

History is so interesting because learning about famous and everyday people, events, stories, and the successes and failures of people, nations, civilizations, and organizations can be important and meaningful. Learning about history gives people perspective, lessons for the present and the future, and many life lessons to ponder, wonder and think about. We have repeated history again as we celebrated the birth our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. I pray that your Christmas celebration during these challenging times was a pleasant experience, as this year will definitely go down in history.

The overarching theme of this Gospel is that the Word, who was “in the beginning with God, and...was God”, “became flesh and lived among us....full of grace and truth”.

It was because the Word was present with God in the beginning that Jesus would later be able to say, “I say the things which I have seen with my Father” and “I know him”. Jesus alone reveals God with perfect clarity, because he alone has shared an intimacy with God in which there were no secrets or disagreements. Moses heard God on Mount Sinai, but could not see God. He read the words engraved on tablets of stone, but did not produce them. The Word, on the other hand, was present with God from the beginning, and participated fully in every stage of the creation.

The surprise is that “those who were his own didn’t receive him”. These would include those charged with the spiritual welfare of the Jewish community—scribes, Pharisees, and priests—men who should have seen the light in Jesus’ life—who should have welcomed him with open arms. The blessing is that “as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become God’s children”

From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Grace is something you can never get but only be given. There’s no way to earn it or deserve it or bring it about any more than you can deserve the taste of raspberries and cream or earn good looks or bring about your own birth. A good sleep is grace and so are good dreams. Most tears are grace. The smell of rain is grace. Somebody loving you is grace. Loving somebody is grace. Have you ever tried to love somebody, your neighbor, the poor, the sick, the weak, and the lonely?

“What’s the good word?” Jesus is. Jesus is the human expression of God’s love for us. John sets out to set forth this Gospel, and this is what makes it a “gospel” - which means “good news.” “The Word was God,” he says. Yes, some other very wise people - both Jews and Greeks - had already stumbled onto that truth. But he goes further. He adds the most important dimension: “the word became flesh and lived among us.”

I would encourage you to read the Creeds, the Nicene and Apostles Creeds; reflect on them to learn what we know to be true, as written in the opening of the Gospel of John.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He

was in the beginning with God.

Jesus is the human expression of God's love for us. John sets out to set forth this Gospel, and this is what makes it a "gospel" - which means "good news." "The Word was God," he says. Yes, some other very wise people - both Jews and Greeks - had already stumbled onto that truth. But he goes further. He adds the most important dimension: "the Word became flesh and lived among us." In the final verses of this Reading, we hear: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace

The grace of God means something like: Here is your life. You might never have been, but you are because the party wouldn't have been complete without you. Here is the world. Beautiful and wonderful things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you. I love you.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all evermore. *Amen.*

Thomas Aquinas wrote, "It is because the Word (known as logos) "Grace is nothing else but a certain Beginning of glory in us."

We can be grateful that the making of history continues as we celebrate the love and life of Jesus Christ our Savior. **AMEN.**

The Rev. Kimball C. Arnold, Deacon
December 26 and 27, 2020