Christ’s Incarnation is His taking our flesh to substitute His sinless life in place of our sinful, guilty existence. We return to this theme for the New Year, after the busyness of the Christmas season, because it is good in quieter moments to contemplate the profound symphony of truths contained in John’s Prologue.

**Mon/Tues Read John 1:1-14 The Mystery of the Word Revealed**

We begin with an overview of John 1:1-14 with the help of J.I. Packer’s *Knowing Go* and his comments on John1:14:“The Word became 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.” What do we mean when we say that the Word became flesh? Packer’s *first response* is: “Whatever may be said about this, it must be emphasized that John does not, and cannot, mean that He ceased to be what He was before.”

John confirms the unchanging, eternal identify of this Word which became flesh, by declaring the following about Him:

* This Word that became flesh *was* the eternal Word (verse 1), with no beginning of His own; when other things began, He – *was*.
* This Word was *“with God”* (verses 1 & 2). The power that fulfils God’s purposes as the Word stands in eternal relation to God, in active fellowship in the Trinity as a distinct, divine, personal being.
* This Word *“was God.”* Here is the Word’s *deity.* Though distinct from the Father, He is not a creature. He is in Himself just as divine as the Father.
* This Word made all things (verse 3). He was the Father’s agent in every act of making that the Father has ever performed. All that was made was made through Him.
* In Him was *life.* The Word animates all parts of the creation. There is no life in the realm of created things except in and through Him.
* This all-animating life in the Word of God is also the *light of men* (verse 4). In giving life, He gives light too. Here is the Word revealing.
* This Word *became flesh* (verse 14). The baby in the manger was none other than the eternal Word of God.
* Our conclusion about this Word’s identity? This Word made flesh is revealed in His identity in all His words, works and wisdom as *God’s* Son (verse 14). Thus John establishes the point at which he was aiming throughout. He has now made it clear what he means by calling Jesus the Son of God. The Son of God is the Word of God; we see what the Word is; well, that is what the Son is. Such is the Prologue’s message in John 1

 Adapted from J.I. Packer’s *Knowing God*

**Meditate and Pray:** Lord, please never let our church lose our grip on the eternally unique deity of God the Son. Cause all our worship and service to be profoundly Christ-centered!

Let us sing about Christ’s eternal glory as a co-equal member of the Trinity in hymn # 162*:*

*1 Of the Father's love begotten
ere the worlds began to be,
he is Alpha and Omega,
he the Source, the Ending he,
of the things that are, that have been,
and that future years shall see,
evermore and evermore!*

*2 O that birth forever blessed,
when the Virgin, full of grace,
by the Holy Ghost conceiving,
bore the Savior of our race;
and the babe, the world's Redeemer,
first revealed his sacred face,
evermore and evermore!*

*3 This is he whom heav'n-taught singers
sang of old with one accord,
whom the Scriptures of the prophets
promised in their faithful word;
now he shines, the long-expected;
let creation praise its Lord,
evermore and evermore!*

**Wednesday: Read John 1:3-5 and Acts 17:31 Light to All Men**

We may be daunted by the depth of John’s Prologue, speaking as it does of the eternal Son of God in His relationship with His Father in verses 1-2. Verses 3-4 are also deep, speaking of the *power* of the Word in creating all things, and of the *glory* of that Word as it shines with life-giving power. Verse 3 soars far beyond our reckoning in declaring that the Word of God is the light of all men, giving light, as verse 9 says, “to every man.” What can this mean? This is simpler than we may at first grasp. John is not saying what the Quakers claim; they falsely claim that John 1:9 asserts that all men are savingly related to God by virtue of that universal spark of divine knowledge.

Instead, remember that John is speaking of creation here, establishing the fact that the Word (Son) of God was with the Father creating all things in the beginning. It is the light of creation which John speaks of. When God spoke, “Let there be light and there was light…”, – that light is what gives light to every man’s conscience, so that those who stubbornly refuse to understand that light (verse 5, NIV) seeking actually to overcome it (verse 5, ESV) are unable to suppress fully the knowledge that *there is no light apart from the light of God’s Word!* All men know that the Word which made the whole world will one day come to judge that very same world, uncovering every man’s unbelief, and will judge them for it.

**Meditate and Pray:** Give thanks that God has appointed a day when He will judge the world by the Man He has appointed, and has given proof of this by raising Him from the dead (Acts 17:31). It is this eternal Word, who became real man with real flesh in John 1:14, who is the One raised from the dead in order to one day judge the world. Sing about that day of coming Judgment, using the words of hymn # 545:

*When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon glaring sun,
When we stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o’er life’s finished story,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe.*

*When I hear the wicked call,
On the rocks and hills to fall,
When I see them start and shrink
On the fiery deluge brink,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe.*

*When I stand before the throne,
Dressed in beauty not my own,
When I see Thee as Thou art,
Love Thee with unsinning heart,
Then Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe.*

*When the praise of Heav’n I hear,
Loud as thunders to the ear,
Loud as many waters’ noise,
Sweet as harp’s melodious voice,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe.*

*Chosen not for good in me,
Wakened up from wrath to flee,
Hidden in the Savior’s side,
By the Spirit sanctified,
Teach me, Lord, on earth to show,
By my love, how much I owe.*

**Thursday: Read Psalm 104:1-5 & John 1:3-13 Master of Great and Small**

John emphasizes God’s mighty control of all that He has made through the Word, thereby helping us to trust that Word’s saving power in our lives when we receive Him by faith (John 1:12). Thus John’s teaching on creation builds up our faith in the Word as the source of our eternal salvation. The proof that the Word saves us is that by receiving Him, we are adopted as sons and daughters in the Father’s family – born not of human good works, human flesh, or human will, but born from above by God’s Spirit (John 1:13)! We become members of the family, who belong to the mighty Creator of all things.

**Meditate and Pray**: Give thanks that God often uses the doctrine of creation in the Bible to encourage us to trust Him. When we are tempted to think that the direction, way, and events of our lives are hidden from God, God reminds us that He has the same tireless power to attend to us and save us that He first displayed in creation –

Why do you say, O Jacob,

 and speak, O Israel,

“My way is hidden from the Lord,

 and my right is disregarded by my God”?

Have you not known? Have you not heard?

The Lord is the everlasting God,

 the Creator of the ends of the earth.

He does not faint or grow weary;

 his understanding is unsearchable.

 Isaiah 40:27-28

**Fri/Sat/Sun: Read John 1:12-18 & Proverbs 8:22-31 Restored to Good Order Again**

The beauty of John’s Prologue is that it contains a depth of theology beyond anything unaided human understanding can grasp, while at the same time giving us such a clear view of God’s love that even those with the simplest of faiths can rest in the picture of God’s Fatherly care. For example, the purpose of the Incarnation (John 1:18) is to reveal God the Father to us in Christ’s coming down to us in human form from the Father’s side.

Only the Son of God reveals the Father to us – because only He has come from the “bosom of the Father” to become man. How profound to think of the Son as eternally begotten, in the most intimate connection with His Father, choosing to come from that place of eternal, Triune fellowship to become man!

What a simple picture of domestic love, shared between the Father and the Son! It is their shared joy in what they created which then makes them work together to save that same creation once it has fallen into sin*.* Proverbs 8:22-31 says, “My delights were with the sons of men.” The Son comes from the Father’s side, desiring to demonstrate to the whole world His love for His Father - by *restoring to His Dad* what He had lost in the Fall!

This illustration may be helpful: You have a burglar break into your house, making off with the most precious family heirloom you possess – the priceless portrait of your family ancestors. After a few months, the police break the burgling ring and arrest the perpetrator who broke into your home. His case goes to trial, the one who stole your property is found guilty, and the appropriate sentence is handed down by the Judge. But yet there is no lasting closure for you, and no healing after this crime. Why is that? Because (as the late James Philip says in this his illustration) you want your painting back. Only then will you be satisfied when you see that heirloom back on the wall.

Just so with the Word of God’s Incarnation. The Son becomes a man to restore our humanity, created in God’s image, to its proper place – in the Father’s possession. The Son restores the fallen creation to its rightful place and gives His Father the joy of receiving back His people into His family once again.

**Meditate and Pray:** What joy must there be between the Father and the Son as they restore in us God’s image as the redeemed people of God! If they shared a great joy *in first creating us*,(Proverbs 8:30-31) *how much more joy now* as we have been adopted anew into God’s family and authoritatively called the children of God! See 1 John 3:1-3 and share the joy of these verses:

See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appearswe shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.