***Veiled in Flesh***

**Advent 2020, Fourth Sunday: John 1:1-14 December 20, 2020**

***The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.  
We have seen his glory . . . .*John 1:14**

**Singing about the incarnation**

Christ, by highest heaven adored, Christ the Everlasting Lord!

Late in time behold him come, Offspring of the Virgin’s womb.

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; Hail the Incarnate Deity,

Pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel.

“Hark! The Herald Angels Sing”, Charles Wesley, 1739

1) Charles gets it right – Chrsitmas is about being introduced to the glory of the Christ

2) “Veiled” is a beautiful description of the incarnation

**The Prologue**

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning.*

*3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

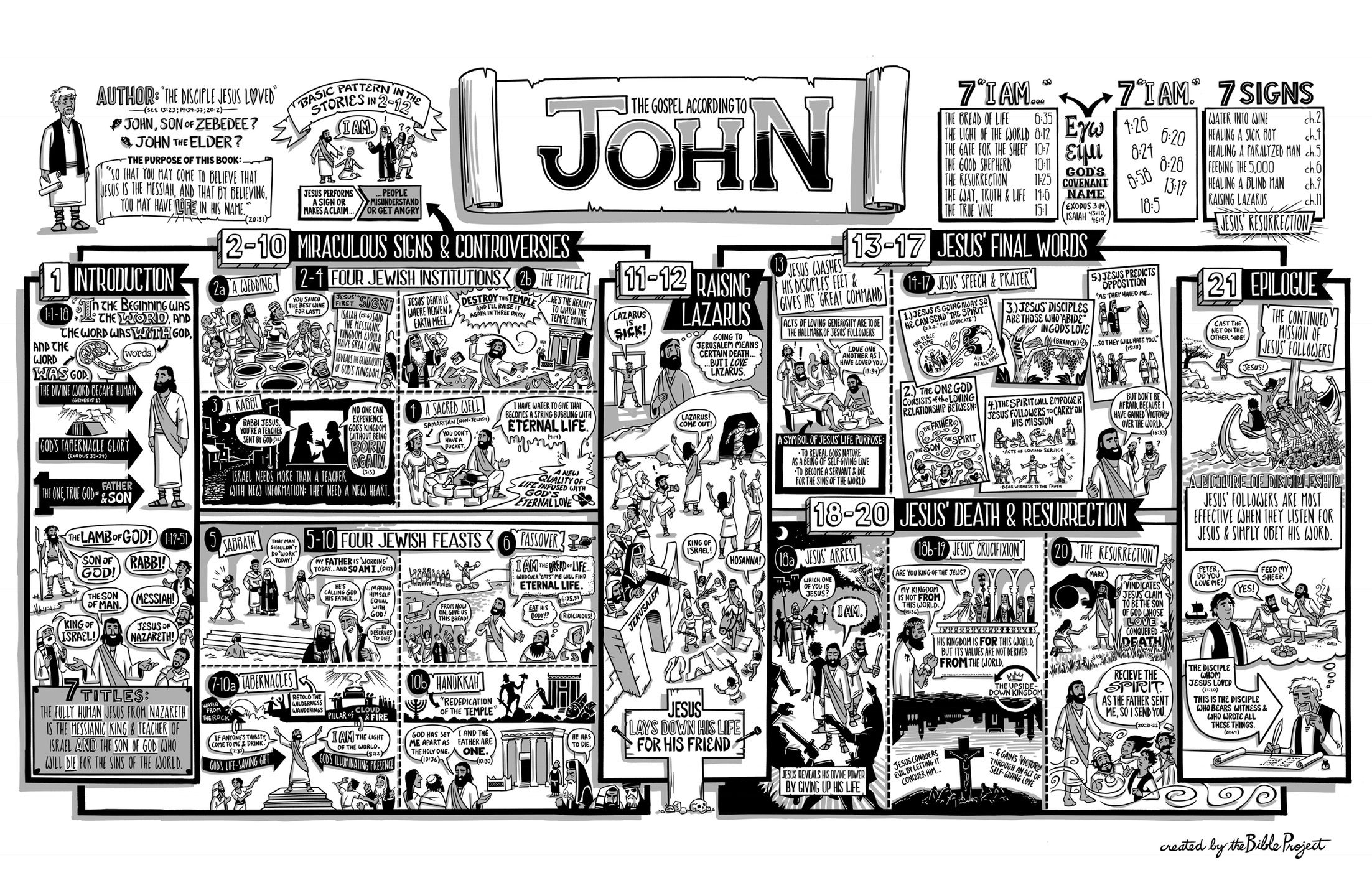
John 1

1) This is a second creation story, but the same Creator

2) The vocabulary is from Genesis 1: beginning, life, light, darkness

3) *Logos* is the Reason, Logic, Wisdom, Revelation, Sentence, Expression, Power, Will, Truth of God

4) It is the Word (see Genesis 1:3) who reveals the character of God (now it’s a person!)



**Theology of the incarnation (with help from Jonathan Edwards)**

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning . . . .*

*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.*

John 1:1-2,14

1) Incarnation isn’t just about a flesh (like chili *con carne*) – it is about our human nature

2) Without incarnation, Jesus couldn’t keep the law and so be our Second Adam

3) Without incarnation, Jesus couldn’t die for me!

4) Without incarnation, the Spirit of Christ couldn’t indwell in this new way

5) While “God with us” wasn’t new that first Advent, the incarnation was!

**Incarnation**

1) Life is incarnational (a first kind of reverse incarnation!)

. . . *the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.*

Genesis 2:7

2) ministry is incarnational (it’s not just the church that is a body)

2 *Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

Galatians 6:2

18 *Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”*

Matthew 28 (and the conclusion of Spurgeon’s “True Tabernacle” sermon)

3) The world prefers God at a distance (and it isn’t just theological)

*3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of men. 5 The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it . . . .*

*10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.*

John 1

“Safe?” said Mr. Beaver; “don’t you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. He’s the King, I tell you.”

C.S. Lewis, Mr. Beaver talking to the children in *The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe*

4 ) only when the God takes on flesh, can we become children of God (a second kind of reverse incarnation!)

*12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God*.

John 1:11-12 (see especially Jonathan Edward’s “Of Christ’s Incarnation”)

***The Word Became Flesh, John 1 (Doug’s expanded translation)***

In the beginning   
 the Word was  
 the Word was face to face with God  
 the Word was God (as the predicate precedes the subject when it has “the”)

This one was in the beginning face to face with God.

3 Through him all things came to be;   
 without him came to be not one thing.  
 4 In him was life,   
 and that life was the light of men.  
 5 The light shines in the darkness,   
 but the darkness has not understood [better, “mastered” or “overcome,” *katalambanō*] it.

6 There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John.   
 7 He came as a testimony that he might testify [note the repetition] concerning that light,   
 so that through him all men might believe.

8 He himself was not the light;   
 he came only as a witness to the light.  
 9 The true light that enlightens every person  
 was coming into the world.

10 In the world he was,   
 and the world through him came into being,  
 and the world did not recognize him.   
 11 To his own he came,   
 but his own did not receive him [or, “take him alongside with them,” *paralambanō*]  
 12 Yet to all who received [*lambanō*] him,   
 to those who believed in his name,   
 he gave the right to become children of God—   
 13 those who, not out of natural descent [“blood”]  
 nor out of desire of the will, nor out of the desire of a husband,   
 but out of God were born [*genaō* , “born”, rather than *ginomai*, “become”, which is used above]

14 And the Word became flesh   
 and made his dwelling [“pitched a tent”] among us.

We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only [“uniquely begotten,” *monogenēs*, see John 3:16]  
 who came from [as in alongside, not “out of”] the Father, full of grace and truth.

15 John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying,   
 “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me   
 because he was before me.’ ”

16 From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.   
 17 For the law was given through Moses;   
 grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

18 No one has ever seen God,   
 but God the One and Only [see *monogenēs* above]  
 who is at the Father’s side,   
 has made him known.

**Resources for further studies of John 1 and the incarnation**

The Bible Project team has videos at <https://www.monergism.com/christs-incarnation> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G-2e9mMf7E8> and poster at [*https://www.pinterest.com/pin/354165958186900874/*](https://www.pinterest.com/pin/354165958186900874/)

Spurgeon has two wonderful sermons on John 1:14 at [*https://www.monergism.com/true-tabernacle-and-its-glory-grace-and-peace*](https://www.monergism.com/true-tabernacle-and-its-glory-grace-and-peace) and [*https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjsub-K4tjtAhULt54KHddcCowQFjAEegQIBBAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spurgeongems.org%2Fvols7-9%2Fchs414.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1p52t9y\_LvuS7rpPq3R\_sI*](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&ved=2ahUKEwjsub-K4tjtAhULt54KHddcCowQFjAEegQIBBAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spurgeongems.org%2Fvols7-9%2Fchs414.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1p52t9y_LvuS7rpPq3R_sI)

Jonathan Edwards has a wonderful short piece (see below) on the necessity of the incarnation at [*https://www.monergism.com/christs-incarnation*](https://www.monergism.com/christs-incarnation)

J.C. Ryle at [*https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=2093*](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=2093)

Bob Deffinbaugh at [*https://bible.org/seriespage/1-importance-incarnation*](https://bible.org/seriespage/1-importance-incarnation)

Gordon H. Clark, “The *Logos*” at [*http://www.trinityfoundation.org/PDF/The%20Trinity%20Review%2000278%20TheLogosClark.pdf*](http://www.trinityfoundation.org/PDF/The%20Trinity%20Review%2000278%20TheLogosClark.pdf)

# Of Christ's Incarnation

### by Jonathan Edwards at [*https://www.monergism.com/christs-incarnation*](https://www.monergism.com/christs-incarnation)

Jonathan Edwards' exposition of the incarnation of Jesus is an excerpt from his '[History of the Work of Redemption](https://www.monergism.com/history-work-redemption-ebook)'.

Christ became incarnate, or, which is the same thing, became man, to put himself in a capacity for working out our redemption. For though Christ, as God, was infinitely sufficient for the work, yet to his being in an immediate capacity for it, it was needful that he should not only be God, but man. If Christ had remained only in the divine nature, he would not have been in a capacity to have purchased our salvation; not from any imperfection of the divine nature, but by reason of its absolute and infinite perfection: for Christ, merely as God, was not capable either of that obedience or suffering that was needful. The divine nature is not capable of suffering; for it is infinitely above all suffering. Neither is it capable of obedience to that law which was given to man. It is as impossible that one who is only God, should obey the law that was given to man, as it is that he should suffer man’s punishment.

And it was necessary not only that Christ should take upon him a created nature, but that he should take upon him our nature. It would not have sufficed for Christ to have become an angel, and to have obeyed and suffered in the angelic nature. But it was necessary that he should become a man, upon three accounts.

1. It was needful in order to answer the law, that the very nature to which the law was given, should obey it. Man’s law could not be answered, but by being obeyed by man. God insisted upon it, that the law which he had given to man shall be honoured, and fulfilled by the nature of man, otherwise the law could not be answered for men. The words, “Thou shalt not eat thereof,” etc. were spoken to the race of mankind, to the human nature; and therefore the human nature must fulfil them.

2. It was needful to answer the law that the nature that sinned should die. These words, “Thou shalt surely die” (Genesis 2.17) respect the human nature. The same nature to which the command was given, was that to which the threatening was directed.

3. God saw meet, that the same world which was the stage of man’s fall and ruin, should also be the stage of his redemption. We read often of his coming into the world to save sinners, and of God’s sending him into the world for this purpose.—It was needful that he should come into this sinful, miserable, undone world, in order to restore and save it. For man’s recovery, it was needful that he should come down to man, to man’s proper habitation, and that he should tabernacle with us: “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

# Did the Word become Flesh? J.C. Ryle at [*https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=2093*](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=2093)

# The passage of Scripture now before us is very short, if we measure it by words. But it is very long, if we measure it by the nature of its contents. The substance of it is so immensely important that we shall do well to give it separate and distinct consideration. This single verse contains more than enough matter for a whole exposition. The main truth which this verse teaches is the reality of our Lord Jesus Christ's incarnation, or being made man. St John tells us that "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us". The plain meaning of these words is, that our divine Saviour really took human nature upon Him, in order to save sinners. He really became a man like ourselves in all things, sin only excepted. Like ourselves, he was born of a woman, though born in a miraculous manner. Like ourselves, he grew from infancy to boyhood, and from boyhood to man's estate, both in wisdom and in stature (Luke 2:52). Like ourselves he hungered, thirsted, ate, drank, slept, was wearied, felt pain, wept, rejoiced, marvelled, was moved to anger and to compassion. Having become flesh, and taken a body, He prayed, read the Scriptures, suffered being tempted, and submitted His human will to the will of God the Father. And finally, in the same body, He really suffered and shed his blood, really died, was really buried, really rose again, and really ascended up into heaven. And yet all this time He was God as well as man! This union of two natures in Christ's one Person is doubtless one of the greatest mysteries of the Christian religion. It needs to be carefully stated. It is just one of those great truths which are not meant to be curiously pried into, but to be reverently believed. Nowhere, perhaps, shall we find a more wise and judicious statement than in the second article of the Church of England. "The Son, which is the Word of the Father, begotten from everlasting of the Father, the very and eternal God, and of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin of her substance: so that two whole and perfect natures, were joined together in one Person, that is to say, the Godhead and the manhood were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God and very man." This is a most valuable declaration, "sound speech, which cannot be condemned." But while we do not pretend to explain the union of two natures in our Lord Jesus Christ's person, we must not hesitate to fence the subject with well defined cautions. While we state most carefully what we do believe, we must not shrink from declaring boldly what we do not believe. We must never forget, that though our Lord was God and man at the same time, the divine and human natures in Him were never confounded. One nature did not swallow up the other. The two natures remained perfect and distinct. The divinity of Christ was never for a moment laid aside, although veiled. The manhood of Christ, during His lifetime, was never for a moment unlike our own, though by union with the Godhead, greatly dignified. Though perfect God, Christ has always been perfect man from the first moment of His incarnation. He that is gone into heaven, and is sitting at the Father's right hand to intercede for sinners, is man as well as God. Though perfect man, Christ never ceased to be perfect God. He that suffered for sin on the cross, and was made sin for us, was "God manifest in the flesh." The blood with which the church was purchased, is called the blood "of God." (Acts 20:28). Though He became "flesh" in the fullest sense, when He was born of the Virgin Mary, He never at any period ceased to be the Eternal Word. To say that He constantly manifested His divine nature during his earthly ministry, would, of course, be contrary to plain facts. To attempt to explain why His Godhead was sometimes veiled and at other times unveiled, while He was on earth, would be venturing on ground which we had better leave alone. But to say that at any instant of His earthly ministry He was not fully and entirely God, is nothing less than heresy. The cautions just given may at seem at first sight needless, wearisome, and hair-splitting. It is precisely the neglect of such cautions which ruins many souls. This constant undivided union of two perfect natures in Christ's Person is exactly that which gives infinite value to His mediation, and qualifies Him to be the very Mediator that sinners need. Our Mediator is One that can sympathise with us, because He is very man. And yet, at the same time, He is One who can deal with the Father for us on equal terms, because He is very God. It is the same union which gives infinite value to His righteousness, when imputed to believers. It is the righteousness of One who was God as well as man. It is the same union which gives infinite value to the atoning blood which He shed for sinners on the cross. It is the blood of One who was God as well as man. It is the same union which gives infinite value to His resurrection. When He rose again, as the Head of the body of believers, He rose not as a mere man but as God. Let these things sink deeply into our hearts. The second Adam is far greater than the first Adam was. The first Adam was only man, and so he fell. The second Adam was God as well as man and so He completely conquered. Let us leave this subject with feelings of deep gratitude and thankfulness. It is full of abounding consolation for all who know Christ by faith, and believe on Him. Did the Word become flesh? Then He is One who can be touched with the feeling of His people's infirmities, because He has suffered himself being tempted. He is almighty because He is God, and yet He can feel with us, because He is man. Did the Word become flesh? Then He can supply us with a perfect pattern and example for our daily life. Had He walked among us as an angel or a spirit, we could never have copied Him. But having dwelt among us as a man, we know that the true standard is to "walk even as he walked." (1 John 2:6). He is a perfect pattern because He is God. But He is also a pattern exactly suited to our wants, because He is man. Finally, did the Word become flesh? Then let us see in our mortal bodies a real, true dignity, and not defile them by sin. Vile and weak as our bodies may seem, it is a body which the Eternal Son of God was not ashamed to take upon Himself, and to take up to heaven. That simple fact is a pledge that He will raise our bodies at the last day, and glorify them together with His own.

The conclusion of Spurgeon’s “True Tabernacle” sermon  
at [*https://www.monergism.com/true-tabernacle-and-its-glory-grace-and-peace*](https://www.monergism.com/true-tabernacle-and-its-glory-grace-and-peace)

II. Now I want a few minutes to say to you, Come brothers and sisters, LET US AVAIL OURSELVES OF THIS TABERNACLING OF GOD AMONG US.  
  
First, then, if God has come to dwell among men by the Word made flesh *let us pitch our tent around this central tabernacle;* do not let us live as if God were a long way off. To the Israelites God was equally near from every near from every quarter of the camp. The tabernacle was in the center, and the center is equally near to every point of the circumference. No true Israelite could say, "I must go across the sea, or soar up into the air, or dive into the depths to find my God." Every Israelite could say "He dwelleth between the cherubim: I have but to go to His tabernacle to be in His presence and speak with Him." Our God is not far from any one of His people this day. We are made nigh by the blood of Christ. God is everywhere present, but there is a higher presence of effectual grace in the person of the only begotten. Do not let us feel as if we worshiped a far-off God. Let us not repine as if we were deserted. Let us not feel alone, for the Father is with us.

God is near thee, therefore cheer the sad soul.

Open thy window towards Jerusalem, as Daniel did; pray, with thine eye upon Christ, in whom all the fullness of the Godhead bodily the greatest nearness to us. God is never far away since Christ has come to dwell among men.  
  
Next, *let us resort to this central tabernacle to obtain grace to help in time of need.* Let us come to Christ without fear, for He hath grace to give, and He will give it to us abundantly whenever we need it. I like to think of the wording if my text. Leave out the parentheses, and it runs, "He dwelt among us full of grace." He could not have dwelt among such provoking ones if he had not been full of grace." But if He dwells among us full of grace, we need not fear that He will cast us away because of our sins and failings. I invite you, therefore to come boldly to Him who is full of forgiving love. I beg you to come and receive of His fullness, for grace is truly grace when it is communicated: grace which is not distributed is grace in name only. "Alas!" you say, "I want so much grace." Brother, it is treasured up in Christ for you without measure. It is placed in Him that you may have it. Do we not try to persuade the sinner that there is life in a look? Shall I need to persuade saints that grace is equally free to them? Do we tell the sinner that God is not be sought for as far away, but that He is waiting to be gracious? Must I tell the believer the same? You may at this moment obtain all the grace you need. The door is open; enter and take what you will. Do not stop till you reach home and go through a set of religious exercises; but here, and now, believe in Jesus to the full. In the center of the camp is the incarnate God; Israel had but to go the central tent to find present help in time of trouble. In the person of Christ, who hath said, "I am with you always, even to the end of the world," there is, in truth, all the grace you can possibly need. Come to this well and drink. Receive of His fullness, and go on your way rejoicing.  
  
What next shall we do? Brethren, since God in Christ is in the midst of us, *let us abide in joyful, peaceful confidence in Him who is grace and truth to us.* Do not let us wander to other sources. To whom should we go? Shall we leave our God? Shall we leave His grace, His truth? Do not let us dream that He has changed, for He is God. Do not imagine that He has removed, for He hath said. "This my rest forever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it." Do not let us conceive that His grace and truth are exhausted; for His fullness is eternal. Let us receive strong consolation, and remain steadfast, unmovable. Let us quietly rest in the firm belief that all we can want between here and heaven, all that we need this moment and in all moments yet to come, is treasured up in Christ Jesus, who is abidingly the center of His church and the manifestation of God.  
  
Once more: if this be so, and God really in Christ dwell in the midst of His people "full of grace and truth," *let us tell everybody of it.* I am sure if I had been an Israelite in the wilderness, and had met an Amalekite or an Edomite, I should have gloried in the privileges which His presence secured me. We know that Amalekites and Edomites could not have come into the house of the Lord: but nowadays, if we meet with one who is a stranger, we can tell him of our privilege, with sweet persuasion that the stranger can be brought nigh through the blood of the Lamb. Therefore let us abundantly speak of the dwelling of God with men. Let us tell to all that the Lord has come to man, not in wrath, not in judgment, but "full of grace and truth." O my unconverted hearer, come to Jesus! He is able to save to the uttermost those that come unto God by Him. Draw night to the meek and lowly Jesus, and you draw night to God. He saith, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Publish the invitation of grace to the four winds. Ring out your silver trumpets, or if you have them not, sound your ram's horns; but somehow let all people know that the tabernacle of God is with men, and He doth dwell among them. Tell out his news in the far country, that the wandering prodigal son may hear it, and cry, "I will arise, and go to my Father." God has come to men' will not come to receive grace and truth?