

GOD WITH US

John 1:14-18

NATURE OF THE WORD

The Word has two natures — a divine nature and a human nature.

DIVINE NATURE

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

Before there was time, before there was creation, before there was anything but God — The Word was there. He is eternal and with God from the beginning. The Word has eternally existed before there was time and any semblance of creation.

But not only does the Word share in the divine attributes, we see that the word shares in the divine activity.

We also see in the first 13 verses of John 1, that the Word was actively involved in creation. His activity in creation was so pivotal and integral that John says without him, nothing could have been made that was made.

And not only does the Word share in the divine attributes and activity, the Word also has a divine personality.

All throughout John's prologue he refers to the Word with the personal pronouns he and him. John is telling us that the eternal logos — the Word of God is not an abstract principle — but a person. The Word has a divine personality, divine activity, and divine attributes — and we can conclude that the Word has a divine nature.

And if that weren't enough — John flat out calls the Word God.

HUMAN NATURE

14 And the Word became flesh...

Take everything that we've said so far about the Word being divine and to that — add a human nature. The eternally existing Word took on flesh. The way John says it is like this — And the Word became flesh.

Now, The word "became" does not mean "changed into."

Greek has a different word for that which is where we get our word, metamorphosis. John uses a different word — which in this context means — "take on a new additional form of existence."

Metamorphosis is when one thing changes and transforms from one form to another. Think of a caterpillar transforming into a butterfly. When a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, it ceases to be a caterpillar.

This is not the same thing as when a caterpillar becomes a butterfly. When a caterpillar becomes a butterfly, it ceases to be a caterpillar.

That's not what happens when The Word became flesh.

When the Word became flesh — he added to his existing divine nature, a human nature. This is closer to when a woman becomes a mother or when a man becomes a father. A woman adds motherhood to her existence while still remaining a woman. A man adds fatherhood to his existence while still remaining a man.

What the Son of God — the Logos adds to himself is a human nature to his already existing divine nature. He adds humanity while still remaining divine. And this is a permanent and irreversible addition.

So now and forever, the Word is the God-man — Fully God and Fully Human.

Murray Harris writes —

“The logos become what he was not [human] without ceasing to be what he was [divine].”

The result is that The Word has a fully divine nature, and a fully human nature. This is what theologians refer to as the Incarnation.

NEARNESS OF THE WORD (1618)

14 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.

When the Word became flesh, not only did he enter into humanity, but into our time and space to dwell among us. The word “dwelt” is one of those words packed with meaning. The Greek word that we translate, “dwelt” is the verbal form of the word “Tabernacle.”

In other words, to translate it more literally, you could say, The Word became flesh and *tabernacled* among us.

The Tabernacle in the Old Testament was a mobile Temple that moved with Israel as they left Egypt after the Exodus toward the promised land. Later the Tabernacle was replaced by the Temple. The Tabernacle and the Temple was where the visible glory of God’s presence, resided.

The Garden of Eden was the first temple, the place they could call home where they dwelled with God.

But when our first parents traded intimacy and communion with God for tyranny and autonomy, their experience of God’s presence changed from delight to fear.

Look at Genesis 3:8...

And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God among the trees of the garden.

Their guilt, fear, and shame drove them to hide from God. And when the dust settled from the reckoning, they were exiled from the Garden and God’s presence.

And the rest of the Old Testament is a story about God’s plan to dwell among his people again. He gives them the law, to teach an unholy people how to live a holy life before a holy God.

He gives them the sacrificial system so that the penalty for their sin can be paid, their guilt forgiven, and their relationship with God restored.

He provides a new Garden, the Tabernacle and later the Temple so that the presence of God can once again dwell among the people of God.

Exodus 25:8

And let them make me a sanctuary [tabernacle], that I may dwell in their midst.

If you were to walk through the temple you would see carved images of pomegranates, open flowers, palm trees, lilies, cedars, and olive wood.

At the entrance into the Holy of Holies where the presence of God dwelled — you would see two images of Cherubim standing guard. It echos the cherubim that were set as sentries with flaming swords to guard the entrance into the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve were exiled.

Roberts and Wilson, in their book, *Echoes of Eden*, write...

“The tabernacle, and then (more spectacularly) the temple, were filled with reminders of Eden, the place where God walked with humans. In fact, the whole thing was built to suggest a fruitful, verdant, and well-watered garden.”

And while the Tabernacle and the Temple are great improvements, they aren't complete — because the presence of God isn't experienced by everyone.

It's limited to the Holies of Holies, and only the priests can come near. His presence has drawn nearer — but it hasn't drawn near enough.

And John's first readers would have had all that anticipation and longing stored up in their heart.

And then they read these glorious words —

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

Like a song that builds and builds — the incarnation is the crescendo of the glory of God. It's a major milestone moment in the work of redemption and reconciliation.

John uses the phrase — the only Son from the Father or God's only Son — all throughout his Gospel. That word “only” is used to speak of something or someone that is unique and one of a kind.

John is going to tell us more about this unique, one of a kind Son of God and how we can have life in his name — but for now — he wants you to know that God drew near to us — The Son took on flesh and we saw him. We interacted with him. We lived with him and we ministered with him.

And at the end of the day, John says — the best word that I can use to summarize the person and work of the Son of God is — GLORY.

That's one of those words that is hard to define, but let me give you a definition to work with —

God's glory is the public display of who God is — his worth, his value, his perfections, his beauty, his goodness, his truth — all of it — for us to worship and enjoy.

What John is saying — is that when he, the other Apostles saw The Son of God in flesh — they saw the glory of God on full display and his glory was full of grace and truth. John says — if you want to know the grace and truth of God — get to know the Son of God. He is fully God and fully man. He drew near to us so that we can draw near to him.

NAME OF THE WORD

16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

In verse 17 — John reveals who the Word is. The Word who was with God in the beginning. The Word who is God. The Word who became flesh and dwelled among us is none other than — Jesus Christ.

If you remember from last week, we looked at John 1:12-13...

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

At that point, John hadn't revealed his name — but now we know the name that is to become the object of our greatest attention, affection, and allegiance — and that name is — Jesus Christ.

From this point on his gospel, John will not refer to the Son of God with the ambiguous term — The Word. From here until the end — The Son of God is identified as Jesus Christ.

Now — John says everyone who receives Jesus and who believes in that wonderful name — receives grace upon grace and the right to become children of God.

And what does he mean by *grace upon grace*? Well our first clue is that word translated as “upon” is the greek word that means “instead” or “replacing one thing with another.”

And then he goes on to explain in verse 17...We first received the gift and grace of the law from Moses.

Now we don't often think of God's law as a gift of grace...but friends...God's law is not a burden but a gift. It becomes a burden because of sin and because we don't like to be told what to do! But God gave us the law so that we would know how to live a life that pleases God — to know God's expectations — to know the difference between right and wrong — to know how to thrive and flourish.

But because of sin — we take the goodness and grace of God's law and we made it a burden. And then John says — the grace of the law was then replaced by the even greater grace and truth of Jesus Christ.

As John will show throughout his Gospel — Jesus perfectly kept the law of God with his every thought, motive, and deed so that he could eventually give us that perfect record of righteousness. And then on the cross He took on our every imperfection and sin in that great exchange where he took our unrighteousness and gave us his righteousness.

As it's often said around here — Jesus lived the life we failed to live and died the we deserved to die so that we might be reconciled to God.

When the fulness of time had come to accomplish our redemption, God the Father didn't send a message or a messenger — He sent his Son, Jesus Christ who is God's final word, the message to be received. Jesus didn't point to a way — Jesus said He is the way.

That's why the Word became flesh. That's why the Word drew near. So that you and I could receive the fullness of grace upon grace that comes from believing in the name of Jesus Christ.

Heb 1:1-3

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, 2 but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. 3 He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high...

The writer of Hebrews is saying the exact same thing as John as he closes his prologue...

John says that no one has ever seen God the Father as He is in Himself.

God chose you reveal himself through Jesus. You cannot know God without knowing Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Father's self disclosure. Jesus reveals and explains God.

John is saying — Jesus Christ — who is right now at the Father's side has made God known. He made visible what was previously invisible.

Seven Mile — Do you want to know God?

Then look to Jesus Christ, the Son of God, true God of true God. He is the radiance of the glory of God. He is the exact imprint of the nature of God. And to prove he is worth knowing — He died for you and me so that we might delight in his grace.

APPLICATION...

1. RECEIVE AND BELIEVE IN THE NAME OF JESUS

The grace upon grace of being an adopted son and daughter of God are only given to those who receive and believe in the name of Jesus.

To receive Jesus is to receive him as he is revealed to us — not some edited version that suits your tastes and preferences. Jesus Christ is Lord whether we like it or not. We must receive Him as He is. He is either Lord of all of your life or none of it. That means — Jesus has your highest attention, your deepest affection, and your greatest allegiance. It is to say with your mouth, your heart, and your life — Jesus Christ is my Lord.

If you haven't received and believed in Christ — before you leave here today — ask yourself what is keeping you from acknowledging him for who He is — Jesus Christ the Lord.

2. GIVE THE GIFT OF YOUR NEARNESS AND PRESENCE

Just like God gives us the gift of his presence — what would it look like if we gave people the gift of our presence. When is the last time you gave your friend, your child, your spouse, your neighbor, your undivided attention. No phones. No email. No social media. No videos. No endless worrying about other circumstances. Just your full and focused attention where you really listened and engaged.

Seven Mile — how would your relationships change — this week — if we were fully present with our friends, family, and neighbors?