

# BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



## FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

*God in the Flesh*  
John 1:1-18

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

## Leaders' Responsibilities:

**Important:** Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

## Prior to this Coming Session:

**Gathering Time Leader:** Copy the Choral Reading which is included at the end of the Worship Time. Enlist a Worship Leader and a Worship Participant. Give instructions for all Worshippers to join in reading the part designated for them.

### **Bible Study Leader:**

Take note of the definitions of "grace" at the end of the session which you will use in leading your group. Also, there you will find a brief study of "Did Moses See God?" which also plays a part in your Bible study (see John 1:15-18).

Be prepared to show the group the photo of the “Northern Cave Fish” that lives and produces future generations of fish while completely blind. It lives totally in the dark and has no eyes. The photo is found on page 24 of this session. Make sure that you request a copy of the page that contains the photo.

### **Worship Time Leader:**

### **Music Sources:**

**Shine, Jesus, Shine**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 491; CCLI # 30426

**Shine On Us**, *The Worship Hymnal* #89; CCLI # 1754646

**Grace Alone**, *The Worship Hymnal* #112; CCLI # 2335524

**Gathering Time:** (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***God in the Flesh*****Focal Text**

John 1:1-18

**Background Text**

John 1

**Main Idea**

In Jesus the eternal Word became flesh, revealing God uniquely and offering those who trust in him the right to become God's children.

**Question to Explore**

Who is Jesus?

**Teaching Aim**

To help the church explain the significance for their lives of who Jesus is.

**Gathering together:**

Sing: **Shine, Jesus, Shine**, *The Worship Hymnal* # 491; CCLI # 30426

**Use the following choral reading to introduce the Gathering Time:**

Worship Leader: **I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of life.**

Worship Participant: **For God, who said, "Light shall shine out of darkness" – He has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God's glory in the face of Jesus Christ.**

Worshippers: **He is the radiance of His glory, the exact expression of His nature, and He sustains all things by His powerful word.**

WP: **In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.**

WL: **The Lord will shine over you, and His glory will appear over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your radiance.**

(Isaiah 60:2,3; Matthew 5:16; John 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Hebrews 1:3) from *The Worship Hymnal*, Responsive Reading #491.

**First thoughts:** Today we begin the study of the book of John. John's Gospel was written by John the disciple. He is also the author of 1,2 and 3 John, and the book of Revelation. John was "the beloved disciple" and his book reveals his deep relationship with Jesus. He records many of the same events as are recorded in the other Gospels, but his perspective is different and allows a wonderful understanding of who Jesus was. We begin the study with the topic God In the Flesh. This allows us to consider the significance for our own lives of who Jesus is. We can expect that the study of John will deepen our Christian walk.

### **Closing the Gathering Time:**

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

# 2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

**Note to the Bible Study Leader:** Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

## Teacher Preparation

### *God in the Flesh*

#### **Focal Text**

John 1:1-18

#### **Background Text**

John 1

#### **Main Idea**

In Jesus the eternal Word became flesh, revealing God uniquely and offering those who trust in him the right to become God's children.

#### **Question to Explore**

Who is Jesus?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To help the church explain the significance for their lives of who Jesus is.

### **Introduction to your personal study:**

Use the Responsive Reading included in the Gathering Time materials as a part of your devotional time each day this week. This is one of the most wonderful lessons you will ever teach. Ask the Lord to help you prepare spiritually as well as in understanding the Scripture.

### **Background:**

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

## Focusing on the Meaning:

The book of John begins with what is known as the prologue (1:1-18) which introduces the entire book and points to its meaning. The focus of this study is that of the prologue. A prologue is defined as a preface or introduction to a literary or musical work. In the case of the book of John we will find guidance for understanding the meaning of the entire book as we study the prologue.

John's portrait of Jesus is an interweaving of the majesty of his divinity with the reality of his humanity. Only in the epistle to the Hebrews are the divinity and humanity of Christ blended to such an extent.

### John 1:1 – He is God Himself.

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

“It is not by accident that the Gospel begins with the same phrase as the book of Genesis. In Gen. 1:1 ‘In the beginning’ introduces the story of the old creation; here it introduces the story of the new creation. In both works of creation the agent is the Word of God” (Bruce, F.F. **The Gospel of John**. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1983, pages 28-29).

In the prologue of the Gospel (1:1-18), Jesus is described as being the Word (logos). Logos was a technical term of Greek philosophy representing the divine reason or rational principle that stands behind the universe and permeates all of life. The term also was important to the Jews, especially to the Jews in Alexandria (Egypt). Philo, a famous Alexandrian Jewish scholar who lived in the first century, combined the Greek idea of Reason with the Jewish idea of Wisdom. (See Prov. 8:22-30 where wisdom is the first of God's creation and the agent of creation.) To Philo, the Logos was the power of God active in creation and in making God known.

When John used this term to describe Jesus, he was speaking in such a way that both Jews and Greeks could understand him. The radical newness of his presentation comes in 1:14 where he wrote, ***‘The Word became a human being.’*** John, in a profound way, claimed that the God who created and who pervades all things came in history as a person—the man Jesus Christ” (Steen, J.W. Editor, **A Study Guide to John**. Nashville, Tennessee: The Sunday School Board, 1973, p. 78).

Translators have struggled to adequately portray the meaning of logos. Most versions used the capital letter to indicate the importance of “Word”. Always it must be interpreted as the creative, redemptive expression of God.

“To the Jew the idea of the **Word of God** is understood primarily in terms of authoritative, creative action and will. This is the case in Genesis where, by the **Word of God**, the Creation occurs, and also in the prophets where, by the **Word of God**, his

mighty will is made known to humanity” (Palmer, E.F., **The Intimate Gospel: Studies in John**. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1978, page 17).

“There have been many opinions about why this name was given to the Son of God. The opinion which seems most plausible may be expressed as follows: 1<sup>st</sup>. A *word* is that by which we communicate our will, by which we convey our thoughts; or by which we issue commands – the medium of communication with others. 2d. The Son of God may be called ‘the Word,’ because he is the medium by which God promulgates his will and issues his commandments” (Barnes, A. **Notes on the New Testament. Luke and John**. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1965, page 173).

In writing about this passage Herschel H. Hobbs (**The Gospel of John: A Study Guide**. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1965) speaks of The Beginning (1:1a) The Eternity of Christ (1:1b); The Equality of Christ (1:1c) and the Nature of Christ (1:1d, 2). Thus, in one small verse John introduces Christ as existing in the creation of the world and thus eternal. In the final part of the verse we understand the equality of Christ with God. “Literally, ‘the Word was face to face with God’ or the Word saw eye to eye with God, as though they looked at one another on an even line. We are not to think of God as *first* and the Word as *second*, as though the latter was inferior to the former. They are equal, the one to the other” (Hobbs, page 13).

Few passages in the Bible carry the force that these words carry. To read them is to feel a thrill.

### **John 1: 2-3**

***He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.***

“John at the outset makes the stupendous statement that Christ existed eternally on an equality with God, even as God Himself” (Hobbs, page 13). He was present in the creation. These words also affirm God and the Word or Jesus as Creator of everything that exists. This is a fundamental belief of the Christian faith. It is the lens through which we examine all views about creation

### **John 1: 4-5 – He is the Light that brings Life.**

***In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.***

In the original creation account we read ***Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, ‘Let there be light,’ and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness”*** Genesis 1:2-3.



The function of light is to dispel the darkness.

***“Formless and empty – darkness over the surface of the deep”***. These are words which evoke an unpleasant picture. We are glad when light was spoken into existence and God saw that it was good.

In most cultures, darkness symbolizes evil. Crime flourishes at night and in dark places. Children are sometimes afraid of the dark. Although humans enjoy the night in that it allows for rest and sleep, we also are glad for each sunrise and for sunshine.

The writer of this session lives in a very cold climate, but it is a sunny place to live. Even on very, very cold days, the sunshine brightens life.

John’s vivid picture is that Jesus brings life and that life is one of light. The light shines even in the dark world which does not understand or appreciate it.

“Light and darkness are opposites, but they are not opposites of equal power. In fact, darkness exists only where no light intrudes. In other words, darkness is nothing. Light is something. (Physicists term it energy—waves of electromagnetic radiation that is visible to the human eye). Light is stronger than darkness; darkness cannot prevail against it. Whenever and wherever light is produced—darkness recedes.

John uses this understanding of universal physics as more than a mere analogy. He states this as a physical truth, the coming of Jesus to earth. Now that the Word has come into the world, ***‘the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining’*** (1 John 2:8). The light of the world could not be overcome by the power of darkness, for all its hostility; darkness cannot overcome (ketalabein) those who walk in the light (John 12:25)” (Bruce, page 34).

### **John 1: 6-9 The Witness to the Light – John.**

***There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.***

The purpose for the life of John the Baptist was to bear testimony to the Light. He proclaimed that the light which gives light to everyone was coming. In his ministry, he called for repentance. He also had the privilege of baptizing Jesus. ( See Matthew 3: 1-16 for the story of John’s ministry and the baptism of Jesus.)

John was not the Messiah. “The ministry of John the Baptist serves as an important landmark in the geography of the faith. Before John, as far back as Abraham and the other patriarchs, having faith meant waiting. The exercise of belief was almost completely a matter of waiting for the Messiah. John the Baptist was the final faithful ‘waiter.’ After John, faith is expressed by following the Messiah.

This significant shift from waiting to following was immediately preceded by an act of repentance in preparation for the coming of Messiah. That is where John fits in. His baptism of repentance, which so confused the Jewish authorities, perfectly prepared the waiting faithful to become faithful followers” (Card, M. **The Parable of Joy**. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Discovery House Publishers, 2007, Page 29).

Jesus is the true light. “It is from this true light that all genuine illumination proceeds. Whatever measure of truth men and women in all ages have apprehended has been derived from this source” (Bruce, page 35).

### **John 1: 10-13**

***He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become the children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.***

These words describe the result of faith in the life of one who believes in God’s name. “Name here refers to the self-disclosure of God. John’s hymn teaches that whoever receives God’s own speech is granted by God’s decision the spiritual birth into God’s family” (Palmer, pages 20-21).

However, ***his own did not receive him***. The Jewish people who had waited so long for the appearance of the Messiah did not, as a whole, receive Him. They were instrumental in his death. But some did receive him – believed in his name – and those had the right to become the children of God.

The Jewish people were proud of their role as God’s chosen people. Now that role has changed. Individually, believers in His name become children of God. Believers are no longer just God’s creation; they are now His children.

### **John 1: 14 – He is God Who became one of us.**

***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.***

This wonderful declaration is the climax to the Prologue. “John declares that the Word, who always was equal with God, even God Himself, came into being as flesh. He became what He had never been before. *God became Jesus of Nazareth!* (Hobbs, page 15).

For thirty-three years, Jesus lived among the people of Judea who worked, ate, slept, played, and worshipped. He was a man. He understood and experienced joy, pain,

grief, exhaustion, and frustration. He needed rest and constant communion with God the Father. “John’s claim is that the Word has become historically concrete and real. It is in witness to this historic breakthrough of the eternal Word that the Son now comes to its dramatic crescendo; ‘Full of grace and truth’ (Palmer, page 20).

“Grace, charis, is a word John now uses to describe the surprising gift-love of God.” “Glory is used by John in its Old Testament sense as the mixture of wonder and authority that is always a reference to the presence of God and the disclosure of God’s character. It was what Isaiah heard from the seraphim in his encounter with Yahweh (Isaiah 6:3):

***‘Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;  
The whole earth is full of his glory.’”***

(Palmer, page 20).

“Thus far, there has been no direct identification of the word or life or light with Jesus. To this point John has spoken in general terms that would secure little objection from Jew or Greek. But the Greek would find it difficult to believe that a good God would take residence in ‘evil ‘ flesh. And the Jew would regard divine claims for a mere human to be tantamount to blasphemy. So to his readers, the incarnation is the test: ‘And the word became flesh and dwelt among us’ (1:14a)” (Barton, V.W. **The Gospel of John: A Study Manual**. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1960, Page 22).

“Here was the shatteringly new thing – that God could and would become a human person, that God could enter into this life that we live, that eternity could appear in time, that somehow the Creator could appear in creation in such a way that men’s eyes could actually see Him” (Barclay, Wm. **The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John**. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1956, Page 45).

## **John 1: 15-18**

***John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’” From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.***

Many commentaries and articles on the Internet attempt to answer the question of whether Moses actually saw God. Please read the article on page 26 of this session. It seems to this writer to be the best answer for us.

Again reference is made to the ministry of John the Baptist. He declared that Jesus was greater than he was because Jesus existed before John. John was the cousin of Jesus and was physically born before Jesus was (See Luke 1:39-80). He was not referring to their relationship here on earth, but to his relationship to Jesus as God who

existed from the beginning of anything and everything, ever. Remember that eternity goes back forever as well as forward forever.

Moses was another great Jewish leader. He received the law from God and gave it to the Israelites as they wandered in the desert (See Exodus 17: 19-20:26). Those laws had guided the Jewish people for many years. With the coming of Jesus, grace and truth was given. The law of Moses was no longer the supreme value.

Jesus, the One and Only Son of God, sat at the Father's side, but when Jesus came to earth, God became known in a manner never before possible. Jesus was God in the flesh.

### **Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:**

To help your group to understand what it means that Jesus came to earth as a human and as God.

### **For Personal Reflection:**

**What have I learned from this study?**

**What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

**What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

## **Bible Study Plan** (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

### ***God in the Flesh***

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the **Focal Text** in their Bibles. Also, share with them the **Main Idea** to be learned from the Scriptures, and the **Questions to be Explored** by the group.

#### **Focal Text**

John 1:1-18

#### **Background Text**

John 1

#### **Main Idea**

In Jesus the eternal Word became flesh, revealing God uniquely and offering those who trust in him the right to become God's children.

#### **Question to Explore**

Who is Jesus?

#### **Teaching Aim**

To help the church explain the significance for their lives of who Jesus is.

### **Connect with Life:**

You may want to read the words of the old hymn by Philip P. Bliss **The Light of the World is Jesus**.

The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin; The Light of the world is Jesus;  
Like sunshine at noonday His glory shone in, The Light of the world is Jesus.

No darkness have we who in Jesus abide, The Light of the world is Jesus;  
We walk in the Light when we follow our Guide, The Light of the world is Jesus.

Ye dwellers in darkness with sin blinded eyes, The Light of the world is Jesus;

Go, wash at His bidding and light will arise, The Light of the world is Jesus.

No need of the sunlight in heaven we're told, The Light of the world is Jesus;  
The Lamb is the Light in the City of God, The light of the world is Jesus.

Chorus:

Come to the Light, 'tis shining for thee;  
Sweetly the Light has dawned upon me;  
Once I was blind, but now I can see;  
The Light of the world is Jesus.

**Favorite Hymns of Praise.** Chicago, Illinois: Tabernacle Publishing Company, 1972.

And/Or:

Show the group the photo of the "Northern Cave Fish" that lives and produces future generations of fish while completely blind. It lives totally in the dark and has no eyes.

You may ask the participants to describe an occasion when they were "in the dark" – (in a cave, alone in a dark room, without electricity, on a dark road at night etc.)

## **Guide the Study:**

Introduce the study with a discussion of what a prologue is and state that John 1:1-18 which is our scripture for today is a prologue to the rest of the book of John.

State: John's portrait of Jesus is an interweaving of the majesty of his divinity with the reality of his humanity.

Have someone read John 1:1 and another person read Genesis 1:1.

Ask: What relationship do these verses have? (You may want to say: The Genesis story introduces the story of the old creation and John 1: 1 introduces the story of the new creation. In both works of creation, the agent is the Word of God. (Bruce, pages 28-29)

Ask if anyone knows the Greek word which is translated "Word". (Logos)

Discuss the Greek philosophy representing the divine reason or rational principal and the Jewish idea of wisdom. (This is in your **Teacher Preparation** material).

Have someone read Proverbs 8:22-30.

Stress that the term “Word” must be interpreted as the creative, redemptive expression of God. Use the **Teacher Preparation** materials to elaborate as is appropriate for your group.

Encourage a discussion: How important is it that we understand that God came to earth as a person? (The discussion should center on this reality as basic to our faith).

Have someone read John 1: 2-3.

Inquire: When did Jesus begin to exist? (Allow for the assumption by some that Jesus was born as a baby and thus his existence might be said to begin there. However, it is essential to the understanding of the passage that the participants understand that Jesus existed with God the Father from the beginning—that is He has always existed).

Express to the group: These are big thoughts—thoughts beyond what the human mind can fully comprehend.

Consider with the group the importance of these verses in any understanding of Creation. God the Father, Son, and Spirit is Creator of all things which exist.

Have someone read John 1:4-5 and another read Genesis 1:2-3.

Ask: How important is light to your daily existence?

Add: What is the function of light?

Encourage the group to mention words they associate with darkness.

Share: A number of fish and crustaceans have been photographed that live in deep caves or ocean trenches and have no eyes. They have no light by which to see and therefore have no use for eyes. (Show the group the photo of the “Northern Cave Fish” found on page 24 of this session).

Read the following statement:

“Light and darkness are opposites, but they are not opposites of equal power. Light is stronger than darkness; darkness cannot prevail against it. Now that the Word has come into the world, ‘the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining’ (1 John 2:8). The light of the world could not be overcome by the power of darkness, for all its hostility; darkness cannot overcome (ketalabein) those who walk in the light (John 12:25)” (Bruce, page 34).

Have someone read John 1: 6-9.

Ask: To whom is this passage referring? (John the Baptist. You may need to review the story of John the Baptist from Matthew 3: 1-16 and Luke 3 if your group is not familiar with the story).

Inquire: What was John's role? (To bear testimony to the Light).

Ask: Was John as important as Jesus? (No, John was a messenger to help people anticipate and prepare for the coming as Jesus. **He himself was not the light.**

Have someone read John 1: 10-13.

Discuss with the group how Jesus was received. (His own people and especially the Jewish religious leaders did not accept Him as the Messiah although they had anticipated the coming of the Messiah for generations).

Consider what happens to those who **"believed on his name"**. (Everyone who believes on his name becomes a child of God).

State: We sometimes refer to all humanity as children of God. All people are the creation of God. We become children of God by placing our belief in Him as Saviour.

Ask the entire group to read John 1: 14.

Solicit reactions to the reading of the verse: How does it make you feel to read these words?

Ask: What two characteristics of Jesus are emphasized here? (Full of grace and truth)

Continue: Though many people today claim that "truth is relative", we know that God's truth is perfect, universal, unchanging, and not negotiable.

Add: Can we define the word "grace"?

We will hear much more about the term "grace" in our sharing time later. But for now let's just allow for a simple definition of the word:

Grace has been defined as "the love and mercy given to us by God because God desires us to have it, not because of anything we have done to earn it".

State: Jesus lived as the Word made Flesh for thirty-three years. How does he "dwell among us today?"

## Encourage Application:



If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Conclude by reading John 1: 15-18 and stating: John the Baptist had an important role as the witness to the one who came after him but was before him. Moses was a key figure in Jewish life as the one to whom the Ten Commandments was given. But neither Moses nor John the Baptist had seen God face to face. But Jesus had sat at the Father's side and, when he came to earth, it became possible for us to have an intimate knowledge of the nature and love of God the Father.

Encourage the group to consider what it means to them to have God in the Flesh. Each participant can rejoice in this reality in their devotional time and in their daily life this week.

**Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time.** Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

# Youth!!! Take Ten

## Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

### *God in the Flesh*

John 1:1-18

**A youth will lead the following activity and comments.** No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

#### **John 1: 2-3**

**He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.**

Every Christian young person must consider what they believe about how creation occurred. Discuss how this verse can serve as a basis for how we make decisions about our understanding of creation.

**Worship Time** (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***God in the Flesh***  
**John 1:1-18****Beginning the Service:**

Sing: **Grace Alone**, *The Worship Hymnal* #112; CCLI # 2335524

**Offering:****Praying for the World:**

The Hui of China live mainly in Northwest China, but many are scattered throughout the country with more than 2.5 million Hui living in China's Northeastern provinces. The Hui are Chinese Muslims, descendants of Arab traders who entered China along the Silk Road. The Hui like to cluster together in pockets of community. Many of them own small restaurants and their food is some of the best in China! Family is very important for the Hui, and preserving their cultural and religious way of life is one of the highest goals of the family. They hold tightly to their law and do not understand that Christ came to set them free.

## Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

### Full of Grace and Truth

***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. John 1: 14***

Another translation done by the songwriter and author, Michael Card, reads ***And the Word/Deed became flesh and pitched a tent among us, and we looked upon His glory, the glory of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.***

In **The Message**, an interpretation by John Peterson, we read: ***The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood. We saw the glory with our own eyes, the one-of-a-kind glory, like Father, like son, Generous inside and out, true from start to finish.***

The focus in the Prologue to the book of John was on the fact of the Word (Jesus) becoming human and living among ordinary people. The translations which read ***and pitched a tent among us*** or ***moved into the neighborhood*** gives a sense of the intimacy of his relationship to us.

"The Greek word translated dwelt means pitched (His) tent or tabernacle. Since the tabernacle and the later Jewish temples symbolized God's presence, John stressed the fact that God now had made known the fullest manifestation of His presence in Christ" (Howard, F.D. **Bible Book Study Commentary, John (Part 1)**. Nashville, Tennessee: Convention Press, October, November, December 1986, Page 14).

But, although he dwelled among us, he was not ordinary. In spite of his humanness, he was filled with glory and full of grace and truth.

Grace is a word used extensively in the book of Luke and in the writings of Paul. It is used here in the book of John but not in other places in the book. But John wanted us to get the full impact of its meaning. This human was not like other people. He was full of grace and truth.

John dwells on the divine character of Jesus. In this verse, we are told two major attributes of his character – grace and truth. The Prologue has taught that to know

Jesus is to know God the Father. Thus, we know God the Father as filled with grace and truth.

The word grace means favours, gifts, acts of beneficence. Jesus was kind, merciful, gracious, doing good to all, and seeking man's welfare by great sacrifice and love, so much so, that it might be said to be characteristic of him. He abounded in favours to mankind. Grace is unmerited and undeserved. Grace emphasizes the great need of mankind and the great love of God. Grace also contains the concept of beauty; we are confronted with the sheer loveliness of the love of God.

In verse 16 John expanded on the idea of grace ***From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.*** Michael Card translates: ***Because from His fullness we have all received grace on top of grace.***

***We all live off his generous bounty, gift after gift after gift. We got the basics from Moses, and then this exuberant giving and receiving. This endless knowing and understanding – all this came through Jesus, the Messiah. No one has ever seen God, not so much as a glimpse. This one-of-a-kind God-Expression, who exists at the very heart of the Father, has made him plain as day.*** John 1:16-18, The Message.

Grace on top of grace; gift after gift after gift. Grace from Jesus to us is expressed over and over again. The song **Grace Alone** by Scott Wesley Brown and Jeff Nelson captures this idea of overabundance. Every promise we make and keep; every prayer, every step of faith, every good thing we do is because of God's grace to us through Jesus. Grace is the extravagant goodness of God to undeserving people.

"'Grace for grace' (1:16) means 'grace over against grace' and suggests the surge of the sea with one wave following hard upon the other" (Barton, Page 22).

The book of John will tell us many examples of how Jesus lived out this grace. John wants us to know from the very start the kind of Saviour Jesus was.

Jesus was full of truth. This truth was ultimate reality, but also complete veracity.

John will speak about truth in other parts of the Gospel. In Chapter 4:23 he quotes Jesus as saying ***Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.***

In 8:32 we read ***To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."***

***Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him” 14:6.***

We are to worship in truth; we will know the truth through our relationship with Jesus; Jesus is the truth. We live in a world where we long for truth in elected officials, in advertising, in work relationships, in international politics. Jesus tells us he is truth. We can trust what he said. We can trust him to sustain us in difficult times; we can trust his love in the here and now and for all of eternity.

“He declared the truth. In him was no falsehood. He was not like the false prophets and false Messiahs, who were wholly impostors; ...he was truth itself. He represented things as they are, and thus became the truth as well as the way and the life” (Barnes, page 181).

Jesus is the one who in the midst of the perplexities of life makes things clear; He shows us the right way – the true way.

### **Call to Commitment:**

Jesus is grace and truth. Through grace we believe in him and we receive His grace daily—over and over again. He is truth and he calls upon us to live in truth. May we go about the work of this week rejoicing in the grace we have received and extending God’s grace to others. May we live truthfully. May our lives be lives of integrity as we love, serve, and honour the One who is full of grace and truth.

### **Concluding the Service:**

Sing: **Grace Alone**, *The Worship Hymnal* #112; CCLI # 2335524

Make copies of the reading for all participants. Enlist a Worship Leader and a Worship Participant to read the assigned portions.

**Worship Leader:** I am the light of the world. Anyone who follows Me will never walk in the darkness but will have the light of light.

**Worship Participant:** For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness” – He has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of God’s glory in the face of Jesus Christ.

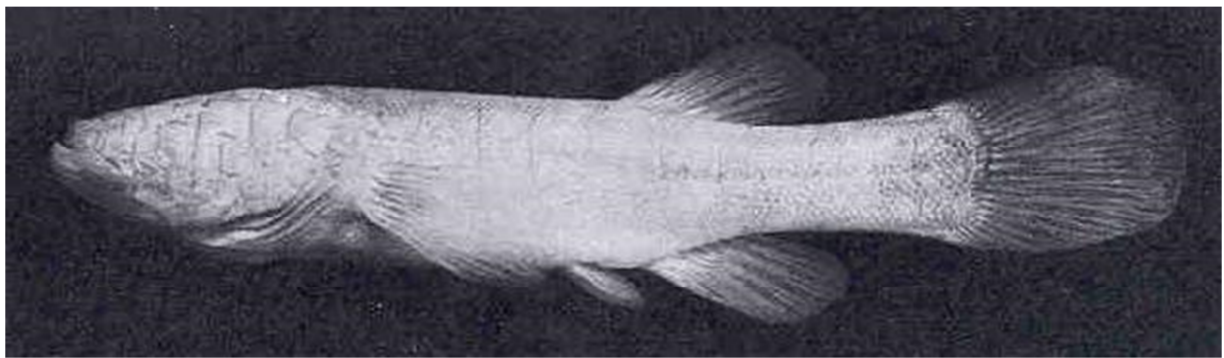
**Worshippers:** He is the radiance of His glory, the exact expression of His nature, and He sustains all things by His powerful word.

**WP:** In the same way, let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

**WL:** The Lord will shine over you, and His glory will appear over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your radiance.

(Isaiah 60:2,3; Matthew 5:16; John 8:12; 2 Corinthians 4:6; Hebrews 1:3) from *The Worship Hymnal*, Responsive Reading #491.

**Commonly termed “Northern Cave Fish”**





**Grace** has been defined as "the love and mercy given to us by God because God desires us to have it, not because of anything we have done to earn it".

<sup>1</sup>**grace** *noun* \ˈgrās\

### Definition of **GRACE**

1

*a* : unmerited divine assistance given humans for their regeneration or sanctification

*b* : a virtue coming from God

*c* : a state of sanctification enjoyed through divine grace

2

*a* : [approval](#), [favor](#) <stayed in his good *graces*>

*b* *archaic* : [mercy](#), [pardon](#)

*c* : a special favor : [privilege](#) <each in his place, by right, not *grace*, shall rule his heritage — Rudyard Kipling>

*d* : disposition to or an act or instance of kindness, courtesy, or clemency

*e* : a temporary exemption : [reprieve](#)

3

*a* : a charming or attractive trait or characteristic

*b* : a pleasing appearance or effect : [charm](#) <all the *grace* of youth — John Buchan>

*c* : ease and suppleness of movement or bearing

4

—used as a title of address or reference for a duke, a duchess, or an archbishop

5

: a short prayer at a meal asking a blessing or giving thanks

6

*plural capitalized* : three sister goddesses in Greek mythology who are the givers of charm and beauty

7

: a musical trill, turn, or appoggiatura

8

*a* : sense of propriety or right <had the *grace* not to run for elective office — Calvin Trillin>

*b* : the quality or state of being considerate or thoughtful

[See grace defined for English-language learners »](#)

[See grace defined for kids »](#)

### Examples of **GRACE**

1. She walked across the stage with effortless *grace*.
2. She handles her problems with *grace* and dignity.
3. He has shown remarkable *grace* during this crisis.
4. She is quite lovable despite her lack of **social graces**.
5. Let us give thanks for God's *grace*.
6. By the *grace* of God, no one was seriously hurt.
7. She tried to live her life in God's *grace*.

## Origin of **GRACE**

Middle English, from Anglo-French, from Latin *gratia* favor, charm, thanks, from *gratus* pleasing, grateful; akin to Sanskrit *gr̥ṇāti* he praises. First Known Use: 12th century.

## Did Moses See God?

[thimblefulloftheology](#) says:  
[April 6, 2012 at 2:27 pm](#)

Exodus 24:9-11 says, “Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of lapis lazuli, as bright blue as the sky. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank.”

The apostle John clearly says in John 1:18, ***“No one has ever seen God, but the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made him known.”***

So here we have two Scriptures that must both be believed and yet cannot contradict themselves. It is much easier to understand the first one as describing a “vision” or “form” of God that he allows Moses and the elders to witness without actually seeing Him in His full glory. This seems justified especially by Yahweh’s comment to Moses later in Exodus when Moses asks to see His glory, “And the LORD said, ***“I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. But,” he said, “you cannot see my face, for no one may see me and live.”***”

So even though God allows Moses to see something, it is not His full glory and so John is absolutely correct when he says no one has ever seen God.