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The Word Was Made Flesh (John 1:14)

Introduction

There will forever be wonders in every aspect of the Lord that no angelic, and much less humans, will be able to fully grasp and appreciate, even when we have our glorified bodies. This is due to several truths:

- a) The vastness of the theme:
 - i) This is due to the wonder of who He is: “God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Tim. 3:16); the One of whom the Spirit said: “For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col. 2:9); and the paradox of the man Jesus was, and is, God incarnate. When the Lord added humanity to His deity He lost nothing of His deity, consequently:
 1. Being God He is invisible (Col. 1:15), yet was perfectly visible as the man Jesus.
 2. Being God He whom the heavens cannot contain (1 Kgs. 8:27), yet was localized (multiple references to the Lord moving from place to place).
 3. Being God He never grows weary (Isa. 40:28), yet having added humanity to His deity He knew what it was to be weary (Jn. 4:6).
 4. Being God He cannot die, yet having added humanity to His deity, He died (1 Cor. 15:3).
 5. Being God He cannot be tempted (Jam. 1:13), yet having added humanity to His deity He knew what it was to be tempted (Matt. 4:1-11).

Unless the Holy Spirit enlightens our spiritual vision to see the wonder of God, the glory of the condescension and incarnation of the Lord will simply be a “matter-of-fact” piece of history. Such a “matter-of-factness” results in a low evaluation of divine love and the superlative wonder of the work of Calvary. We may remember the facts on a Sunday or throughout the week, or even at Christmas, but the blaze of its glory will never be appreciated.

The Consideration Of The Lord “Being Made”

There are multiple references to the expression “being made” concerning our Lord with various emphasis being emphasized. In such a consideration two matters are before me:

- a) Clarification of His “being made”
- b) The indications of this truth in the New Testament

Clarification of His being made

- a) It scarcely needs to be stated and yet it must be clarified, when the scriptures speak of the Lord “being made”, there is no thought of reluctance on His part or coercing by God. God never wants anything given to Him which is begrudged and loves a cheerful giver (2 Cor. 9:7). When this truth is applied to the Lord and spiritually entered into, then the mind and heart begin to be lost in the wonder and depth of such love. How could God be cheerful about giving His Son to the cross and afflicting Him, or, how could the Lord offer Himself cheerfully as the sole sacrifice for sins? It was not that God or Christ found delight in such an activity as if they were sadists. When the Lord offered to become that great sacrifice for sin, it was not just for our salvation, neither was it just because He had made a covenant with the house of Israel, it was for the glory of God. Facing Calvary He said, “I have glorified Thee on the earth” (Jn. 17:4). God gave His Son for the ultimate purpose of bringing all things for all eternity back into full harmony with Himself so that God is all in all (1 Cor. 15:28). John states that all things were made for the Lord’s pleasure (Rev. 4:11), and God will glorify Christ in so doing, no matter how obstinate man and satanic forces are.
- b) A much better word is “became”, which removes any slight on either His or God’s character, therefore, in some of the following quotations the clause “being made” is translated by the acceptable term, “became”.

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The indications of this truth in the New Testament

- a) In reading the scriptures we are reminded that the Lord “came”, or He was “sent”. The Lord Himself said He was sent and came to do the will of God (Jn. 4:34) and to, “seek and to save that which was lost” (Lk. 19:10). When He came, He was “made”; “became”.
 - i) “He *became* a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death” (Heb. 2:9) which indicates His condescension.
 - ii) “God sent forth His Son, made of a woman” (Gal. 4:4) which indicates His incarnation.
 - iii) “Made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and *became* in the likeness of man (Phil. 2:7) indicating His humiliation.
 - iv) “Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh” (Rom. 1:3) which indicates His designation.
 - v) “Wherefore in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren” (Heb. 2:17) which indicates His identification.
 - vi) “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us” (Gal. 3:13) which indicates His substitution.
 - vii) “And insomuch as not without an oath he was made a priest” (Heb. 7:20), indicating His glorification.
 - viii) “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36) indicating His exaltation.
 - ix) “Being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation” (Heb. 5:9) indicating His experiences as a human moving in fellowship with God.
 - x) “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament” (Heb. 7:22) indicating the security He is for all those who trust Him.

Comments

When it comes to the person and incarnation of the Lord, we are automatically in a sphere far beyond human or angelic comprehension. We are contemplating an individual who has:

- a) A glorious Name: “Then the Levites . . . said, Stand up and bless the LORD your God for ever and ever: and blessed be thy glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise” (Neh. 9:5).
- b) Having a body of glory: “Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself” (Phil. 3:21).
- c) Having power which is glorious: “Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness” (Col. 1:11).

The subject of the condescension and incarnation of Lord is absolutely fundamental to everything else about his life. Once there is a denial of the incarnation, there is an automatic denial of every miracle He ever wrought and a questioning of every claim He made or principle He taught. Such is the perfections of Himself, His words, and works, that there must never be any quibbling of any aspect of His humanity or deity, much less rationalizing about anything He ever did or claimed. Therefore, the fact of His condescension and incarnation is fundamental. The incarnation is not just an historical fact, it is the foundation stone for all else concerning Him.

In the consideration of this great subject, there are several aspects one could consider, such as:

- a) His condescension: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant (Phil. 2:6)
- b) His incarnation: “Was made in the likeness of men” (Phil. 2:7)
- c) The Annunciation: The angel said to Mary, “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God”; “And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger” (Lk. 1:35; 2:7)

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- d) The manifestation: “And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water” (Jn. 1:31)
- e) The declaration, which came from God and men.
 - i) God: “And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Matt. 3:17) which was spoken at His baptism. “While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him” (Matt. 17:5) which was spoken at His transfiguration.
 - ii) Men: “The Word was made (*became*) flesh, and dwelt among us . . . full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:14). Leaving out the parenthetical sections we could read the following glorious contrasts and developments:
 - (a) “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was made (*became*) flesh” (Jn. 1:1, 14)
 - (b) “The Word was with God and dwelt among us” (Jn. 1:1, 14)
 - (c) “The Word was God” and “full of grace and truth” (Jn. 1:1, 14).

The expression, “in the beginning was the Word” causes our thinking to that which was, what we call, the past eternity, that is, before Genesis 1. Our minds are made to go back to when there was only the three persons of the Godhead, before time or matter, or anything was ever formed. Letting our minds go back to that situation, we read, “In the beginning was the Word” and “the Word was made flesh”. We are immediately face to face with the profoundness of the condescension and incarnation of Lord. Well may we say, “Such things are too wonderful for me”. The hymn writer penned the words:

*Thou art the everlasting Word, the Father's only Son,
God manifestly seen and heard, and Heavens beloved One.*

Furthermore, by the expression, “In the beginning was the Word”, it is an indication that Christ in eternity past was the unveiling of the heart and mind of God. Therefore, it's not surprising that when He added humanity to Himself, He was and still is that which He was in eternity past. He is the unchangeable Word of God, the unveiling of God in His person, principles, prioritizing, and performances. In becoming flesh we discover that out of the mists of eternity past God comes to us with finite nearness, from the invisible to the visible.

There is a sense in which we can understand the reluctance of the people to accept that the man of Galilee was none other than their Messiah, the God of heaven. Isaiah wrote of their attitude toward Him, “There is no beauty that we should desire him” (Isa. 53:2). It is not speaking of physical attractiveness but, he did not have the aura, he did not fulfill that which they expected the Messiah to be. They had expected a Messiah who would become a mighty ruler from a noble house, who would judge and prevent all risings up against Israel, and be manifested as the King of Israel. Instead, he was born in a manger outside of Jerusalem and lived in Egypt and Galilee. To all outward appearances, He was nothing other than an ordinary man, a man who had a following, but not a mighty person with whom one could relate to someone super great. And yet, great is the reality that in that manger in Bethlehem, on that night so long ago while the inhabitants of Jerusalem went about their business; while the Romans prepared for the census to be taken; as people rushed to get lodging places, to greet friends and renew relationships; there in that stable so close to them physically but so far removed from them in spirit, there was born a tiny baby. That baby was, “over all, God blessed for ever” (Rom. 9:5). Therein we stand with unshod feet and are honored and privileged by faith to look upon the face of that little baby who, as another has said, while Mary held him in her arms, he was holding the universe in His. Is it any wonder we sing with the hymn writer as we contemplate such a truth, “Oh come let us adore him, Christ the Lord”

. . . Rowan Jennings