

The Father Revealed
John 1.14-18
Series: The Word Became Flesh
Advent 2020
December 20, 2020

I. Introduction

- A. Moses had a unique relationship with God
 - 1. He knew God like no other Israelite
 - a. Meeting with Him on Mt. Sinai
 - b. With such a presence that when he descended his face shown with the reflected glory of God
 - 2. But in his relationship he also felt he had the freedom to address God in ways that would seem a bit presumptuous
- B. He at one point told God, “Look, God, you told me to bring this people up into the promised land. But you haven’t told me who you would send with me.”
 - 1. God responded by giving Moses one of the great promises in all of the OT
 - a. “My Presence will go with you...”
 - 2. Whereupon Moses replied, “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.”
 - a. In other words, “If you don’t go with us, I’m not going!”
 - 3. God’s plan for His presence going with Israel was the tabernacle
- C. **Tabernacle**
 - 1. An amazing structure
 - a. In one sense – just a tent
 - b. It prefigured the temple; essentially a mobile temple
 - 2. But the degree of detail and artistry was nothing short of stunning
 - 3. Ark of the Testimony
 - a. Chest containing the tablets of the 10 Commandments, Aaron’s rod that budded
 - b. Overlaid with pure gold, inside and out
 - 4. Mercy seat covered the ark of the covenant
 - a. Pure gold seat with two hammered gold cherubim with their wings spread so the tips would extend from one side of the Holy of holies to the other
 - 5. Table for the shewbread was overlaid with pure gold as well
 - a. Even the bars for carrying the ark and the table were overlaid with gold
 - 6. The lampstand was made of pure gold as well – hammered by craftsmen with ornamental gold knobs, flowers, and almond blossoms
 - 7. Interior curtains – fine woven linen with blue, purple, and scarlet thread
 - a. Artistic designs of cherubim and pomegranates woven into the fabric
 - 8. Priestly garments were just as immaculate in their design and fabrication
 - a. Breastplate, ephod, robe, tunic, turban, sash

- b. Made of gold, blue, purple and scarlet thread
 - c. Onyx stones with the names of the sons of Israel engraved on them, placed in gold settings
 - d. All artistically constructed by the finest craftsmen
 - e. Indeed, the first people mentioned to have been filled with the Spirit of God were these craftsmen – all for the purpose of skillful and artistic expression
- 9. Even more to describe – time does not permit
 - a. And all of these beautiful, artistic materials, even the colors, represent a dimension of the person and work of the Messiah Jesus
 - b. Who Himself embodied all the elements of Law and grace in the entire Old Covenant sacrificial system
 - c. You must use your best imagination to gain a sense of what it was like to enter into that worship setting
 - d. And to know that as beautiful and ornate as the tabernacle structure was in itself, it was dwarfed by the real Presence of God
 - e. His Shekinah glory filling the already glorious space with the overwhelming glory of Almighty God
 - f. This was where God dwelt with His people
 - g. **God with us – Emmanuel**
- D. And yet covering the tabernacle on the outside was a curtain of goat's hair and the skins of badgers
 - 1. It's as if all the magnificence, all the artistry, all the beauty, all the glory invested into the tabernacle
 - a. Was hidden under a cloak of the ordinary, the mundane, the pedestrian
 - b. Nothing artistic about badgers' skins
 - c. Nothing beautiful about goats' hair
 - 2. From the outside you could not see the glory
 - a. All you saw was nothing special
 - b. Nothing unusual
 - c. Nothing different than might cover one's own tent
- E. That is **a picture of the incarnation**
- F. Advent – preparing for our celebration of Christmas by examining the Prologue of the Gospel of John
 - 1. John doesn't describe any of the details of the birth of Jesus – the typical story of Christmas
 - 2. Instead, he lays out for us the theology of Christmas, the meaning of Christmas
 - a. What really took place when this baby Jesus, the eternally begotten Son of God, was born in Bethlehem
 - b. In a word – it was the incarnation
 - 3. God entered our world
 - a. Our ordinary, mundane, pedestrian – even corrupt and profane world

- b. He took His immaculate glory and cloaked it all with a covering of goats' hair and badgers' skins
 - c. He cloaked it all with our humanity
 - 4. And yet, under that covering of ordinary humanity was a glory that could never be entirely hidden
 - a. And that is the essence, the meaning of Christmas
 - b. The incarnation
 - c. God with us
 - d. Emmanuel

II. The Eternal in History

- A. **John 1:14** (NKJV) — 14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...
- B. We were introduced at the beginning of the gospel to **the Word**
 - 1. In an iconic verse that echoes the opening of the Bible – **"In the beginning"**
 - a. The Word was seen to be with God
 - b. And the Word was seen to be God
 - c. And the Word was said to be in the beginning with God
 - 2. Thus the deity of Jesus and His eternal nature were on full display
 - a. In a way that is unforgettable
 - b. You may have trouble memorizing
 - c. But who can forget
 - d. **John 1:1–2** (NKJV) — 1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.
- C. And yet this eternal, this Word, for whom time in any kind of meaningful sense does not exist, enters time
 - 1. Enters history
 - a. Enters our world with all of its constraints, limitations
 - b. All of its sequences of events and contingencies
 - 2. **The One who transcends time**
 - a. For Whom a thousand years is as a day, and a day as a thousand years
 - b. The One who knows the end from the beginning as if it were the present
 - 3. He condescends to place Himself into time, into our history
 - a. Into our lives with all its changing conditions and circumstances
 - 4. This is time travel on steroids
 - a. This is Back to the Future in a way that the movie aficionados would never understand
 - b. This was not one person in time being transported into another time
 - c. This was One who created time, Who exists outside of time, Whose Being transcends time
 - d. Entering time – His own created time
 - 5. We celebrate Christmas in time
 - a. We celebrate Christmas as an event in time, space and history

- b. But it is a significant moment in time because the Eternal has entered history and has made it so
- D. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...”
 - 1. Dwelt – skenoo (Gk)
 - a. Skenos = tent, tabernacle
 - 2. The Word, the Eternal One
 - a. Literally has tabernacled among us
 - 3. No Jew would have missed that reference when John wrote it
 - a. They would have seen in their minds’ eyes the badgers’ skins and goats’ hair covering the glory of the Presence of Almighty God
 - b. And they would have understood that in this Jesus, hidden under the cloak of humanity, was the glory of the Word, Who was with God, and Who was God
 - 4. In Christmas, in the incarnation, the Eternal One has come to dwell, to tabernacle, with us
 - a. He is God with us
 - b. Emmanuel

III. The Glory Revealed

- A. John 1:14 (NKJV) — 14 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.
- B. The Reformers had a slogan – in Latin as you might expect
 - 1. Finitum non capax infinitum
 - a. The finite cannot contain the infinite
- C. In the incarnation, the Word, the eternally begotten Son of God, comes and hides His glory under the cloak of humanity
 - 1. But skins of badgers and goats’ hair have their limits
 - 2. And occasionally, the glory breaks out
 - a. And it can’t be hidden
- D. The gospel of John is witness to a number of those episodes of outbreak
 - 1. Signs
 - a. They are miracles that testify to something about the nature and character of Jesus
 - b. Signs so that we might believe, and believing have life in His name – John 20.31
 - 2. So John and the disciples say, “we beheld His glory”
 - 3. When Jesus turns water into wine
 - a. The glory has begun to escape through the cracks of our world’s finite cloak
 - 4. When Jesus heals the man born blind
 - a. His glory has shown through to give natural and spiritual light to a man sequestered in darkness
 - 5. When Jesus feeds the 5,000
 - a. His glory has demonstrated how the Creator-incarnate will provide

- for His people
- 6. When Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead
 - a. His glory explodes and displays how the One who has life in Himself may extend life to all who believe in Him
- 7. **John 1:14** (NKJV) — 14 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.
- E. Christmas is about the glory hidden, but yet revealed
 - 1. Revealed to all who would see, did see
 - a. And today, to all who would see, will see
 - 2. Glory cannot be hidden forever under the cloak of humanity

IV. **The Witness of Glory**

- A. John the apostle is not his own witness in this revelation of glory
 - 1. He's already introduced us to John the Baptist
 - a. Whose express purpose was to be a witness to the light that is the Word become flesh
 - 2. We have explored the significance of what it means to be a witness
 - a. How difficult it is to get witnesses to testify
 - b. How dangerous it might be to testify – witness is marturia (GK; martyr)
 - c. How John himself paid for his witness with his head
 - 3. Now we see how John the Baptist testifies that the Eternal One has entered our history, our time, time itself
- B. **John 1:15** (NKJV) — 15 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.’ ”
 - 1. “He was before me”
 - a. That does not mean that Jesus was born before John the Baptist
 - b. That was not the case
 - 2. No – Jesus was before John in a much more profound sense
 - a. He was before all humans
 - b. Indeed, He was before all of creation
 - c. He was in the beginning with God
 - 3. “He was before me”
 - a. He is eternal – the Eternal One
- C. The Great Baptist affirms this central truth of Christmas
 - 1. That in the birth of Jesus the One who eternally exists has entered our world of contingency, circumstance, and context
 - 2. So John the Baptist becomes a witness of glory
 - a. Glory that John has been able to see even through the cloak of humanity
 - 3. He bore witness to the incarnation
 - a. A witness who “beheld His glory”

V. **The Glory Received**

- A. **John 1:16** (NKJV) — 16 And of His fullness we have all received...
- B. I can't even begin to tell you how significant this is!
 - 1. Not only has the Eternal entered time
 - 2. Not only has the hidden glory escaped its shroud
 - a. But the Eternal One deigned to share His glory with His children by grace
 - 3. "And of His fullness we have all received..."
- C. Have you received His fullness?
 - 1. If you have been born again, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit has entered your tabernacle, and set up His residence there
 - a. And even you have become a second incarnation in a manner of speaking
 - b. As God's Presence dwells in you by His Spirit
 - c. His glory inhabiting your cloak of humanity
 - d. Your badgers' skin and your goat's hair
 - 2. **2 Peter 1:3-4** (NKJV) — ... His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.
 - a. "Partakers of the divine nature"!
 - b. Incredible! Can't even begin to unpack that glorious truth
 - 3. **Colossians 1:27** (NKJV) — 27 To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
 - 4. **2 Corinthians 3:18** (NKJV) — 18 But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.
- D. Not only has the Eternal entered time
 - 1. Not only has the glory of the Eternal One been revealed
 - a. Not only has the glory been witnessed
 - 2. But the glory of the Eternal One has been shared with the likes of you and me!
 - a. With a glory that transforms us into the image of the Messiah Jesus
 - 3. A transformation that continues as long as we are living in this time-bound, condition-constrained, earthly frame
- E. Partakers of the divine nature!
 - 1. "Of His fullness we have all received"
- F. Now that is a Christmas present!

VI. **The Glory Completed**

- A. **John 1:17** (NKJV) — 17 For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

- B. All of this started with Moses and the tabernacle
 - 1. With its picture of the glory of God in elaborate, even exquisite environs
 - a. Nevertheless cloaked with skins of badgers and hair of goats
 - 2. But that was just a glimpse of His glory
 - a. That's what happened with Moses in his conversation with God
 - b. "Show me Your glory" he said to God
 - c. Whereupon God said "You cannot stand my glory"
 - d. So God placed him in the cleft of the rock and passed by Moses so Moses would only catch a glimpse of His glory
- C. But now that glory – for which Moses could only dream
 - 1. Is completed in Jesus Christ
 - a. "For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."
 - 2. The Law was wonderful – a magnificent portrayal of the nature and character of God
 - a. But it wasn't complete
 - b. It wasn't all that God wanted for His people
 - 3. So He sent Jesus, born of a woman, born in time – Son of God incarnate
 - a. And He completed the glory that Moses dreamed of
 - b. By His personal display of grace and truth
 - 4. Put that under your tree and open it up on Christmas morning
 - a. The world hawks its wares during this season
 - b. Cars, and games, and electronics, and food, and clothing...
 - 5. But just give me grace and truth
 - a. Because that's what I really need

VII. The Glory Declared

- A. **John 1:18** (NKJV) — 18 No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.
 - 1. There is only One Being in the universe who knows the Father with the kind of intimacy that would enable Him to show the world the nature and character of the Deity
 - a. Only the eternally begotten of the Father
 - b. Only Jesus knows the Father truly and comprehensively
- B. God is the hidden God – **Deus Absconditus**
 - 1. **Isaiah 45:15** (NKJV) — 15 Truly You are God, who hide Yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior!
 - 2. Only One who truly knows the Father can reveal the Father
 - a. That Only One is Jesus
- C. Christmas, on the other hand, is **Deus Revelatus** – the God revealed
 - 1. The birth of this baby – the incarnate Son of God
 - 2. The life of Jesus
 - 3. The prophetic word of Jesus (who is the Word)
 - 4. The suffering and death of Jesus
 - 5. The resurrection of Jesus

6. The ascension of Jesus
 7. All are the only begotten Son – who declares the Father with grace and truth
- D. Do you now see the Father?
1. Jesus told Philip, “How can you say, ‘Show us the Father.’ If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father”
 2. Can you begin to see the Father through the eyes of Christmas?
 - a. Can you begin to see the Father through the incarnation?
- E. Christmas is a day of revelation
1. A day when the Father, hidden behind the cloak of humanity, shows Himself through the life, death and resurrection of His Son
- F. What do you see on Christmas day?
1. Lights?
 2. Presents?
 3. Family?
 4. Singing?
 5. Do you see the Father – revealed in Jesus?