

G R A C E

Reformed Baptist Church

Soli ◇ deo ◇ gloria

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Sermon Notes

The Word Became Flesh

October 3, 2004

¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. ⁴In him was life, and the life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. ⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. ⁹The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹²But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. ¹⁴**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.** ¹⁵**(John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'")** ¹⁶**And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.** ¹⁷**For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.** ¹⁸**No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.**

John 1:1-18

□ Appolinaris

- Became Bishop in Laodicea about A.D. 361
- Taught that Jesus Christ had a human body but not a human mind or spirit
- Unlike Arius, Appolinaris affirmed the full deity of Christ [i.e. His equality in essence with God the Father], yet he denied that Jesus Christ was FULLY human
- Condemned at the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D.
- This may seem to some, at first glance, that it protects the deity and majesty of Christ
- So, why was it [and remains so today] a heresy?

Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

Hebrews 2:17-18

“[T]he views of Apollinaris were rejected by the leaders of the church at the time, who realized that it was not just our human body that needed salvation and needed to be represented by Christ in His redemptive work, but our human minds and spirits (or souls) as well: Christ had to be fully and truly man if he was to save us (Heb. 2:17).

- Apollinarianism calls into question the nature of the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ

Verse 14

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.

- And the Word *became* flesh
 - **Became**
 - *egeneto* (as opposed to *en*) : something that *has come* into being or existence [*en*: an *ongoing* existence (used in John 1:1)]
 - This passage clearly speaks of the Incarnation
 - At the Incarnation, Jesus became **FULLY (100%) GOD and FULLY (100%) MAN**
 - God is still Immense, Awesome, and Transcendent; yet He is also Personal and Intimate

Why was it essential for Jesus to be fully God and fully man?

“What Jesus gave up in coming to earth was immense. From a position of ‘equality with God,’ which entailed the immediate presence of the Father and the Holy Spirit as well as the continuous praise of the angels, he came to earth, where he had none of these. The magnitude of what he gave up is beyond our power even to imagine, for we have never seen what heaven is like. When we arrive there, we will probably be overwhelmed by the splendor of what he left...Even if Christ had come to the highest splendor that earth could afford, the descent would still have been immense. The greatest of riches the highest of honors...would be as nothing compared to the conditions he left. But it was not to the highest of human circumstances that he came. Rather, he took the form of a servant, a slave. He came into a very common family. He was born in the very obscure little town of Bethlehem. And even more striking, he was born in the very humble setting of a stable and laid in a manger. The circumstances of his birth seem to

symbolize the lowliness of estate to which he came.”
 Erickson, Christian Theology

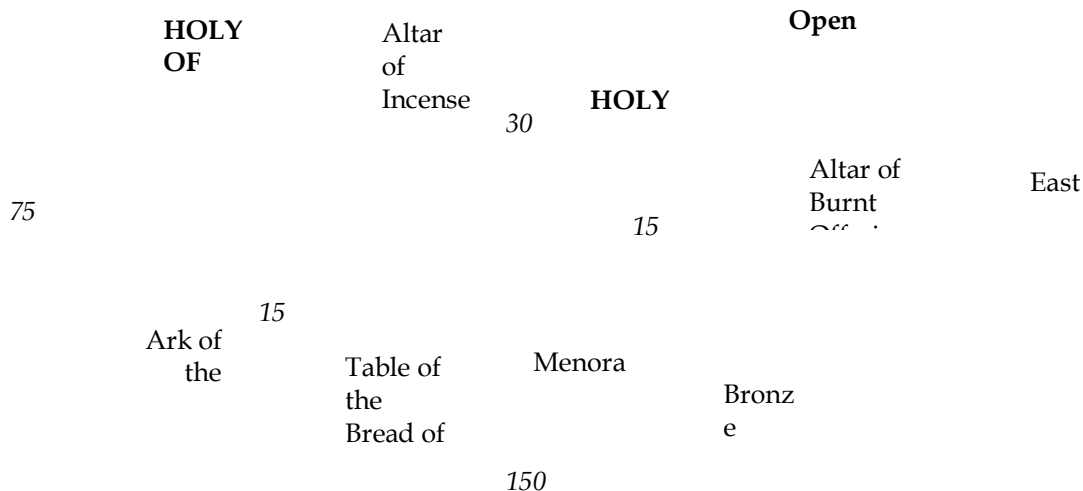
Millard

- and *dwelt* among us...
 - **Dwelt**
 - eska(ay)nosen (eskhnwsen)
 - **tent**, temporary shelter, **tabernacle** (of a worship place)
 - “dwelt among us” more accurately would be translated in one of the following ways:
 - “lived in His **tent**, amongst us”
 - “pitched His **tabernacle** among us”
 - “**tabernacled** among us”
 - **Possible Interpretations** for *DWELL* (“...became flesh and *dwelt* among us”) (Potentially all were intended, depending upon the reader) :

1.) The Tabernacle or Tent of Witness (also the “tent of meeting”)

“Let them construct a sanctuary for Me, that I may dwell among them.” Exodus 25:8

7 ½ ft. high curtain



“The tabernacle was of great importance to Israel, as the double description of it suggests. In [Exodus] 25:8 God says: ‘Have them make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them.’ The tabernacle, then, was the localization of God’s presence with his people, a visible symbol that he was their God. Here Israel was to worship and to make atonement for breaches of the covenant stipulations. The

tabernacle with its imagery and sacrificial system was the means by which the holy, transcendent, infinite God could yet be present with his people – ‘tabernacling’ or ‘tenting’ among them. And it was the means by which a sinful people could maintain fellowship with their holy Lord. As the symbol of God’s presence, it looks forward to the time when God in the person of his Son would be visibly present with his people: ‘the Word became flesh and ‘tabernacled’ among us, full of grace and truth.’”

Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form, and Background of the Old Testament
by William Sanford LaSor

2.) The Tent of Meeting

Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, a good distance from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting which was outside the camp. And it came about, whenever Moses went out to the tent, that all the people would arise and stand, each at the entrance of his tent, and gaze after Moses until he entered the tent. Whenever Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent; and the LORD would speak with Moses. When all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would arise and worship, each at the entrance of his tent. Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses returned to the camp, his servant Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent. **Exodus 33:7-11**

“There is no further explanation about this special tent of meeting in Scripture. Certainly there is no connection between it and the ark of the covenant. Even though two tents have this same name, the tent outside the camp is to be distinguished from the Tent of Meeting, which was yet to be erected in the center of the camp. Both tents have in common the tradition that there Yahweh manifested his presence, but the one in this account was a special tent connected to Moses’ unique leadership through direct communication with Yahweh.” William LaSor

3.) The “dwelling” *Shekinah* Glory of God

The Hebrew word for “to dwell,” *shakan*, and the noun for “tabernacle,” *mishkan*, are both related to the post-biblical (i.e. this word is not used in the Bible) term *shekina*.

“The word, means “residence,” but most commonly refers to the glory of God who made himself present in the tabernacle and temple. The bright cloud of the presence of God settled on the tabernacle and the glory of the Lord filled it (Exodus 24:16; 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-11)...The bright cloud of the presence of God settled (*shakan*) on the tabernacle, and the glory of the Lord filled it (Exodus 24:16; 40:34-35; similarly the temple, 1 Kings 8:10-11). In post-biblical Hebrew, the *shekina* glory was nothing less than the visible manifestation of God. By alluding to such themes, John may be telling his readers that God manifested himself most clearly when the Word became flesh. The

incarnate Word is the true *shekina*, the ultimate manifestation of the presence of God amongst human beings, for this Word became a man.” D.A. Carson

The glory of the LORD rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it for six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses from the midst of the cloud.
Exodus 24:16

- How did the people of God react in the Old Testament when the *Shekinah* glory of God rested in their presence? How does this relate to our worship today?

The Tabernacle Set Up

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.
Exodus 40:34-35

The Ark of the Covenant Brought into the Temple

It happened that when the priests came from the holy place, the cloud filled the house of the LORD, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD.
1 Kings 8:10-11



“Therefore it was not till the priests had come out of the oracle that the *Shechinah* took possession of it, in a cloud, which filled not only the most holy place, but the temple, so that the priests who burnt incense at the golden altar **could not bear it.**”
Matthew Henry

“The dazzling brightness, or rather, perhaps, the dense portentous darkness of the cloud, struck the minds of the priests, as it formerly had done Moses, which such **astonishment** and **terror** that they could not remain.”
Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary

□ *and we have seen his glory,*

- In this context, “we” likely refers to those Jesus interacted with during His earthly ministry.
- When most people think of the word glory, they think of physical, awe-inspiring beauty accompanied often with dazzling light and color.
- Jesus revealed His glory in His signs (John 2:11, 11:4, 40), death and exaltation (7:39; 12:16; 23; 13:31-32), and resurrection (17:5, 24).
- “[A]s John proceeds with his Gospel, it becomes clearer and clearer that the glory Christ displayed was not perceived by everyone. When he performed a miracle, a ‘sign’, He ‘revealed his glory’, but only his disciples put their faith in him. The miraculous sign was not itself unshielded glory; the eyes of faith were necessary to ‘see’ the glory that was revealed by the sign. Then, as the book progresses, the revelation of Jesus’ glory is especially tied to Jesus’ cross and the exaltation that ensues...”
D.A. Carson
- There is a hiddenness to the display of glory in the incarnate Word, a hiddenness penetrated by the Evangelist and the incarnate Word.”
Carson
- In this portion of John 1:14, the Evangelist is likely making reference to Exodus 33:18-20:

Then Moses said, "I pray You, show me Your glory!" And He said, "I Myself will make all *My goodness* pass before you, and will proclaim the name of the LORD before you; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show compassion on whom I will show compassion."

But He said, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live!"
(emphasis added)

The LORD descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the LORD. Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished..."

Exodus 34:5-6, 7

- It seems rather clear, therefore, that God's glory (in the context of verse 14) is his **goodness**.
- *glory as of the only Son from the Father,*
 - this should be rendered, *one and only*, or *best-loved*
 - It should NOT be rendered begotten, which would be incorrect [as begotten can mean "to procreate as the father"]
- *full of grace and truth.*
 - These words appear to describe the glory (or goodness) of God
 - In other words, the goodness of God is full of grace and truth

Verse 15

(John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'")

- This points to the pre-existence of Christ
 - The New English Translation states, "He who comes after me is greater than I am, because he existed before me."

Verse 16

And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

- This could also read, "grace instead [*anti*] of grace."
 - The law was a display of the grace of God
 - The law pointed man to his need for a Savior, the Word
 - It is as though the grace of the Law prophesied the grace of the Word
- "grace upon grace" could also refer to the inexhaustible grace of Jesus Christ

Verse 17

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

- We read here (also in conjunction with verse 15) of the **Superiority of the Logos** (Christ):
 - Superior to John the Baptist (verse 15)
 - Superior to Moses (verse 17)
- The law *was given* through Moses
- Grace and truth *came* through Jesus Christ [the Logos]

- Grace and truth came (into being – *egeneto*) from the very essence of who Christ is
- Christ truly is superior to the Logos!

Verse 18

No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

- No one has ever seen God
 - Scripture states that God is so holy that man cannot see Him and live (Exodus 33:20; Deuteronomy 4:12; Psalm 97:2)
 - Moses was not allowed to see God (Exodus 33:20)
 - Scripture states that Moses spoke with God “face to face” and that he saw “the form of the LORD” (Numbers 12:8); however, we should affirm that this was in a “diminished sense.”
 - “We should perhaps say...that Moses saw, so to speak, the afterglow of the divine glory” F.F. Bruce
- There is a great parallel between verse 18 and verse 1 of John 1
 - Here, the Logos, Jesus, the beloved one, is referred to as **God**.
 - There is a unity with the Father and the Logos
 - There is a distinction here between God [Logos] and Father
 - “the Word was with God” in verse 1 Parallels:
 - who is at the Father’s side
 - literally, “who is in the bosom of the Father”
 - ◆ The “bosom” is a place of **absolute intimacy and favor**
 - Lazarus in Abraham’s bosom (Luke 16:22-23)
 - John (the disciple) rests in Jesus’ bosom at the last supper (John 13:23)
- *he has made him known*
 - Literally, he (Jesus Christ) has *exegeted* him
 - Jesus has *explained* God

- “Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.”
John 6:46
- Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long with you, and yet you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"
John 14:9

God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they.
Hebrews 1:1-4