
JOHN 1:14 : GOD'S SUPREME REVELATION [3]

... became flesh ... (2)

No. EE108

We have seen that John, by calling Jesus the *Logos*, is telling his readers that his Main Character is really and in every way the eternal and almighty God of heaven and earth. But then, after bringing it home to the reader by repeating it several times, he drops a bombshell in v.14 on both the Greek philosophical world and the Jewish religious world: *this Word became flesh and came to live among us!*

We are looking at v.14 and for the moment more specifically at the fact that The Word became flesh. Last time we made sure that we understand John's words correctly. We also looked at the Bible's insistence on a pure Christology.

Now we need to focus more specifically on this incarnation of the Son. This is surely one of the most perplexing teachings in the whole of Scripture and one we shall never be able to fully comprehend. But to the extent that you manage to understand and embrace this Biblical revelation, to that extent you will also be able to understand other truths in Scripture.

CONCEPTION AND BIRTH

□ We speak of the virgin *birth*, which is in order, but we need to keep in mind that it is only the *conception* of the Son that was supernatural, not the pregnancy of Mary, or the birth itself. The Child was born "when the time came" (Lk 2:6) - i.e. probably after a pregnancy of 40 weeks.

□ The supernatural aspect of the birth lies in 3 truths - and in them only:

- The *conception* was supernatural. Mary's womb was not entered by the seed of a man. It was the Holy Spirit "that came upon her" (Mt 1:20; Lk 1:35). But equally important is the fact that Mary was in every respect the biological mother of Jesus. It was *her* ovum that was impregnated.

- The *Baby* that was conceived was supernatural. It was not just a normal baby that had been conceived supernaturally, but the eternal Son of God, the second Person of the holy Trinity, the Word - from the very first moment of conception. The foetus that developed was truly the Son of God, from the time that He was a microscopically tiny cell, through all the phases of development, to the moment He was born - bloodied, defenceless and in a natural way.

- The baby was supernaturally protected against *any defilement by sin* from the womb. Whether this protection took place during conception, or whether it lasted throughout the 40 weeks of pregnancy, we do not know. But that it was supernatural and perfect, is a certainty.

THE HUMAN NATURE OF JESUS

□ Many of the Old Testament prophesies about the coming Messiah (there are approximately 300 of them) make it quite clear that He would be fully human.

He would have a human birth (Isa 7:14; 9:6), out of the tribe of Judah and the family of David (Jer 23:5-6). He would be subject to God's law and would keep it perfectly (Ps 40:6-10). He would die, be buried, and be held for a time in the grip of death (Isa 53; Ps 16:9-11; 22; 118:17-23). He would be flogged, tortured and spat upon (Isa 50:6), and so forth.

□ We should never let the supernatural nature of Jesus' conception tempt us into believing that He did not have a true human nature. Except for the fact that He had no sin, He truly became one of us.

The writer of the Hebrew letter puts it as follows: "Since the children *have flesh and blood*, he too *shared in their humanity* ... For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason *he had to be made like his brothers in every way...*" (2:14-17).

□ The New Testament repeatedly affirms the fact that Jesus was human in every respect. Of course he was more than human, but also fully human. He had a human body, a human nature, a human mind.

We see his humanness particularly in four areas:

- His *physical, bodily life*. He was born by normal birth out of a normal woman. At eight days he was circumcised like any normal Jewish boy. He grew up and developed normally (Lk 2:40, 52). In the second chapter of Luke, Jesus is described successively as a baby (16), a child (40) and a boy (43). He became hungry and ate; He grew tired and slept.

It was because He was fully human that the townsfolk of Nazareth, where he grew up, were so surprised at his authority and wonders, saying, "Isn't this the carpenter? Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?" (Mk 6:3).

- His *emotional life*. Jesus not only had a human body, but also a human soul and spirit, and as such experienced typical human emotions. He loved (Jn 11:3,5); He got angry (Mk 3:5; Jn 11:33); He became sad (Jn 11:35; Lk 19:41); He experienced joy (Lk 10:21). We read over and over of his empathy with people in distress. And in Gethsemane he experienced shock, fear, confusion and emotional pain.

- *His natural life.* Although He did not share our sinful nature, He was limited by all our natural limitations. When he was born, He was as weak as a normal baby. He could not jump three metres high. His skin could be pierced by nails. There were things that He did not know: "Who touched my clothes?" (Mk 5:30); "How many loaves do you have?" (Mk 6:38).

In Jn 11:34 Jesus asks Martha and Mary, "Where have you laid him?" Yet a short while later He raises Lazarus from the dead! He therefore had, at the same time, limitations and no limitations. He was ignorant of certain things as well as omniscient, powerless as well as omnipotent.

This is the principle here: When Jesus acted supernaturally, it was through the power of the Holy Spirit, and then only at the will of the Father - and always for the glory of God, and to confirm his godly mission and mandate, never in his own interest.

- *His spiritual life.* He was tempted; He prayed; He studied the Scriptures; He fasted; He trusted in God.

☐ Jesus often referred to Himself as "the Son of man" (it appears in the Bible approximately 80 times). What did He mean by that? We find the answer in the Old Testament. In Ps 8:4 and Ps 146:3 the expression emphasises human frailty. In Ezekiel God uses this expression repeatedly when He addresses the prophet and so reminds him of his insignificance as human being. And in Dn 7:13 "one like a son of man" approaches the "Ancient of Days". This is a Messianic prophesy of the receipt by Christ of all authority in heaven and on earth - but that underlines that this happened to Him in his capacity as the *man* Christ Jesus.

A COMPLETE SAVIOUR

☐ In Rm 8:3 Paul makes a shocking statement, which takes him to the brink of blasphemy. *Christ came in the likeness of sinful man.* The apostle could

certainly have put it less harshly, but he wishes to bring home a point.

The word "likeness" implies a qualification: There was a limit to the extent of the Son's incarnation - *He was fully human in all respects, except that He was sinless.*

But why does Paul use the term "*likeness of sinful man*" at all? Because he wishes to emphasise that Jesus came in such a manner as to make Him fully human. His identification and solidarity with us is almost absolute. He came as close to sinful humanity as He possibly could - without himself becoming a sinner. As the writer of the letter to the Hebrews puts it: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses, but we have one who *has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin*" (Hb 4:15).

☐ There are four things we need to understand here:

- In order for Him to be our Substitute, Jesus Christ had to become one of us in every respect. Any element of our humanity that was not present in Him would have been excluded from his redemptive work. But God wants to save us completely - man in his totality. Nothing whatsoever may be excluded.

- But what then about sin? Surely it is an integral part of our make-up? No, no! In essence sin is not part of our humanity. Man was not created like that. Sinfulness came later. It is, in fact, completely unnatural. *And it is the original that Jesus came to save and restore completely! Praise God!*

What then about sin? It is for the very purpose of ridding us of this strange and unnatural cancer that Jesus took it upon Himself to remove and destroy it for all eternity.

- Finally we need to keep in mind that Jesus came essentially as the Substitute and Successor to Adam - that is, the sinless Adam as he

was before the Fall, the crowning glory of God's creation. In fact, after his resurrection Jesus was - as far as his humanity was concerned - what the original Adam would have become if he had remained faithful to God. Therefore He received the eternal and irreversible reward. And that is exactly where those of us who are in Christ are heading. In the first place the curse of the Fall has been removed as far as we are concerned (now already in principle, but one day completely). And the eternal prize for complete obedience (His obedience attributed to us) awaits us more surely than night follows day.

Truly, 1Jn 3:2 should be written on our hearts: "Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is".

The more one meditates about and delves into the redemption that Jesus accomplished for those that the Father has entrusted to Him, the more you stand astounded by it all. It is eternal, irreversible and far more glorious than words can ever express.

Oh, what a Redeemer Jesus Christ is! Perfect, perfect in the fullest sense of the word!

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