

The Word Became Flesh (John 1:14-17)^a

© 2019 Tony Garland^b

0:00 / 1:11:29

John 1:14-17

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, [but] grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.¹

"The Word became flesh" (John 1:14)

1. Material Realm not Inferior

David Bentley Hart, "the belief that God himself had really assumed human flesh at once dispelled a certain antique reserve with regard to the body, a certain pious conviction that the material and carnal are a kind of corruption within which God cannot possibly dwell. Not only was it the case that, for the Christian, the body was much more than merely one of the pilgrim soul's transient associations or degrading entanglements; it was the real vehicle of divinization in Christ, as essential to our humanity as the rational will, to be chastened only that it might be redeemed and made glorious."²

2. Set aside divine prerogative (the "kenosis" from **ΚΕΝΩΩ** [*kenōō*] - empty oneself, Php. 2:7)

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, [and] coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to [the point of] death, even the death of the cross.³

3. The point of origin of many heresies by various names

- A. *Apollinarianism* - the divine Logos took the place of a human spirit in the man Jesus
- B. *Docetism* - Jesus body was illusory
- C. *Eutychianism* - incarnation produced a third nature, a deified humanity in which the properties of human nature were lost
- D. *Nestorianism* - Jesus had two personalities or was two persons

4. The elevation of the material body

- A. Against the gnostic notion that the material realm is inherently bad
- B. The body is much more than that merely a degrading entanglement or temporary vehicle for our pilgrimage below

5. Council of Chalcedon (451 A.D.)

- A. Modern-day western Turkey
- B. “The final formula of Christology adopted at Chalcedon was that in the one person of the incarnate Logos two natures-human and divine-both subsisted complete and undiminished.”
- C. Jesus is, “perfect both in deity and in humanness; this selfsame one is also actually God and actually man.”

6. Nature of Christ essential for us to be partaker of the divine nature (Christ as the bridge)

David Bentley Hart, “The essential intuition of the great churches remains the same: that Christ is one divine person, who perfectly possesses everything proper to God and everything proper to humanity without robbing either of its integrity, and who therefore makes it possible for every human person to become a partaker of the divine nature without thereby ceasing to be human.”⁴

“Dwelt among us” (John 1:14)

1. “Dwelt” is from σκηνώω [skēnoō] - to “take up residence,” “live in a tent”

- A. Same Greek word used in the LXX for the “tabernacle” in the OT
- B. *tabernacled*, the revelation of God among men, approachable, touchable

I. 1 John 1:1-3

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, *which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled*, concerning the Word of life—the life *was manifested*, and we *have seen*, and bear witness, and declare to you that eternal life which was with the Father and *was manifested to us*— that which we *have seen and heard* we declare to you, that you also may have fellowship with us; and truly our fellowship [is] with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.⁵

II. God’s answer to the request of the people for an approachable representative (Deu. 18:15-16)

- C. Similar function: the location where deity meets with sinful man

- I. Jesus (deity in the flesh) physically touched lepers (typologically representing sin, Mat. 8:3; Mark 1:41-42; Luke 5:12-13)
- II. Sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair (Luke 7:39)

Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw [this], he spoke to himself, saying, "This man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman [this is] who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."⁶

"we beheld His glory" (John 1:14)

1. Mount of Transfiguration (Mat. 16:27-17:1 cf. Mark 8:38-9:3; Luke 9:26-29)

For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom." Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light.⁷

- A. Coming "in His kingdom" - but not then, future: "in the glory of His Father with His angels" (Mat. 16:27-28)

"the glory as of the only begotten of the Father" (John 1:14)

1. only begotten is from **μονογενής** [*monogenēs*]

- A. "begotten" leads in potentially misleading direction
- B. denotes *uniqueness, favored position*, as in "one and only," or "one of a kind"
- C. Used of Isaac's relation to Abraham (Heb. 11:17)
 - I. Abraham's other children: Ishmael (by Hagar, Gen. 16:11-15), Zimran, Jokshan, Medan, Midian, Ishbak, Shuah (by Keturah, Gen. 25:1)

"full of grace and truth" (John 1:14)

1. Randy Alcorn - the need for both grace and truth

Often, conservatives emphasize truth (morals) and liberals emphasize grace (compassion). Conservatives want to conserve what's right; liberals want to liberate from what's wrong. Liberals' commitment to fighting racism in the sixties was commendable. But sometimes liberals fight against true standards, like the beliefs that abortion, fornication, adultery, and homosexual behavior are wrong. They embrace tolerance as a grace substitute. Liberal Christians often end up being liberals first, Christians second. Conservatives want to restore lost values. They want to go back to the days when prayer was allowed in schools. But they forget that the same schools that allowed prayer didn't allow black children! By trying to conserve so

many things — even things that were clearly wrong — conservative Christians have sometimes been conservatives first, Christians second. Why should we have to choose between conservatism's emphasis on truth and liberalism's emphasis on grace? Why can't we oppose injustice to minorities and to the unborn? Why can't we oppose greedy ruination of the environment and anti-industry New Age environmentalism? Why can't we affirm the biblical right to ownership of property and emphasize God's call to voluntarily share wealth with the needy? Why can't we uphold God's condemnation of sexual immorality, including homosexual practices, and reach out in love and compassion to those trapped in destructive lifestyles and dying from AIDS? We cannot do these things if we are first and foremost either liberals or conservatives. We can do these things only if we are first and foremost followers of Christ, who is full of grace and truth.” — [Randy Alcorn, “The Grace and Truth Paradox,” Multnomah Publishers, 2003, pp. 79-81]⁸

2. Woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11)

When Jesus had raised Himself up and saw no one but the woman, He said to her, “Woman, where are those accusers of yours? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, Lord.” And Jesus said to her, “Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more.”⁹

- A. Where is the man (“this woman was caught in adultery, in the very act,” John 8:4)
- B. Jesus carefully walks through the law of Moses (keeps the law)
- C. The accusers leave, grace prevails

3. The need of balance: today it is *truth* which is being thrown under the bus of *grace* in order to serve ecumenical goals of fellowship

John the Baptist, “He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was *before me*” (John 1:15)

1. But John the Baptist was conceived six months before Jesus (Luke 1:36)!

“the law was given through Moses” (John 1:17)

1. Parallels between John 1 and Exodus 33 - 34

It is clear that the Evangelist's thought in these verses is immersed in the background of the Old Testament, particularly Ex. 33-34. Köstenberger's helpful chart highlights connections between the two. [Stephen S. Kim, The Literary and Theological Significance of the Johannine Prologue, Bibliotheca Sacra, Volume 166 Number 664, October-December 2009, 421:435, p. 433.]

- A. Israel finds grace in Yahweh's sight (Ex. 33:14); Disciples receive “grace” (John 1:16).
- B. No one can see Yahwey's face and live (Ex. 33:20); No one has seen God at any time (John 1:18).

- C. Yahwey's glory passes by Moses (Ex. [33:23](#); [34:6-7](#)); The disciples beheld the Word's glory (John [1:14](#)).
- D. Yahweh abounds in loving-kindness and truth (Ex. [34:6](#)); Jesus is full of grace and truth (John [1:14,17](#)).
- E. Yahweh dwelt in a tent (Ex. [33:7](#)); The Word "tented" among the disciples (John [1:14](#)).
- F. Moses was given the Law (Ex. [34:27-28](#)); The Law was given through Moses (John [1:17](#)).
- G. Moses, the mediator between Yahweh and Israel (Ex. [34:32-35](#)); Jesus, the Mediator between God and man (John [1:17-18](#)).

"but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ"

1. Moses vs. Jesus

2. Law vs. Grace

3. Issues to get clear concerning the law in our age:

- A. "The law" refers to the Old (Mosaic) covenant (one of numerous covenants in the OT which must be carefully distinguished from one another)
 - I. The Mosaic covenant was conditional and was broken by Israel. (Jer. [31:32](#)).
- B. No one is justified (declared righteous) by the law (Gal. [3:11](#)).
 - I. The law was meant to expose our sin (Rom. [3:19](#); [5:20](#); [7:7](#)), guide us, and point us to Christ (Gal. [3:19-25](#)).
 - II. Justification has always been by faith in God based on the work of Christ (Gen. [15:6](#); Gal. [3:6](#)).
 - III. Christ abolished in His flesh the law of commandments (the Mosaic Covenant, which separated Jews from Gentiles) creating *one new man* — the church (Eph. [2:12-15](#)).
- C. Salvation is by faith based on participation in the Abrahamic Covenant — which preceded the Mosaic Covenant and was not annulled by it (Gal. [3:7-18](#)).
 - I. The Abrahamic Covenant is not abolished by the passing away of the Mosaic Covenant (Gal. [3:17](#)).
 - II. Gentiles participate in the blessing of Abraham (Gen. [12:3](#)) via faith in Christ (Gal. [3:8,14](#)) who fulfilled the law (Mat. [5:17](#)).

D. The New Covenant is superior to the law, because of the weakness of our flesh (the law cannot be kept)

- I. The law is an all-or-nothing proposition. Those who would seek to be justified by the law have become *estranged from Christ* (Gal. 3:10; 5:3-4; Jas. 2:10).
- II. The Old Covenant is obsolete and vanishing (Heb. 8:13). People of faith are no longer under it (Heb. 9:10; Gal. 3:25; 5:18).
- III. Believers are now subject to the **law of Christ, the law of the Spirit** (Rom. 8:2; 1Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; Jas. 1:25; 2:12).

Tue Sep 17 16:45:22 2019



SpiritAndTruth.org Scan Code[©]

Endnotes:

1. NKJV, John 1:14-17
2. Ref-1290, 210
3. NKJV, Php. 2:5-8
4. Ref-1290, 211
5. NKJV, 1Jn. 1:1-3
6. NKJV, Luke 7:39
7. NKJV, Mat. 16:27-17:2
8. Ref-0228, May 7, 2004
9. NKJV, John 8:10-11

Sources:

- NKJV** Unless indicated otherwise, all Scripture references are from the *New King James Version*, copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
- Ref-0228** Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon, *TBC This Week* [www.theberean.org].
- Ref-1290** David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009). ISBN:978-0-300-11190-3^d.

Links Mentioned Above

- a - See http://www.spiritandtruth.org/teaching/John_by_Tony_Garland/005_John_1_14-17/index.htm.
- b - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/tg.htm>.
- c - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org>.
- d - See <http://www.spiritandtruth.org/id/isbn.htm?978-0-300-11190-3>.