

John 1:1, 14 The Word became flesh! Christmas Day December 25, 2018

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Grace, mercy, and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior born in Bethlehem. Amen.

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

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

Dear Christian Friends,

What would you consider the greatest miracle in the Bible? Was it when God created the heavens and the earth? Was it the miracle of Jesus raising Lazarus from death after being in the grave for 4 days? Perhaps we should expand the thought of the resurrection to the Last Day when Christ will command all the dead to rise to life! There is a miracle still greater, written in John 1. The Son of God became human. Paul wrote about this miracle, "*Great is the mystery of godliness: God was [revealed] in the flesh*" (1 Timothy 3:16). Today, we'll see why we consider this such a great miracle with the theme:

The Word became flesh!

First what does it mean for God's Son to become human? Ancient Christian scholars stated it in the form of a riddle: the Son of God "did not cease to be what He was, yet He became what He was not before." Jesus was the Son of God from eternity and cannot change. Yet, as man, He had a beginning and He was constantly changing like any other human being. So, at His conception the Son of God whom the universe cannot contain, chose to be within Mary's womb. He could have come as the Lord of all and destroyed all enemies with His holy presence. But that would not save sinners. He entered the world as a humble baby to do what God could not do: take on human frailties, be wounded, suffer pain, and die. Jesus was born in humble circumstances and He would humbly die as a man.

The Bible sometimes uses the word flesh in negative ways regarding people. Of us it is said, "*That which is born of the flesh is flesh....*" (John 3:6). We were born with a sinful nature, in the likeness of Adam's sinfulness. But, Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary in the likeness of God His Father without sin.

Again 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, it is impossible for us to 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 NKJV).

Yet of Christ it is written, He was "*in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin.*" (Hebrews 4:15). Of us it is stated, "*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 united as one. Both were perfect and in complete harmony and love.

Second, how do we benefit from the Word uniting with flesh? It means that God made a way to be among people to bless them. The night of Jesus' birth when the angels filled the sky, God's glory shown around the shepherds and they were terrified! His glory did not help them. How much more awesome it would be to have the almighty God appear in full glory! We sinners would die! So, "*The Word [God's Son] became flesh and made His dwelling among us.*" (v.14). In the Old Testament, God showed His presence sheltered in a towering cloud as Israel wondered in the desert or later His glory was hidden in the temple at Jerusalem. But these appearances were only shadows of the coming Christ, who is Immanuel, God with us. We don't need to go to a desert or to a temple to meet God. With Christ as our Savior, wherever we are we can meet God and not be afraid, because God's Son is also one of us.

John wrote, “*We have seen His glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father*” (v.14). From the day He was born Christ’s body was like a curtain covering His divine nature. Through Jesus in the flesh John saw God’s glory, which was more than a shining appearance at His transfiguration. His glory included the compassion of God’s love, the power of God’s miracles, the greatness of God’s 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 as a baby.

John wrote that Jesus was “*full of grace and truth*” (v.14). The truth is that we are all sinners, who deserve to go the way of all flesh: to death and then judgment. But Jesus has connected something new to humanity: God’s grace. In Christ, God completely pardoned our sin and guilt. We are justified, declared innocent through the payment of Christ’s blood. He gave His flesh to be scourged, nailed to a cross until death, and was laid in a tomb. Yet, His flesh did not see corruption because He is the sinless Son of God. His body is risen! Paul wrote, “*Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits 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 truth that the angels already proclaimed on the night of Jesus’ birth. We can’t get to heaven on our own or with any human help. But, heaven has come to us in Christ. The myriad of angels appeared above the shepherds to share in the celebration. As God looked at His Son, a new-born baby, He already saw the victory that Jesus would win by His death as a full payment for sins. Paul wrote, “*What the law could not do..., God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh...*” (Romans 8:3). Everything that God demanded in His law was accomplished for us by Christ. Even Jesus’ birth as a sinless child has been credited to us through faith 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 Christ is his brother and God is his Father.”

All the things which we could not do, Jesus did for us while in a body. Just as Christ body experienced glory after He rose from death, we will share in His glory. Not just our souls will be in heaven; our bodies will be there, too. 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.... For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed*” (v. 50-52). With our own eyes we will see Jesus, who was born as a baby, lived, died, and rose from death for us. John summed up in His Gospel: “*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 of God. Yet, the greatest miracle was God’s Son, taking on human flesh to be our world. He 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 miracle of Jesus, the baby of Bethlehem, who is the Lord of all.

We close with this hymn verse: “Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ, the everlasting Lord, Late in time, behold Him come, Offspring of a virgin’s womb. Veiled in flesh the God-head see, Hail the incarnate Deity! Pleased as Man with man to dwell, Jesus, our Immanuel! Hark! The herald angels sing, “Glory to the newborn King!” Amen.