

Title: **HAVE YOU SEEN HIS GLORY?**

Text: John 1:14

Subject: *The Incarnation and Glory of Christ*

Date: Sunday Morning — January 20, 2008

Tape : John #5

Reading: *Philippians 2:1-13*

Introduction:

HAVE YOU SEEN HIS GLORY? — That is my subject. Have you seen the glory of Christ? When Philip went down to Samaria “*he preached Christ unto them, and there was great joy in that city.*” Why do you suppose the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “*I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and him crucified*”? Without question he made that determination because Jesus Christ crucified is the message of Holy Scripture. Paul was determined to preach Jesus Christ crucified to all men everywhere because the only thing in the world that can give peace to the souls of men is “*Jesus Christ and him crucified.*”

You who are yet without life before God, you who yet believe not, vainly imagine that you must find something good in yourselves before you can trust the Savior. What a sad, foolish thing! You are seeking rest where no rest can ever be found.

- Rest in your good works!
- Rest in your feelings!
- Rest in your experience!
- Rest in your religious duties!
- Rest in your remorse over sin!
- Rest in your faith!

You make for yourself a refuge of lies that must be swept away. You lay on a bed that is too short to stretch yourself upon it. You wrap yourself in coverings too narrow to cover. And you wonder why you cannot find rest for your soul!

There is no place of rest for your soul, but Jesus Christ crucified. There is nothing in this world that can give you rest, except a sight of the crucified Lamb of God. If you would have rest, you must get a sight of the glory of Christ, “*the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” So I ask you to turn with me to John 1:14. This is a text so deep and full that I approach it with fear and trembling, lest I misstate that which is here revealed. Yet, I am certain that, if the Lord God will, by the grace and

power of the Holy Spirit, enable you to behold the glory of Christ you will leave here with rest in your soul.

(John 1:14) “And the Word was made 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.”

THE TABERNACLE

John here compares Christ to that which was the greatest glory of the Jewish Church. Let me read it, giving another translation, the NKJV: “And the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only begotten of a father, full of grace and truth.” The word “*dwelt*” in our translation comes from the Greek word for “tabernacle.” When the Son of God became flesh, he tabernacled among us.

In the Jewish Church of the Old Testament its greatest glory was the fact that God tabernacled in its midst. God did not dwell (tabernacle) in the tent of Moses, or in the tents of the princes of the Israel, but the tabernacle in the wilderness. There God dwelt; and that tabernacle was Israel’s glory. They had God himself in their midst. **The tabernacle was a tent to which men went when they would commune with God. It was the place to which God came manifestly when he would commune with man.** There God and his chosen people met each other through the slaughter of bullocks and the lambs. It was there, in the tabernacle, that the two (God and man) were reconciled.

All of this pointed to and was typical of our Lord Jesus Christ. **Christ’s human body is God’s tabernacle; and it is in Christ that God meets with man, and in Christ that man has dealings with God.** As the ancient Jews went to God’s tent in the center of the camp to worship, so we come to Christ to worship the triune God. If the Jew would be released from any ceremonial uncleanness by which he was polluted and ceremonially separated from his God, he went up to the sanctuary of God, the tabernacle. There he found cleansing by the sacrifice God required, and peace was restored between God and his soul. So, too, you and I, being washed in the precious blood of Christ, have access with boldness unto God, even the Father through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is our tabernacle and the tabernacle of God among men.

THE SHEKINAH

Follow the parallel a little further. **The greatest glory of the tabernacle was the most holy place.** There stood in the most holy place the ark of the covenant, with its golden lid called the mercy-seat. Over the mercy-seat stood the cherubim, whose wings met each other, as they looked downward toward the mercy-seat. Rising above the mercy-seat, there was a bright light, called “**the Shekinah.**” That light represented the continual, abiding presence of God in the tabernacle. Immediately above that light stood a pillar of fire by night, and by day a spiral column of cloud. The cloud expanded over all the camp of Israel, and shielded God’s chosen people from the broiling sun. **The Shekinah was glory.**

Our text declares that the incarnate Christ is God’s Tabernacle; and John says, “*we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.*” I am not simply telling you what Christ was. I am declaring what he is. Our Lord Jesus Christ is himself God; and he is God’s Tabernacle, “*the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man*” (Hebrews 8:2), “*for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*” In this Tabernacle, the Lord Jesus Christ we have, and we behold the Shekinah, the glory of God.

GRACE AND TRUTH

Here is the great, surpassing excellence of Christ the true Tabernacle, by which he wondrously excels the typical tabernacle of the Old Testament. He is “*full of grace and truth.*” **The Jewish tabernacle was full of law.** Its rites and ceremonies foreshadowed and typified of grace; but those typical sacrifices, repeated continually did nothing to remove guilt and sin. As with all the law, all they could do was remind the people of their sin and guilt. That is what the Holy Spirit tells us in the opening verses of Hebrews 10.

“Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain
Could give the guilty conscience peace,
Or wash away the stain.

But Christ, the heavenly Lamb,
Takes all our sins away;
A sacrifice of nobler name

And richer blood than they.

My faith would lay her hand
On that dear head of thine,
While, like a penitent, I stand,
And there confess my sin.

My soul looks back to see
The burdens Thou didst bear
When hanging on the cursed tree,
And hopes her guilt was there.

Believing, we rejoice
To see the curse remove;
We bless the Lamb with cheerful voice,
And sing redeeming love!"

The old tabernacle had a barrier, a wall, a thick veil that separated God and man. That veil represented the law of God we have broken. The worshippers of old, as they came to the tabernacle, were reminded of their sin and guilt and could never enter into the presence of God in the most holy place behind the veil. But in Christ, the true Tabernacle, there is no separating veil. He destroyed the barrier separating his people from God by fulfilling and satisfying God's law. Now, as I said before, we draw near to God by faith in his blood, with full assurance, because but Christ is "*full of grace*" (Hebrews 10:19-22).

(Hebrews 10:19-22) "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, (20) By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; (21) And *having* an high priest over the house of God; (22) Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

How I love those words "*full of grace*"! — There is not a little grace in him, or much grace in him, but such a rich abundance of grace is treasured up in the Lord Jesus that he is "*full of grace!*" In him all fulness dwells!

The old tabernacle of old was full of imagery, and shadows, and

symbols, and pictures, and types; but Christ, the true Tabernacle is “full of truth.” Christ is the substance, not the picture, — the reality, not the shadow. Here is our great joy. Coming to Christ, we come to the true Tabernacle of God.

- We come not to the Shekinah that represented the glory of God, but to him who is the glory of the God.
- We come not to the representation of grace, but to him who is Grace.
- We come not to the shadow of truth, but to him who is the Truth by which our souls are accepted of God.

Have you come to Christ? Have you beheld his glory? Are you numbered among those who can say with John, — “*We beheld his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” As we look at this text together, I pray that God the Holy Spirit will be our Teacher, enabling you and me to behold his glory today.

(John 1:14) “And the Word was made 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.”

I want to call your attention to **five things** in this verse.

THE INCARNATE WORD

First, the Apostle speaks of the incarnate Word. If there is any verse in the Bible marked with the special emphasis by God the Holy Spirit, surely this is one. Every word is of immense importance. Here is the glorious person so highly spoken of in the preceding 13 verses of this chapter. The Word, is declared to be “*made flesh.*” The Son of God was “*made flesh.*”

The word translated “*flesh*” is very strong. It is same word is used in Romans 3:20, where we are told no flesh can be justified by the deeds of the law. In Romans 8:3 Christ is said to have been made “*in the likeness of sinful flesh.*” The word here translated “*flesh*” has the same significance as the Hebrew words used Genesis 6:12 to speak “*corrupt*” flesh. John could not have used a stronger, more emphatic word to speak of our Savior’s great condescension and humiliation in assuming of our nature. Had John merely said, “*the Word was made man,*” the meaning would not have been so emphatic a declaration of degradation. (Philippians 2:5-8).

HAVE YOU SEEN HIS GLORY?

(Philippians 2:5-8) “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (6) Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: (7) But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: (8) And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

“*The Word was made flesh!*” — The Son of God was made what we are, made to be our full nature, body and soul, a complete man. He who is God became man. He did not cease to be God; but he took our human nature into union with his divine nature, so that the Lord Jesus Christ is God and Man, the God-man, our Mediator. “*The Word was made flesh,*” as Augustine put it in the 4th century, “Not by changing what he was, but by taking what he was not.” This union of God and Man in one person is indissolvable and forever. Jesus Christ our Savior, our God-man Mediator is “*the same yesterday, and today, and forever*” (Hebrews 13:8).

I have no idea what the length, breadth, height or depth of what I am about to say is; but I cannot help linking these words to those of the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:30. — “*The Word was made flesh,*” and “*we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones!*” So is it now, so it has been in all ages of the Church, and so shall be forever.

THE FAVORED PEOPLE

Second, our text describes a favored people. — “*And we beheld his glory.*” Who are these favored people? **They are an elect people, a chosen company.** The Lord Jesus said, “*I know whom I have chosen.*” He said, “*Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.*” He came unto his own, and his own received him not; but they who did receive him are described as people who were “*born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*” The elect in Christ’s day, though they were but a small remnant, nevertheless did exist. There were but few who followed him; but there were a few who followed the Lamb whithersoever he went. The “*we,*” then, who “*beheld Christ’s glory,*” were a chosen company. So it was then, and so it is now. Thank God for his electing love.

- Those who behold his glory are those who were chosen from eternity to behold his glory (Acts 13:48).

- And those who behold his glory here shall behold his glory forever in the world to come (John 17:24).

Those who behold Christ's glory are a graciously called people. We behold his glory because we have been specifically called by him to behold his glory. — “*He calleth unto him whom he would*” (Mark 3:13). — “*He calleth his own sheep by name*” (John 10:3). It is written of those he delivers from going down to the pit, “*His life shall see the light*” (Job 33:28). “*Many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD*” (Psalm 40:3). — “*They shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God*” (Isaiah 35:2).

(Psalms 69:32) “The humble shall see *this, and* be glad: and your heart shall live that seek God.”

(Isaiah 25:9) “And it shall be said in that day, Lo, *this is* our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: *this is* the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.”

The Son of God calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. If you and I behold Christ's glory, it because he has called to himself; and that call is the result of his election of us unto salvation.

These who behold his glory are also a divinely illuminated people. If others do not see what we see, and we are as blind as they by nature, our seeing his glory must be because of something he has done for us, and not because of anything in us or done by us (2 Corinthians 4:6).

(2 Corinthians 4:6) “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.”

C. H. Spurgeon said, “None of the princes of this world knew him. The priests who had studied the law could not discover him; the members of the Sanhedrim, who were under some expectation of his advent, could not perceive him. In vain the star in the east; in vain the miraculous appearance of angels to the shepherds; the blind generation would not perceive him. In vain the opening of blind eyes and the preaching of the gospel to the poor; in vain the raising of the dead; in vain all those innumerable signs and wonders; they

could not perceive his glory; but of those who did perceive it it may be said, as of Simon Barjonas, ‘*Blessed art thou, for flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee.*’”

“*Blessed are your eyes, for they see!*” — None believe in Christ but those who are his sheep. No man comes unto him except the Father who sent him draws them, and none ever perceive him but those whose eyes are opened by his own healing fingers. Let the question be passed round among us. — Do I behold his glory? If so, beloved, it is because he chose us, he called us, and he illuminated us by his grace.

THE THING REVEALED

Third, let me talk to you briefly about the thing revealed. — “*We beheld his glory.*” — “*We beheld.*” The text does not say, we heard about his glory, we read about his glory, but “*we beheld his glory.*” What a privilege that is!

This is much more than a physical, carnal vision of the Lord Jesus. Many saw him with the eyes of their heads who never saw him with the eye of faith, who never beheld his glory. And many today, behold him with the eye of carnal reason, who never behold his glory because they do not know him and do not behold him by faith, having him revealed in them by the Spirit of God.

When John says, “*We beheld his glory,*” he is saying the very same thing Peter said when he wrote, “*We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty*” (2 Peter 1:16). He is talking about that which he, with Peter and James, beheld on the Mount of Transfiguration. Christ was transfigured before them. They saw him as he now appears in heaven, glorified with the glory he had with the Father before the world was. **They saw the Lord Jesus Christ as the sinner’s Substitute who accomplished redemption by his death upon the cursed tree** (Luke 9:28-31).

(Luke 9:28-31) “And it came to pass about an eight days after these sayings, he took Peter and John and James, and went up into a mountain to pray. (29) And as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. (30) And, behold, there talked with him two men, which were

Moses and Elias: (31) Who appeared in glory, and spake of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.”

The word “*decease*” in verse 31 is literally the word “exodus.” These disciples beheld his glory upon the mount, the very same glory that is revealed to us by the saving operations of his Spirit. By the death he accomplished...

- He fulfilled the law and the prophets.
- He pleased the Father (Matthew 17:5).
- He obtained eternal redemption.
- He earned the right to be Lord as our Mediator.
- He revealed the glory of God as “*a just God and a Savior*” (Isaiah 45:20-22). — In Christ crucified God sent forth “*his mercy and his truth*” from heaven and saved us (Psalm 57:3).

(Isaiah 45:20-22) “Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, ye *that are* escaped of the nations: they have no knowledge that set up the wood of their graven image, and pray unto a god *that* cannot save. (21) Tell ye, and bring *them* near; yea, let them take counsel together: who hath declared this from ancient time? *who* hath told it from that time? *have* not I the LORD? and *there is* no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; *there is* none beside me. (22) Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else.”

(Psalms 85:10) “Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed *each other*.”

(Psalms 115:1) “Not unto us, O LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, *and* for thy truth’s sake.”

(Proverbs 3:3) “Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart:”

(Proverbs 16:6) “By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD *men* depart from evil.”

(Micah 7:20) “Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, *and* the mercy to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old.”

I ask you again, Have you his glory? Have you beheld the glory of Christ by the Spirit's gift of faith? If you would behold his glory, he says, "*Look unto me!*" Look and you will see.

- He does not say, Work for me, but "*look unto me.*"
- He does not say, Figure me out, but "*look unto me.*"
- He does not say, Serve me, but "*look unto me.*"
- He does not say, Feel after me, but "*look unto me.*"
- He does not even say, Pray to me, but "*look unto me.*"
- Look away to Christ and, looking, you will behold his glory.

Trusting Christ, we see his glory, just as Isaiah did, "*the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth*" (Isaiah 6:1-7).

(Isaiah 6:1-7) "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. (2) Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. (3) And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. (4) And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. (5) Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. (6) Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, *which* he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: (7) And he laid *it* upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged."

It is by faith, only by faith that we behold his glory (John 11:40).

(John 11:40) "Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"

Trusting the Lord Jesus Christ, we behold his glory in...

- Redemption!
- The Saving Operations of His Grace!
- His Providence!

THE BLESSED VISION

Fourth, John describes the blessed vision before us, as we behold the glory of our Savior. It is just this: — “*The glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*” What glory we have before us, as we behold the glory of Christ by faith!

- The Glory of His Wonderful Person — God and Man!
- The Glory of His Perfect Righteousness as Our Representative!
- The Glory of His Sin-atonement Sacrifice (2 Corinthians 5:21)!
- The Glory of His Sovereign Dominion!
- The Glory of Tender, Sympathizing Humanity!
- The Glory of His Heavenly Intercession (1 John 2:1-2).
- The Glory of His Persevering Love (John 13:1)!
- The Glory of His Final Triumph (Revelation 19:1-6)!

(Revelation 19:1-6) “And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: (2) For true and righteous *are* his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. (3) And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever. (4) And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia. (5) And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. (6) And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

THE WITNESS GIVEN

Fifth, one reason why the Lord God has so graciously given us grace to behold his glory is that we might bear testimony to others of his glory as “*eye witnesses of his majesty*” (1 John 1:1-3). As soon as Isaiah beheld his glory, the Lord God said to that sinner whose lips still burned with the purging fire of his altar, “*Go tell this people!*” That is what we must do. — Proclaim the Glory!

(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, of the Word of life; (2) (For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) (3) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.”

- Jesus Christ is the Only Savior of poor sinners.
- He is the only begotten of the Father.
- He is full of grace!

“Plenteous grace with him is found, —
Grace to cover all my sin:
Let the healing streams abound,
Make and keep me pure within.”

- The Lord Jesus Christ is full of truth! — He is Truth! — He is the Truth of all the Prophets, all the Law, and all the Promises of God!

“All hail Immanuel, all divine
In Thee Thy Father’s glories shine;
Thou brightest, sweetest, Fairest One,
That eyes have seen or angels known.

O may I live to reach the place
Where He unveils His lovely face.
Where all His beauties saints behold,
And sing His name to harps of gold!”

(John 1:14) “And the Word was made 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.”

Have you beheld his glory? Oh, may God give you grace to behold his glory from this day forth and forever more!

Amen!