

(Peaks of Salvation 1) ATHANASIUS & THE ETERNAL SON

John 1: 1 - 18

John 1: 1 cf. **Genesis 1: 1**; the Word – Logos - did not come into being – was not created - for as God He always is. *The Word was WITH God*; active and perfect communion. He was with God before He revealed God. *And the Word was God*; no article: He is the image of God not simply of the Father. **1 John 1: 1 & Colossians 1: 13 – 23. John 1: 2 – 5 & 11 – 13. V14.** *The Word became flesh*; he comes as fully Man; not clothed with humanity or humanoid but was and is totally Man and fully God; God in redemption of the Cross. He became what he had never been – Man; – but did not cease to be what he had always been – God. Fully divine & fully human: two natures in one person.

Dwelt among us; live in a tent; tabernacled. The Tabernacle as a symbol of the world: **Psalm 139: 1 - 13.** *We have seen his glory*; the glory of One who represents another, being derived from Him and same essence with Him. The divine presence in the OT Tabernacle and the divine presence in the Incarnate Word living as Man amongst men & women. He never sought glory for himself; **5: 41**, *I do not receive glory from people.* -- He always sought God's glory and always did his Father's will; God's glory is supremely His goodness; **Exodus 33: 18 – 23.** There is only One who is good: The glory of His Cross. The SHATTERING RESURRECTION. Without the eyes of faith we cannot see or know the glory. *The Creator must enter His own creation, groaning as it is under the burden of alienation from Him*; SBF. *Glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth: fullness* = the full measure of all the divine powers and graces which were concentrated in Christ; Colossians 1: 19 & 2: 9 also Ephesians 1: 22 & 23 plus 3: 19 & 4: 13. All is in Him and all in Him is available for the believer.

Why significant? Fourth century AD, church into acrimonious debates, divisions, councils, creeds. Church severely persecuted, but change with **Emperor Constantine's** vision 312, took church under patronage & frequently interfered; church politics and power games. About 318, **Arius**, an elder of Alexandria, having difficulty with Trinitarian nature of Godhead; desired to maintain monotheist belief and Logos-Christ as independent being. Taught that

Christ was different in essence from the Father; a distinct, inferior, non-eternal being created by the Father for, before that he did not exist. (Public relations, eloquent preaching, ideas into tunes sung in streets)

Bishop Alexander summoned council of one hundred bishops who debated and condemned Arius' teaching. Eastern Empire remained in dispute so **Emperor Constantine** called first ecumenical Council of bishops at **Nicea (Turkey)**, 325 and took the chair. About 300 plus gathered. **Athanasius** (296-373), deacon of Alexandria, said Christ and Father were the same in essence and the Son was eternal. Only one who was truly God and truly man could be our Saviour. **Nicene Creed**: much discussion on one word; *homoousios* =[homma-oozy-oss] consubstantial or of same substance or essence. Others wanted, *homoiousios* = similar substance or essence to the Father; **ousia** = 'essence'. The Son had the same nature and being as the Father. One letter, *i* (bran, brain; mad, maid).

Athanasius, later a bishop, won but was criticised, hunted, battles continued and exiled five times but God preserved him: **Nicene Creed**. Athanasius' whole theology centred on doctrine of salvation; ie. deification: Christ makes humans divine; ie. lifted up by Jesus Christ to share in the glory of God; **2 Peter 1: 4**, *partakers of the divine nature*.

John 1: 16-18; *out of his fullness*; He is the only source of light and life and grace which are not separate from him but always with him. Only through Him can we know and belong to God for He has freed us from the power and pollution of sin and evil. *We have all received*; we all received that which answered to our needs. *Grace for grace*; each blessing appropriated became the foundation of greater blessing. **V17**, *grace and truth*: their complete embodiment. **V18**, *He has declared Him* – explained Him: once and forever.

John 8: 58 and 17: 5 – the Eternal Son.