

“And the Word Became Flesh”
John 1:14
(Preached at Trinity, June 1, 2016)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. John has been describing the great mystery of Christ. His fullness is beyond measure, He is God. In the first 4 verses John describes His Divine perfections:
 - He is eternal – “In the beginning was the Word”
 - He is a person distinct from the Father – “The Word was with God”
 - He is God – “the Word was God”
 - He is Creator – “All things came into being through Him”
 - He is the source of all life – “In Him was life”
2. Now in **Verse 14** John declares the incarnation of Christ.
 - A. **Verse 1** declares “Jesus was” – “In the beginning was the Word” – John is declaring the deity of Christ. He has existed from everlasting to everlasting.
 - B. Now John writes, “And the Word became . . .” –
In **Verse 1** John says Jesus “was” using the imperfect tense of the verb “to be.” It describes continuous action in the past.
Now John says Jesus “became” using the aorist tense indicating an action at a point in time.
 - The One who was above time has entered into time.
 - The eternal became temporal.
 - The infinite became finite
 - The One who knows all things would grow in wisdom and stature
 - The self-sufficient God would hunger and thirst.
 - The One who is Creator of all things, the source of all life, must die
3. This is a mystery that is beyond our comprehension. The Eternal God became man. And yet, He remained God. We call this the hypostatic union – the union of the human nature and divine nature into one person, without any confusion of either.
- I. The Incarnation was God's revelation of Himself in bodily form
John 1:14 NAU - "and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth."
 - A. God is a revealing God
 1. He cannot be known except through revelation – He is transcendent
 2. God's revelation of Himself is divided into two types:
 - a. General or natural revelation – creation, providence, conscience
 - b. Special revelation – three types:
 - (1) External manifestations – Most often seen in theophany
 - (2) Internal suggestion – characteristic in prophecy, visions, dreams

- (3) Concursive operation – the inspiration of God upon the writers of Scripture working in, with, and through them.
3. Scripture is God's revelation of Himself
- B. God's ultimate revelation of Himself is through the Divine Logos, the Word
Hebrews 1:1-2 NAU - "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² 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."
1. This could only take place through the second person of the godhead – the eternal Son of God – “The Word became flesh”
 2. Neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit has ever appeared in bodily form, yet, the eternal Son of God has come – He became man
- C. The Bible declares that Jesus is both God and man
1. The union is hypostatic or personal – Divinity and humanity in one individual essence
 2. It is not a union of persons:
 - a. In the Trinity we find a unity of persons: the union of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The union of three persons in one God
 - b. Jesus Christ is not the union of two persons; but the union of two natures in one person
 - c. The doctrine known as *communicatio idiomatum* (Latin for "communication of properties"). It is the teaching that the attributes of both the divine and human natures are ascribed to the one person of Jesus.
 - d. But in this union of natures both natures stay intact. The Divine nature is not weakened, nor is the human nature somehow enhanced by the Divine.
 3. In the person of Christ God has fully revealed Himself
Colossians 2:9 NAU - "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form"
- II. The Incarnation was a voluntary condescension by the second person of the Godhead
- A. This was a wondrous condescension of God
1. He is infinite – we are but a speck of dust
 2. He is unknowable, incomprehensible, inaccessible to sinful men
- B. Jesus left His habitation in glory to dwell among man - See Phil. 2:5-8
Philippians 2:5-8 NAU - "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."
1. He was “in the form of God” (μορφῆ)– Jesus was not merely like God or had the appearance of God - Jesus was and is the exact form of God – He possessed all that makes God God. There was absolute equality.
 2. He did not consider this perfect equality something to hold on to ἀρπαγμὸν – “to grasp, seize
 3. Jesus voluntarily left this place of exaltation and supreme glory

4. "But emptied himself. . ."
We call this the "Divine Kenosis" - κενόω – to make empty, make void –
What was it that Jesus emptied Himself of in His incarnation?
 - a. God is immutable - incapable of change
He cannot grow nor diminish in His being
 - b. Jesus could not have emptied Himself of any of His Divine attributes – He would have ceased being God.
 - c. His emptying Himself could not have been by subtraction but by addition – It was not the existence of the divine nature that changed but the manifestation.
He became a servant and He became a man.
He took upon Himself servitude, He became a man of sorrows –
He became obedient unto to death, even the death of the cross
5. Jesus, the Son of God, willfully left His place in glory and took upon Himself flesh and blood.

III. In His humanity Jesus had all of the qualities of man

- A. Proving that Jesus was both God and man is not difficult. Our ancient confessions describe Him as "truly God and truly man."
 1. The difficulty is in reconciling the two natures in one person – the hypostatic union and the unipersonality of Christ. This has often been the source of many of the heresies of the church—to deny either the deity or the humanity of Christ. Or to deny His unipersonality by teaching that He was actually two persons.
It is hard for us to fathom. The one person of Christ possesses the attributes of both human and divine natures without any mixture or confusion of the two. This is why the divine/human person Jesus received worship.
 2. Jesus Christ was fully God, yet there were characteristics of Jesus in His humanity that are hard to reconcile with the Divine.
- B. He was limited in His understanding – this is unfathomable for us
 1. The Bible tells us He grew in wisdom. He had to learn to walk and learn to talk.
Luke 2:52 NAU - "And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."
 2. The God who declares the end from the beginning in His incarnation had to see it unfold bit by bit. He experienced events in time.
- C. He took on all of the weakness of human flesh
 1. He understood hunger and thirst. He understood grief and sorrow. He experienced pain and suffering. He would have known headaches.
 2. He could savor all of the enjoyments we know. He tasted each flavor for the first time. He learned to identify all of the aromas that we experience. He could enjoy the coolness of the early morning, but also the discomfort of the noonday heat.
 3. He experienced hunger in the wilderness.
 4. He also knew the temptations of Satan. Yet He did not sin.

- D. The changeless God in His incarnation endured change
1. Not in His deity but in His humanity. God cannot change, and yet the life of Jesus was one of continual change.
 2. He grew. He went from infancy to childhood to adult
He experienced joy then grief
- IV. The Incarnation was the accomplishment of God's eternal purpose
- A. The Bible declares that Jesus became flesh according to the will of God
1. God the Father elected a multitude of sinful men unto salvation
 2. The Father pledged to give these people to His Son and the Son agreed to redeem them from their sin
 3. He then SENT His Son into the world. John 3:16 – “He gave”
John 6:38 NAU - "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."
John 7:29 NAU - "I know Him, because I am from Him, and He sent Me."
 4. Jesus came in obedience to the Father
Philippians 2:8 NAU - "Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."
John 4:34 NAU - "Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me and to accomplish His work."
- B. The Incarnation took place as the result of the love of God
1. **John 3:16**
 2. **1 John 4:9-10 NAU** - "By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."
- C. Jesus came to redeem His people from their sins
Matthew 1:21 NAU - "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
1. His name means Savior – He shall be the Savior of His people.
“He will save His people . . .”
 - a. Who are these people?
It can’t ultimately be the Jews alone for they would not have Him
John 1:11-13 NAU - "He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

- b. Our Lord's people are those that were chosen and given to Him from the foundation of the world – these are the sheep.
John 10:14-16 NAU - "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, ¹⁵ even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶ "I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will hear My voice; and they will become one flock with one shepherd."
- 2. The whole issue of our Lord's coming was the need to redeem His people from their sins.
- 3. The end of the incarnation is that Jesus would suffer and die

Conclusion:

- 1. Our God is great and mysterious. How can you understand the Trinity? How can you understand the hypostatic union and unipersonality of Christ? God had to become man in order to save us. It is the greatest of all Biblical miracles.
Our God is great and greatly to be praised.
- 2. May it drive us to our knees and cause us to lift up our voices in glorious praise. May it drive us to humble ourselves in obedience.