

The Word Became Flesh

- ☆ eternal Creator (vv.1-3)
- ☆ Light of the world (vv.4-13)
- ☆ Glory – full of grace and truth (v.14)

In the name of Jesus, the eternal Word of God, dear trusting Christians:

If there's one thing writers of modern Christmas carols love to produce, it's miracles. Look for "The Miracle of Christmas," and you'll find plenty of love discovered, families restored and miraculous healing of hearts and minds. What makes these stories so appealing is the sweetness of acceptance. Everyone wants that loyalty of love and friendship that lasts beyond these dark winter nights into the broad daylight of springtime and summer. Who would not love a love that lasts?

Yet these miracles from our imagination pale beside the Christmas Eve miracles we enjoyed again last night. An emperor decrees the tax registration that brings God's prophecies of Nazareth and Bethlehem together in Mary and Joseph's journey. Even the shepherds, the stable and the manger were miracles. The high and mighty like King Herod and the Jewish religious leaders did not go to Bethlehem – except Herod with the swords that killed his supposed rivals in the baby boys. Shepherds came to a stable where they were welcome to see the newborn Savior for us all. There in the manger is the greatest miracle of all. *"Even angels long to look into these things"* (1 Peter 1:12) as **The Word Became Flesh**.

☆ eternal Creator (vv.1-3)

One of my greatest joys with this Christmas Gospel happened in China when I asked a group of seminary students, who is the eternal **Word**? We have to read the first thirteen verses wondering before we can tell for sure who this is. But those Chinese students knew. They could see their **eternal Creator**.

The simplicity of John's God-inspired Greek original reveals the deep, profound mystery of the Incarnation when **The Word Became Flesh**. The LOGOS here was known to God's ancient believers by the Hebrew name DABAR. The Word of God would appear as the Angel of the LORD, the pre-incarnate Christ, the Second Person of the Trinity. The LOGOS performed miracles. They worshiped Him as God.

Here the dear Holy Spirit lets us look back into eternity when the LOGOS, **The Word**, was still in heaven *with* God the Father. Fascinating how that little word *with* can mean so many things. Flying or driving *with* other Christmas travelers makes no connection with them. But if there's an accident, you're *with* a group in shared difficulties. Connections are real. Then again, if you get to be *with* the ones you love, or especially the one who brings songs to your heart, you're turned toward each other.

That's the way John pictures *"the Word was with God"* – *turned toward* each other in the close intimacy of the fully, eternally united Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Although God the Holy Spirit is not mentioned in these verses, other Bible passages tell us He inspired holy writers like John. We see Father and Son *turned toward* each other in the salvation plan when **The Word Became Flesh**.

If you have a plan to make a table with a few nails and screws, it will fall apart for sure. But if you make a mortise and tenon with plenty of glue surface, you'll have an intimate bond that can last for centuries. If you draw bore a pin in that mortise, it will hold long after the glue fails. That's a dim picture of the infinite skill of God telling us **The Word** existed from eternity as the **eternal Creator** because *"through him everything was made, and without him not one thing was made that has been made."*

☆ **Light of the world (vv.4-13)**

When someone walks into a room and your face lights up, they can tell you're glad to see them. But wouldn't they be disappointed if you came over and walked right past them to someone else?

When **The Word Became Flesh**, he was not waiting for everyone's face to light up seeing Him. We are the people walking in darkness because of the way we treat each other. We speak without thinking or purposely hurt others, especially those closest to us. And if we're on the receiving end of careless, hurtful words, we forget how often we have done the same, hurting the feelings of others without even knowing it. We walk right past the hurting souls around us, even in our families. We want others to light up with love for us, to somehow shatter the dark loneliness that chills every soul alone.

The Word did not wait for the light of others. He not only created light, but He is the uncreated, eternal **Light of the World**. Human darkness cannot understand, could not write this down for others, and certainly cannot take down the **Light** like a wrestler trying to destroy his opponent. The **Light of the world** will dispel the darkness wherever He wants to shine. Oh, shine in my heart, I pray!

And there's another miracle of Christmas to go with the incarnation of Christ. The **Light of the world** was shining for centuries through the prophets proclaiming the Virgin birth of the woman's Seed that would crush the serpent's head. In ever increasing brightness those ancient prophecies increased the **Light** of details no one could imagine, much less carry out by moving empires and finally bringing **The Word** to the cross to be executed in our place, under God's wrath. Darkness has deadly consequences which **The Word** came as the **Light of the world** to heal. And even with one more prophet named John the Baptist witnessing to the **Light**, "*his own people did not accept him. But to all who did receive him*" in the miracle of conversion, "*to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.*" By faith they're "*born again*" as Jesus will explain to Nicodemus in John 3. Here we see God's...

☆ **Glory – full of grace and truth (v.14)**

"The Word became flesh..." To show the miracle of the incarnation to simple townsfolk Francis of Assisi found a cave and collected different animals associated with a stable. As crowds gathered on the first live nativity, Francis pointed to the baby in the manger and said, "Behold your God!" *"For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form,"* (Colossians 2:9 NIV84)

"The Word...dwelled among us," literally, *tented in us*. In Revelation, John uses the same word for God *tenting with us* in heaven. Ancient Jews would remember the Feast of the Tabernacles when the whole nation went on vacation together. Everyone lived in shelters together as you can only form the closest bonds in camping. Our family had to camp to see relatives in the Midwest. My first thunderstorm was in Idaho where the rain poured through a tent flap too short as Dad tried to stop the flow with every towel of us seven kids and the dog. "Are we having fun yet?" But what if you could go on vacation, enjoying the great outdoors with no storms, no bugs, no danger – just all together? Heaven, right?

"We have seen his glory, the glory he has as the only-begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth." The entire Epiphany season in coming weeks shines the **grace and truth Glory** of God in the face of Jesus for us. What the shepherds saw in the skies above Bethlehem, we see in the miracles of our Lord who is Himself the greatest Miracle of all. He came to embody God's **grace** of full and free acceptance of sinners by the cleansing power of his own blood. He came to embody God's **truth** for all of us who need to confess our own sin and then receive by the God-given miracle of faith not only the forgiveness of God but the righteousness God gives in the Person of **The Word**. God loves us the way we are, but He loves us too much to leave us in our darkness, dismay, turmoil and death. God's ultimate **Glory** is to love unlovable sinners in the way He sees them in **The Word full of grace and truth**.

Gaze with the angels, with Mary and Joseph and the shepherds at the miracle in the manger. Now you're enjoying the miracle of faith God worked in you, trusting **The Word Became Flesh**. Amen.