

—{1}. **John 1:14** . . . . . **“God Enters Humanity”**

A. Introduction

1. just as the existence of God is the fundamental thesis of the Holy Scriptures – ‘In the beginning, God ...’ – so the incarnation is the fundamental thesis of the Christian faith
  - a. Judaism, almost from the beginning, and Islam since its inception, have complained that Christians worship their Jesus as though he were God
    - (A) in this they are correct
    - (B) they understand the teachings of the New Testament
    - (C) often better than many who call themselves Christian
    - (D) for, indeed, we do teach and preach that
    - (E) in the man Jesus of Nazareth, God entered humanity
  - b. The Scriptures teach this unequivocally
    - (A) we saw this in our earlier reading, Philippians 2:5-11
    - (B) this truth of the incarnation is to be found in one of the earliest confessions of faith as recorded in 1 Timothy 3:16, “By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He {that is, Jesus Christ} who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.” (1 Timothy 3:16)
    - (C) John made it the primary test of orthodoxy and heresy in his first letter, “Who is the liar but the one who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the anti-Christ, the one who denies the Father and the Son. Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also.” (2:22-23) ... “By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus is not from God; this is the *spirit* of the anti-Christ, of which you have heard that it is coming, and now it is already in the world.” (4:2-3)
    - (D) « and in this morning’s Scripture reading, John 1:1-17 »
2. it is on this subject – the incarnation – that our messages this December have been based:
  - a. Pastor Lewis Willard opened the series by preaching on John 1:4-5, “In him was life; and the life was

the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not {did not overpower it}." (AV) – the Incarnate Son of God as the Light of the world

- b. then Carlos preached on John 1:18, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*." (AV) – the Incarnate Son of God as the One who made God known
- c. and last week our message was from Luke 2:14, "Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased." – the Incarnation of the Son of God brought praise to the glory of God
- d. today our text is: "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." (John 1:14) – as the Incarnate Son of God, God Enters Humanity
- e. from that text we will look at that truth this morning. We will do so by just touching on the some of its highlights:
  - (A) 1. Why did John call Jesus Christ, 'the Word'?
  - (B) 2. What was involved in that he 'dwelt among us'?
  - (C) 3. What is the meaning of 'the only begotten'?
  - (D) 4. What was this 'glory' they saw?
  - (E) 5. What does that 'grace and truth' mean to me?

B. 1. Why did John call Jesus Christ, 'the Word'?

1. the Word, in Greek, '*o logos*' is a philosophical term
  - a. the Greeks were great at philosophy (Gk = love wisdom)
  - b. they had idealistic philosophers like Plato
  - c. and pragmatic (practical) philosophers like Aristotle
  - d. such philosophers listed three things that convinced people of truth:
    - (A) *ethos* ('ethical') – the character of the speaker
    - (B) *pathos* – persuasion that comes from within the hearer
    - (C) *logos* – logical proof of the truth
    - (D) pure mathematics is considered to be the purest of all the pure sciences – at least by mathematicians!

- (1) because its theorems and proofs
  - (2) can be constructed without the need of recourse to any physical universe – completely in the mind
  - (3) and those truths conveyed by '*logos*' from one person to another (but pencil and paper helps)
  - (4) in this sense, pure mathematics is very beautiful, yet can be very unsatisfying, until made practical and applied to problems of life, by engineers, physicists, or as was my case, as an actuary
- e. so, to the Greeks, the *logos* was the final and greatest proof of truth, so this word came to mean the unifying principle of the *kosmos*, the universe, pervading and controlling everything – in a word, the impersonal 'god'
- (A) that 'god' later espoused by those we call deists
  - (B) that 'god' of those people who say, 'Oh yes, I believe in God, but I don't think He is concerned about us'
  - (C) such an impersonal 'god' is not particularly satisfying
- f. now John had lived his life in the midst of Greek culture, so he understood this use of 'Word', so he said
- (A) this God of truth, this Word that was the true Light which enlightens every man, entered this world (1:9)
  - (B) this God is really personal; He sustains relationships
  - (C) and this God has proven His personality by becoming a living, breathing, walking, suffering human being
  - (D) this is the God that can satisfy man's deepest longing
- g. <sup>{2}</sup>. The Word did not become a philosophy, a theory, or a concept to be discussed, debated, or pondered. But, the Word became a Person to be followed, enjoyed, and loved!

2. But 'Word' also implies the communication of information

- a. God in the flesh, in Jesus Christ, revealed Himself
- b. "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," (Hebrews 1:1-3)

- c. so that Jesus could dialogue with Philip in this fashion, "'If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; from now on you know Him, and have seen Him.' Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.' 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 14:7-9)
- d. Jesus Christ in His life, His words, His works shows us in every aspect just what God is like

C. 2. What was involved in that he 'dwelt among us'?

1. now, you may have a footnote or marginal note in your Bible which gives an alternate translation for dwelt as 'tabernacled' or 'pitched His tent'
  - a. with tent we immediately think of temporariness
  - b. the tabernacle in the wilderness was just a big tent
  - c. the original prefabricated dwelling, joined by hooks & eyes, ready to be set up or taken down at a moment's notice
  - d. here today, gone tomorrow – transient, passing
  - e. Peter uses this picture of a tent to describe his own life, "I consider it right, as long as I am in this *earthly dwelling* {tent}, to stir you up by way of reminder, knowing that the laying aside of my *earthly dwelling* is imminent, as also our Lord Jesus Christ has made clear to me." (2 Peter 1:13-14)
2. but there is another aspect to Christ's dwelling among us
  - a. if you have gone camping, especially in rainy weather, you will be very familiar with it – it is very cramped quarters!
  - b. the tabernacle in the wilderness was a very large tent –but, let me say it reverently, it was very cramped quarters for God, only a shadow of the heavenly places
  - c. the Son of God in becoming man limited Himself to very cramped quarters, that of living in a human body
    - (A) at first as a helpless baby – a strange evidence of His being in control, that He could place Himself in this precarious position, without endangering His plan
    - (B) living after the fashion of humanity, facing the same pains, bereavements, temptations, hardships,

fatigue

- (C) and He lived cheek and jowl with sinful humanity; jostled by the crowds, visiting with the society's dregs, attended by faithless and self-seeking disciples, even travelling in their smelly, old, fishing boat
- d. a self-limitation that helps us to comprehend by faith
  - (A) the promises of His presence, "... lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28: 20)
  - (B) ... and of His help, "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: 18)

D. 3. What is the meaning of 'the only begotten'?

1. there are phrases in Scripture

- a. especially as expressed in the sonorous majesty of the AV
- b. to which we are drawn and cling onto lovingly
- c. and this is such a phrase; but what does it mean?
- d. it took the church centuries to sum up the Bible truth of the Trinity to guard it against heresy, to the effect that, 'There is one God, subsisting as three co-equal, co-eternal Persons; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (or Spirit)'
- e. so when we ask what does 'only begotten' mean, we may get the dictionary-based answer, 'He's the only child that God had' which as you will see immediately, conflicts with Trinitarian truth as well as other truths of Scripture
- f. it also is not what the word means; this exact same word is also used in Hebrews 11:17, "By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son;"
  - (A) Isaac was not the only son that Abraham had
  - (B) nor was he was the first son; the only one at that time ... Ishmael was Abraham's first son
  - (C) but Isaac was unique and special –the promised one
- g. the meaning of this word is literally the only one of its or his race, kindred, species or kind
  - (A) I like the old French version, 'son Fils unique du Père'
  - (B) the Son incarnate is unique, one and only of His kind

(C) neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit became flesh; that has been the particular role of the Son

2. what is the point?

- a. that when we proclaim the exclusiveness of Christianity
- b. that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the only way of salvation
- c. that "... there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)
- d. we do not do so based on human presumption
- e. but because Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the only one in or out of this universe that can in His own person bring mankind into union with God, for He entered humanity

E. 4. What was this 'glory' they saw?

1. when we see that word 'glory' what is our first thought?

- a. perhaps you, as I, think of that shekinah or shining glory with which God fills the place of His presence
  - (A) from which Moses departed with his face shining
  - (B) and, for example, in the visions of Isaiah, Ezekiel, John
- b. which is surely what Peter, James and John witnessed when for a moment the door of the tabernacle was pulled aside and they were could peek inside "And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light." (Matthew 17:2)

2. yet the context of this verse

- a. seems to make the 'we' of 'and we saw' much too large
  - (A) just to refer to three men, Peter, James and John
  - (B) and to just one event on the mount of transfiguration
- b. but to be more akin to the we with which John commences his first letter, "What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—" (1 John 1:1)
- c. it was throughout His entire human existence that Jesus Christ, Son of God, showed forth the glory of God
  - (A) in His words, "The officers answered, 'Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.'" (John

7:46)

- (B) in His works, "But many of the crowd believed in Him; and they were saying, 'When the Christ comes, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?'" (John 7:31)
  - (C) in His conduct, "Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me?" (John 8:46)
  - (D) so that at the close of His ministry he could say, "I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do." (John 17:4)
- d. the glory that they saw in Jesus Christ was that in each and every way they beheld a man who did God's will in contrast to the rest of us, as we are described in Romans 3:23, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

F. 5. What does that 'grace and truth' mean to me?

1. we mentioned before about the Greeks

- a. that their *logos* was an impersonal ruling force or 'god'
- b. and their truth was a harsh truth, a truth that forced the philosopher Socrates to drink the cup of hemlock
- c. so there is a contrast in these two words: grace, describing that which is beautiful and commendable, and truth, which demands punishment of the one doing wrong

2. yet in Psalm 85:10 we read, "Lovingkindness and truth have met together; Righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

a. Jesus' words were true

- (A) and with them comes judgement
- (B) they judged the religious hypocrites of His day
- (C) one day they will be the basis for judging mankind

b. but with those words came also the gracious salvation offer

- (A) "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30 NAS95)
- (B) those who chose to accept this gracious offer made in His first advent, will know only joy and

gladness in His second; but those who reject that offer have a far more frightening prospect when Christ returns to earth as He surely will and must one day.

3. what a cause for praise! ... in Graham Kendrick's words, <sup>{3}</sup>.

Meekness and majesty, manhood and Deity,  
In perfect harmony, the Man who is God.  
Lord of eternity, dwells in humanity;  
Kneels in humility and washes our feet.  
Oh what a mystery, meekness and majesty  
Bow down and worship, for this is your God.

G. Closing Hymn, "Love Was When" (199)



1. © 2007 by Garth Hutchinson, Faith Fellowship Baptist Church of Aurora (Ontario): may be distributed or quoted freely, only let this be done to the glory “of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13). Except as noted otherwise, quotations are from the New American Standard (NAS) version of the Bible, © 1960 ... 1995 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Various other English versions of the Holy Bible may be used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in {braces}. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
ERV	The Revised Version of 1885
NAS	New American Standard version © 1960, 1995 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version © 1989 by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, [www.holwick.com](http://www.holwick.com). Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick's database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. From a Christmas card by DaySpring Cards – Kerux illustrations #10900
3. Graham Kenrick © 1986 Make Way Music Ltd. / Thankyou Music.