

JOH 1:14 "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

This verse is probably one of the best verses for describing in a most succinct way the fulfillment of all God had promised mankind, starting with Adam and Eve, as it related to His plan to redeem men and bring us back into a right relationship with Himself.

It is also in this one verse where we see both the deity of Jesus Christ along with His manhood. And this is why this verse really needs to be connected back to the original thought which starts this gospel in verse one.

JOH 1:1,14 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

The reality that the Creator of the universe, the Lord of Glory, became a man is certainly a mystery, but it's no less true. That the infinite God joined with finite man by becoming a man is a testament to God's love for us.

No matter how men may accuse God of being unloving, uncaring and unconcerned for mankind, the facts simply don't bear that out. But how do we begin to explain and then understand this awesome truth of God becoming a man, and for what reason?

Well, this is where we need to delve into some of the theological implications concerning this truth and then try and begin to appreciate this mystery as we apply this truth to our lives personally.

Remember, John has made it clear that this Word, or Logos, is none other than God Himself according to verse one of this chapter. And then we're told here in our text this morning that this Word became flesh.

Down through the ages men have tried to comprehend and explain this and they have often come up short in their attempt to reconcile this mystery. And the problem has always been, how can God be God and human at the same time? How can Christ have two separate and distinct natures and yet remain one person, described by theologians as the hypostatic union?

Keep in mind that Jesus Christ is only one person. Before He took on flesh He was the person who is described as the Son of God. Even Satan recognizes Him this way when he tried to tempt Jesus in the desert after the baptism of our Lord.

MAT 4:3 The tempter came to him and said, "If you are the Son of God, tell these stones to become bread."

On one occasion when Jesus was about to cast out a number of demons from a man the demons actually acknowledged Jesus for who He is.

MAT 8:29 "What do you want with us, Son of God?" they shouted. "Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?"

It was always understood by the Jews that the Messiah would be regarded as the Son of God. Unfortunately, their understanding of the Son of God would be that of a conquering King instead of a lowly servant. But they missed the point that the Son of God must first become a lowly servant to redeem men, before He could return the second time as the conquering King we see in the book of Revelation.

When Jesus was before the Sanhedrin, before they delivered Him up to Pilate to be crucified, they interrogated Jesus to hear from His own lips who He claimed to be so that they could charge Him with blasphemy.

MAT 26:63-64 "But Jesus remained silent. The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." 64 "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied."

What the Jews understood about the Son of God was that He was to be equal with God. He was to come from the bosom of the Father, if you will. The son of anyone is an offspring with the same nature. However, unlike men who have children of the same nature, Jesus Christ was not the Son of God in the sense that the Father gave birth to the Son. Rather, the Son's and Father's nature are identical, being God.

The Son of God is an expression which intimates that the One who represents the Father is God Himself who would dwell among men as He came from His throne. And so, the term Son of God describes His nature as God more than it tries to explain His origin, as one coming from the Father, as though the Father needed to birth a son.

This is the mistake the Mormons have made. Their conception of the Son of God is taken in a literal sense where they believe that the Father conceived Jesus in Mary. They believe that Jesus became a son at His birth and then was given the ability to attain Godhood.

Most people aren't aware that the Mormons believe that our heavenly Father was once a man who evolved into God. And that all men have the ability to evolve into gods and have dominion over different parts of this universe.

This is why Mormonism in its early days aggressively held to polygamy. Each man tried to produce as much progeny as possible so as to secure a people over whom he would eventually rule and reign as god over them on a planet of his own.

In fact, our heavenly Father is none other than the former man Adam, according to Mormon theology.

According to Brigham Young, in the Journal of Discourses, volume one, page 50, "When our father Adam came into the Garden of Eden, he came into it with a celestial body and brought Eve, one of his celestial wives, with him.... He is our father and our God and the only God with whom we have to do." (Walter Martin, Kingdom of the Cults)

It was this god of the Mormons, none other than Adam, whom they now call Father, who had relations with Mary and produced a son, namely, Jesus.

Walter Martin in his book, Kingdom of the Cults, quotes James Talmage in the 1925 edition of Articles of Faith: "His (Christ's) unique stature in the flesh as the offspring of a mortal mother (Mary) and of an immortal or resurrected, and glorified Father (Adam-god)."

What this teaches is that, according to Mormonism, Jesus Christ did not come into existence until He was physically born into this world through Mary, some 2,000 years ago. And of course, they then contend that Jesus went on to become a god with wives of his own and a ruling king over his offspring.

In other words, Mormonism believes and teaches in polytheism; that there are many gods, not just one.

Now, we could spend the entire morning going over the weird teachings which have come down over the last 2,000 years surrounding Jesus Christ as it relates to His taking on flesh.

The truth of the matter is that Jesus Christ, the person, did not come into existence when He took on flesh. The person of Christ, the Son of God, has always existed being very God and Creator, as John clearly points out in verses one through three of this first chapter.

There was never a time in which the Son of God didn't exist. He always was because He is the only God. This is what was intimated in the name God shared with Moses when Moses was confronted by God in the burning bush. Moses asked Him what His name was and the Lord replied, I Am.

This is exactly what Jesus told the Jews of His day when they confronted Him with our Lord's statement that Abraham longed to see His day and saw it. They responded this way.

JOH 8:57-59 "You are not yet fifty years old," the Jews said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" 58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" 59 At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds."

They picked up stones to kill Him because the Jews clearly understood what Jesus meant when He referred to Himself as I Am. He was saying I am the same God who appeared to Abraham and Moses, and I am now that same God who is here with you.

And so, the person of Christ is eternal. But when He took on flesh His person didn't change. He is the same person. His God nature didn't change. What changed was that an additional nature was added to His person.

And so, through the incarnation, Jesus Christ the eternal God, now became Jesus Christ the eternal God/man. But it's not as though God simply possessed a human body. In other words, Jesus didn't slip into a man who happened to be born of Mary. The Son of God actually became a man as He was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

He didn't simply look like a man as He did in the Old Testament on different occasions, but actually took on the very nature of man in every way. This is remarkable. The eternal Son of God, the second person of the Godhead now has a nature just like ours. He is not two persons, but He now has two distinct natures; that of God and man.

This is why we use the expression that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. He is not a man who became God, nor is He God who fills someone's body.

The Westminster Confession of faith puts it this way: "The Son of God, the second person of the Trinity, being very and eternal God, of one substance, and equal with the Father, did, when the fullness of time [came took] upon Himself man's nature, with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof, yet without sin: being conceived by the power of the Holy [Spirit], in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that the two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion. Which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man." (Chapter 8, section 2)

Now, granted, for finite men to try and comprehend the infinite God as He has revealed Himself through Jesus Christ may not be an easy task, but the fact remains that without a proper understanding of the basics of this truth we can end up creating a Jesus which more resembles a monster than a Savior, like the Mormons have done.

Their Jesus is one god among many who first started out as a mere mortal and then evolved into a god. Our Jesus, according to the bible, is one eternal God with two natures. And so, for Jesus to receive adoration is not unreasonable since He is the very God who deserves our worship, which is exactly what Thomas did when he saw Jesus after His resurrection.

JOH 20:27-28 "Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." 28 Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!"

All throughout the N.T. we see Jesus Christ as the One who is God as He demonstrates He is the living Word who represents and demonstrates that He and the Father are one in essence.

Just look at His miracles. His first miracle was at the wedding feast at Cana where He turned water into wine. And how was that accomplished? He simply spoke the word and it came to

pass. He instructed the servants to fill six large jars with water and then commanded them to draw from them. The living Word spoke and there was wine.

On another occasion Jesus spoke and healing took place.

JOH 4:46-53 "Once more he [Jesus] visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. 47 When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death. 48 "Unless you people see miraculous signs and wonders," Jesus told him, "you will never believe." 49 The royal official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." 50 Jesus replied, "You may go. Your son will live." The man took Jesus at his word and departed. 51 While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. 52 When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, "The fever left him yesterday at the seventh hour." 53 Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, "Your son will live." So he and all his household believed."

This is the Word who became flesh. It is this God who took on flesh and proved Himself to be the One who fulfilled all that the prophets prophesied of Him.

Now, when John describes the Word taking on flesh he doesn't use the word flesh as something which in and of itself is bad as when the word flesh is often associated with the old nature of man.

ROM 8:8-9 "Those controlled by the [flesh] cannot please God. 9 You, however, are controlled not by the [flesh] but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ."

Here the word flesh is describing the sinful nature of man. But since Jesus does not have a sinful nature the word flesh, as associated with Jesus, means the literal flesh and blood that all humans possess.

And so, in this way Jesus Christ assumed the nature of man in every detail with the exception of his sin.

1JO 3:5 "But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin."

HEB 4:15 "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are -yet was without sin."

Now it should be pointed out that when Jesus, or the Word, became flesh it wasn't because He was curious what it would be like to become human. There was a specific reason for Him taking on flesh, our human nature. And it all goes back to the Garden of Eden where man first sinned.

The reason God created man in the first place was to allow man to share in the eternal kingdom of God. God was very gracious in allowing us to be a part of His eternity. And so, He created

man so that man could have fellowship with His creator, and in turn God would delight in having fellowship with man.

Now, having said that, it is important for us to realize that God did not need man to have fellowship with. It wasn't as though God was lonely and decided to create man to break the boredom of eternity.

God is complete and all sufficient in and of Himself, and therefore needs no one but Himself to be content. He delighted in Himself from eternity past as He had fellowship with Himself being one God with three persons; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Each a separate person as we understand this revelation, and yet only one God as the Scriptures also reveal Him.

But in His sovereignty and love He chose to allow us to share in His presence, which is why He created the universe and this earth where He originally placed man in a perfect environment with perfect natures, without sin.

And so, the perfect scenario is that God has created Adam and Eve in a perfect world and this with the express purpose of sharing in the life of God, the Creator.

In other words, our existence was always meant to be one where we could live in a world which would not experience decay, or death, or destruction of any kind. It would be a world where men would live at peace with God and each other and that this world would go on forever with God allowing us access to Him as we personally fellowship with Him in this world.

This was to be the plan for man. But there was a requirement put on man which if followed would secure this relationship with God in this world forever. It was actually a test to see if man would choose to love God or choose to love self to the exclusion of God his creator.

If man passed one simple test he would be sealed in perfection and fellowship with God; not unlike the angels who did not rebel against the Lord. Yet, some angels fell away as they pursued the agenda of Lucifer, which was to ascend to the throne of God and become co-equal with his creator. They too were eternally sealed in their decision.

Those angels who were faithful to God had their own test in that incident. The ones who failed were sealed forever to be separated from their creator destined for the Lake of fire, which by the way was prepared specifically for them. And yet many humans will share in the same punishment in that place originally designed for angels. Jesus points this out when describing those who rejected Him.

MAT 25:41,46 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. 46 "Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

Those angels who did not rebel will be in God's presence forever. And so, what this means for angels is that there is not a possibility for demons, who are those angels who rebelled, to have

any chance for redemption or forgiveness of their sin, but it also means that those faithful angels cannot ever rebel against their God. They are secure and without the desire to rebel.

This is what was to happen to man in the beginning. If Adam and Eve had passed the test, which necessarily means there had to be a time frame in which this test took place, they would have been sealed, along with the rest of mankind, in their perfect sinless state to enjoy perfect fellowship with the Lord.

But of course, that is not what happened. Man failed the test. And by way of reminder that test was not to eat of a certain fruit. And as a side-note, this test was not originally given by God to Eve. It was only given to Adam by God before Eve was created.

GEN 2:15-18 "The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." 18 The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

So, whether the Lord personally told Eve of His will, or if Adam was given the responsibility to bear witness to the truth as he told her of God's will, both of them knew that they should not eat of this fruit.

And so, the Lord tested man to see if, of his own free will, he would love and serve God. You would think with the perfect sinless nature man had back then that he would choose God and obey Him in all things, but that's not what happened.

Eve, was actually the one tempted by Satan to eat of this fruit who would then present it to her husband.

GEN 3:5-7 "For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves."

But the point of all of this is that once they fail the test they will pay the penalty which is death. And this penalty must be paid by man, since it was the very test which was given to man by God.

What all of this means is that for man to have this penalty paid for by someone else the recipient of the penalty must also be a man. And so, for the Son of God to simply appear in this world as a man, as He did all throughout the O.T., would not qualify Him to pay our debt.

He had to take on flesh, human nature and literally become one of us, by being born into this world, if He was going to be able to be our substitute for sin. And since the penalty for sin is

death He had to be a real human being with a real body and soul just like ours, if He were going to die in our place.

What Adam failed to do Jesus would accomplish for us. This is why Jesus is referred to as the last Adam in Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians.

1CO 15:45-47 "So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. 46 The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. 47 The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven."

The only thing Adam produced after he sinned was to give all mankind a death sentence. Their only way out was the path God laid before them in promising to send a Savior, the Son of God, who would take our place and pay our debt on the cross as He bore our shame and guilt, though He was guiltless.

And as He was dying on that cross the Father poured out His wrath on His Son; the wrath we deserved from our Holy God. Jesus paid our debt in full as He cried out, it is finished and then died.

How much did God love Adam and Eve? How desirous was He to have this fellowship reestablished with these two people in the Garden? How much did He want to make sure that all of His people would be able to come back into a peace relationship with their Creator?

Here's how much He loves us.

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JOH 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Outside of Christ there is no chance of eternal life because we have, at that point chosen to pay our own debt, which is death. That was the penalty for rebelling against God in the Garden, and it is the penalty for sin today. And this is the contrast between Adam's sin nature given to mankind, and the life we can have by placing our faith in Christ and His redemptive work on our behalf.

1CO 15:22 "For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive."

Why? Because Christ lives today. He rose bodily from the dead three days later defeating death and sin and He gives us the victory.

What do we want? Do we want death or life? And if we've chosen life in Christ how then should we live?

ROM 6:10-12 "The death he [Jesus] died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. 11 In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus. 12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its evil desires."

May our lives demonstrate the life we've got in Christ and may we look forward to that day where Paradise Restored will become a reality as our God and Creator refashions our present world into the new heavens and new earth at His coming on the last day.

May we honor our Lord Jesus, the Son of God and the Son of Man, who came into this world to bring us home through His life, death and resurrection.