

John 1:14 The Word became flesh!

Christmas Day December 25, 2009 (Children – the white candle of the Advent Wreath)

Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ Amen

God's Word of a wondrous miracle is written in John 1:14

These are Your Words of love heavenly Father. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear Friends, in Christ,

What would you consider the greatest miracle in the Bible? Was it the parting of the Red Sea so that Moses and the Israelites could cross? Was it the miracle at Joshua's time where in the heat of battle Joshua asked God to extend the day and the sun stayed in the same spot in the sky for about 24 hours? Was it the miracle of Jesus raising Lazarus from death after the man had been in the grave for 4 days, or perhaps expanding the thought of resurrection to the Last Day when at the command of Christ all the dead who have ever lived will be raised to life? The final resurrection will be a wondrous miracle, but there is one that is still greater. It's the one listed in John 1:14. The Son of God became flesh. Paul wrote about this miracle, "*Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested [revealed] in the flesh*" 1 Tim 3:16. We'll consider why it was such a great miracle and why it is such good news for us. Our theme is:

The Word became flesh!

First what does it mean for God to become flesh? Ancient Christian scholars stated it this way: Jesus "did not cease to be what He was, but He became what He was not before." Jesus was the Son of God from eternity. Yet, as man, He had a beginning inside Mary's womb. Jesus became flesh in the sense of having a body and soul just like any other human being. Jesus once told His disciples "a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have." (Luke 24:39) So, at His conception the Son of God who fills the universe chose to be within Mary's womb. He could have come as a Lord of all, destroying all enemies with the glory of His presence, but entered the world as we did, as a helpless baby. He who had all power, took on human frailties. The defender of all the universe once in human form could be wounded, become tired and hungry, and could die. Life is so precious because of its limited time. So, Jesus, who lived from eternity, now lived in a mortal body. He was born in humble circumstances and He would die in the same as a man.

The Bible sometimes uses the word flesh in negative ways regarding all people but not Christ. Of us it is said, "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.*" John 3:6. We were born with a sinful nature, in the likeness of Adam. But, Jesus was born in the likeness of His Father in heaven. He was born without a sinful nature as God had intended for all people to live.

Again of us the Apostle Paul stated, "*For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwells no good thing.*" Romans 7:18. But of Christ it is stated, "*In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*" Colossians 2:9. Because of our sinfulness, there is no way we can earn a place in heaven. The Bible warns, "*By the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in [God's] sight.*" Romans 3:20. As human beings, we are not only tempted to sin, and we often commit sin that condemns us. Yet of Jesus it is written, He was "*in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*" Hebrews 4:15. The last negative point from the Bible about our sinful human nature states, "*The flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another.*" Galatians 5:17. Yet when Jesus, as a human being, described His relationship with God, He said that they were one. As one of us Jesus lived exactly as God intended for us.

Second, what does it mean for us that the Word became flesh? First, it means that God made a way to dwell among people without their being harmed. We don't want to see the glory of the Father in any other way than through Jesus in the flesh. God's glory would overwhelm us in a moment. Just think how frightened the shepherds were when angels filled the skies. How much more fear we would have if the almighty God appeared in all his glory. God's solution was, "*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.*" v.14. In the Old Testament times, God showed

His presence in a towering cloud in the desert or later in the temple in Jerusalem. But these were only shadows of the coming Christ, who is Immanuel, God with us. We don't need a temple to meet God. In Christ our Savior, whoever we are and wherever we are, we can meet God and not be afraid, because Jesus is one of us.

John wrote, "*We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.*" v.14. Christ's body from the day He was born was like a thin curtain covering something awesome. Through Jesus in the flesh people saw God's glory, which isn't just a bright appearance. His glory includes the greatness of God's love, the power of His miracles, the compassion of His forgiveness, and the depth of God's wisdom. All that God is had come to us in a form that could be held and seen in the flesh.

John wrote that Jesus was full of grace. We are sinners. We deserve to go the way of all flesh, to sickness, death, and judgment. But, Jesus has connected something new to humanity, His grace. Our sin and guilt are freely pardoned in Christ. We are justified, declared innocent through the payment of Christ's life. He gave His flesh to be scourged, nailed to a cross until dead, and then was laid in a tomb. Yet, as God's Word promised, His flesh did not see corruption because

He is the sinless Son of God. And He did not remain in the grave. Paul wrote, "*Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 1 Corinthians 15:20-22*

This is the full truth that Christ brought to the world. Despite our sin, death, the power of the devil fighting against us, we have Christ who won the victory for us. Paul wrote, "*What the law could not do..., God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh...: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the ... requirement of the law might be fulfilled.*" *Romans 8:3-4*. Everything that God demanded in His law was met for us in Christ. Even Jesus' birth as a sinless child has become ours when we trust in Him. Martin Luther wrote, "Christ takes our [sinful] birth away... and gives us His birth that we may be made new and clean.... Every Christian shall rejoice in Christ's birth... that in it Christ is his brother and God is his Father."

Not even death and the devil can permanently harm us, since we are connected to Christ. Hebrews states, "*As the children have partaken of flesh and blood, [Jesus] shared in the same, that through death He might destroy ... the devil.*" *Hebrews 2:14*. All things which we could not do, Jesus did for us while in the body. He did this so that we will share in His glory in heaven. It won't just be our souls in heaven; our bodies will be changed to be like Him. Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 15, "*Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption.... We shall all be changed-- in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.*" *1 Corinthians 15:50-52*. With our own eyes we will see Jesus, who was born as a little baby in Bethlehem, lived, and died for us. John summed up His Gospel with these words for us, "*These are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name. John 20:31.*

There are many great miracles in the Bible that show the power and wisdom of God. Yet, the greatest miracle was Jesus coming to this world in human flesh. God's Son became one of us so that we might receive the full rights as God's children. There is no greater news for us. So, rejoice in the greatest miracle of Jesus, the baby of Bethlehem, who is the Lord of all. Amen.