

# Christ Reformation Church

Tillamook, Oregon

*You Must be Born Again!*

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## The Word Became Flesh

*December 25, 2022*

**Sermon Text:** John 1:14

**Scripture Reading:** Hebrews  
10:19-39

It is Christmas morning and we remember Christ our Savior coming into this world to save us from our sins. Matthew and Luke both give us accounts of the birth of the Son of God as He took on human flesh. Mark began his Gospel with the appearance of John the Baptist.

And then there is John. In a way, His account of Christ being born as one of us is the most profound of all the nativity narratives because

He begins before the beginning – back to eternity past before anything that exists was created:

Joh 1:1-5 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. (3) All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. (4) In him was life, and the life was the light of men. (5) The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Christ's human nature began there in Bethlehem, but His divine nature had no beginning. When the *beginning* began – the creation of the world, of the heavens and the earth and all that is within them – when that *beginning* began, the Word already *was*, and He was with God, and He *was God*.

This baby, two natures in one Person, created all things. When the Lord said “Let there be Light” at the beginning, this Word was that Light. When life came, this Word was that Life.

John is telling us here that when that first Christmas occurred, an even greater Beginning, a new creation, took place. Once more God had said, “Let there be Light,” and that Light came into the darkness of this fallen world. The Light continues to shine and the darkness of sin, the Prince of darkness and his dark kingdom, cannot stop that Light.

Mat 4:16 the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned.”

That is what this world is – a region of darkness, a shadow of death where people are blind and do not know where they are going. Christ is the Light who shines and gives

us life just as the sun gives life to green plants.

Now, what do you suppose? What would you expect? “Hurray! Thank you!! I can see! The Light is finally on!” But, in fact -

Joh 1:9-13 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. (10) He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. (11) He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.

Why? Here is the reason:

Joh 3:18-21 Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. (19) And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. (20) For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works

should be exposed. (21) But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God.”

It's true even today and always has been. Blind people stumbling about right on the very precipice of hell, yet they refuse sight and rescue because their heart affections are for evil. They *loved* the darkness.

Think on this carefully. Here is the insanity of sin. When I was a kid I was afraid of the dark. I bet many of you were too. My parents gave me the chore of taking the day's garbage outside to the trash can and by the time it was ready to go out, it was dark. I never admitted it to anyone, but I was very afraid. Of what? *Of the dark*. But darkness is nothing in itself. It is what might be lurking in the darkness that we fear. But what happens when suddenly a switch is thrown and the floodlights illuminate the whole area so that we can see? The fear leaves.

Nevertheless, people dwelling in darkness and death and all the evils that accompany it, *chose the darkness rather than the Light*. Why? Because their deeds were evil – and their hearts were evil because their hearts were evil. The sinner loves his sin and is terrified of being exposed.

I have been reading about *narcissism* recently. Here is a definition:

Narcissism is characterized by a grandiose sense of self-importance, a lack of empathy for others, a need for excessive admiration, and the belief that one is unique and deserving of special treatment.

John is telling us here that wicked people fear the Light – they fear *exposure of who they really are and what they are doing in the darkness*. They only want to be told lies, to be told how great they are, how good they are, how much they deserve admiration. But this is all darkness. It is lies.

This is why when light comes, they hate it and do all they can to extinguish it. This explains why man in his sin hates Christ and all who belong to Him.

1Th 5:4-5 But you are not in darkness, brothers, for that day to surprise you like a thief. (5) For you are all children of light, children of the day. We are not of the night or of the darkness.

How do you know that you belong to Christ, that you are born again? Well, if you are born again, you are light and the great majority of people in this world are going to hate the fact that you are shining light on them. You don't even have to say anything – just be who you are in Christ – Light. And suddenly people will hate you – for no stated reason. Cain killed Abel simply because Abel was righteous and Cain's was wicked.

However, John tells us, there are these somewhat rare exceptions:

(12) But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he

gave the right to become children of God, (13) who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

How did this happen? Why did these few receive the Light and believe in Him? John tells us – *they were born of God*. The Light came on in them as a result of *God* – not man – *God declaring, 'Let there be Light. And there was Light.'* Genesis words. A new creation.

John continues. How did this Light come into the world? –

Joh 1:14-18 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

(15) (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”)

(16) For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.  
(17) For the law was given through

Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

(18) No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

There it is:

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

This is a profound statement, deeper than our minds can comprehend. *The Word became flesh.* This is Christmas – it is the heart of what we remember and praise God for in this season. We call it the *incarnation* – the eternal Word becoming *in-carne*. In flesh. Listen to the Westminster Confession on it:

The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of

time was come, take upon Him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof; yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

Mystery of mysteries, for certain. And He is still – and forever will be – the God-Man. He ascended into heaven to the Father's right hand where He represents us, having been made the perfect High Priest, God and man. Representing us to God and God to us.

He is the Temple

There is a major theme of the Bible in this 14<sup>th</sup> verse and if you would like to look into it more deeply, you

can go to our [sermonaudio.com/crc](http://sermonaudio.com/crc) channel and listen to the series of messages under the title *In My Father's House*.

But the theme is this – *the temple*. John wrote it this way – *the Word became flesh and tabernacled among us*. He tented among us. That is why He could say: *destroy this temple and I will raise it up on the third day*. He spoke of the temple of His body.

How was the Word become flesh a tabernacling? Well, just as God had instructed the Israelites to make a tent/tabernacle for Him to dwell in among them, so God came to dwell among us in Christ's body.

What is a temple? It is a place where God meets man. *Two men went up to the temple to pray. And, You make my Father's house a den of thieves*. The burning bush in which God appeared to Moses was a temple. The place Jacob named Bethel (the house of God) was a temple – a meeting place between God and man.

You could say that even this building in which we meet each

Lord's Day is a temple and we would do well to be reminded of that. No, the temple of God in this church age is not a building – nevertheless we do not come here each Sunday to socialize with each other or to be entertained. This building is here, devoted to God, so that when we gather here we trust that the Lord will be present among us. That we will hear His Word, that He will hear and receive our prayers and worship, that He is present in the elements of His Table. And we should come here cheerfully yet with a healthy and right fear of meeting with God.

The Temple of God today, that place in this world where Christ dwells among us, *is His church*.

1Co 3:16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?

1Co 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own,  
2Co 6:16 What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as

God said, “I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

Eph 2:19-22 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, (20) built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, (21) in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. (22) In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

So you see that as the centuries rolled by, as the drama of God’s redemption of us in Christ played out, the Lord drew *closer and closer and closer to us*. So that now instead of dwelling in a tent in the wilderness or a stone building in Jerusalem, the Lord dwells, He tabernacles *in us by His Spirit*. So that WE are holy ground and we are not to subject that holy ground to the sin of this world.

There is one more stage yet to play out in this divine drama. It is the ushering in of the New Creation when Christ returns. When He does, there will be no temple – actually there will be, but it will be the entire creation. God will dwell among us everywhere so that literally and without any obscurity – *the whole earth will be full of His glory*.

All of this made possible by *the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us as one of us to redeem us from our sin*.

### And We Beheld His Glory

Consider two more things in this 14<sup>th</sup> verse:

**Joh 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.**

1. We have seen His glory. What does that mean?

Christ, by highest Heav’n adored;  
Christ the everlasting Lord;  
Late in time, behold Him come,  
Offspring of a virgin’s womb.

**Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;**  
Hail th'incarnate Deity,  
Pleased with us in flesh to dwell,  
Jesus our Emmanuel.

No man can see the full glory of God and live – not until the resurrection and the New Earth. So Christ came *veiled in flesh*. However, His glory was revealed. It broke through. Certainly we think of the mount of transfiguration, but Christ Himself spoke of other occasions being the display of His glory:

Joh 2:11 This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

Joh 11:40 Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?”

“Glory” is just a little word with only 4 letters in the Greek NT. And yet it is profound in its meaning and even rather difficult to pin down to the essence of its meaning. Fundamentally, doxa is this:

*“the condition of being bright or shining, brightness, splendor,*

*radiance.* Paul saw this when Christ appeared to him on the Damascus Road. Light. Brighter than the sun. God is glorious, radiant and blindingly brilliant in His glory.

But this glory also speaks of God’s magnificence, his greatness and splendor, fame, renown, honor and prestige. His glory is related to His holiness, his “otherness.”

So that when, for instance, Christ changed the water into wine or when He raised Lazarus from the dead, the glory of God was displayed. Something, or rather Someone, had come into this world that was not of this world. Someone magnificent, life-giving, darkness-dispelling, worthy of our praise and honor and reverential fear and worship.

Christ displayed this glory of God, though veiled in flesh. We behold the glory of God by looking at Christ.

### Full of Grace and Truth

Finally, John says that in Christ we behold grace and truth. In contrast

to the Law and Moses which could only bring about condemnation of the sinner, in Christ we see God's grace in giving us a Savior. And more – *we see it clearly*. In the Law, this gospel of Christ was revealed but only is type and shadow. When Christ became flesh and dwelt among us however, He gave us eyes to see clearly. It was as if, you know, when you are looking through binoculars and they are all out of focus. You can make out certain blurry images but you aren't sure what they are. Then you turn the focus wheel and it all become clear.

Well, that is what happened when Christ came. As he lived among us and taught us and when He sent His Spirit and gave us more of His Word, that divine focus knob turned. It still hasn't come into full focus because the Bible says that in this life we only see in a mirror darkly – *but then, when Christ comes for us, we will see Him face to face*. And we will be like Him – we will be *glorified ourselves*.

The Word became flesh. That is Christmas.