

Christmas in a Nutshell

December 25, 2021

Introduction

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14). If you take 40 gallons of maple sap and boil it down, you get one gallon of maple syrup. If you could take everything we know about Christmas, put it all together in a big pot, and boil it down, you would end up with this verse. This is what Christmas is all about. Just as John's **Revelation** is God's perspective on human history, the prologue of **John's Gospel** is God's perspective on the Nativity. And just as John's **Revelation** is a revelation of Jesus Christ, this verse reveals a wealth of information about our Savior.

The Word Became Flesh

That the Word would become flesh is a scandal to the Greeks and Romans. Their gods, from time to time, would assume human form and walk with their people, but no god would debase himself by becoming flesh and blood. But as Hilary of Poitiers said, "The dignity of the Godhead is preserved." The Word doesn't lose anything by becoming flesh. The flesh was elevated by being attached to the Word. The Word became flesh so we could understand God better and so Christ could be the Perfect Sacrifice for our sins. Being human, He could die in our place. Being divine, He would be pure, so His sacrifice would satisfy. Basil the Great said that we should think about His dual nature as fire and iron. Fire doesn't lose anything when it encounters iron. Rather, it gives its properties of light and heat to the iron.

And Dwelt Among Us

Emmanuel, God with us. This is what being incarnate is all about. What good would it do for the Word to become flesh if He didn't dwell with us. To be incarnate is to embody the Gospel in the world.

And We Have Seen His Glory

John saw the glory of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. And we see His glory in the star, the angels, the shepherds, Anna, Simeon, Gabriel, the voice of the Father, the Spirit, and all the countless signs. But as Chrysostom said, "We admire Him not only because of the miracles but also because of the suffering." We see His glory on the cross, where He won the greatest battle. Yes, we have seen His glory.

The Only Son from the Father

Of the Father's love begotten
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see
Evermore and evermore. – LSB 384 v. 1

Remember, this Baby in the manger is the Second Person of the Trinity. He is a man, but He is still God.

Full of Grace and Truth

He is full of grace because He is fully and naturally loved by the Father. But He is loved by the Father to share that love with the elect. He is full of truth because the knowledge of God truly shines in the Son. Because the Word took on human flesh, made His dwelling among us, showed us His glory, yet remains true God, He can say to us, *“Take, eat, this is My body; ... take, drink, this is My blood”* (**Matthew 26:26-27**). The Babe in the manger is our crucified, risen, and coming Lord. that’s **CHRISTMAS IN A NUTSHELL**.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
