

## **We Can Know God!**

***John 1:14-18***

***Thought for the Day:*** In and through Jesus Christ, we can know and understand God, and have a personal relationship with Him.

Verses 14-18 conclude John's Introduction to his Gospel of Jesus Christ. Verse 14 is a theological commentary on the Incarnation of Jesus Christ—God becoming a Man and living among us:

### **14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...**

- 1) Jesus Christ was and is fully God and fully Man.
- 2) In His Incarnation, He did not give up any of His divinity, but in fact, added humanity to His deity.
- 3) He did, however, voluntarily lay aside His divine rights and privileges and, in submission to the Father's will, subject Himself to human limitations.
- 4) He limited the exercise of His divine power and knowledge and conducted His ministry in submission to and dependence on the Father and the Holy Spirit.

### **...and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

- 1) The word "glory" speaks of the perfections of the character and nature of God.
- 2) In Christ's life and ministry, we see the character and nature of God on full display.
- 3) Jesus Christ was the perfect expression of God in human form.
- 4) The incarnation was all for the purpose that we might have fellowship with God and His Son Jesus Christ.

### **15 (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.'")**

- Verse 15 is parenthetical. John has something important to say—pay attention!
- "After me" – a chronological statement – John was sent by God to be Jesus' forerunner (vss. 6-8). John was announcing His arrival and Jesus would come along shortly.
- "He ranks before me" – spiritual status. As the Son of God, Jesus was spiritually superior to John and therefore worthy of greater honor.
- Second "before me" – both a chronological statement and a statement of spiritual status.
  - Physically, John the Baptist came before Jesus, having been born 6 months prior.
  - John is underscoring the pre-existence of Jesus—"He was before me" chronologically because He existed from all eternity as God.
  - John is stressing the point that Jesus was superior in every way to John the Baptist.

### **16 And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.**

- "Fullness" indicates superabundance and completeness. The Apostle John had never found Jesus lacking in any way.
- He supplies grace upon grace, abundant grace—God's undeserved favor and blessing—to His beloved followers.

- Every material blessing (James 1:16-17) and every spiritual blessing (Ephesians 1:3ff) we have is a gift of God's grace.
- John is inviting us to trust Jesus' ability to meet our needs.
- "Nothing can deplete Christ—no matter how much the believers receive of him, he keeps on giving. His strength is not diminished by helping us. Believers do not need to seek any other source of spiritual power but Christ. Paul said: 'For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete [or made full] in Him' (Col. 2:9-10 NKJV). Christ himself fulfills our Christian life; we do not need to seek anything beyond him.  
"The grace given by Christ can never be exhausted because he is full of grace. When we are exhausted and 'on empty,' Christ is always present to fill us with his grace." (*The Life Application Commentary Series*)
- Am I depending on Christ to meet my every need, or am I looking elsewhere?

### **17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.**

- Here is the Old Testament (or Covenant) and the New Testament in a single verse! The Old Covenant was established through Moses; the New Covenant was established through Christ. (1 Corinthians 11:25)
- Jesus came that we might know and experience God's grace and truth in ways that we could not experience through the Mosaic Law.
- "Both law and grace express God's nature. Moses emphasized God's law and justice, while Jesus Christ came to highlight God's mercy, love, and forgiveness. Moses could only be the giver of the law, while Christ came to fulfill perfectly the law (Matthew 5:17). The law revealed the nature and will of God; now Jesus Christ reveals the nature and will of God. Rather than coming through cold stone tablets, God's revelation ("truth") now comes through a person's life. As we get to know Christ better, our understanding of God will increase." (*The Life Application Commentary Series*)
- We can know and experience God's grace and truth through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

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

- God's temporary appearances in physical form in the OT revealed little of His character and nature. (Ex. 24:9-11; 33:20-23; Deut. 4:12; John 6:45-46; 1 Tim. 6:16; 1 John 4:12)
- "This statement seems to contradict passages like Exodus 24:9-11, which says that the elders of Israel "saw God." What then does John mean? Very likely, he is affirming the fact that no human being has seen the essential being of God — i.e., no one has seen God as God. Some men experienced "theophanies" (special appearances of God in various [physical] forms), but no one saw the essential being of God. As Calvin put it, "When he says that none has seen God, it is not to be understood of the outward seeing of the physical eye. He means generally that since God dwells in inaccessible light, he cannot be known except in Christ, his lively image." Only the Son, who is himself God, can communicate his glory to us. (*The Life Application Commentary Series*)
- "The only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known" – Jesus' divinity.
- Jesus was preeminently qualified to reveal God to Man. When men saw and heard Jesus, they saw and heard God! We cannot know God in His fullness apart from Jesus.