

Christmas Eve - The Word Made Flesh

12/24/2025

Scripture 1: (Jn. 1:14 ESV)

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Sermon:

Tonight, we gather to remember and celebrate the day when the wondrous miracle known as the Incarnation: the birth of Jesus Christ; occurred. The Incarnation of Christ is one of the five most important moments in history: Creation, the Fall, the Incarnation, the Death and Resurrection of Jesus, and finally, His future and imminent Return. Each of the other four events revolve around the Incarnation as a pivot point.

- Creation gave us a “place”; a perfect world which was waiting to be filled with life.
- Adam's Fall introduced sin into God's good creation; changing and corrupting this perfect world, consequently causing our need for salvation and redemption.
- Together, Jesus's Death and Resurrection satisfied our debt of sin, justifying us and redeeming us from the righteous wrath that we each deserve.
- Then, when Christ returns in glory, He shall make “*all things new*” (Revelation 21:5); restoring everything to its original state of perfection or to make them even better.

The first two events established and created the need for the Incarnation, while the latter two, as consequences of the Incarnation, satisfied that need; thereby making the wondrous birth of Jesus the fulcrum point and center of all history. That is why we celebrate and remember Christmas, because it is the most important day in human history. It is the day when “...*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...*”. It is the day when God lovingly gave His Son as a gracious gift, for the salvation of His Elect children. While this verse is set within the Evangelist's preamble to this Gospel, it is the simplest, and most perfect summary explaining the LORD's gift of His only begotten (*monogenes*) Son, Jesus.

Earlier, John has already explained that the Word, the *Logos*, is eternally God (John 1:1-3), and now he tells us about what God the Word did after His initial work of Creation; that God “*became flesh and dwelt among us*”.

God the Word “...*became flesh...*”. He came down from heaven and entered into our world; into our space and time. God became incarnate, but He did not “become” in the sense of changing. That which had only ever been purely Spirit, now became physical, as well; the physical was added to the spiritual, without change, confusion, or mixture¹. God became man, adding humanity to His divinity without changing either. He became a human person, a male child, a baby boy. He was born, Jesus, the son of Mary and Joseph, with all three being descended from King David: the man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). He was born in Bethlehem, Judea during the reigns of King Herod and Caesar Augustus; born at a specific moment in history. He grew up and was raised to be a carpenter like his earthly father, and He was raised to be the King like His heavenly Father.

However, by saying that God the Word “*became flesh*”, the Evangelist did not mean that God suddenly changed. God did not transform and stop being the transcendent God and become an infinitely lesser creature. When He took on flesh, God did not surrender His deific nature, nor did He corrupt or mix it with our human

¹ See the *Definition of Chalcedon*

nature. Instead, John shows that in becoming flesh, by taking on flesh, God added a finite human nature to His eternally existing divine nature; truly making the Incarnation a mystery of addition.

- The Spiritual added Physical to itself and in doing so, the Spiritual divine nature continued unchanged, but was now “clothed in flesh” by His human nature, as Charles Wesley described (Hark! The Herald Angels Sing, by Charles Wesley).

Then, the Evangelist also explains that God the Word “...dwelt among us...”. God “tabernacled” with us. Transcendent divinity came down and lived imminently among base humanity. God chose to “pitch His tent”, to settle down, and join the community life of His people, Israel. God made Himself easily accessible to everyone who wanted to draw near. However, what John describes here is different from what the LORD had done in the past. This was the truest fulfillment of God's promise of Emmanuel, of “God with us” (Isaiah 7:14).

- Back near the beginning, during “*the cool of the day*” (Gen 3:8 ESV), the LORD walked in the Garden where Adam and Eve lived; strolling among His people.
- Then, “*Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.*” (Gen. 5:24 ESV). The LORD brought Enoch directly into heaven, without suffering death, to be with Him and dwell in His divine presence.
- The LORD spoke to Abraham through visions (Genesis 15:1) and He even visited his tent (Genesis 18:1), but God never dwelt with this “wandering Aramean”.
- However, during Israel's time in the wilderness, the LORD commanded Moses to build a tent for Him to dwell in and live among His people. This tent was set up and traveled in the midst of the Israelite host, with all God's people organized around it, and whenever their traveling ceased the LORD's glorious cloud (the *sheikinah*) would settle upon the tent, covering it (Exodus 40:32-38) as a visible sign of His presence.
- After David conquered Jerusalem (2 Samuel 5:6-9) and established it as his capital, he had the LORD's “ark of the covenant” brought into the city (2 Samuel 6) with him. But while he was forbidden from building a magnificent temple to the LORD: a “*house of cedar*” (2 Sam. 7:2 ESV) like his own; his son, Solomon, was permitted to build the LORD a house and the cloud of the LORD's glory filled it (1 Kings 8:11).

Thereafter, whenever Israel was faithful and obedient to God, their lives revolved around the LORD's temple: His religious calendar, His requirements of purity, His Law, and His divine authority as mediated through the Davidic kings. So, in the past, while the LORD God did dwell within the midst of His people, now, when “...*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...*” the character of His dwelling changed dramatically and extraordinarily.

Previously, the character of His dwelling was like mixing oil and water. God and man may have been together, kept in close proximity, but they were never truly mixed. Our respective natures (*essentia*) are indissoluble. The LORD is Holy, while we are not. God is spirit, while we are physical. The LORD is the Creator, while we are creatures. The LORD is righteous, while we are wicked. Although His presence was imminent, He remained transcendent. He is worshiped and obeyed, while we worshiped and obeyed. While we were in community and in relationship together with Him, it was with God as our King and we as His subjects. He is the Lord and our Master, while we are His servants.

But now, God became “clothed in flesh” and although His divinity was obscured by His humanity, it could not be entirely hidden; glimpses of His glory still broke through. Now, instead of simply dwelling among us, God the Word dwelt with us. The LORD lived with us. He lived like us. He lived as we lived; experiencing what we

experience, the same as we all experience it. God experienced the fullness of humanity, except for the human flaw of sinfulness; except for suffering the tragic effect of our sinning. We are reminded that while we are all sinners because we sin, we sin because our human nature was corrupted by Adam's sin first. But God the Word, in His incarnation, enjoyed the benefit of the true and perfect human nature, sinless; the perfection that every Christian longs for and will someday receive, when the final trumpet sounds (1 Corinthians 15:51-58) and we are each raised into glory.

- Clothed in human flesh, God the Word, the *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Andros*, experienced (and suffered) every human temptation, yet without sinning (2 Cor 5:21; Hebrews 4:15).
- Clothed in human flesh, God the Word, the *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Andros*, kept the Law of Moses. He obeyed the LORD and perfectly satisfied all of the requirements of His holy Law, by not breaking the Law and by positively doing what it commands; achieving an active state of righteousness, something impossible for sinners like us because of our inherited corruption.
- Clothed in flesh, God the Word, the *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Andros*, was unjustly condemned and died as an atonement to satisfy our debt of sin: the righteous for the unrighteous, the innocent for the guilty, divinity for humanity (Isaiah 53:12; Romans 3:21-25; Hebrews 2:17-18; 1 John 4:10).
- Clothed in flesh, God the Word, the *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Andros*, was raised from the dead, proving that He truly is the holy and righteous, Son of God (Romans 1:1-7), and confirming the justification that He has purchased for us (Romans 3:20-25); for those who believe in and trust Him.

After describing what God has done, the Evangelist then next describes what we do; describing our Christian response, “...and we have seen his glory...”. Yet this is not as simple or straightforward as it seems because this glory of Christ; this glory of God the Word; the glory of the *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Andros*; was not obvious or plainly evident to everyone. Clearly, since we have read “the rest of the story”, not everyone saw this “glory” because otherwise, if they had, everyone would have known and understood that Jesus is God, and therefore believed. Instead, the expected relationship of “cause and effect” concerning this “seeing” is reversed. They, and we, did not see this glory and then believe, but rather, we believed and therefore, we saw His glory. The Holy Spirit opened our eyes to see Christ's glory, and He opened our hearts to receive Christ. We believed because we were caused to believe, and our God-given faith was further rewarded by the sight of Jesus's glory.

- Therefore, in seeing, we were also believing and receiving.
- Therefore, in seeing and receiving, we were also becoming children of God, as John wrote just immediately before our verse, “*But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*” (Jn. 1:12-13 ESV); seeing, receiving, and becoming by the sole power and will of God.
- Therefore, in seeing and becoming “*children of God*”, we were also becoming obedient to God. We were gaining the desire to try to obey our heavenly Father as a response of love, and we were gaining credit for Christ's active obedience: His justifying righteousness; through our belief and trust in Him.

But, what is the glory that we have seen? We have seen “...*glory as of the only Son from the Father...*”.

- We have seen the glory of the Word made flesh, the *Logos* who is *Theos* and *Andros*. The Word who is God. The Word who was with God, in the beginning. The Word through whom all things were made (John 1:1-3).

- We have seen the glory of God the Son, which is the glory of God the Father, whose glory also belongs to the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- We have seen the glory of God; a glory which is “...*full of grace and truth*.”.

The LORD is glorified and glorious in His merciful grace. God is glorified by His forgiveness and God is glorified through justice and the judgment of His wrath. God is glorified in His holiness; His perfect righteousness. God is glorified in truth and with truth because He is the truth; He is the absolute standard that defines everything that is true. God is glorified through His Word; by truthfully keeping every promise He makes. All of this is mixed into and throughout the wonder of Christmas.

The miracle of the Incarnation can be reduced to one simple fact: that when “...*the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...*”, when God entered our world in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ, He was giving Himself to us, to give Himself for us, so that He might bring us to Himself as His adopted children. Therefore, God gave us His Son for Christmas, to be our sacrificial lamb. God became incarnate, so that we could become His beloved sons and daughters forevermore. The Word of God came dwelt among us on earth, so that we could go to dwell with Him in heaven and upon the New Earth to come. That is why Christmas, the day of Christ's Incarnation and birth, is not only the most important day in all of history, but also, the most important day for your own life.

So, if you believe this and if you can see how gloriously wonderful this is, then you may know and trust that:

- Jesus was born for you.
- Jesus lived for you.
- Jesus died for you.
- Jesus rose from the dead for you.
- Jesus ascended into heaven for you.
- And, Jesus is coming back for you.

But, if you do not yet believe that truly, then search your heart, confess your sins and repent. You have a gift in this very moment, to take the opportunity to repent and turn to Jesus Christ in faith; to believe, to receive mercy, to be forgiven, and to be saved from unending wrath. The offer and promise of God's gift of grace is here before you, waiting to be seen and received. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see and open your heart to receive, so that you may truly believe and fully experience the Christmas miracle tonight and forever more.

AMEN