers fulfill wholly because by God's provision in Christ through his Spirit (see Holy Spirit) sin has no more power over them (cf. Rom 8:4, 9-10); the immediate context shows his concern for obedience to the whole Torah (Rom 13:8-10). **4. Fulfillment of Time** - Gal 4:4; **5. Fullness of Essence** - Col 1:19, 2:9 (BORROW [Dictionary of Paul and his letters](#))

Pleroma is a common term with the Greek philosophers and in the false teachings of Gnosticism ([Wikipedia Article](#)). Gnosticism used **pleroma** for the entire host of intermediary beings between God and man. The Gnostics taught Christ was kind of "halfway house" to God, a link in the chain with other better links on ahead. Paul countered with the clear and indisputable truth that in Christ "all the **fullness** (*pleroma*) of Deity dwells (present tense = continually) in bodily form." (Col 2:9) Paul is saying that Christ is not some inferior emanation. In short, as mysterious and incomprehensible to our finite minds as this truth is, Jesus was fully God and fully Man and the great news is that we as believers are "been made complete" in Him (Col 2:10). Every believer possesses all of Jesus today that they will possess of Him for all eternity. The goal now of course is for Jesus to possess "all of our heart" today, which is the essence of the Spirit's work of daily, progressive sanctification (setting us apart from the world and unto God) in believers (cp Php 1:6).

William Barclay adds that in Col 2:9, '**Pleroma** means fullness, completeness. This is the word which is needed to complete the picture. Jesus is not simply a sketch of God or a summary and more than a lifeless portrait of him. In him there is nothing left out; he

is the full revelation of God, and nothing more is necessary." (Barclay - [Colossians Commentary](#))

Wayne Detzler - Originally **pleroma** had several practical meanings in Greek. It spoke of the cargo of a ship. A ship was filled with grain, for instance. On a slightly different tack, the word referred to the crew of a ship: a ship was "fully manned." It is easy to see the literal meaning of "fullness." This word referred to a full container, but it also had abstract meanings. A person was "full of years," meaning that he was very old. On the other end of the scale a baby was spoken of as being "full term." The sea was "full" of riches, including fish. The Bible uses both aspects of the word. It speaks of a container or a vessel which is full. The Bible also speaks of fullness in an abstract sense. Both of these focuses appear on these pages. (BORROW [New Testament Words in Today's Language](#))

Vincent's Note on Pleroma - The word **fullness** is found here only in John, but frequently occurs in the writings of Paul, whose use of it in Ephesians and Colossians illustrates the sense in John; these being Asiatic churches which fell, later, within the sphere of John's influence. The word is akin to **pleres**, full (John 1:14), and to **pleroun**, to fill or complete; and means that which is complete in itself, plenitude, entire number or quantity. Thus the crew of a ship is called **pleroma**, its complement. Aristophanes ("Wasps," 660), "the **sum-total** of these, is nearly two thousand talents." Herodotus (iii., 22) says that the **full term** of man's life among the Persians is eighty years; and Aristotle ("Politics," iv., 4) refers to Socrates as saying that the eight classes, representing different industries in the state, constitute the **pleroma** of the state (see Plato, "Republic," 371). In Ephesians 1:23, Paul says that the church is the **pleroma** of Christ: i.e., the plenitude of the divine graces in Christ is communicated to the Church as His body, making all the body, supplied and knit together through the joints and bands, to increase with the increase of God (Col 2:19; compare Eph 4:16). Similarly he prays (Eph 3:19) that the brethren may be filled unto all the **pleroma** of God: i.e., that they may be filled with the fullness which God imparts. More closely related to John's use of the term here are Col 1:19, "It pleased the Father that in Him (Christ) should all the **fullness** dwell;" and Colossians 2:9, Colossians 2:10, "In Him dwells all the **pleroma** of the Godhead bodily (i.e., corporally, becoming incarnate), and in Him ye are **fulfilled**." This declares that the whole aggregate of the divine powers and graces appeared in the incarnate Word, and corresponds with John's statement that "the Word became flesh and tabernacled among men, full of grace and truth;" while "you have been made complete (**pleroo**)" answers to John's "of His fullness we all received." Hence John's meaning here is that Christians receive from the divine completeness whatever each requires for the perfection of his character and for the accomplishment of his work (compare John 15:15; John 17:22). ([Vincent's Word Studies](#))

Harold Hoehner -

A Study of πλήρωμα (pleroma) - The term πλήρωμα, which is derived from the adjective πλήρης, has been much discussed. In classical literature it has both the active sense, "that which fills," such as wine fills the cup or a crew or cargo fills a ship;² and the passive sense, "that which is filled, brought to fullness," such as a full number of ships, full number of citizens of a city.⁴ Furthermore, this term can denote the idea of "totality, sum, entirety," as the total number of years of life, total number of members of the senate,⁶ or a full or complete supply of materials. In discussing the above and other passages, some have suggested that substantives ending with -μα have a strictly passive sense (and -σις the active sense), but Lightfoot corrected this notion by suggesting that substantives ending with -μα are passive in the sense that "they give the result of the agency involved in the corresponding verb." Robinson, on the one hand, criticizes Lightfoot for relying too heavily on the -μα ending to determine it as a passive rather than letting the context determine whether it is passive or active. On the other hand, Robinson goes on to show that Lightfoot's rule is valid if substantives ending with -μα have with them corresponding verbs from the same root, for example, πρῶγμα "a deed" is the result of "doing" (πράσσω) and δῶμα "a gift" is the result of "giving" (δίδωμι). Accordingly, the result of filling is completeness, totality, entirety. Hence, the word πλήρωμα basically means "completeness, the absence of any lacunae."

In the LXX πλήρωμα occurs fifteen times having the idea of fullness of content and thus totality as in the fullness of the sea (1 Chr 16:32; Pss 96:11 [LXX 95:11]; 98:7 [LXX 97:7]) and earth or land (Pss 24:1 [LXX 23:1]; 50:12 [LXX 49:12]; 89:11 [MT 89:12; LXX 88:12]; Jer 8:16; 47:2 [LXX 29:2]; Ezek 12:19; 19:7; 30:12; cf. also Eccl 4:6bis). All but two times it translates πληρῶ and twice πλήρωσις translates this Hebrew word (Deut 33:16; Ezek 32:15) meaning "fullness," a fact which shows that the endings do not necessarily determine whether they are active or passive. In koine Greek it continues to have the idea of "full, complete."¹²

In the NT πλήρωμα occurs seventeen times, five times in the Gospels, twelve times in Paul's writings, and four of these in Ephesians (1:10, 23; 3:19; 4:13). It refers to fullness of content, such as the leftover bread that filled the baskets (Mark 6:43; 8:20), a patch on a garment (Matt 9:16 = Mark 2:21) or contents of the earth (1 Cor 10:26 quoting Pss 24:1 [LXX 23:1]; 50:12 [LXX 49:12]). It also refers to a full number of people (Rom 11:12, 25) and to a sense of totality or entirety, such as Jesus' fullness of grace (John 1:16), God's essence (Col 1:19), or deity (Col 2:9); Paul's coming in the fullness of the blessings of Christ (Rom 13:10); believers'

maturing to the fullness of Christ (Eph 4:13); filled with God's fullness (Eph 3:19); and the church, the body, as the fullness of Christ (Eph 1:23). Its use to convey completeness can be seen in the phrase "fullness of time" (Gal 4:4; Eph 1:10). It is used once to convey the idea of the completion or fulfillment of the law (Rom 13:10). Clearly, in all NT uses it maintains the idea of the result of filling, that is, fullness, completeness, entirety.

The word πλήρωμα was frequently used by the Gnostics. It is a technical term used by the most influential Gnostic school, the Valentinian Gnostics (second century A.D.) for a complex spiritual world of thirty aeons (intermediaries) arranged in fifteen pairs who emanated from the primordial pair, Depth and Silence. The last created aeon, Sophia ("wisdom"), disturbed the πλήρωμα, which led to her fall whereby she was excluded from the πλήρωμα and this meant that part of the Godhead was lost. She became the creator of the evil material world of which humans are a part. In order to bring Sophia back into harmony with πλήρωμα, two new aeons, Christ and the Holy Spirit, were created. Christ came by adopting Jesus' body probably at baptism and departing from it just before the crucifixion to restore her and to enlighten humans with knowledge (γνσις) of their essential identity with the Godhead which also will lead to their ultimate restoration. With the discovery of the Nag Hammadi library more information has been gained regarding Gnosticism. This material has helped to clarify some nuances of the Gnostic use of the word πλήρωμα, although in essence it retains the definition outlined in Valentinian Gnosticism. Notwithstanding, there are some real difficulties in accepting the Gnostic concept of πλήρωμα as relevant to NT studies. First, Gnostic literature is second century A.D., well after the NT era. Some postulate that the fully developed Gnosticism of the second century was already present in pre-Christian Gnosticism (or "Gnosis" which is a more inclusive term than 2d century Gnosticism) and therefore, influenced NT thought. However, since there are no pre-Christian Gnostic documents, these scholars inappropriately use second- and third-century documents to support pre-Christian Gnostic thought and its influence on early Christianity within the NT in the first century. It is inappropriate to foist second century thinking on the first century. Furthermore, even a church father such as Ignatius (35–107/8) uses πλήρωμα in the same sense as the NT. Since he does not make a polemic against the Gnostic concept of it, it would indicate that the later second-century perception of πλήρωμα had not yet become known. Second, the concept of πλήρωμα in Gnosticism is altogether different from what is presented in the NT and should not be taken seriously. After careful study of πλήρωμα in the Nag Hammadi materials, Evans concludes, "it would seem apparent that whereas nowhere in the New Testament does pleroma function in the Valentinian sense at least one aspect of Pauline usage (i.e., reconciliation/restoration) is represented in the gnostic writings. I would also suggest that not one of the occurrences of pleroma in the Pauline corpus indicates gnostic thought either on the part of the author or on the part of his opponents." Hence, one must not try to foist Gnostic ideas of the word into the NT era.

Although in the OT the noun πλήρωμα is never used to describe God's essence, glory, power, or presence of God, the verb "to fill" and the adjective "full" are used to describe filling with God's presence or essence. For example, the OT refers to the concept of the glory of God which filled the temple of God (1 Kgs 8:10, 27) and the earth (Ps 72:19 [LXX 71:19]; Jer 23:24). Hence, Paul's use of πλήρωμα to describe Christ being filled with fullness of God's essence is in line with the OT teaching of God's filling certain things with his essence, presence, power, or glory. This view is far more plausible than to think Paul adopted the Gnostic concept of fullness.

In conclusion, it is best to determine the usage of πλήρωμα within its context. Only there can one ascertain if it has an active or passive sense. For a further discussion of this, see the comments on 1:23. (See [Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentary](#) - scroll up and down to show more comments)

Pleroma - 17x in 17v in the NAS - **NAS Usage** = all... contains(1), fulfillment(2), full(2), fullness(10), patch(2).

Mt 9:16 But no one puts a **patch** of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; for the patch pulls away from the garment, and a worse tear results.

Mk 2:21 "No one sews a **patch** of unshrunk cloth on an old garment; otherwise the patch pulls away from it, the new from the old, and a worse tear results.

Mk 6:43 and they picked up twelve **full** baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish.

Mk 8:20 "When I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets **full** of broken pieces did you pick up?" And they *said to Him, "Seven."

Jn 1:16 For of His **fullness** we have all received, and grace upon grace.

Ro 11:12 Now if their transgression is riches for the world and their failure is riches for the Gentiles, how much

more will their **fulfillment** be!

W E Vine - what still greater blessings will accrue from their ultimate national restoration? The Divine riches will then be bestowed not merely on individuals as now but upon the nations of the world as a whole. The word **pleroma**, here applied to Israel, indicates the time when as a nation they will all be converted (Ed: Those that believe will be converted - 1/3 will believe, 2/3's will not - see Zech 13:8), in contrast to the present existence of a remnant. Here again the significance is full and national prosperity.

Comment: Pleroma is that which has been filled and thus refers to that which is complete, the completeness of Israel referring here to its return to God at the second Advent of the Messiah when all Israel would be saved (cp Ro 11:26). Paul uses pleroma in Ro 11:25-note to describe the fulness of the Gentiles.

Ro 11:25 For I do not want you, brethren, to be uninformed of this mystery—so that you will not be wise in your own estimation—that a partial hardening has happened to Israel until the **fulness** of the Gentiles has come in;

Comment: Distinguish "**fulness of the Gentiles**" ([See Chart comparing the Times versus the Fullness of the Gentiles](#)) from "times of the Gentiles" ([See discussion of times of the Gentiles](#)). **Pleroma** is that which has been filled and thus refers to that which is to a sum total, to a complete amount, or a full number, in this case the "full number" of Gentiles who will come to belief in Messiah. The NET Bible conveys the meaning clearly rendering it "A partial hardening has happened to Israel until the full number of the Gentiles has come in." (NET Bible)

Ro 13:10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the **fulfillment** of the law.

Ro 15:29 I know that when I come to you, I will come in the **fulness** of the blessing of Christ.

Comment: In Romans 15:29 the passive sense is used to refer to Paul's desire that the Roman believers share in "the full abundance" of Christ's blessing" through their financial collection, not just to bring relief to the famine-stricken in Jerusalem, but also to strengthen the bond between Jews and Gentiles in the church (Rom 15:24–33). (Dictionary of Paul and his letters).

1 Co 10:26 for the earth is the Lord's, and **all it contains**. (NET "and its abundance")

Gal 4:4 But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,

Detzler - fulfillment of time. The Lord Jesus was born of the virgin, according to Galatians 4:4, 'when the time had fully come'. There is a marvelous sense of completion in that phrase. All of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament reached its climax in the Lamb of God. Prophecy likewise found its fulfillment par excellence in the person of Christ. In fact, there are more than thirty references to the fulfillment of prophecy in the person of Christ as the story is found in the Gospels. (BORROW [New Testament Words in Today's Language](#))

Eph 1:10 with a view to an administration suitable to the **fulness** of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him

Comment: Here pleroma refers to the fulfillment, full end, or completion of time, the full period

Eph 1:23 which is His body, the **fulness** of Him who fills all in all.

MacArthur - The church is the fulness or complement (pleroma) of Christ. As a head must have a body to manifest the glory of that head, so the Lord must have the church to manifest His glory (Ep 3:10).

Henry Alford - Here, the simple and primary meaning is by far the best,—'the thing filled,'—'the filled up receptacle' ... the meaning being, that the church being the Body of Christ, is dwelt in and filled by God: it is His pleroma in an especial manner—His fulness abides in it, and is exemplified by it" (3:87).

John Eadie - "The word (pleroma), we apprehend, is rightly taken in a passive sense—that which is filled up." And then he concludes: "So the church is named pleroma, or fulness, because it holds or contains the fulness of Christ" (p. 113).

Wuest - The word "**fulness**" is **pleroma**. Thayer gives the following: "that which is or has been filled; used of a ship inasmuch as it is filled (i.e., manned) with sailors, rowers, and soldiers; in the NT, the body of believers, as that which is filled with the presence, power, agency, riches of God and of Christ." Alford says, "the meaning being, that the Church, being the Body of Christ, is dwelt in and filled with God: it is

His **pleroma** (fulness) in an especial manner—His fulness abides in it and is exemplified by it.”

Salmond (Expositor's Greek Testament) **Pleroma** is to be taken in the passive sense here, as is done by most commentators, and the idea is that the Church is not only Christ's body but that which is filled by Him. In Col 1:19, 2:9, the whole **pleroma** or every plenitude of the Godhead, the very fulness of the Godhead, the totality of the divine powers and qualities, is said to be recognized as Framer and Governor of the world, and there is neither need nor place for any intermediate beings as agents in those works of creating, upholding and administering. Here the conception is that this plenitude of the divine powers and qualities which is in Christ is **imparted** by Him to His Church, so that the latter is **pervaded** by His presence, **animated** by His life, **filled** with His gifts and energies and graces. He is the sole Head of the universe, which is supplied by Him with all that is needed for its being and order. He is also the sole Head of the Church, which receives from Him what He Himself possesses, and is endowed by Him with all that it requires for the realization of its vocation.” “The all things” is “the whole system of things, made by Christ, and having in Him the ground of its being, its continuance, its order (Heb. 1:3, Col. 1:16, 17, 1Cor. 8:6), ‘with all things,’... the universe itself and all the things that make its fulness.” ([Commentary](#))

Eph 3:19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the **fulness** of God.

MacArthur - To be filled up to all the fulness of God therefore means to be totally dominated by Him, with nothing left of self or any part of the old man. By definition, then, to be filled with God is to be emptied of self. It is not to have much of God and little of self, but all of God and none of self. This is a recurring theme in Ephesians. Here Paul talks about the fulness of God; in 4:13 it is “the fulness of Christ”; and in 5:18 it is the fulness of the Spirit.

Eph 4:13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ.

Col 1:19 For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the **fulness** to dwell in Him,

J B Lightfoot on **pleroma** - On the one hand, in relation to Deity, He is the visible image of the invisible God. He is not only the chief manifestation of the Divine nature: He exhausts the godhead manifested. In Him resides the totality of the Divine powers and attributes. For this totality Gnostic teachers had a technical term, the **pleroma** or plenitude...In contrast to their doctrine, [Paul] asserts and repeats the assertion, that the **pleroma** abides absolutely and wholly in Christ as the Word of God. The entire light is concentrated in Him.

[Dictionary of Biblical Imagery](#) (ONLINE) - The reference to fullness here is an intentional slap at the false teachers, who apparently used the same word, **pleroma**, to denote the totality of all the thousands of divine emanations of lesser gods. The sense is that Jesus is not one of the lesser gods of the fullness. He is the Fullness. Colossians 2:9 puts it even more explicitly: “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (NIV). Fullness denotes the totality of divine power and attributes in Christ. Knowledge of this fullness is part of the gnōsis for which Paul prayed for the Colossians. Divine fullness establishes Christ's superiority beyond doubt. And with this, his adequacy to meet every believer's need fills his followers: “and you have been given fullness in Christ” (Col 2:10NIV). Christ can hold all the fullness of deity, believers cannot. But believers are full of his fullness. This grand motif then informs the section on practical living.

Col 2:9 For in Him all the **fulness** of Deity dwells in bodily form,

Salmond (Expositor's Greek Testament) - The false teachers represented the fulness of the Godhead as distributed among the angels, and thus led their victims captive. Paul's warning against the false doctrine thus rests on the fact that it was in Christ that the whole fulness dwelt. ([Commentary](#))

Barclay - In Colossians 2:9 he says in Christ there dwelt the **pleroma** of deity in a bodily form. He meant that in Jesus there dwelt the totality of the wisdom, the power, the love of God. Just because of that Jesus is inexhaustible. A man can go to Jesus with any need and find that need supplied. A man can go to Jesus with any ideal and find that ideal realized. In Jesus the man in love with beauty will find the supreme beauty. In Jesus the man to whom life is the search for knowledge will find the supreme revelation. In Jesus the man who needs courage will find the pattern and the secret of being brave. In Jesus the man who feels that he cannot cope with life will find the Master of life and the power to live. In Jesus the man who is conscious of his sin will find the forgiveness for his sin and the strength to be good. In Jesus the

pleroma, the fullness of God, all that is in God, what Westcott called “the spring of divine life,” becomes available to men. (Barclay - [Colossians Commentary](#))

Pleroma - 13v in non-apocryphal Lxx - 1Chr. 16:32 Ps. 24:1 Ps. 50:12 Ps. 89:11 Ps. 96:11 Ps. 98:7 Eccl. 4:6 Cant. 5:12 Jer. 8:16 Jer. 47:2 Ezek. 12:19 Ezek. 19:7 Ezek. 30:12

Wayne Detzler - **ILLUSTRATIONS of Pleroma** - Some years ago a documentary film showed the remarkable capabilities of a submarine. When the chambers were filled with water the submarine sank slowly beneath the waves and disappeared. At the command of the skipper the same tanks were filled with air; as air forced out water, the craft surfaced. So it is with Christians. The Holy Spirit forces sin out of our lives as He fills us, and we rise to new levels of spiritual life.

Blaise Pascal, famous French mathematician and philosopher, spoke of the "God-shaped vacuum" in every person. There is a void in the life of every person which can only be filled by God. To attempt to fill it with things, or fame, or even culture, is of no avail. Only when Christ Jesus fills that place is there true satisfaction.

In preaching I am often compelled to fly. Actually it is a very pleasant means of travel. When the pilot takes off from Denver for Chicago, he has a flight plan. During the next two hours he flies exactly according to that plan, and when he has fulfilled it, we arrive safe and sound at O'Hare Field in Chicago. God has a plan for our lives, and He will fulfill it if we allow Him to. At the end we shall arrive safe and sound in heaven.

There is yet another fulfillment of significance to each Christian. This is the fullness of the Holy Spirit. A former president of Wheaton College, V. Raymond Edman, loved to speak about the Holy Spirit. Of Him Dr. Edman wrote: "The Spirit-filled life is no mystery revealed to a select few, no goal difficult of attainment. To trust and to obey is the substance of the whole matter."

Dr. Edman used to put the point simply in this way. "What happens," he would ask, "if you are carrying a cup of water and you are jostled?" "Well," we would answer, "the water spills."

"Correct," Dr. Edman said. "By the same token, if you are filled with the joy of the Lord and you are jostled, only the joy of the Lord can spill over."

Bible paraphraser J.B. Phillips explained the fullness of the Holy Spirit in another way: "Every time we say, 'I believe in the Holy Spirit,' we mean that we believe that there is a living God, able and willing to enter human personality and change it."

Speaking of the entire church of Jesus Christ, British preacher and writer John Stott said: "Before Christ sent the church into the world, He sent the Spirit into the church. The same order must be observed today." (BORROW [New Testament Words in Today's Language](#))

QUESTION - [What is the Pleroma?](#)

ANSWER - *Pleroma* is a Greek word that has to do with filling or being full, or completing or being complete. The word in various conjugations is common in the New Testament and is used in a variety of contexts. In Matthew 1:22 it is translated “to fulfill (prophecy),” and in Matthew 13:48 it is used to describe a full net of fish. In Acts 2:2 the sound of the rushing wind “filled” the house, and in Acts 2:28 Peter quotes David as being “full” of gladness. In non-biblical usage there are examples of *pleroma* being used of a “full” ship or even a “fully manned” ship. It is simply a normal Greek word without any inherent theological content.

The reason *pleroma* has become an issue is Paul’s use of it in Colossians 1:9 to speak of being “filled” with the knowledge of God’s will; in Colossians 1:25 to say that he is “fully” carrying out his ministry; in Colossians 2:10 to tell the believers they are “complete” in Christ; and in Colossians 4:17 to encourage someone to “complete” his ministry. These are all rather straightforward. In Colossians Paul uses the word *pleroma* two times in reference to Christ—each occurrence is a powerful statement of the [deity of Christ](#). Colossians 1:19: “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him”; and Colossians 2:9: “For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.”

The fact that Paul uses the word *pleroma*, which later became a prominent term in [Gnostic theology](#), has led some to infer that Paul was a Gnostic and then, in turn, to try to interpret his writings, especially Colossians, in a Gnostic fashion.

In Gnostic writings, “the *Pleroma*” takes on a technical meaning. The *Pleroma* is that spiritual perfection that is in contrast to physical deficiency. (Gnostics believed that matter was evil.) In Gnosticism, the *Pleroma* descended upon Christ at His baptism and left Him at the crucifixion before His death. Gnostics also hope to be able to experience the *Pleroma* themselves as they progress in Gnostic teaching.

In the New Testament, the *pleroma* is the fullness of God, the complete set of divine attributes that were incarnated in

Christ. Christ is fully God and fully man and will forever inhabit a glorified human body. He is the unique Son of God (**ED: THE MEANING OF "MONOGENES"**) in this way. Although sons of God by faith will inherit a glorified body and are complete in Christ (as in Colossians 2:10) and indwelt by the Spirit of God, Christ is unique in His deity and sonship.

In Gnosticism, "the *Pleroma*" is a spiritual fullness or perfection that descended upon Christ temporarily and can descend upon other human beings as well. The *Pleroma* will never be permanently attached to a physical body because matter is considered evil—only the spiritual is good. Therefore, the Gnostic understanding the *Pleroma* as it applies to both the uniqueness of Christ and the goodness of created matter is at odds with biblical teaching.

WE HAVE ALL RECEIVED GRACE UPON GRACE

We have all received ([lambano](#)) - John is not advocating universalism, the false teaching that everyone is a child of God, that everyone will go to heaven and that no one will go to hell. John has just used **received** ([lambano](#)) in Jn 1:12 of those who **received** Jesus Christ as Savior and who thereby became **children of God**. **All** of those who **received** Jesus, **receive** His grace upon grace. Remember that salvation is not something we **achieve** but something we **receive**. By grace we receive it and by grace we live it out (grace upon grace, so to speak).

Kent Hughes - Scripture says we have "**all**" received his "**fullness**." It is simply a matter of receiving grace upon grace upon grace, allowing God to put it to work within us. But at the same time receiving grace is not a matter of just lying there and saying, "Overflow me with your grace." We have to take hold of grace and believe that we will receive the promised abundance of divine favor and provision. May we learn to receive grace upon grace, so our lives will become richer and more beautiful and more joyful through grace! May we be people who receive grace upon grace and who then give out grace upon grace in response to the effects of sin, misery, and horror in this world! God wants us to be filled with all his fullness and to possess it. Grace is ours. May God help us to appropriate this power! (Preaching the Word).

Grace upon grace - Christ can supply **grace upon grace** because He is "**full of grace and truth**." (Jn 1:14) and because in Him the fulness of the Godhead dwells in bodily form (Col 2:9). The simple picture is that of **grace piled upon grace**. All that we will ever need is in Christ so that Paul could say "I can do all things through Him Who strengthens me (by His grace)." (Php 4:13+) and because His grace is sufficient His power is perfected in my weakness (2Cor 12:9-10+). Hallelujah! Thank You Jesus! Amen!

*In the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace
in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.*

-- Paul (Eph 2:7+)

John MacArthur adds that "Because in Christ "all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form" (Col. 2:9), He provides for all His people's needs (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 4:12-13; Col. 1:28; 2:10; 2 Peter 1:3). That abundant supply will never be exhausted or diminished; grace will continually follow grace in a limitless, never-ending flow (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9; Eph. 2:7). (See excellent commentary on [John 1-11 MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) scroll up and down for more comments)

Illustration of grace upon grace - Years ago, Amy Carmichael shared some helpful insights about the phrase, "**grace for grace**." Drawing from the writings of Bishop Moule (1841-1920), she wrote that the Greek word translated "for" literally means "instead of." He illustrated the meaning by describing a river. "Stand on its banks," he wrote, "and contemplate the flow of waters. A minute passes, and another. Is it the same stream still? Yes. But is it the same water? No." The old water, he explained, had been displaced by new—"water instead of water." (See [full devotional below](#))

Upon is the preposition [anti](#) (see [discussion in NIDNTT](#); see also Vincent's note and NET notes below) - Anti has two basic meanings - instead of or opposed to. Because of this preposition commentators have argued over the meaning of grace upon grace (discussed below), but most common people are not able to "nuance" the Greek and take God's Word with simple minds and humble hearts, which is why I favor the interpretation of **grace piled upon grace, always enough no matter the need!** Indeed, this is Amazing Grace!

Grace ([5485](#)) (**charis**) in simple terms is God's unmerited favor and supernatural enablement and empowerment for salvation and for daily sanctification. Grace is everything for nothing to those who don't deserve anything. Grace is what every man needs, what none can earn and what God Alone can and does freely give (see Ro 8:32+ where "freely give" is *charizomai* [word study] from *charis* = a grace gift!). Grace addresses man's sin, while mercy addresses man's misery. The gift of grace makes men fit for salvation, miraculously making separated strangers into God's beloved sons.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary definition of **grace** - unmerited love and favor of God which is the spring and source of all benefits men receive from Him, including especially His assistance given man for his regeneration or sanctification. (Grace is) a virtue from God

influencing man, renewing his heart and restraining him from sin.

Charles Allen offers a succinct synopsis of grace noting that "In the Bible there are three distinctive meanings of grace; it means the mercy and active love of God; it means the winsome attractiveness of God; it means the strength of God to overcome."

NET Note - The meaning of the phrase *charin anti charitos* could be: (1) love (grace) under the New Covenant in place of love (grace) under the Sinai Covenant, thus replacement; (2) grace "on top of" grace, thus accumulation; (3) grace corresponding to grace, thus correspondence. The most commonly held view is (2) in one sense or another, and this is probably the best explanation.

Wiersbe - **Grace** is God's favor and kindness bestowed on those who do not deserve it and cannot earn it **ED**: See [Teed's Commentary on John 1](#)). If God dealt with us only according to truth, none of us would survive; but He deals with us on the basis of grace and truth. Jesus Christ, in His life, death, and resurrection, met all the demands of the Law; now God is free to share fullness of grace with those who trust Christ. Grace without truth would be deceitful, and truth without grace would be condemning. ([Commentary](#), Another source [Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

Vincent - The preposition *anti* originally means over against; opposite; before (in a local sense). Through the idea of placing one thing over against another is developed that of exchange. Thus Herodotus (iii., 59), "They bought the island, for (*anti*) money." So Mt 5:38, "An eye for (*anti*) an eye," etc. This idea is at the root of the peculiar sense in which the preposition is used here. We received, not New Testament **grace** instead of Old Testament grace; nor simply, **grace added to grace**; but new grace imparted as the former measure of grace has been received and improved. "To have realized and used one measure of grace, was to have gained a larger measure (as it were) in exchange for it." Consequently, continuous, unintermittent grace. The idea of the development of one grace from another is elaborated by Peter (2Peter 1:5). Winer cites a most interesting parallel from Philo. "Wherefore, having provided and dispensed the first **graces** before their recipients have waxed wanton through satiety, he subsequently bestows different **graces** in exchange for (*anti*) those, and a third supply for the second, and ever new ones in exchange for the older."

Steven Cole - we do need to consider what John means by the phrase, "**grace upon grace**." John uses a Greek preposition, *anti*, that means that one thing is replaced by another or put in the place of another. In light of verse 17, many reputable commentators understand it to mean that the grace of the law was replaced by the grace of Jesus Christ (Carson, p. 132; Andreas Kostenberger, John [Baker], pp. 46-47; this view goes back to several early church fathers). They contend that if John had meant "**grace upon grace**," he would have used another preposition, *epi*. In light of God's revelation to Moses of His grace in Exodus 33 & Exodus 34, this may be what John means for us to understand. **But it strikes me as a bit subtle** (ED: I AGREE), especially since the **law itself was not noted for dispensing grace**. The Bauer-Arndt-Gingrich Greek-English Lexicon [University of Chicago Press], 2nd ed., p. 73) says that in John 1:16, *anti* means "*grace pours forth in ever new streams*." (In the same vein, see A. T. Robertson, A Grammar of the Greek New Testament [Broadman Press], p. 574.) Another scholar, Murray J. Harris (ONLINE - [The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology \[Zondervan\], ed. by Colin Brown, p. 1179](#)) says that the preposition in this verse "*denotes a perpetual and rapid succession of blessings, as though there were no interval between the arrival of one blessing and the receipt of the next*." When you add in the idea of Jesus' fullness, at the very least John wants us to see that in Him we get all the grace that we need. It's an inexhaustible supply. ([Why You Should Believe in Jesus John 1:15-18](#))

Cambridge - Literally, Grace in the place of grace, one grace succeeding another and as it were taking its place. There is no reference to the New Testament displacing the Old. Possibly the **anti** may imply that one grace leads on to another, so that the second is, as it were, a reward for the first. Winer, p. 456. ([John 1 - Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary](#))

Expositor's Greek Testament - "ever and anon fresh grace appears over and above that already received"... "Where in the history of mankind can we find anything resembling this, that men who had eaten and drunk with their Master should glorify Him, not only as the Revealer of God, but as the Prince of Life, as the Redeemer and Judge of the world, as the living power of its existence, and that a choir of Jews and Gentiles, Greeks and barbarians, wise and foolish, should along with them immediately confess that out of the fulness of this one man they have received grace for grace?" ([John 1 - The Expositor's Greek Testament](#))

J C Ryle - All we who believe in Jesus have received an abundant supply of all that our souls need out of the full store that resides in Him for His people. It is from Christ and Christ alone, that all our spiritual wants have been supplied.

Constable's discussion of **grace upon grace** - [John Commentary Notes](#)

Peter spoke of this full supply of grace this way...

seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. (2Pet 1:3)

Criswell - The Christian's experience of grace begins with the reception of the riches of His grace ("fullness") and is progressive and limitless. Its source is Christ's abundant Person (cf. Phil. 4:19). Indeed there was grace in the Law which came through Moses, but

the grace of God which appeared at the incarnation overwhelms all previous manifestations.

Steven Cole - John Calvin applies John 1:16 in three ways. He says that **first** it shows us that while we're all spiritually destitute, the abundance that exists in Christ "is intended to supply our deficiency, to relieve our poverty, to satisfy our hunger and thirst." **Second**, if we depart from Christ, "it is in vain for us to seek a single drop of happiness" elsewhere. The world can never give us the lasting joy we find in Christ. **Third**, we have no reason to fear lacking anything if we draw on Christ's fullness, because He is "a truly inexhaustible fountain." He points out that John includes himself in John 1:16 to make it plain that no one is excepted. All who believe have received grace upon grace. ([Why You Should Believe in Jesus John 1-15-18](#))

Fresh Daily By Joanie Yoder

I once heard someone describe his troublesome life like this: "Each day is just yesterday warmed up!" Yes, life sometimes dishes up a diet of old problems disguised as new ones. It's like the frugal housewife who feeds her family for a week on leftovers from Sunday dinner, serving the same old food in different disguises.

It was into such a tiresome, troublesome world that Jesus came. The apostle John said that Jesus is full of grace and truth, and He supplies us with "grace for grace" (John 1:14,16).

Years ago, Amy Carmichael shared some helpful insights about the phrase, "grace for grace." Drawing from the writings of Bishop Moule (1841-1920), she wrote that the Greek word translated "for" literally means "instead of." He illustrated the meaning by describing a river. "Stand on its banks," he wrote, "and contemplate the flow of waters. A minute passes, and another. Is it the same stream still? Yes. But is it the same water? No." The old water, he explained, had been displaced by new—"water instead of water."

The same is true of grace. Your life today may carry yesterday's problems, but remember, God's grace is new each morning, exactly what you need to meet each new challenge. It is an inexhaustible and ever-fresh supply. (**ED**: COMPARE "MANIFOLD GRACE" FOR MANIFOLD or VARIOUS TRIALS - SAME WORD IN BOTH - [poikilos](#) - SEE 1Pe 1:6+, 1Pe 4:10+)

Each day God sends His loving grace
To strengthen you and me;
We need but use this day's supply
And let tomorrow be.
—Anon.

God gives special grace for each trial we face.

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John 1:17 For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: hoti o nomos dia Mouseos edothe, (3SAPI) e charis kai e aletheia dia Iesou Christou egeneto. (3SAMI)

Amplified: For while the Law was given through Moses, grace (unearned, undeserved favor and spiritual blessing) and truth came through Jesus Christ. [Ex 20:1]

ESV: For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

KJV: For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

NLT: For the law was given through Moses; God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ.

Phillips: For while the Law was given by Moses, love and truth came through Jesus Christ. |

Wuest: Because the law through the intermediate agency of Moses was given, the aforementioned grace and the truth came through Jesus Christ.

Young's Literal: for the law through Moses was given, the grace and the truth through Jesus Christ did come;

- **The law:** Jn 5:45 9:29 Ex 20:1-17 Dt 4:44 5:1 33:4 Acts 7:38 28:23 Ro 3:19,20 5:20,21 2Co 3:7-10 Gal 3:10-13,17 Heb 3:5,6 8:8-12
- **Grace:** Jn 8:32 14:6 Ge 3:15 22:18 Ps 85:10 89:1,2 98:3 Mic 7:20 Lk 1:54,55,68-79 Acts 13:34-39 Ro 3:21-26 5:21 6:14 15:8-12 2Co 1:20 Heb 9:22 10:4-10 11:39,40 Rev 5:8-10 7:9-17
- See [John 1:17 Commentary for additional notes](#)

- [John 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

For - Steven Cole sees this as John's elaboration (explanation) "on the fact (from John 1:14) that Jesus is also full of truth."

The Law was given - Strictly speaking the Law referred to the Torah (Genesis through Deuteronomy), but in this context probably is a reference to the entire OT (cf Jn 5:39 below), especially in view of the fact that the entire OT pointed to the Logos, the Messiah. And in the present passage John is in effect presenting a contrast between Old and New, Moses and Jesus, Law and grace and truth.

Even the **Law** was to have pointed Israel to Jesus for as Jesus Himself said "You search the Scriptures (in context this refers to the OT, including the Torah) because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me." (John 5:39)

Jesus Christ - The first use of His Name by John. John's only other use of this full Name is John 17:3 (cp Jn 20:31 where Jesus and Christ are separately used). John used the Name Jesus almost as many times as all the other Gospel writers combined (there are a total of 979 uses of Jesus in the NT, and John has 242 of these uses in his Gospel. Recall John's purpose...

(John 20:31) but these have been written SO THAT (PURPOSE) you may believe that **Jesus** is the **Christ**, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name.

Jesus - Used by John 242x in 233v (Matthew used Jesus 150x, Mark 81x, Lk 89x) -

John 1:17, 29, 36ff, 42f, 45, 47f, 50; 2:1ff, 7, 11, 13, 19, 22, 24; 3:2f, 5, 10, 22; 4:1f, 6f, 10, 13, 17, 21, 26, 34, 40, 44, 47f, 50, 53f; 5:1, 6, 8, 13ff, 19; 6:1, 3, 5, 10f, 15, 17, 19, 22, 24, 26, 29, 32, 35, 42f, 53, 61, 64, 67, 70; 7:1, 6, 14, 16, 21, 28, 33, 37, 39; 8:1, 6, 10ff, 14, 19, 25, 28, 31, 34, 39, 42, 49, 54, 58f; 9:3, 11, 14, 35, 37, 39, 41; 10:6f, 23, 25, 32, 34; 11:4f, 9, 13f, 17, 20f, 23, 25, 30, 32f, 35, 38ff, 44, 46, 51, 54, 56; 12:1, 3, 7, 11f, 14, 16, 21ff, 30, 35f, 44; 13:1, 3, 7f, 10, 21, 23, 26f, 29, 31, 36, 38; 14:6, 9, 23; 16:19, 31; 17:1, 3; 18:1f, 4f, 7f, 11f, 15, 19f, 22f, 28, 32ff, 36f; 19:1, 5, 9, 11, 13, 17ff, 23, 25f, 28, 30, 33, 38, 40, 42; 20:2, 12, 14ff, 19, 21, 24, 26, 29ff; 21:1, 4f, 7, 10, 12ff, 17, 20ff, 25;

Tenney - The contrast between law and grace as methods of God's dealing with men is expressed here as plainly as in the Pauline writings (see Ro 5:20–21; Eph 2:8). The law represented God's standard of righteousness; grace exhibited his attitude to human beings who found that they could not keep the law. This attitude was depicted in the person and life of Jesus. (The Expositor's Bible Commentary)

Grace and truth - While these attributes were present in the Torah, they are consummated and reached their pinnacle in the incarnate Son of God. These divine gifts/attributes are fully realized in the Son Who gives **grace** (2Cor 12:9, 2Ti 2:1), something neither Moses nor the Torah could provide. In addition, the Son declared Himself to be the personification of **truth** (Jn 14:6). While grace and truth that come to man through Jesus Christ is clearly the "better way," the Law has not been discarded but in the New Covenant is written on our hearts (Jer 31:33). In fact in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus repeatedly alludes to the internal aspect of the law when He says "You have heard that it was said...But I tell you" (Mt 5:21–22, 27–28, 22:33–34, 38–39, 43–44). As Jesus Himself declared "Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill." (Mt 5:17) Paul amplifies Jesus' declaration explaining that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes." (Ro 10:4) As Paul says in Romans 6 believers "are not under law, but under grace." (Ro 6:14)

Boice - The contrast is between the **law** with all its regulations and the new era of salvation by **grace** through faith apart from the works of the law that has come with Jesus Christ. It is a great contrast. **Under the law**, God demands righteousness from people; under grace, He gives it to people. **Under law**, righteousness is based on Moses and good works; under grace, it is based on Christ and Christ's character. **Under law**, blessings accompany obedience; under grace, God bestows his blessings as a free gift. **The law** is powerless to secure righteousness and life for a sinful race. Grace came in its fullness with Christ's death and resurrection to make sinners righteous before God. (The Gospel of John : An expository commentary)

Keep in mind that **grace and truth** were still present in the OT, but just not as fully and finally realized as they were in Jesus Christ. And so in the midst of great spiritual darkness and sin on earth we read that "Noah found **favor** (Heb = *chen*; Lxx = *charis* = grace) in the eyes of the LORD." (Ge 6:6, cp Lxx uses of *charis* in Ge 18:3 of Abraham to God, God gift of grace to Joseph in Ge 39:21, cp Ps 86:11), In a similar way we see the mention of **truth (aletheia)** in Ge 24:27 (God "has not forsake His lovingkindness and His **truth [aletheia]**). As alluded to earlier (comments on Jn 1:14), the OT "analogue" of grace and truth is lovingkindness and truth and is found 19 times in the OT, especially in the Psalms -

Gen 24:27 And he said, "Blessed be the LORD, the God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken **His lovingkindness and His truth** toward my master; as for me, the LORD has guided me in the way to the house of my master's brothers."

Ex 34:6 Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in **lovingkindness and truth**;

2Sa 2:6 "And now may the LORD show **lovingkindness and truth** to you; and I also will show this goodness to you, because you have done this thing.

Ps 25:10 All the paths of the LORD are **lovingkindness and truth** To those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.

Ps 26:3 For Thy **lovingkindness** is before my eyes, And I have walked in Thy **truth**.

Ps 40:10 I have not hidden Thy righteousness within my heart; I have spoken of Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation; I have not concealed **Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth** from the great congregation.

Ps 40:11 Thou, O LORD, wilt not withhold Thy compassion from me; **Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth** will continually preserve me.

Ps 57:3 He will send from heaven and save me; He reproaches him who tramples upon me. Selah. God will send forth His lovingkindness and His truth.

Ps 57:10 For **Thy lovingkindness** is great to the heavens, And **Thy truth** to the clouds.

Ps 61:7 He will abide before God forever; Appoint **lovingkindness and truth**, that they may preserve him.

Ps 69:13 But as for me, my prayer is to Thee, O LORD, at an acceptable time; O God, in the greatness of **Thy lovingkindness**, Answer me with **Thy saving truth**.

Ps 85:10 **Lovingkindness and truth** have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.

Ps 86:15 But Thou, O Lord, art a God merciful and gracious, Slow to anger and abundant in **lovingkindness and truth**.

Ps 89:14 Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Thy throne; **Lovingkindness and truth** go before Thee.

Ps 108:4 For **Thy lovingkindness** is great above the heavens; And **Thy truth** reaches to the skies.

Ps 115:1 Not to us, O LORD, not to us, But to Thy name give glory Because of **Thy lovingkindness**, because of **Thy truth**.

Ps 117:2 For His **lovingkindness** is great toward us, And the **truth** of the LORD is everlasting. Praise the LORD!

Ps 138:2 I will bow down toward Thy holy temple, And give thanks to Thy name for **Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth**; For Thou hast magnified Thy word according to all Thy name.

Pr 16:6 By **lovingkindness and truth** iniquity is atoned for, And by the fear of the LORD one keeps away from evil.

Kostenberger refers to this **grace** as "True grace, i.e., final eschatological grace, came through Jesus Christ. Rather than offend the Gospel's Jewish audience, this verse is designed to draw it in: "If you want an even more gracious demonstration of God's covenant love and faithfulness," the evangelist tells his readers, "it is found in Jesus Christ." Jesus' ministry is superior to Moses, just as He is superior to Jacob (Jn 4:12) and Abraham (Jn 8:53).

Bible Knowledge Commentary - The greatness of the old dispensation was the giving of the Law by God through His servant Moses. No other nation has had such a privilege. But the glory of the church is the revelation of God's grace and truth ... through Jesus Christ (cf. Jn 1:14).

A T Robertson - It is grace in contrast with law as Paul sets forth in Galatians and Romans. Paul had made grace "a Christian commonplace" (Bernard) before John wrote. It is truth as opposed to Gnostic and all other heresy as Paul shows in Colossians and Ephesians. The two words aptly describe two aspects of the Logos and John drops the use of Logos and charis, but clings to alētheia (see Jn 8:32 for the freedom brought by truth), though the ideas in these three words run all through his Gospel.

Hughes - Much could be said about **truth**. Suffice it to say, however, that when grace comes, so does God's revelation of spiritual truth, and we begin to see things as they are. A little girl had a terrific fight with her brother. When her mother came in, the mother asked, "Why did you let the devil put it in your heart to pull your brother's hair and kick him in the shins?" The little girl thought for a moment and said, "Well, maybe the devil put it into my head to pull my brother's hair, but kicking his shins was my own idea." She had better theology than her mother. We begin to see things as they are when we through grace begin to understand ourselves, life,

God, and salvation. The overflowing fountain of grace is a marvelous gift. (Preaching the Word).

Through Moses... through Jesus Christ - "Through" indicates they were the intermediate agents of God, the former the agent of law, the latter the agent of grace and truth.

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God Who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him. (NASB: Lockman)

Greek: theon oudeis eoraken (3SRAI) popote; monogenes theos o on (PAPMSN) eis ton kolpon tou patros ekeinos exegesato (3SAMI)

Amplified: No man has ever seen God at any time; the only unique Son, or the only begotten God, Who is in the bosom [in the intimate presence] of the Father, He has declared Him [He has revealed Him and brought Him out where He can be seen; He has interpreted Him and He has made Him known]. [Prov. 8:30.]

ESV: No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

KJV: No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

NLT: No one has ever seen God. But his only Son, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart; he has told us about him. ([NLT - Tyndale House](#))

Phillips: it is true that no one has ever seen God at any time. Yet the divine and only Son, who lives in the closest intimacy with the Father, has made him known.

Wuest: Absolute deity in its essence no one has ever yet seen. God uniquely-begotten, He who is in the bosom of the Father, that One fully explained deity.

Young's Literal: God no one hath ever seen; the only begotten Son, who is on the bosom of the Father -- he did declare.

- **Seen:** Jn 6:46 Ex 33:20 Dt 4:12 Mt 11:27 Lk 10:22 Col 1:15 1Ti 1:17 1Ti 6:16 1Jn 4:12,20
- **The only:** Jn 1:14 Jn 3:16-18 1Jn 4:9
- **In the bosom:** Jn 13:23 Pr 8:30 Isa 40:11 La 2:12 Lk 16:22,23
- See [John 1:18 Commentary for additional notes](#)
- [John 1 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

He has explained Him: Jn 12:41 Jn 14:9 Jn 17:6,26 Ge 16:13 Ge 18:33 Ge 32:28-30 Ge 48:15,16 Ex 3:4-6 Ex 23:21 Ex 33:18-23 Ex 34:5-7 Nu 12:8 Jos 5:13-15 6:1,2 Jdg 6:12-26 Jdg 13:20-23 Isa 6:1-3 Eze 1:26-28 Ho 12:3-5 Mt 11:27 Lk 10:22 1Jn 5:20

1 John 4:12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

John 5:37 "And the Father who sent Me, He has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.

John 6:46 "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.

John 8:19 And so they were saying to Him, "Where is Your Father?" Jesus answered, "You know neither Me, nor My Father; if you knew Me, you would know My Father also."

John 14:9 Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how do you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on My own initiative, but the Father abiding in Me does His works.

John 15:24 "If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin; but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well.

**JESUS EXEGETES
THE INVISIBLE GOD**

No one has seen God at any time - No one is absolute negation = "absolutely no one." The point is that no one has ever seen God, in His full and complete way (cf. Jn 6:46+), but some people did see partial revelations of God in the OT. However, most commentators feel that the One Who was seen in the OT was Christ, presenting Himself in a so-called pre-incarnate Theophany (or "Christophany") (See study of Angel of the LORD, almost certainly a **Christophany**). Later, John records under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that the prophet Isaiah "saw His (Jesus') glory, and he spoke of Him." (Jn 12:41+, cp Isa 6:1-5+ = Isaiah declared "*my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.*")

One reason no one had seen the essence of God was that to do so would have brought instant death (Ex. 33:20; cf. Ge. 32:30; Dt. 5:26; Jdg. 13:22)

Paul writes that the essence of God is **invisible** = "Now to the King eternal, immortal, **invisible**, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen." (1Tim 1:17), "Who Alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, **Whom no man has seen or can see**. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen." (1Ti 6:16) What Paul is saying is that no man has ever seen the very essence of God, or God in His essential nature. John is saying that the only way to see the inner nature of God is to see Jesus. Jesus Himself was asked by Philip "Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us." (John 14:8) Jesus responded "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? **He who has seen Me has seen the Father**; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:9) Let us fix our eyes on Jesus (Heb 12:2)!

Utley - Some say that this (**No one has seen God at any time**) contradicts Ex. 33:20–23+. However, the Hebrew term in the Exodus passage refers to "afterglow," not physical sight of God Himself. The thrust of this passage is that only Jesus fully reveals God (cf. Jn 14:8ff). This verse emphasizes the unique revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth. He is the full and only divine self-disclosure. To know Jesus is to know God. Jesus is the Father's ultimate revelation of Himself. There is no clear understanding of deity apart from Him (cf. Col. 1:15–19; Heb. 1:2–3). ([John 1 Commentary](#))

Boice - No one in the ancient world would have disagreed with the first part of that statement—"No one has ever seen God"—for, as William Barclay notes in his commentary, "In the ancient world men were fascinated and depressed and frustrated by what they regarded as the infinite distance and the utter unknowability of God. ... Xenophanes had said, '*Guesswork is over all.*' Plato had said, '*Never man and God can meet.*' Celsus had laughed at the way that the Christians called God '*Father*,' because '*God is away beyond everything.*' At the best, Apuleius said, "*men could catch a glimpse of God as a lightning flash lights up a dark night—one split second of illumination, and then the dark.*" Even the Jews would have thought this way, for they knew that God had spoken to Moses in the Old Testament, saying, "*You cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live*" (Exod. 33:20+). There would have been no disagreement at all when John the Baptist declared that no one could see God. (The Gospel of John : An expositional commentary)

The only begotten God ("God the One and Only" NIV) - Some versions read "only begotten Son." (e.g., KJV, NKJV, RSV, HCSB, NLT, NAB, NJB) - The NET Note says "The textual problem "the only God" versus "the only son" is a notoriously difficult one. Only one letter would have differentiated the readings in the manuscripts." (**For more detailed discussion see full [NET Note on John 1:18](#)**)

Steven Cole sums the arguments up by noting that "The earliest and best manuscripts favor the reading "only begotten God." Since it is a unique phrase and is more difficult to explain than "only begotten Son," a scribe probably changed the original to "only begotten Son" to correspond to John 3:16 & 18. Thus translated literally, the verse in the original probably read, "the unique Son, God, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him." As Jesus will later say (6:46), "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father." And (14:9), "He who has seen Me has seen the Father."

In the bosom of the Father - Steven Cole explains that "**in the bosom of the Father**" corresponds to "the Word was with God" (Jn 1:1) and points to the close and unbroken fellowship that Jesus enjoyed with the Father, as seen in His prayer in chapter 17. It also shows us the horror of the cross for Jesus, when as He bore our sins He cried out (Mt. 27:46), "**My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?**" This shows that as horrible as Jesus being the Bearer of all mankind's sins was, even worse was the momentary separation from His Father (a mystery no man can explain, certainly not this writer!). It is interesting that Paul in his description of the judgment of unbelievers does not emphasize the fiery torment but the separation from God (2Th 1:6-10+ = "These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, **away from the presence of the Lord** and from the glory of His power."). ([Why You Should Believe in Jesus \(John 1:15-18\)](#))

D A Carson - A similar expression is found elsewhere: Lazarus is in Abraham's bosom (Lk. 16:22–23+), and John rests on Jesus' bosom at the last supper (Jn 13:23+). It apparently conveys an aura of intimacy, mutual love and knowledge. (The Gospel according to John).

Vincent - The phrase, in the bosom of the Father, depicts this eternal relation as essentially a relation of love; the figure being used of the relation of husband and wife (Deut. 13:6); of a father to an infant child (Num. 11:12), and of the affectionate protection and rest afforded to Lazarus in Paradise (Luke 16:23). ([John 1 - Vincent's Word Studies](#))

He - "He is strongly emphatic, and pointing to the eternal Son. This pronoun is used by John more frequently than by any other writer. It occurs seventy-two times, and not only as denoting the more distant subject, but as denoting and laying special stress on the person or thing immediately at hand, or possessing pre-eminently the quality which is immediately in question. Thus Jesus applies it to Himself as the person for whom the healed blind man is inquiring: "It is **He** that talketh with thee" (John 9:37). So here, "the only-be-gotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father — **He** hath declared Him." ([John 1 - Vincent's Word Studies](#))

Has explained (exegeomai) Him (God) - Jesus alone could "exegete God" for only Jesus "is the image of the invisible God." (Col 1:15) Only Jesus "is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature." (Heb 1:3) In Jn 1:18, John says that the life of Jesus provides detailed information in a systematic manner regarding the character of God. In a sense, Jesus is the "exegesis" of God! He "narrates" or "relates" the full story about God! He is the Word of God and the Word about God! "As Jesus gives life and is life, raises the dead and is the resurrection, gives bread and is bread, speaks truth and is the truth, so as he speaks the word he is the Word." (D A Carson quoting C H Dodd). **Exegeomai** always occurs in the Greek *middle* voice which underlines the high level of *personal* (self) participation involved with the "leading out" (*for oneself*).

G Campbell Morgan - "**He hath exegeted Him.**" What is **exegesis**? The word means bringing out from into visibility; to bring forth authoritatively into visibility. Exegesis is the authoritative bringing forth into visibility of that which was there all the time, but which was not seen until brought forth. Jesus is the Exegesis of God. He is the One through Whom there is brought forth authoritatively into visibility the things men had not seen." ([The Gospel According to John](#))

Zodhiates - "From His eternal, infinite, spiritual self-existence, He came out into the open for humans to see with their physical eyes. He came in human flesh, a bodily representation of the fullness of the Godhead."

MacArthur - Jesus is the only one qualified to exegete or interpret God to man, since "no one knows the Son except the Father; nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son wills to reveal Him" (Matt. 11:27).

*Just as a word explains an unseen thought,
so Jesus, the Word, explains the unseen God to us.*

Steven Cole - The word "**explained**" is the Greek word from which we get our word "**Exegete**." It is parallel to "the Word" in Jn 1:1. Just as a word explains an unseen thought, so Jesus, the Word, explains the unseen God to us. The only way that you can know the Father is through Jesus His Son (Luke 10:22; Jn 14:6). Elsewhere John writes (1 John 2:23), "Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also." In John 5:23 Jesus states, "He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him." This means that the cults, which all deny the deity of Jesus, cannot bring anyone to God. It also means that the Insider Movement, which has changed the terms "Father" and "Son" because they are offensive to Muslims has perverted the core of the gospel. It's fine to explain what the terms mean, but it's not fine to change the terms that God has used to reveal Himself to us in His Son. ([Why You Should Believe in Jesus John 1:15-18](#))

Explained (1834)(exegeomai from **ek** = out or as an intensifier + **hegeomai** = tell, lead means literally to lead out, then to unfold, declare by making plain, or tell the meaning of something, especially to tell it fully. To make known or thoroughly explain. Figuratively the idea is to "bring out" the meaning. To "draw out" in narrative form and so to relate (Luke 24:35; Acts 10:8; 15:12, 14; 21:19). In English **relate** means to give an account of. **Exegeomai** means to "lead completely out" which means more than simple "telling" for it also unfolds something to reach a proper understanding, e.g., the "leading out" (expounding) of the facts proceeds to its necessary objective. About AD 75, Josephus used **exegeomai** as a "technical term for the interpretation of the law as practiced by the rabbinate"

Exegeomai is used of a man relating his dream (Jdg 7:13), of describing a miracle (2 Ki. 8:5), and of declaring the Lord's glory among the nations (1Chr. 16:24). The closely related noun **exegetes** (also in Ge 41:8) is used in Pr 29:18 (**see commentary**) which says "Where there is no **vision** (no expounder, on one who leads on, no interpreter), the people are unrestrained, But happy is he who keeps the law." The clear application to pastors is to "**Preach** (every verb in red is aorist imperative = command to do so even with a sense of urgency) the word; **be ready** in season and out of season; **reprove, rebuke, exhort**, with great patience and instruction." (2Ti 4:2-note) How few pastors are exegetes and thus their sheep are not fed.

Explain (Webster's definitions - Ponder Jesus' incarnation as you read these definitions! Interesting!) - To make known or clear by providing more detail, to make plain or understandable, to give the reason for or cause of, to show the logical development or relationships of, to explain implies a making plain or intelligible what is not immediately obvious or entirely known; to make (something) comprehensible, esp. by giving a clear and detailed account of the relevant structure, operation, surrounding circumstances, etc; **Synonyms** = clarify, clear up, define, demonstrate, describe, disclose, elucidate, explicate (formal), expound, illustrate, interpret, make clear or plain, resolve, solve, teach, unfold. **Webster's 1828** = To make plain, manifest or intelligible; to clear of obscurity; to expound; to illustrate by discourse, or by notes. The first business of a preacher is to explain his text. Notes and comments are intended to explain the scriptures.

Vincent - Originally meant to lead or govern. Hence, like the Latin *praeire verbis*, to go before with words, to prescribe or dictate a form of words. To draw out in narrative, to recount or rehearse (see Acts 15:14, and on Luke 24:35). To relate in full; to interpret, or translate. Therefore, **exegesis**, is interpretation or explanation. The word **exegetes** was used by the Greeks of an expounder of oracles, dreams, omens, or sacred rites. Thus Croesus, finding the suburbs of Sardis alive with serpents, sent to the soothsayers (*exegetas*) of Telmessus (Herodotus, i. 78). The word thus comes to mean a spiritual director. Plato calls Apollo the tutelary director (*patroos exegetes*) of religion ("Republic," 427), and says, "Let the priests be interpreters for life" ("Laws," 759). In the Septuagint the word is used of the magicians of Pharaoh's court (Ges 41:8, 41:24), and the kindred verb of teaching or interpreting concerning leprosy (Lev 14:57). John's meaning is that the Word revealed or manifested and interpreted the Father to men. The word occurs only here in John's writings. Wyc. renders, He hath told out.

These words conclude the Prologue.

The Historical Narrative now begins, and falls into two general divisions:

I. The Self-Revelation of Christ to the World (Jn 1:19-12:50)

II. The Self-Revelation of Christ to the Disciples (Jn 13:1-21:23)

In secular use **exegeomai** was used to describe the disclosure or description of a document, statement, or incident. In Josephus **exegeomai** is a "technical term for the interpretation of the law as practiced by the rabbinate.

TDNT - Exegeomai "is a technical one for the exposition of poetry, law, oracles, etc."

The English derivative is **exegesis** which refers to the unfolding, explanation or critical interpretation of a text. **Exegesis** is when a person interprets a text based solely on what it says. That is, he extracts out of the text what is there as opposed to reading into it what is not there (*eisegesis*). There are rules to proper exegesis: read the immediate context, related themes, word definitions, etc., that all play a part in properly understanding what something says and does not say." ([Exegesis - CARM Theological Dictionary](#)) ([See a very long article on "Bible Exegesis in the 1901 Jewish Encyclopedia](#)) Some interpreters feel that exegesis is a term interchangeable with hermeneutics ([Bible, Hermeneutics - Holman Bible Dictionary](#)).

Bryant - Exegeomai seems to have been more of a Hellenistic than a biblical term. The word meant (1) to recount facts or relate a narrative. This was the main Greek use of the term. The word also meant (2) to make known or explain divine secrets. This latter is its meaning here, and has to do with Hellenistic notions of revelation as well as biblical. It seems important that the prologue closes with such a term. To Jew and Hellenist, Jesus is the revelation of God's glory, grace, and truth. (College Press NIV commentary).

Exegesis literally means "lead out" (draw out) the meaning of Scripture to its needed outcome and life-application. Leading out the true message of Scripture is based on correct understandings of the grammar of the original Hebrew-Greek texts.

Exegesis - It usually refers more specifically to a verse-by-verse or phrase-by-phrase explanation. The goal in exegesis is to analyze passages carefully so that the words and intent of the passage are as clear as possible. Speculation is not prized, but attention to word meaning, form, structure, context (historical and biblical) and theology is usually addressed. Exegesis tends to be descriptive more than prescriptive; however, many readers engage in exegesis of the Bible for the ultimate purpose of finding guidance on spiritual matters, and thus relevance becomes part of the task of interpreting a passage. (Pocket dictionary of biblical studies).

Exegeomai - 6x in 6v - NAS Usage: explained(2), relate(2), related(1), relating(1).

Luke 24:35 They *began* to **relate** their experiences on the road and how He was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread.

Comment: The disciples who met the risen Christ on the road to Emmaus exegeted the events to the other disciples. A T Robertson "Their story was now confirmatory, not revolutionary. The women were right then after all."

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has **explained** Him.

Acts 10:8 and after he (Cornelius) had **explained** (had exegeted) everything to them, he sent them to Joppa.

Acts 15:12 All the people kept silent, and they were listening to Barnabas and Paul as they were **relating** (to go through or lead out a narrative of events) what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles.

A T Robertson - Three times (Acts 14:27; 15:4, 12) Paul is described as telling the facts about their mission work, facts more eloquent than argument (Page). One of the crying needs in the churches is fuller knowledge of the facts of mission work and progress with enough detail to give life and interest.

Acts 15:14 "Simeon has **related** how God first concerned Himself about taking from among the Gentiles a people for His name.

Acts 21:19 After he had greeted them, he *began* to **relate** one by one the things which God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry.

A T Robertson - Imperfect middle of exegeomai, old verb to lead out, to draw out in narrative, to recount. So Paul is pictured (by use of the imperfect tense = over and over) as taking his time for he had a great story to tell of what had happened since they saw him last.

A T Robertson - Exegeomai means to lead out, to draw out in narrative, to recount. Here only in John... This word fitly closes the Prologue in which the Logos is pictured in marvelous fashion as the Word of God in human flesh, the Son of God with the Glory of God in Him, showing men who God is and what He is.

Boice has a wonderful application of these passages: "What is your reaction to these things? Do you know the truth of them personally? One of the most memorable sermons that I have ever come across was preached by the late Emil Brunner at the Fraumünster Kirche in Zurich, Switzerland. It was based on the phrase "faith, hope, and love." The points were these. Every man has a past, a present, and a future. Every man has a problem in his past, a problem in his present, and a problem in his future. The problem in our past is sin, but God has an answer to that problem. The answer is faith, faith in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The problem in our future is death, but God has an answer to that problem also. The answer to that problem is hope, hope in Christ's return based on the fact of his historical resurrection and his promises. The problem in our present is hate, and God's answer to that problem is love. It is the love of Christ lived out in the lives of those who trust him. Brunner was entirely right. And he was right not only in highlighting the three great problems; he was right in pointing to the unique Christ as the answer. Has Christ become the answer to the problems in your life? He is the only One who will ever answer them completely." (The Gospel of John : An expositional commentary)

Illustration - Throughout church history Christianity has struggled against heresies that declare that the spiritual world is pure while the material world is either evil or illusory. For example, the second-century philosopher **Celsus** (an anti-Christian Greek philosopher) argued against Christianity in part by stating, "If you shut your eyes to the world of sense ... only then will you see God." Scripture consistently denies this premise of Greek philosophy. When speaking of knowing God the Bible rarely mentions personal insight or illumination. God created the material world and called it good. The Son of God became fully human with human flesh and blood. Our story today shows that God can be known through the senses, even in a man born blind. John says Jesus "**has explained Him**," the invisible God!

Thou art the everlasting Word,
The Father's only Son;
God manifestly seen and heard,
And Heaven's beloved One.
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee should bow.

In Thee most perfectly expressed
The Father's glories shine;
Of the full Deity possessed,
Eternally divine:
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee should bow.

True image of the Infinite,
Whose essence is concealed;
Brightness of uncreated light;
The heart of God revealed:
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee should bow.

But the high mysteries of Thy name
An angel's grasp transcend;

The Father only—glorious claim!—
The Son can comprehend:
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee should bow.

Throughout the universe of bliss,
The centre Thou, and sun;
The eternal theme of praise is this,
To Heaven's beloved One:
Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou
That every knee to Thee should bow .
--Josiah Conder (1789–1855):

David Reed - BORROW [Mormons : answered verse by verse](#)

John 1:18 No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.

Since Joseph Smith claimed to have seen God the Father, this verse proved to be a problem for him. However, rather than back off from his claim of having seen God, he sought to change Scripture. Thus Mormons are able to turn to their Doctrine and Covenants and read, "For no man has seen God at any time in the flesh, except quickened by the Spirit of God"—from a revelation allegedly received by Joseph Smith in November, 1831 (Doctrine and Covenants 67:11).

Not satisfied simply to have added this 'exception' by means of a personal revelation, Smith went on to retranslate the text of John's Gospel itself. Thus his "translation" of the Bible presents John 1:19 as saying, "And no man hath seen God at any time, except he hath borne record of the Son; for except it is through him no man can be saved."

On what basis did Smith change the Bible text to conform to his thinking? Did he render some Greek words differently to produce this new wording? No, because the Greek words in the manuscripts Bible translators have been using for years could not possibly be rendered that way. Did Smith discover other ancient manuscripts with different wording? No, he did not claim any such discovery. On what basis, then, did he produce such a radically different "translation"? Again, the claim was that he was personally "inspired" to do so—even though his rendering has no basis in any existing ancient manuscript and in fact contradicts the hundreds of Greek manuscripts preserved from ancient times.

It should also be pointed out to Mormons that Joseph Smith's claim to have seen God the Father and Jesus Christ in his "First Vision" also contradicts Mormon scripture. Doctrine and Covenants 84:21, 22 says that "without the ordinances ... and the authority" of the Melchizedek Priesthood, "without this no man can see the face of God, even the Father, and live." Yet Smith claimed to see God the Father in his "First Vision" several years before he allegedly received the Melchizedek Priesthood.

See also the discussions of Genesis 32:30, Exodus 24:10, 11; 33:11; Deuteronomy 4:2; 1 John 4:12; and chapter 3, "Mormon Scripture."

A W Tozer - GOD—ACTING LIKE GOD

The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. John 1:18

When Jesus walked and taught in Galilee 2,000 years ago, many asked, "Who is that Man?"

The Bible's answer is clear: That Man walking in Galilee was God, acting like God! It was God, limited deliberately, having crossed the wide, mysterious gulf between God and not God, between God and creature. No man had seen God at any time.

In John 1:18, the English translators have said, "The only begotten Son...hath declared him." Other versions skirt around it, doing everything to try to say what the Holy Spirit said, but when we have used up our words and synonyms, we still have not said all that God revealed when He said, "Nobody has ever looked at God, but when Jesus Christ came He showed us what God is like" (paraphrase of John 1:18).

He has revealed Him—He has shown us what God is like!

He has declared Him! He has set Him forth! He has revealed Him!

He is in the Father's bosom. It is stated in present, perpetual tense, the language of continuation. Therefore, when Jesus hung on the cross, He did not leave the bosom of the Father!

QUESTION - [What is the difference between exegesis and eisegesis \(WATCH VIDEO\)](#)

ANSWER - Exegesis and eisegesis are two conflicting approaches in Bible study. Exegesis is the exposition or explanation of a text based on a careful, objective analysis. The word *exegesis* literally means “to lead out of.” That means that the interpreter is led to his conclusions by following the text.

The opposite approach to Scripture is eisegesis, which is the interpretation of a passage based on a subjective, non-analytical reading. The word *eisegesis* literally means “to lead into,” which means the interpreter injects his own ideas into the text, making it mean whatever he wants.

Obviously, only exegesis does justice to the text. Eisegesis is a mishandling of the text and often leads to a misinterpretation. Exegesis is concerned with discovering the true meaning of the text, respecting its grammar, syntax, and setting. Eisegesis is concerned only with making a point, even at the expense of the meaning of words.

2 Timothy 2:15 commands us to use exegetical methods: “Present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.” An honest student of the Bible will be an exegete, allowing the text to speak for itself. Eisegesis easily lends itself to error, as the would-be interpreter attempts to align the text with his own preconceived notions. Exegesis allows us to agree with the Bible; eisegesis seeks to force the Bible to agree with us.

The process of exegesis involves 1) observation: what does the passage say? 2) interpretation: what does the passage mean? 3) correlation: how does the passage relate to the rest of the Bible? and 4) application: how should this passage affect my life?

Eisegesis, on the other hand, involves 1) imagination: what idea do I want to present? 2) exploration: what Scripture passage seems to fit with my idea? and 3) application: what does my idea mean? Notice that, in eisegesis, there is no examination of the words of the text or their relationship to each other, no cross-referencing with related passages, and no real desire to understand the actual meaning. Scripture serves only as a prop to the interpreter’s idea.

To illustrate, let’s use both approaches in the treatment of one passage:

2 Chronicles 27:1-2 “Jotham was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem sixteen years. . . . He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father Uzziah had done, but unlike him he did not enter the temple of the LORD.”

EISEGESIS

First, the interpreter decides on a topic. Today, it’s “The Importance of Church Attendance.” The interpreter reads 2 Chronicles 27:1-2 and sees that King Jotham was a good king, just like his father Uzziah had been, except for one thing: he didn’t go to the temple! This passage seems to fit his idea, so he uses it. The resulting sermon deals with the need for passing on godly values from one generation to the next. Just because King Uzziah went to the temple every week didn’t mean that his son would continue the practice. In the same way, many young people today tragically turn from their parents’ training, and church attendance drops off. The sermon ends with a question: “How many blessings did Jotham fail to receive, simply because he neglected church?”

Certainly, there is nothing wrong with preaching about church attendance or the transmission of values. And a cursory reading of 2 Chronicles 27:1-2 seems to support that passage as an apt illustration. However, the above interpretation is totally wrong. For Jotham not to go to the temple was not wrong; in fact, it was very good, as the proper approach to the passage will show.

EXEGESIS

First, the interpreter reads the passage and, to fully understand the context, he reads the histories of both Uzziah and Jotham (2 Chronicles 26-27; 2 Kings 15:1-6, 32-38). In his observation, he discovers that King Uzziah was a good king who nevertheless disobeyed the Lord when he went to the temple and offered incense on the altar—something only a priest had the right to do (2 Chronicles 26:16-20). Uzziah’s pride and his contamination of the temple resulted in his having “leprosy until the day he died” (2 Chronicles 26:21).

Needing to know why Uzziah spent the rest of his life in isolation, the interpreter studies Leviticus 13:46 and does some research on leprosy. Then he compares the use of illness as a punishment in other passages, such as 2 Kings 5:27; 2 Chronicles 16:12; and 21:12-15.

By this time, the exegete understands something important: when the passage says Jotham “did not enter the temple of the LORD,” it means he did not repeat his father’s mistake. Uzziah had proudly usurped the priest’s office; Jotham was more obedient.

The resulting sermon might deal with the Lord’s discipline of His children, with the blessing of total obedience, or with our need to learn from the mistakes of the past rather than repeat them.

Of course, exegesis takes more time than eisegesis. But if we are to be those unashamed workmen "who correctly handle the word of truth," then we must take the time to truly understand the text. Exegesis is the only way.

The Masterpiece Revealed - In an article in Moody Monthly, Frank M. Fairchild told of a beautiful fresco on the ceiling of a Roman palace. Painted by Guido Reni in 1614, it was one of the most impressive works of its day. But visitors couldn't fully appreciate the masterpiece because they had to crane their necks to see it. To solve the problem, palace officials placed a large mirror on the floor beneath the painting, enabling viewers to study its reflection and more fully appreciate its beauty.

Fairchild made this observation: "Jesus Christ does precisely that for us when we try to get some notion of God... He interprets God to our dull hearts. In Him, God becomes visible and intelligible to us. We cannot by any amount of searching find out God. The more we try, the more we are bewildered. Then Jesus Christ appears. He is God stooping down to our level, and He enables our feeble thoughts to get some real hold on God Himself."

Christ came to reveal God to us. But He is more than a reflection of the Father. He is God in human flesh. Hebrews tells us that He is "the express image" of God (John 1:3). And Jesus Himself said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9).

As we meditate on the wonder of "the Word made flesh," we will say with the hymn writer, "O come, let us adore Him, Christ, the Lord."—R W DeHaan

Christ's birth brings the infinite God within the finite reach of man.

What Message Does Your Life Preach? - Jesus is God in human form. In coming into our world, He revealed the heavenly Father to us (He **explained** God to us). That's what John meant when he said that "the Word became flesh." We call this the doctrine of the **incarnation**.

F. W. Boreham applied this truth in his book *Faces in the Fire*. He wrote,

"The Christian man must accompany the Christian message. The Word must be presented in its proper human setting... The Word made flesh is thus pronounced with an accent and an eloquence which are simply irresistible... The words of men become [filled] with passion and with power only when they are made flesh. And in the same way, the thoughts of God to men are only eloquent when they are so expressed."

To emphasize the importance of putting actions behind our words, Boreham quoted English writer George Eliot (pen name for Mary Ann Evans). Speaking of how people's lives convey the meaning of ideas, Eliot said,

"Sometimes [words] are made flesh; they breathe upon us with warm breath, they touch us with soft responsive hands, they look at us with sad, sincere eyes, and they speak to us in appealing tones; they are clothed in a living human soul."

Likewise, if people are to "hear" the Word of God, they must "see" it demonstrated in our lives. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).—R W DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Christians who live what they believe give flesh to the Word.

We teach more with our life than with our lips.