

3. Christmas – God in the flesh: The Grace of God

Dear Listeners,

The Lord Jesus, whose *birth* we remember and celebrate this week, *before* His birth was very much involved with the *creation* of the world, as we have seen *previously* in the first chapter of the gospel according to *John*. Everything was *made through Him*; so, He *knows* everything *about* the moon and its positions, the flowers and their structure, the body and its veins and arteries; you name it! *He* made it all! Now *He*, the Word, the Creator of all things, *He* came into the world, to become the Saviour of this world! That's *grace*! Yes, that's *grace* so much, because He *knows* this world, the *troubles* of this world; He knows *us*, inside and out! He knows what went *wrong* with us when we sinned, what misery and pain came of it; He *knows* the body, which He made, and sees what's *wrong* with it and what it takes to *heal* it, *restore* it. He *knows* the world at large, the relationships in the world, the misery of the world, and He knows exactly what *He* would have to *do* to *save* this world. Yes, even when I *die* and return to *dust*, He knows as no other what He has to do to bring that *dust* together again. He's done so before! He knows every aspect, gene, DNA, and speck of dust of me!

In the *manger*, dear listeners, you see your *Creator*! He *knows man*, He knows *us*, better than we know ourselves! There is no better Saviour than *He*; no one could better recreate us than *He* who created us! What glorious *grace* it is, therefore, that He came! Who? *God*! God, who said, 'let there be *light*, and there was light.' *He* came: *God*, who *is* the light of the world! Who came? *God*, who *is* the *life* of man; who gave life to the plants, the animals, to man. *He* came, who said, 'I am the *life* of the world!' He came to remove the *darkness* from the world, which *sin* had brought upon the world. He came to bring life into the world where *death* reigned due to the sin in the world! That's what John tells us in his Christmas account: Jesus Christ came from *God* as the *light*, as the *life*, to restore it! 'I am the resurrection and the life,' He said, and 'I am the bread of life,' etc. etc. *Grace* upon *grace*! Overwhelming! *Grace* in abundance!

Yes, and the fact that John calls Him the *Word* also highlights His *grace*: He came to *recreate* through the *Word*! He came to speak with the *Word*! He came into a dark and silent world to *speak*! I'm sure we all know what feeling that is: a dark and silent world (or else ask a widow or widower, when they come home to an empty house, what that is like). Jesus came as the *Word*, to *speak*: "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people." Jesus came as the *Word*, urging us, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Jesus came and entered the gathering of the disciples, *saying*, "Peace be with you! Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." Jesus came to *assure* us, "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." *He* did, for He *is* *life* and *light*, who brings this light and life through the *Word*! He speaks, to *you*, to your *heart*, to give you light and life! That's *grace*!

Jesus Christ, dear listeners, gave us *grace* upon *grace* from the *fullness of God*. He *was* God; He came from God; He was *with God*, as He Himself testified, “I and the Father are one!” “Before Abram was, I am,” He said, and He came from *God* to save the children of Abraham. He came to give us *grace* upon *grace*, Jesus, the baby in the manger: *Immanuel*, *God* with us! He is the fulfilment of Isaiah’s prophecies: “Wonderful Counsellor, *Mighty God*, everlasting Father, and Prince of peace!” That is *Jesus: grace upon grace*, bringing the one gift of grace after the other, coming to us from the *fullness of God*: He is the Creator, He is the light, He is the life, He is the Word, and He is God Himself; and He is coming into the world to manifest to us the *fullness of God’s grace*!

Indeed, for then John says (and that’s the *heart* of the gospel, as we have seen last week!), then this *grace* of God came so *close*, so very *close*, when the Word became *flesh* and dwelt among us. Remember, He came into our *weak* and *mortal flesh*; He came to dwell among us, assuming our *flesh and blood*, in the form of a *servant*, a slave! *God*, who is Creator, light, life and the Word, did not remain in His exalted height but *humbled Himself* and came to us, true man! Yes, He *dwelt* among us; He didn’t just make an appearance, He *pitched His tent* with us, literally. God with *us*! In all humbleness and tenderness, He came to us as the *babe* in the manger! That’s *grace*! He came to show us His *glory*: the *glory* of God shone around the shepherds, and they were *terrified*, for in the OT people were *afraid* to see the glory of God, which blinded them (even its radiance as it shone from Moses’ face!). Yet, here, in *Jesus* you can *see* the glory of God and *not* be blinded; yes, with the angel a great company of the heavenly host appeared, praising God and saying, “*Glory to God* in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom His favour rests.”

We have seen *His glory* too, John reports as well: remember – at the wedding at Cana, at the mount of transfiguration, at the grave of Lazarus, and at His resurrection! Time and again: *grace* upon *grace* God’s *glory* shone around Him. It was the glory of the only-begotten Son of God, John adds. He was *God*, as we have seen already; and yes, He was the *Son* of God! God sent His *Son*, His only One, His *beloved*, as He expressed at the baptism of Jesus. He was in the *bosom* of the Father, literally (at the *Father’s side*, denoting how *close* and *intimate* He was with the Father). God didn’t just send the *Word* to save us, *practically* speaking, *effectively* working; no, He sent His *Son*, the Son of His *love*, because He so *loved* the world, and because He wanted to *save us* in His love! That’s why John said it already: full of *grace* and truth! From the *fullness of God’s grace* He manifested Himself in His whole life as the *true grace* of God – *true* grace, i.e. in Him we see God’s grace in all its sincerity, integrity, and honesty! God *means* it what He says; God *means* to show His grace, truly! What great a *Saviour* we have! May this gospel of His love and grace give you a blessed and joyous Christmas! Thank you for listening!