

# The Second Sunday after Christmas Day

## Jan 5, 2020

1. Have volunteers read each passage out aloud.
2. Focus on the Gospel.
3. Discuss the questions.
4. Pray together and for each other.
5. Say the Collect together.
6. End in Compline.

### The Collect

Almighty God who didst wonderfully create man in thine own image, and didst yet more wonderfully restore him: Grant, we beseech thee, that as thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ was made in the likeness of men, so we may be made partakers of the divine nature; through the same thy Son, who with thee and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth, one God, world without end. *Amen.*

### The Lesson Exodus 24:12–18

The LORD said to Moses, "Come up to me on the mountain, and wait there; and I will give you the tables of stone, with the law and the commandment, which I have written for their instruction." So Moses rose with his servant Joshua, and Moses went up into the mountain of God. And he said to the elders, "Tarry here for us, until we come to you again; and, behold, Aaron and Hur are with you; whoever has a cause, let him go to them." Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel. And Moses entered the cloud, and went up on the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

### Psalm 93

The LORD is King, and hath put on glorious apparel : the LORD hath put on his apparel, and girded himself with strength.

He hath made the round world so sure : that it cannot be moved.

Ever since the world began hath thy seat been prepared : thou art from everlasting.

The floods are risen, O LORD, the floods have lift up their voice : the floods lift up their waves.

The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly : but yet the LORD, who dwelleth on high, is mightier.

Thy testimonies, O LORD, are very sure : holiness becometh thine house for ever.

### **The Epistle** 2 Corinthians 8:9–24

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich. And in this matter I give my advice: it is best for you now to complete what a year ago you began not only to do but to desire, so that your readiness in desiring it may be matched by your completing it out of what you have. For if the readiness is there, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he has not. I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of equality your abundance at the present time should supply their want, so that their abundance may supply your want, that there may be equality. As it is written, “He who gathered much had nothing over, and he who gathered little had no lack.” But thanks be to God who puts the same earnest care for you into the heart of Titus. For he not only accepted our appeal, but being himself very earnest he is going to you of his own accord. With him we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the gospel; and not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work which we are carrying on, for the glory of the Lord and to show our good will. We intend that no one should blame us about this liberal gift which we are administering, for we aim at what is honorable not only in the Lord’s sight but also in the sight of men. And with them we are sending our brother whom we have often tested and found earnest in many matters, but who is now more earnest than ever because of his great confidence in you. As for Titus, he is my partner and fellow worker in your service; and as for our brethren, they are messengers of the churches, the glory of Christ. So give proof, before the churches, of your love and of our boasting about you to these men.

### **The Gospel** John 1:14–18

<sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father. <sup>15</sup> (John bore witness to him, and cried, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, for he was before me.’”) <sup>16</sup> And from his fulness have we all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup> For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup> No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.

### **Growth Group Discussion Questions:**

John’s Gospel is an incredibly profound synthesis of Greek philosophy and the Old Testament. For example, John 1:1 begins with “in the beginning” in the exact same way that Genesis 1:1 begins. However, instead of saying “in the beginning, God” John says, “in the beginning, was the Word” (his name for the pre-incarnate Christ). Notice that he doesn’t say “in the beginning was the Son of God” but “the Word” or *logos* (in Greek). In Greek philosophy, *logos* is the preexistent overarching principle of reason and thought that makes all the universe and existence comprehensible. John says that this *logos* becomes flesh—Jesus Christ. What we see in John’s prologue is the clearest Biblical explanation of the oneness of Jesus Christ with God (which John continues throughout his Gospel). Finally, the prologue ends with today’s section where John testifies that the community of disciples has seen this man, Jesus Christ, who is the incarnation of God. To know Jesus is to know God.

We should not miss how scandalous this would have sounded to Greek and Jewish ears—that an obscure, not very educated Jewish carpenter with mediocre hygiene and hick clothes, was God incarnate.

1. Today's Gospel passage is part of a longer poem in John's prologue that begins in John 1:1. Read John 1:1-18 to better understand John 1:14-18.
2. One of the common misconceptions about Christianity is that Jesus' disciples deified Jesus as time went along. In other words, he started off as a humble rabbi, but then after his death, his story evolved to become that of a God-man. Yet, recent scholarship says that John's prologue is one of the earliest known hymns and poems of the Church. Other historical data in John's Gospel places its content to very early on in the history of the Church (e.g.: 45-70AD). What implications does this have for believing that Jesus is God and that his divinity is not an evolved myth?
3. In verse 16, John says, from Jesus' fullness we have received grace upon grace. What is this fullness referring to? If Jesus was merely a human full of human-ness, would we have received grace upon grace? Why not?
4. What do you think is the significance of saying "grace upon grace" (instead of just "grace")? In what ways do we see Christ's life showering us with grace upon grace? Think about all the feast days of Christ. What do all these various feasts have to do with our salvation?
5. In Greek philosophy (as opposed to Greek mythology), the Divine was completely out of reach of humans because they were supertranscendent. Similarly, in Judaism, only a select few saw the presence of God (e.g.: his glory), but not God himself. Thus, John says, "no one has ever seen God". Yet, in verse 18, John says that this man Jesus, the Son of God, has revealed God, because he is God. In what ways is this a radical statement? How would it change your prayer life or your Bible study life to know that to pray to Jesus or to study Jesus in the Gospels is to have God himself hear our prayers and to know God?
6. In verse 14, when John says that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, the word "dwell" can also be translated as "tabernacled" among us. It echoes back to God's glory descending to dwell with the Israelites in the desert, in the tent of the tabernacle of worship. What do you think John is trying to communicate to his Jewish readers about Jesus' identity? In what way does Jesus need to dwell in the tabernacle of your heart? Where does he need to reign as Lord? What would need to happen in your heart for it to have the holiness of God's tabernacle?