

The Word Became Flesh

In the previous article, we saw that John the apostle taught in his gospel that Jesus Christ was indeed God and God has stepped into space and time, into our realm to become one of us -- to become our rescuer and intercessor. The God who made us has become much more than an observer of the human condition. He has identified Himself with humanity, and He has become a part of the human condition.

To God, the earth is not merely a laboratory experiment. He saw earth as a place wherein He would dwell in a most literal sense. His entrance into space and time, though humble, is the most profound event in history. The answers to the great questions and problems of our existence are found in Jesus becoming flesh as outlined in John 1:1-18.

The Light Of The World

Jesus was not a false, uncertain and dangerous guide, but was one that was true, real and worthy of our utmost confidence. A true or genuine light does not deceive us, but removes darkness, error and ignorance from our path. Jesus came to enlighten all (Luke 2:32). This does not mean that every individual of the human race is enlightened with the knowledge of the gospel, for that has never been. But it does mean that the light was extended to all.

The world did not know Jesus. This is a repetition of what was stated in vs. 3. Jesus came as a man performing miracles and teaching the multitudes in ways that produced astonishment, yet they did not know or recognize Jesus as their Messiah (1 Corinthians 2:6-8). How deeply ironic it was that the very Creator of the world and everything in it came to earth as a man and the world did not know its own Maker.

The world did not receive Jesus. Jesus came to His own country or Palestine. This was a land that was particularly God's land and it was God's people. They should have welcomed Him with open arms and threw the door wide open for Him. However, the people rejected Him and put Him to death in fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 53:3-4. The Jews had an abundance of the mercies of God, yet they killed Him anyway.

He gave those who believed the right to become children of God. Though the nation of Israel in general rejected the Lord, there were a few souls who believed on Him. To the ones who did believe on Him, they were granted the right or privilege to become children of God. Faith is the first vital step (Galatians 3:26-27; 4:4-7). We are considered sons of God because we are adopted by Him and we resemble Him (1 John 3:2) and we are united to the

Lord and are regarded as His brethren (Matthew 25:40).

Children of God are born of God. We do not become children of God by virtue of illustrious ancestry which the Jews supposed. Nor does our justification lie within the scope of human achievement. God produces the change and confers the privilege of being called His children. The heart is changed by His power alone (Romans 1:16).

The Word Became Flesh

The statement, "the word became flesh," affirms both the divinity and the humanity of the Lord. The term "flesh" is used to indicate the fact that He became a man (Hebrews 2:14; 10:5). The full manhood of Jesus is gloriously proclaimed as was the full Godhood of Jesus was gloriously proclaimed in John 1:1-3. "Flesh" is not used of Jesus in a restricted sense merely to indicate that He had a fleshly body. It is used as a synecdoche -- a part for the whole. That is, Jesus became a human being with all of its weakness and preclusion to sin. The word "dwelt" means "to dwell as in a tabernacle or tent." This has allusion to the visible symbol of God which resided in the tabernacle and the temple. Jesus is now God's final manifestation of His glory upon the earth. He was with untold multitudes and they interacted with Him in such a way so as to make no mistake that He was a man. Peter, James and John also witnessed His true glory on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-6). His glory was also seen in His teaching, miracles, life and resurrection from the dead. The "only begotten" is used by John to describe only Jesus (1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9). It means "unique" or "one of a kind." He was full of grace which means that He was always concerned with the welfare of mankind who was not deserving and He was full of truth which was in contrast to the false prophets and Messiahs that existed in that day.

John conceded to Jesus. He readily acknowledged that he was not the Christ. Even though John the Baptist was six months older than Jesus and his public ministry began before Jesus, Jesus was superior to John because His divine nature has existed from eternity. We learn from John to lay all at His feet and direct all hearts to Him as the object of affection and honor.

We have received all of the fulness of Jesus. In Him dwelt all of the wisdom, power and love of God (Colossians 1:19; 2:9). Jesus did not come to talk to men about God; He came to show men what God is like so that the simplest mind might know Him as intimately as the learned scholar. In the Lord we have the abundance of the mercy of God. "Grace upon grace" is a superlative expression which depicts grace in its highest degree. In Christ was all that was necessary to fill God's people with bountiful blessings.

Grace and truth were revealed by Jesus. The Old Testament economy was revealed by Moses with all of its burdensome rites and ceremonies. This system was one of law and shadows, but the new one was full of grace and truth. In the gospel we have the discovery of the greatest truths to be embraced by the understanding as well as the richest grace to be embraced by the will and affections.

Jesus explained God. No human eyes have ever seen God (Exodus 33:20), but Christ had a knowledge of God which could be comprehended by man. The prophets delivered what they heard God speak, but Christ delivered what He knew of God as His. "Bosom" is a Hebrew idiom expressing the tender affection found between a parent and child or the intimate association of close friends. Jesus had a knowledge of God such as one friend of another.

We have not been left alone. We have a Savior whose coming into our realm has met our greatest needs. By His life, death and resurrection, the God who became man has filled our hearts with faith and induced us to obedience with a hope of heaven. May we come to a full realization of the truths of that statement and glorify God for the complete revelation of Himself to man in His divine Son!

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