

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 – Christmas is about being introduced to the glory of the Christ
- 2) "Veiled" is a beautiful description of the incarnation

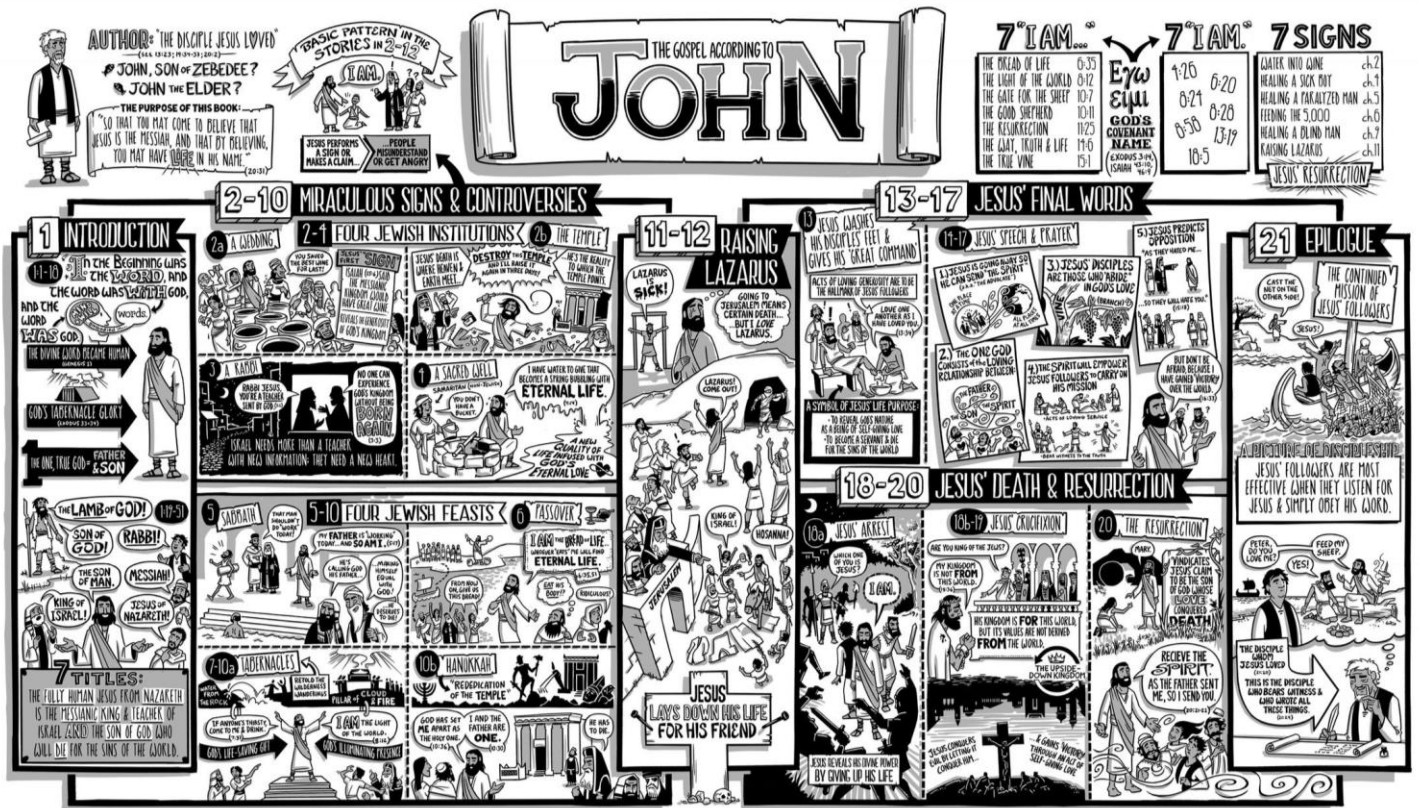
The Prologue

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.

³Through him all things came to be;
without him came to be not one thing.

⁴In him was life,
and that life was the light of men.

⁵The light shines in the darkness,
but the darkness has not understood [better, "mastered" or "overcome," *katalambanō*] it.

⁶There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John.

⁷He came as a testimony that he might testify [note the repetition] concerning that light,
so that through him all men might believe.

⁸He himself was not the light;
he came only as a witness to the light.

⁹The true light that enlightens every person
was coming into the world.

¹⁰In the world he was,
and the world through him came into being,
and the world did not recognize him.

¹¹To his own he came,
but his own did not receive him [or, "take him alongside with them," *paralambanō*]

¹²Yet to all who received [*lambanō*] him,
to those who believed in his name,
he gave the right to become children of God—

¹³those 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]

¹⁴And 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.

¹⁵John 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.'"

¹⁶From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another.

¹⁷For the law was given through Moses;
grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

¹⁸No 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/>

Spurgeon has two wonderful sermons on John 1:14 at <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-K4jtAhULt54KHddcCowQFjAEegQIBBAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.spurgeongems.org%2Fvols7-9%2Fchs414.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1p52t9y_LvuS7rpPq3R_sl

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

J.C. Ryle at <https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/articles/index.php?view=article&aid=2093>

Bob Deffinbaugh at <https://bible.org/seriespage/1-importance-incarnation>

Gordon H. Clark, “The Logos” at <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/PDF/The%20Trinity%20Review%2000278%20TheLogosClark.pdf>