

## Week 4: FROM HIS FULNESS WE HAVE ALL RECEIVED

John 1: 1 – 18

In our first study we referred to John Stott regarding the experience of Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in which he himself explained that the basic question was not, “Why did God become man”? but; “Why did Christ die”?<sup>1</sup> Stott added that the Biblical doctrine of atonement is SUBSTITUTION from beginning to end. No ‘fullness’ without death, resurrection and ascension of Christ. However, that does not suggest we minimise the Incarnation for the first three gospels give significant space to the birth narratives. John omits the birth but emphasises *the Word became flesh*, – a human being. ‘The Word is not communication about God but rather God’s own communication of himself, an effective reality, mightily created by God’s own Godhead’.<sup>2</sup> The relationship between incarnation and atonement is that our Lord Jesus Christ is a definite historical person, of the same substance as the Father, co-eternal with the Father; fully man except for sin; *Emmanuel – God with us*. The Father is God, the Son is God and the Holy Spirit is God.

Although not addressed to a particular church, the riches in John 1: 14-18 cannot be overlooked when we consider atonement. **Verse 11** touches on Incarnation and its result. In becoming flesh the Word did not cease to be what He had always been, but in taking upon himself *flesh* He became what he had never been before. He became **Man**, not ‘a man’. His sonship describes His mission, doing His Father’s will and embracing the cross. The Incarnation contrasts with visionary Old Testament “Christophanies,” and the presence of God walking in a tent and tabernacle. Now He tabernacles or tents/dwells among us. The Tabernacle was a symbol of the world to which he came. **V16**, *Because of His fullness* – linking with **v14**; the plenitude, full measure of grace concentrated in the Son, the Incarnate Word. This is the link with *fullness* in Colossians and Ephesians. We receive from Christ as the spring of divine life all we require for all is in Him and all in Him is available for the believer; **v16 grace for grace, & 17.**

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<sup>1</sup> John Stott, *The Cross of Christ*, 10; Iain Murray, *DML-J*, 190-191.

<sup>2</sup> Otto Weber, *Foundations of Dogmatics, Volume 1*, Eerdmans, 1988, 356

Council of Nicea: (Isnik, Turkey) – 325 AD – convened by Emperor Constantine in attempt to heal schism provoked by Arianism regarding relation of the Son to the Father: main participants Athanasius and Arias. The Holy Spirit was only mentioned in the final sentence but with the Father and the Son is both the subject and object of faith. ‘In him God himself is immediately present in our midst, miraculously and savingly at work, and through him God reveals himself as *Lord*, for God himself is the content of what he does for us and communicates to us ... in the Holy Spirit God acts directly upon us himself, and in giving us his Holy Spirit God gives us nothing less than himself. Since God is Spirit, the Giver of the Spirit and the Gift of the Spirit are identical.<sup>3</sup>

### The Nicene Creed

I/We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, *Maker* of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, **being of one substance/essence with the Father**, by whom all things were made. Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

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<sup>3</sup> T. F. Torrance, *The Trinitarian Faith*, T & T Clark, 1988, 191, from Athanasius, *Ad Ser.*, 1.30, *Haer.*, 74.7