

4. The Son of God Incarnate

September 26, 2010

There was a little church that was located on a main road at the bottom of the mountain where many logging truckers go by. As truckers go by and they get on their CB radios and they chat with one another. Sometimes the frequency of their chattering gets caught in the church wireless PA system.

On one Sunday morning, the pastor prayed out loud at the end of the service and said, "Oh God, come and help us." Just then the deep booming voice over the PA system saying, "10-4, I'll be right down."

One of God's biggest miracles is the Son of God incarnated in a human form. That is a fancy way to say, "God came down from heaven and became a human and hung around with us on earth for about thirty three years.

This message would have been great for Christmas service. Christmas is about celebrating God the Son in a human form came to the world to save all men, not about tinsel on Christmas trees, gift exchanging, or some people getting drunk.

As I have stated in my previous teaching for this chapter, apostle John is giving us the prologue in v1 through v18. But he even more summarizes that portion into just five verses from v14 to 18.

A. GOD DWELT AMONG US

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

Like no other religion in the world, our God came down and dwelt among sinful men and women. History is filled with the people who thought they were gods. But only one God of Christianity would be a Man.

Some of you may be offended because I included President Obama's photo with the rest of these people here. Since President Obama was sworn into the office, there have been 2,331,000 unborn babies aborted in abortion clinics around the United States which are funded by our tax money with his approval. Obama is the biggest supporter for the Planned Parenthood which does the majority of abortions in America.

I asked you to underline the word 'dwelt'. This word in Greek is 'skenoō'. It literally means "have one's tabernacle, abide (or live) in a tabernacle (or tent), tabernacle". If you were with us when we studied the Book of Exodus, you might remember the Tabernacle in the wilderness while the Israelites were traveling throughout the Sinai Peninsula.

The outer material of the Tabernacle was made out of badger skins which means it looked like any other average humble tent from a distance. But once you look inside of the Tabernacle, it was ornated with pure gold and beautiful tapestries. It is such a great representation of Jesus – He was an ordinary looking man in a human body from outside like any other Jew in the first century, but He was fully God inside without a question.

The tabernacle was a temporary place where man could meet with God. Since we couldn't go to God because of our sinful nature from birth, He came to us.

Let's go back to v14 again. Did you notice the word 'became'? Apostle John was careful to use this word instead of "was born" or "was created". John wants us to know that God did not create Jesus out of nothing, like everything else He did including us.

The Word who is Jesus became a man. This is very very simple statement, yet it is the most profound one in all of history. Think about it. Infinity became finite; the invisible now is visible; eternity is now squeezed into time; the supernatural is confined by the natural. A.T. Robertson, the greatest Greek scholar of the 20th Century said, "This is beyond the power of interpretation." Apostle Paul elaborated on it for us:

1 Timothy 3:16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.

Let's go back to v14 again. Some of you are thinking, "Are you planning to finish this Book at this speed? We will be studying this Book until Jesus comes back." We are not in hurry, are we?

Note the word 'beheld' in Greek is 'theaomai' from which we get an English word 'theater'. It means "view attentively, contemplate". It is more than watching or looking at someone or something without thinking. John and the rest of the disciples intensively watched Him, studied His move, His words, and the way He lived while He was with them.

Can you imagine all the disciples watching how Jesus ate His falafels and imitated the way He ate. Falafel is a Jewish traditional dish and it is almost like a Mexican taco. It uses a pita bread filled with salads. Those who are planning to go to Israel with us in next November, you'll get to have falafels in Israel. My wife Karen just loves falafels. She cannot have enough of it. Ask her how much she loves it.

The greatest gift from God was God Himself wrapped in human skin. "The Word became flesh."

B. GOD'S SUPREMACY

John 1:15 John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'"

John the Baptist was actually born six months before Jesus according to Luke 1:36. So in this statement he is referring to our Lord's preexistence, not His birth date. Jesus existed before John the Baptist was ever conceived.

Jesus is the only Person who ever lived before He was born. Some may say, "That is not possible." I would say, "You got it. It is not possible for man, but for God nothing is impossible."

John 8:58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM."

As Americans and Gentiles, we don't get the meaning as well as the Jews. Remember when Moses asked the Lord for His name:

Exodus 3:13-14 Then Moses said to God, "Indeed, when I come to the children of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

When Jesus answered the Pharisees in this way in the eighth chapter of John, the Pharisees knew exactly what Jesus meant – claiming Himself to be God. That was the reason why they picked up the stones to kill Him for blasphemy. Jehovah's Witness and Mormons insist that Jesus never claimed to be God. Oh yes, He did many, many times. This is one of them.

Jesus is supreme. Here is my question to you and myself: Is He supreme in our lives? So we claim to be followers of Christ. Does He get treated as the Master of your life each and every day by you or does He get left overs like a slave? No one can answer that except you. And Father God in heaven knows everything about you.

C. GOD'S GRACE FOR GRACE

John 1:16-17 And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. 17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

This is so, so rich. Do you see it?

Every human being receives 'common grace' from the Lord – like health, air to breathe, food to eat, knowledge, friendship, etc. But once you become a born-again believer of Jesus Christ, we get to have 'covenant grace' – salvation, the indwelling Holy Spirit in us, the peace that passes all understanding, faith in Him in the midst of turmoils, eternal destination in heaven, etc. Everything we need to live the Christian life is given to us when we come to Him.

That is grace for grace. Grace on top of grace, on top of another grace from Him, on top of more grace. You get the picture. It is like the ocean – one wave comes and washes away any blemish on the sand, then another wave, more waves and more waves. Like that, you and I cannot wear out God's grace.

Romans 5:20b But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, Why does God do this? Because He loves you, He loves you so much that He gave His only begotten Son Jesus to die for your sins and mine. By doing so, we get to have eternal life in heaven, not by good works we do, or fame we might have. Only by His grace, my brothers and sisters.

Dr. Karl Barth, a theologian from yesteryear, was interviewed by a reporter who said, "Dr. Barth, of all of the thoughts you have ever had, what is the deepest and most profound truth you've ever come across?" And the reporter waited for some deep kind of wordy statement and Dr. Karl Barth paused a moment and he said, "Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so." So simple that a child can sing it; so profound and so deep enough that a theologian could drown in it. It's that deep.

In v17, John did not suggest that there was no grace under the Law of Moses, because there was. Each sacrifice was an expression of the grace of God. God could destroy the Israelites for their idol worship and sins, but He chose to accept their animal sacrifices as atonements for them. The Law also revealed God's truth. But in Jesus Christ, grace and truth reach their fullness; and this fullness is available to us.

We are saved by grace, but we also live by grace and depend on God's grace in all that we do. We can receive one grace after another, because He gives more grace.

D. GOD'S ONLY BEGOTTEN

John 1:18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

No one has seen God in His pure essence, in His full and undiminished glory. If there was anyone who came close to that, it would be Moses. Even Moses didn't get to see God face to face. He only saw the afterglow of God's glory.

Though God is invisible, Jesus Christ reveals God to us, because He is the image of the invisible God according to Colossian 1:15 and the express image of His person.

Colossians 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Hebrews 1:3 who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high

The word translated "declared" gives us our English word 'exegesis', which means "to explain, to unfold, to lead the way." Jesus Christ explains God to us and interprets Him for us. We simply cannot understand God apart from knowing His Son, Jesus Christ.

It was a cold winter night. Larry's wife Beth took their children to her church mid-week service. She told Larry about Jesus her Savior and Lord; how He became a man and died for everyone's sins so that the people who receive Him in their hearts can have eternal life. Larry knew she was praying for his salvation everyday. But he thought he was good enough to go to heaven without any problem. He considers that Christianity is for those who are emotionally weak, and he was not one of them.

Larry noticed that he didn't have enough fire logs for his fireplace. So he put on his jacket and walked outside toward his barn where he kept fire logs. Under the full moon he could see a lonely bird shaking its body on a bare tree branch nearby the barn. He felt sorry for that little fella, so he opened his barn doors wide for the bird to come into the warm place out of the cold night.

Even though Larry called the bird gently and pointed his finger toward the open barn door, the bird was continuously shaking his tiny body on the branch. Larry became desperate to communicate with the bird without scaring it off. Then, he muttered himself, "If I were a bird, I could tell him that there is a better warm place in this cold night." Then all of sudden, it dawned on him that that is what Jesus has done for mankind. He became a man so that He could tell the whole world about heaven.

Larry fell on his knees right there and asked Jesus to come into his heart as Beth asked him to do so many times. He finally understood.

You see, knowing Christ died – that's history; believing Christ died for me – that's salvation.

E. APPLICATION

The pathway to heaven begins at the foot of the cross.