

How the Word became flesh, 1 of 4 - 20211204

Hi all,

This is the time of year we celebrate the birth of Jesus, but this series is about His life before He ever left heaven to become the Son of Man. Isaiah 9:6 says in part: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given..."

God so loved the world that He gave from heaven His Son, who became the child Jesus born in Bethlehem. In John 17:5 Jesus is talking to the Father and says: "...now glorify me with the glory I had with you before the world ever was..."

The Word of God

The Word of God is first and foremost the person who is the Word of God. The written Word flows from the person who is the Word of God, and the Holy Spirit brings life to those written words.

Unfortunately in our day, many Christians know the written Word better than they know the person who is the Word. I don't have enough fingers and toes to count how many times I've said to myself or Barb: "If they knew Him better they wouldn't think the Word says that." The written Word flows from the person who is the Word.

If someone tells me my wife said something that isn't consistent with who I know her to be, I'll tell them, "That doesn't sound like her." Same with what some say scripture says - if they knew Him they wouldn't think the scripture says that.

Some 'stand on the Word' without ever first consulting with the real Word of God to see if He agrees with them. And if the real Word doesn't agree with the written Word that person has chosen to 'stand on', there will be no presence of the Holy Spirit to bring it to pass, nor even bear witness in one's spirit about it. They can speak the written Word all they want, but there won't be any Life in their declarations or proclamations.

We cannot separate the written Word from the person of the Word. The written Word is not a book of incantations that if you follow certain words or actions 'magic money' will fall into your bank account. Nor is the person who is the Word moved by us repeating the written Word's chapter and verse until we are blue in the face.

Hebrews 1:1-3 says this: "God (Father) having spoken through many ways and parts in times past by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son; whom He appointed heir of all things, by whom also He (Father) made the ages."

"Who being the brightness of His (Father's) glory, and the express image of His (Father's) substance, and upholding all things by the Word of His (Father's) power, when He had purged our sins sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high..."

Notice Jesus Christ upholds all things by the Word of the Father's power - this is not saying there is power in the Word, but rather Jesus upholds all things by the Word of the Father's power. The Father has the power, not Jesus. Jesus is the Word of His Father's power.

For example

Let's say a father tells his son to go outside the house and call his brothers and sisters to come inside because its time to eat dinner. If one of his siblings resists, the son might say 'I'm telling dad'. The power is in the dad who remains in the house, the son is merely the expression of the father's will, expressed by his word to the son and then through him to the son's siblings.

The son has authority to carry out his father's word and commands, but the power resides in the father. We could say that son was sent from the father to tell his siblings to come in for dinner, making him the word of his father. That is Jesus to our Heavenly Father. Jesus upholds all things by the Word of the Father's power.

That is why we are told in this passage the Father has appointed Him heir of all things. That's why Philippians 2:5-11 (v9) says the Father has because of Jesus' actions, given Him a name above all

names. It is why we make prayer requests to the Father as Jesus commanded and as seen throughout the NT. We don't make requests of the Holy Spirit, nor of Jesus, but Jesus said to ask the Father in His name. Why? The Father has the power. Jesus is the expression of that power, the Word of that power, but the power including the power to answer prayer, is with the Father.

(Please don't email me saying something like 'But I pray to or ask the Holy Spirit' or 'is it okay if I say Holy Spirit please', or 'I've always asked Jesus for things' - just obey Jesus and change your ways and you'll step into a higher realm of your walk with the Father, for it is all about the Father and His will being done on earth as it is in heaven. There is no prayer to the Holy Spirit nor prayer request to Jesus, from the Lord's Prayer through the letters of the NT. Does He sometimes cover our ignorance, yes. But now you know a path to higher truth, and it is simply obeying Jesus, so change from disobedience to obedience.)

Jesus is the will of the Father made flesh

In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God, the Word was God...the Word became flesh and lived among us. (John 1:1, 14)

How did this happen? Did it just suddenly happen when Jesus left heaven to be conceived in Mary's womb? No, there is much more to the story than that...Let us go back to around 1100 BC, when the boy Samuel is in the temple as a helper to Eli the High Priest. He is sound asleep when the Lord comes into his room...

We are told in I Samuel 3:1: "The Word of the Lord was rare in those days, there were no open visions (of the Lord)." The Lord called out to the boy 3x, and after Eli told him it was the Lord, verse 10 says this: "The the Lord came and stood as He had previously, and called out, 'Samuel. Samuel.'"

Verse 21 tells us this was a new time for Samuel and Israel, the start of open visions of the Lord. Between the death of Joshua and the first King, Saul, Israel was merely a loosely affiliated band of tribes, led in times of crisis by a judge who would arise to solve the problem.

Samuel was the first prophet to the first king, and it set a precedent that every king of Israel and Judah would have a prophet (or more) to help guide the nation. The lean time with no open vision of the Word of the Lord was over. We are told starting with the boy prophet Samuel: "And the Lord (Yahweh/YHWH) revealed Himself to Samuel again, as the Word of the Lord..."

Understand who Samuel was...

When the Word of the Lord started appearing to Samuel, it set a precedent for all the prophets to follow. The phrase we see in the books of the prophets, "The Word of the Lord came to..." does not mean some prophet was sitting at a table with a quill pen and scroll having is hand guided in a journaling exercise that became for instance, the book of Jeremiah.

No! It means from Samuel through the centuries, the person who IS the Word of the Lord appeared to the prophets and told them what He was telling the nation, or with Him, also a vision of things to come. The Word of the Lord appearing to Samuel set a precedent for all the rest of the prophets to the new nation of Israel. We'll pick it up there next week, until then, blessings,
John Fenn

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How the Word became flesh, 2 of 4 - 20211211

Hi all,

I ended last week talking about how the phrase; 'Word of the Lord came to ____ the prophet', was not a prophet's hand moving as if by invisible divine guidance as they journaled, but was in fact a visitation of the person who is called the Word of the Lord.

That phrase used in I Samuel 3:21, "The Lord revealed Himself to Samuel as 'the Word of the Lord'", defined for the prophets that followed down through the centuries, the phrase 'the Word of the Lord'. It means the Person who is the Word of the Lord, the Son of the Father, appeared to the prophets down through the centuries....amazing...

A small disclaimer...

That doesn't mean every single time you see the phrase 'the word of the Lord' in the Old Testament it means a visitation with the Lord - often the scripture is unclear - sometimes like in our day, we might say 'the Lord told me' or 'this is the Lord's word to me about it'...But very often scripture is clear that it was a visitation, especially at the start of the books or start of a word for Israel or Judah, when you see that phrase.

For example...

In Jeremiah 1:1-9 we have this:

"The words of Jeremiah the son of Hilkiah...to whom the Word of the Lord came in the days of Josiah...in the 13th year of his reign...the Word of the Lord came to me saying, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you came out of the womb I set you apart as a prophet to the nations.' Then I said, 'But Lord, I'm but a young boy (Heb: na'ar: young teenager, about 13 years old) '...Then the Lord put out His hand and touched my mouth...'"

So here we see the Word of the Lord came to Jeremiah as a Person, the Word of the Lord, for he says in v9, "...He stretched out His hand and touched my mouth." The whole conversation which became the book of Jeremiah was the Lord appearing to Jeremiah in a series of visitations as the Word of the Lord, to give him words for the nation.

Isaiah, Ezekiel, and the rest...

Isaiah 1:1 starts: "The vision of Isaiah..." and in v10: "Hear the Word of the Lord..." His 'word' came as a vision.

In Ezekiel 1:3 he says, "The Word of the Lord came to Ezekiel the priest..." as he is standing on the bank of a tributary of the Euphrates river, when he is in the Spirit and sees the throne of God, complete with the cherubs as balls of fire flying the throne platform directly to him. He describes the rainbow over the throne, the clear flooring, and how the Lord appeared as a being of fire and light...and then the Lord started talking to him about his nation.

Hosea 1:1: "The Word of the Lord that came to Hosea...and the Lord said to me (Hosea)..." 3:1: "Then the Lord said to me..."

Amos 1:1, 3, 6: "The words of Amos...which he saw concerning Israel..thus says the Lord...thus says the Lord..."

Obadiah v1: "The vision of Obadiah, thus says the Lord God..."

Jonah 1:1, 3; 3:1: "Now the Word of the Lord came to Jonah saying..." But Jonah rose up and ran from the presence of the Lord...and went to a ship headed to Tarshish (Spain) from the presence of the Lord." And the Word of the Lord came a second time to Jonah saying..."

(We miss the text telling us directly Jonah ran from His presence - the root word presence, 'paneh' in Hebrew, means literally, "Face". "Jonah rose up and ran from the face of the Lord.")

Micah 1:1: "The Word of the Lord that came to Micah...which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem..."

Nahum 1:1: "The burden of Nineveh. The book of the vision of Nahum..."

Habakkuk 1:1, 2:2: "The burden which Habakkuk the prophet did see...And the Lord answered me: 'Write the vision, make it plainly written that he who reads may run with it.'"

I love Habakkuk's description of the Lord in 3:4:

"His brightness was as a bright light, and He had shafts of light coming from His hands, which is where His power was concentrated."

The reason this is significant is the shafts of light coming from His hands, fits Deuteronomy 9:10 which says the 10 Commandments were etched in stone by the finger of God - the world's first mention of

what we would call laser beam - the shafts of light coming from His fingers, etching into stone the 10 Commandments.

Zechariah, the next to last book of the Old Testament starts in with in 1:1: "...came the Word of the Lord to Zechariah..." and in 2:1, "I lifted up my eyes again and saw a man..." and in 3:1, "And He showed me..."

What I've done is walk us down through the centuries where the Person who is called the Word of the Lord, appeared to the prophets. From the first revelation of the Word of the Lord who came and stood in the boy Samuel's bedroom in about 1100BC, to Zechariah seeing the Word of the Lord around 500BC, our Lord appeared to the prophets as the Word of the Lord (Father).

And that is why John 1:14 says simply: "And the Word was made flesh and lived among us."

Can you imagine the awe when the disciples realized the Man Jesus was first the Son given, who appeared to all those prophets through the centuries, and now stood before them?! Amazing grace. Next week, how the transition from heaven to earth happened...until then, blessings,
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How the Word became flesh, 3 of 4, - 20211218

Hi all,

I left last week talking how the apostles must have been in awe by the realization the Word of the Lord who had appeared to the prophets through the centuries, had left heaven to be made a man and live among them. Can you imagine their thoughts?

How did the Son given become the Child born?

In Philippians 2:5-11 Paul writes:

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, did not think it robbery to be equal with God; But did empty Himself, taking the form of a servant, made in the likeness of man, and finding Himself fashioned as a man, humbled Himself, being obedient even to death, even to the death on a cross. Therefore God (Father) did highly exalt Him and give Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow..."

That scripture tells us Christ, the Son from heaven, 'emptied Himself', and was made a man. He 'found Himself' fashioned as a man - what an amazing change for Him to go from unlimited in the Spirit realm to be confined to a physical body.

The Greek word for 'emptied' is 'kenoo' and means to 'empty completely, to make void, to assign no value' (as when a pitcher of water is emptied, the empty pitcher now has no value for its contents have been emptied.) Christ made Himself of 'no value', emptied Himself completely in order to leave heaven to be made a human.

The boy Jesus didn't do miracles

It means Christ the Son, the Word of the Father, emptied Himself of all rights and privileges as the only Son of the Father. For us it means when the Son was given the human name Jesus, He lived not as God's Son, but as a man. Once the Holy Spirit came upon Him, He lived as a Spirit-filled man.

That means the Roman Catholic teaching that the boy Jesus did miracles, is wrong. He did no miracles before His water baptism when the Holy Spirit came upon Him at that time. It also means because He did miracles as a Spirit-filled man, so too we will do similar miracles*, for we too have been given the Holy Spirit. Though scripture says He received the Spirit 'without measure', we have the Holy Spirit according to the measure* given each of us. (*John 14:12, John 3:34, **Romans 12:3)

A visitation I had

In 1989 I had read Philippians 2, but had never studied it in depth. But during a visitation with the Lord and the one I call 'my angel' (my guardian angel) I asked: "What was it like when the Lord left heaven?"

How did it happen?" I knew what Gabriel had told Mary in Luke 1:35 when she asked how it would happen that she would conceive God in her womb:

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the Power of the Most High will overshadow you..."

The word 'power' used here is 'dunamis' which is where we get the word 'dynamite', and means power. The word 'overshadow' means to 'envelop like a cloud'. So the power of the Most High covered Mary like a cloud. More about that next week.

But my question to the Lord and the angel was what did that look like, how did it happen? Suddenly I was in the Spirit standing in heaven. There were no people, only angels, and they were all packed tightly together as a crowd might watch a parade. I was standing at the back of the crowd of angels as an observer, at that point not sure what I was seeing.

There was a narrow path, just wide enough for 1 person to walk, an open path between the angels. Some were looking from the side of the path I was on, the others on the other side of the path looking our direction. But no one was looking at the angel across that narrow path - all eyes were on the brilliant white light of the Father's throne, for the path led from Him through the crowd of angels.

Out of that light stepped the Lord

He looked like the Lord I have seen so many times in visitations - I had previously wondered to what degree if any Mary's DNA had shaped His features, and was a bit surprised to see Who I saw leaving heaven looks the same as the risen Lord I was seeing in the visitations. I watched Christ leave the light of the Father to walk through the path of angels bowed in awe; The angels all either bowed at the waist, or kneeled down, or kneeled on 1 knee, but all eyes were lowered as they silently watched Christ walk from the Father's throne along the path, through their midst.

From my vantage point it was right to left, and I found myself slightly turned towards the throne as the Lord approached, and then went past us. I never turned to my left to see where the path led for I was suddenly back in my living room with the Lord and angel. The realization I'd just been given a glimpse of Him emptying Himself of all rights and privileges as the Father's only Son, to become made into a human being, overwhelmed me.

I was overcome with awe, with amazement. I couldn't speak at first, it was so overwhelming. All I knew mentally about the Father giving His only Son had now become a living truth. I lay face down before Him: "Oh Lord, you are SO worthy of worship, you are worthy...and then I was overwhelmed again to the point I just lay in silence again.

Once I regained my strength

I asked the Lord if He could verify what He had allowed me to see with scripture? He told me to examine the passage with Hebrews 10:5, which I did:

"Therefore as He was coming into the world He said, 'Sacrifice and offering is not what you desired, but a body you have prepared for Me.'" v6-7 continue: "In burnt offerings and sacrifices you have had no pleasure. Then I said, 'Behold! I have come. In the fullness of the scroll (book, ie Old Testament) it is written of Me, to do your will oh God (Father).'"

As the Son was emptying Himself, He told the Father that He knew the Father had no pleasure in the blood of bulls and goats, but that the Father had prepared a body for Him - and He would go to do His will.

And that body - it was a forever change. Jesus was resurrected with a human body, and will always be human. In fact, speaking of resurrection day, Acts 13:33 quotes Psalm 2 as prophetic: "This day have I become your Father." The Father is still in the Spirit realm with a Spirit-body. But His Word who holds all things together by His Father's power, is a man and forever will be. It changed the Father-Son relationship forever.

As far as we know, He will be the only one who will go through eternity with the scars of those world in His flesh. The Son went from being in the Spirit above time and space, to being confined to a body on earth confined within that body.

The One who created Adam's body has now confined Himself to just such a body. The Son for the first time in eternity found Himself having to learn personally what it is to walk, to talk, to use the bathroom, to eat for strength, to go from one place to another not by thought, but by having to put one leg in front of another as He walked to a location.

We'll stop there, and pick it up next week on the physiology of why the Father needed to prepare a body for His Son - and more. Until then, blessings,

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How the Word became flesh 4 of 4. When was He born? - 20211225

Hi all,

Let's close out our study of how the Word became flesh, including when He may have been born...

Why the Father needed to prepare a body

How did the Son in heaven, with a heavenly body, become a man? He would need to fertilize a woman's 'egg' or ovum. That she was a virgin is a sign, proof of Jesus' divine origin, a statement of the Father's integrity.

Mary's egg provided the body for Christ to become Jesus in the conception. The mystery of how that fertilization happened is exactly that, a mystery. We read "A body you have prepared me." That was through Mary.

The gender and blood of the baby is determined by the male at conception. This tells us the blood flowing through Jesus' body was not tainted by sin from Adam's fall because the blood formed in His body was not of earthly origin. This is the crux of Christianity. That the man Jesus is sinless, and God in the flesh. That is how it happened. Without this Christianity is an empty set of philosophies. But Christianity is 'mystical' from the start.

At His birth...

I think we all know Jesus was born in either spring or fall, for various reasons. In fact I've written from time to time about the timing of His birth based on Luke's information in 1:5 - telling us John the Baptist's dad was a priest after the order of Abijah. If we know when John the Baptist was born we can figure out when Jesus was born.

A brief summary: There were 24 divisions of priests with each division serving 1 week in turn, and in I Chronicles 24:10 we are told Abijah was the 8th course, or 8th week in the rotation of service. Additionally, all priests worked Unleavened Bread/Passover week, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. (Dt 16:16)

They took turns for the 24 weeks in the spring starting at Passover, and another round of 24 weeks in the fall starting with Rosh Hashanah/Feast of Trumpets.

For example; If the time Luke documents for Zacharias was the spring round, we'd start with Passover and add 10 weeks to know when Zacharias served in the temple. (8 weeks plus the 2 for Unleavened Bread and Pentecost) And add about 2 weeks for the law of separation before he could be intimate with his wife* for a total of 12 weeks after Pentecost as the earliest John the Baptist could have been conceived. *Leviticus 12:5, 15:25

For instance, if we use 2021 as an example: Passover was March 27, and 12 weeks forward makes it at least the middle to late June before John the Baptist could be conceived. When Elizabeth was in her 6th month*, or mid-late December to early January, she met with Mary, whom Gabriel visited. Meaning John the Baptist would have been born around Passover. The teaching of the day was that Elijah would appear at Passover, so this fits this timeline. *Lk 1:24-26 (Though it could be argued John the Baptist may have begun his ministry around Passover)

Going forward from that meeting between Elizabeth and Mary in the December/January time frame, and adding 9-10 months for Mary's pregnancy from there, puts Jesus being born in September or October. That would mean Jesus being born near the Feast of Tabernacles, when Israel celebrates God living with man, which makes this timeline attractive. If we figure from the fall course of Abijah for Zacharias Jesus would have been born around Passover.

There are other historical factors to consider as well

Shepherds were only in the fields in spring or fall, after the harvest. The timing of Herod's death is also a factor. 1st century Judaism dated a baby's birth from the date of conception or from birth, meaning they start life at 1. Today in the west, we let a baby live a full year and THEN count them as 1 year old.

Some in Asian nations still figure age that ancient way. That means when Matthew 2:16 tells us Herod commanded all children under 2 be killed, it was by our figuring, all babies 1 and under - or no older than 18 months.

Closing...

As Israel's population grew, job availability in the temple did not. There are only so many jobs maintaining the temple just like there are only so many jobs caring for a church building today. For instance, II Chronicles 5:12 says some Levites became temple singers. By the time of Jesus, many people moved into cities, giving up farming, ranching, and shepherding, yet they still needed animals for sacrifice as commanded by the Law of Moses.

Levites who didn't find work in the temple, began raising crops and animals for temple sacrifice to sell to city dwellers, selling them in the temple. In Luke 19:45-47 Jesus confronts them, driving the sheep and cattle out of the temple area, for they were taking advantage of worshippers by price gouging, stating: "It is written; 'My house is a house of prayer'; But you have made it a den of thieves." Mentioned also: Mt 21:13, Mk 11:17, John 2:15

The priests who became shepherds did so around Bethlehem, the 'bread basket' of Israel, for 'Bethlehem' means 'house of bread'. It was to those Priest-shepherds the Father followed the lines of authority as He always does, commanding the Army of Heaven to appear to them to announce the Messiah had been born.

The Army? Yes, the ancient word 'host' means 'troops' or 'layers' of army troops. The Father sent first 1 angel to announce to and calm the shepherds, but then Luke 2:9-15 tells us;

"Suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host (army) praising God and saying: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth; peace, good will towards men.'"

Heaven's army appeared to the shepherds to tell them the Army had not come to destroy, but to announce a peace treaty: Peace; good will towards men. It doesn't mean everyone be at peace with one another, it means God is saying peace towards men. Paul would later write his second letter to the Corinthians, explaining in 5:17-20:

"God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not charging their sins to them, (but unto Him), and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation...therefore we implore everyone as Ambassadors for God, Be reconciled to God." We are Ambassadors urging people to be reconciled to God because He has reconciled to them. Have you ever made peace with someone in your heart but they reject your efforts to make peace? That's what this is about.

The Word of the Father who appeared to mankind from the start and appeared to people down through the centuries, became flesh and lived among us. He remains the only way to the Father. Once He left heaven to become clothed in human flesh, He has remained that way. It changed His relationship with the Father forever, and changed us forever as well. Amazing Grace. New subject next week, until then, blessings,

John Fenn

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