

Grace & Truth Personified

*Joint Area Reformation
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John 1:14,18 – ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

Introduction – You won't find grace and truth in culture or society; negative examples. God is the only source of grace and truth.

I. Eternal Word – John 1:1,3

- A. Context in Rome 1700 years ago: wars, cultural decay, incompetent leaders. The Church used to suffer from external attacks, ie persecution, but was now under pressure from internal attacks, ie false doctrine.
- B. Arius, the influential bishop of Alexandria, reasoned that if Jesus was the only begotten Son of God, it stands to reason that there was a time when he was not begotten. He subordinated Jesus to the Father, denying the Trinity and undermining his divine role in salvation.
- C. Constantine convened the ecumenical Council of Nicaea to address the issue. They found
 - 1. Jesus was the eternal Word; John 1:1,3
 - 2. Jesus appeared in the Old Testament; theophanies
- D. The authors of Nicaea put an end to the Arian heresy: God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. We owe them a debt of gratitude.

II. Word become flesh – John 1:14

- A. This is a mystery, explained best by Athanasius in his creed: the divine nature always existed and received the human nature into itself.
- B. Since Jesus became true God and true man together in one person, uniquely qualified to be our Savior.
 - 1. As a man, he lived under the law truthfully. As a man, he became obedient to death on a cross, graciously. Philippians 2:8ff.
 - 2. As God, his life provided the righteousness obedience God demands. As

God, his death provided the forgiving grace and atonement that welcomes us into heaven.

- C. Jesus is God, the Word made flesh, and therefore able to provide grace and truth to world that didn't have it, and otherwise wouldn't know it.

III. The Word reveals the Father – John 1:18

- A. Many still cling to an "Old Testament" concept of God, angry, vengeful, etc.
- B. Jesus reveals grace and truth
 - 1. John 3 – Nicodemus
 - 2. John 4 – The Samaritan woman
 - 3. John 6 – Feeding of the 5,000
 - 4. John 14 – Phillip – *if you have seen me, you have seen the Father.*

Conclusion – We have every reason to celebrate grace and truth. Today we're grateful for Reformers, and for those who fought for the identity of the Triune God, carefully articulated in the words of the Nicene Creed. Because we know Jesus, grace and truth personified, we know God.