

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

The Word Became Flesh

John 1:14

Intro: (Read **1-13**) At the end of vs13 we can almost imagine the Apostle inserting a personal comment here stating: “*I have said all this to say...*” (**vs.14.**) Right here is the event that all the preceding statements of the prologue have been leading up to: ***the Word became flesh!*** This is John’s most startling declaration so far. It would’ve amazed both Jewish and Greek theologians to hear that ***the Word became flesh.*** The Greeks had a generally **low** view of God. To them, the ancient gods like Zeus and Hermes were just **super-men**; they weren’t equal to the order and reason of the Logos. John’s telling the Greek thinkers “**The Logos that made and ordered the universe has become flesh.**” The Jews generally had a **prohibitively high** view of God. They would’ve had a hard time accepting that the Jehovah revealed in the OT would take on human form. But, John declares in no uncertain terms that ***the Word became flesh!***

John actually makes 4 compelling statements in vs14 and we will spend our time unpacking them here today.

A) *the Word became flesh* – In the very 1st verse of his prologue, John declares unequivocally that that Jesus is God. Now here in vs14 he states in equally certain terms that Jesus is man. Jesus is God. Jesus is man. Properly understood, these are the 2 most important truths that can be made about the person of Jesus Christ. But, it’s not just in John’s Gospel that we come across this teaching. These truths are actually found thru-out the Scriptures and even though they are very profound statements, they’re taught in the most natural and the most matter-of-fact ways.

One such mention in **Isaiah 9:6**, a verse often quoted and even sung during the Christmas season. This verse teaches that the Messiah was to be One who was **always God’s Son** but who would become man at a particular time in history. Thus, as a **Child** He is **born**, but as a **Son** He is **given**. In **Rom 1:3-4** the same teaching occurs. Jesus was made the seed of David, **according to the flesh** but He was declared to always have been God’s Son. Also, **Gal 4:4-5**: as a Son, Jesus Christ was **sent** because He was always God. Still, He was **made** under the law: He became man. The Bible

never hesitates to put the twin truths of the full deity & the true humanity of Jesus together.

These same truths are also taught thru illustration by different events in Jesus' ministry. In **ch2** we'll see Jesus going to a wedding. What could be more **human** than that? But we'll also see Him make new & better wine out of plain water that's been sitting around in stone wash pots. What could be more **divine** than that? When Jesus and the 12 were crossing the Sea of Galilee and a storm blew in; the disciples were panicking but where was Jesus? He was asleep in the boat, exhausted by the day's activities (**human**). But, after the disciples woke Him up with all their screaming, He told the wind and waves to "cut it out" & they did! He left the 12 wondering, *Who is this guy?* (**divine**)!

We must never make the mistake of thinking Jesus is just a divine man or merely a human God. He's the God-man! He is fully and uniquely God while also being perfectly man. He is God with us, God for us, God in us. As a man He's the One who experienced all the trials, joys, sufferings, losses, gains & temptations of this life.

Clearly, John's 1st statement is important but now we must ask the obvious question: Why is it important? It's evident from his first 2 Epistles that at the time he wrote this Gospel, a false doctrine had begun to infiltrate the church, a teaching that **denied** that Jesus Christ had come in the flesh but beyond combating false doctrine, why is the humanity of Jesus Christ important for us today? The humanity of Jesus has several applications for the believer.

1) It made it **possible** for Jesus to **die** (**Heb 10:4-7**). A body was the vehicle for Christ's earthly ministry. Without it, He couldn't have done the things He came to do. In the beginning, in the eternal counsels of God, before there was even a world or a lost race of men, Jesus foresaw all of human history and knew that He was to redeem the race. Thus, in the fullness of time, in the days of Herod, He **became flesh: assumed a human body** so that He could offer up that body as the perfect sacrifice for man's sin. This death was the focal point of both world and biblical history.

2) It made it **possible** for Him to experience **human frailty** (**Heb 4:15-16**). Jesus knew what it meant to be human in ways that we understand. He endured extreme hunger, thirst & physical exhaustion. He endured satanic

temptation, alluring popularity & irrational rejection. But it's the record of His experience and behavior on the way to the cross and the crucifixion itself that is the most unbearable because it's so intensely human. There were **no supernatural advantages** for Jesus on the cross, **no heavenly rescue party**, **no super-human anesthetic**. It's exactly this suffering that helps us know that Jesus experienced all that we experience (**weariness, disappointments, misunderstandings**, and **pain** of this life). Thus, He's able to understand and help all those who are His own and are so tempted and tried.

3) It made it possible for Him to be our **example**. (1 Peter 2:21) Jesus shows us how a life that's pleasing to the Father is to be lived. It's not just the fact that Jesus endured hunger, thirst, exhaustion, temptation, rejection, extreme suffering and death that's important, it's also how He endured those things that has been important for believers thru-out the ages. Thru the humanity of Christ, God revealed the character of His love and righteousness so clearly and plainly so that we, by His grace, might copy them in our own lives.

It's been said that the incarnation of Christ is the 2nd greatest truth in the Bible. The greatest truth is that this God who became man could also love us enough to go to the cross and die for us personally. How should we respond to this truth? By lifting our hearts & voices in praise of a God who can come from the infinite distance and glories of heaven down to a world such as ours in order that He might redeem us and lead us back to Himself. How could we do anything less? How could anyone refuse to surrender to such unfailing love and freely given grace?

B) and dwelt among us – Most likely, John's referring back to the days of Israel's wilderness wanderings here and making a point of contrast: although those days were great for Israel, something much better has happened in our day & it involves all men. We know John's making this contrast because of the unusual word used in this phrase: **dwelt: to tent or encamp** (Gk) so you could translate this as **the Word became flesh and pitched His tent among us** or more literally: **tabernacled among us**. Of course, this word points directly to the **portable "temple"** that Israel carried around the wilderness for 40 yrs. It was the center of their worship & the single most important object in their camp.

The book of Exodus is exhaustive in its details of the tabernacle and

everything about it – dimensions, furnishings, colors, functions, arrangement – was designed to communicate some spiritual truth. Many of its functions were just previews of the functions Jesus would fulfill when He eventually pitched His tent among us. Here's just a few:

1) It was the *center* of Israel's camp – whether stationary or moving, the tabernacle was always surrounded by the other tribes, it always remained in the center. Similarly, Jesus is the center of the Christian camp. He's our gathering place. Not a building or sanctuary but “***where 2 or 3 are gathered together in My name, I am there...***” (Mt 18:20).

2) Its were the Law was *preserved* – the 1st stone tablets of the Law were broken but the 2nd set was placed within the Ark of the Covenant for safekeeping. This speaks of Christ's perfect obedience to the Father (“***I always do those things that please Him***” Jn 8:29) & His perfect keeping of the Law (“***I did not come to destroy but to fulfill***” Mt 5:17).

3) It was the *dwelling* place of God – mostly symbolic in OT times but in a very striking way. In the Holy of Holies, between the wings of the cherubim that covered the Ark, was the ***Shekinah*** glory that symbolized God's presence. Sometimes it was hidden by the cloud that spread over the tabernacle. Other times it flashed out in judgment against some evil in the camp of Israel. But, it always represented the presence of God in the tabernacle. When Jesus walked this earth, He was the physical representation of both the glory and the presence of God and He still is today!

4) It was the place of *revelation* – it was the place where God met with men and spoke to them. That's why the tabernacle was often called ***the tent of meeting***. Today, Jesus Christ is the place where God meets with men and speaks to them. Jesus perfectly reveals the Father. He's the exact representation of the invisible person of God.

5) It was the place where *sacrifices* were made – if you were to walk into the tabernacle, the 1st object you would see was the brazen altar, on which sacrifices burned continually. These “not-so-subtle hints” point directly to the fact that ***there is no approach to God except by means of the sacrifice***. “***Without shedding of blood there is no remission [of sin]***” (Heb 9:22). Similarly, there's ***no*** approach to God today ***except thru*** faith in the sacrifice

provided by Jesus Christ, who in the tabernacle of His flesh offered Himself up on the cross at Calvary.

6) It was the place where Israel *worshipped* – Today, we worship in the presence of Jesus.

C) *we beheld His glory* – when Jesus pitched His tent among us, He did so for the express purpose that we might see Him & thus, come to know the Father. The glory that shined in the tabernacle & later in the temple was just a small preview of the excellent glory that shone thru the humanity of Jesus Christ. This glory was veiled to those who had no desire to come to the light but it was brilliantly manifested to all those who, by faith, pressed into that Light. This happened in a literal way with the 1st disciples: they saw His glory revealed in His baptism, thru His miraculous signs and wonders & 3 of them actually saw Him in all of His glory up on the mountain top. This was *the reason* for His coming. He came that men might **see** His glory and **believe** in Him.

While its true that the 1st disciples saw some amazing things; its also true that their same experience is duplicated in everyone who believes in the Lord of glory today. Paul writes of this experience of every Christian in **2 Cor 3:18**.

D) *full of grace and truth* – what’s the significance of this phrase? We can define the terms; **grace**: God’s unmerited favor towards humanity, expressed most clearly in **Rom 5:8 *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.***” God is gracious towards us, not on the basis of anything we’ve done but solely because it is His nature to be gracious. God doesn’t owe man anything; thus, all the blessings that people enjoy are the direct result of God’s grace. Be it general grace or particular grace – it’s all amazing!

Truth: a great word in John’s Gospel; used 24Xs & in almost every case, it’s related to the **character of God**! The Bible tells us the Father is truth, the Son is truth & the Holy Spirit is truth and everything that derives its nature from God is also characterized by truth. Since truth is the character of God, believers must take their stand on that truth.

There’s a significant OT correlation with this last phrase that bears

presenting. In Ex 33:18-19 Moses begs the Lord, “**Please, show me Your glory.**” Jehovah agrees saying, “**I’ll make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you.**” Jump over to Ex 34:5-6; The Lord does it! He passes before Moses and proclaims: “**The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering and abounding in goodness and truth.**” Let’s not miss what’s going on here: Moses asks to see God’s glory & He says He will show him His goodness. Then when He proclaims the name of the Lord, He doesn’t just say He **possesses** goodness & truth but that He **abounds** in it. How does this relate to our text? This **goodness** or **steadfast love** (**hesed** in Hebrew) is rendered as **charis** in Gk (**grace**). This **truth** or **faithfulness** (**emeth**) is rendered as **truth** in vs14. These same divine character traits that Jehovah declares He abounds in are the same divine character traits that John declares are seen to their fullest extent in Jesus Christ.

The glory that Moses desired to see, the glory that was mostly veiled to him has been fully revealed by Jesus Christ! Have you beheld the glory of the eternal Son of God? Have you seen it? If not, do you want to see it? You will only see the glory of God by accepting thru faith the gift of salvation Jesus freely offers to you.

But, if you **have** seen it then you are called to bear witness of it to a sinful and ever darkening world. Think of it. What a vision – the glory of Jesus Christ! What a task – making His glory known! 😊