

Shock and Awe..... are increasingly hard to come by in our society...

The reason for that is that hour by hour we are inundated with news (of all sorts) that **makes its living** by trying to grab our attention with something **bizarre**....

- Can you imagine if the only job you could find was a writer for a Tabloid magazine?

Talk about a Recipe for burnout.....

Imagine trying to come up with something that would actually **shock** the average American today?...

While you are in line at the grocery store...if you glance up at the headlines.....you will see some of their **lame attempts**:

**WOMAN DELIVERS OWN BABY WHILE SKYDIVING!**

**MAN-MADE TORNADOES ESCAPE FROM CIA LAB**

**SATAN CAPTURED BY GIs IN IRAQ!**

Once you reach the outer limits of what is considered **NORMAL**... in a society.... our flesh ceases to be impressed.... or stimulated.....much less **AMAZED**.....

That is why **drugs**, or sexual perversion.... or even a passion for **violence** are all dead end streets.....that will end in despair – even suicide...

By design... your flesh has **LIMITS** on what it can be thrilled by.....

Thankfully..... just the **opposite** is true of your **SOUL**.....

If you are a child of God.... having been created anew in Christ Jesus.... so that you now have a SOUL connection between you and God.....

Shock and Awe and Amazement..... not only **INCREASE** over time.... through living communion with **Jesus**....

But even the most familiar passages of the WORD of God....keep on **bursting** with **Awe** and mind blowing **attractiveness**... because **THIS** is the means God has chosen to reveal the infinite nature of Who He is to you...

Today, ... the **headline** which John is out to blow your mind with is not fabricated.... or even embellished ..... it is the most amazing **true story** in all of history:

**God Becomes Human!**

Far from being something man made.....

- This is the very **heart** of the Christian faith.....

This is... in my estimation.... a description of the **greatest miracle** of all time.....

Surpassing the creation.....(both old and new); the resurrection .....and all the other miracles in the Bible combined.....

**John 1:14**

"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."

That God would send His own Son..... to take on human flesh..... ought to take your breath away.....

(I propose) that if it does not..... you either don't actually believe it.... or you have not yet adequately considered the magnitude of this miracle....

Because faith to comprehend truths like this one does not happen naturally....

lets **pray** and ask for HELP.

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John began His gospel... by introducing the second Person of the Trinity to us....as the **WORD**....

He taught us 3 essential truths about this Word....in 1:1-3

- 1) The Word is **eternal**; He has existed prior to the Beginning of Time. (no beginning and no end) – even the angels were created at some point..... but He has always been....always will be....
- 2) The Word is **GOD**, (so we know He is infinitely **HOLY** and good..... yet He is a distinct Person from the Father.
- 3) The Word is the sole agent of **Creation**. **The Source** of everything.....(even our own life) can be traced back directly to Him.

Imagine that is ALL you know about this Person of the Godhead.....

- All very **abstract** is it not? Far off... distant...without any FORM...

Even though He is LIGHT... He is LIFE.....

He is still very very FAR removed from our **insignificant**, short lives down here on earth.....

at least until.... John says....

**AND** ..... “the Word became **flesh**..”

God Became Human!

### 1. **It was the Ultimate Stoop**

Most sports fans are impressed when they read of a franchise player who has taken time in the offseason to go hang out (and even play ball with) underprivileged kids.... in order to pass on **good will** to their city.....

We see that as a **stoop**.....

Likewise when a missionary..... lays aside all that is familiar to them..... & what is comfortable... in order to reach down into a place.... into a culture that is dwelling in spiritual **DARKNESS**.....with the light... ..

Our natural response to that is..... what a **sacrifice**!.....

But those are both dim reflections of the **ultimate** condescension ....

The Eternal Communication of God.... becoming FLESH..... is a **stoop** beyond belief.

Just ponder this reality for a moment..... by definition....

The **Author of Life** itself... the one who Himself breathed the breath of life into Adam...-> is made **mortal**...(capable of dying)

The **Infinite**....became **limited**... (weak, tired, hungry, thirsty...)

The eternal....becomes temporal....

The **span** traversed in the Word becoming flesh.... is unimaginably greater than any other distance traveled before or since.

John could have easily said.... The Word became a man... He took on a soul.....

But in order to deflate all the heresies (both of that day) and that were to follow....

He says, the Word became **FLESH**....

The Greeks (of John’s day) saw the physical world as **inherently evil**.... and the spiritual world as good....

They could have handled a God who merely **APPEARED** to be human..... who swooped down for a little while .... kind of hovered about..... sort of like a UFO....or an AVATAR....

But **no**... John says..... the Word became **FLESH**...

He was tangible.... **VISIBLE**....knowable....

He is a **FRIEND** of sinners..... you can LOVE Him as you do your own soul.....

He had SKIN.... he perspired..... he wept...

he had **bones** and lungs.... hair and teeth....

The Word became **FLESH!** (molecules connected to one another in human form)

That is..... **Empathy on Steroids**

This is a kind of mercy... and **LOVE** that the world knows NOT.

#### **Hebrews 2:14**

"Since therefore the children share in **flesh and blood**, he himself likewise **partook of the same things**, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,"

Mind blowing....

That GOD would come and IDENTIFY with us....

That in our rebellion He would choose to send us the HEAD of a New Race of People....

A KING.... to rule over the children of God called together through faith in Jesus Name...

Its **too good** to be true!

If fact, it is so bizarre....no **man made** religion dares to touch it....

**Every** false religion conceives of God as either being **too withdrawn** to do such a thing..... or they elevate mankind to the place where we all are basically gods in seed form....

**Muslims**... could never conceive of the Allah they bow to 5 times a day, even considering the possibility of defiling himself by having actual **contact** with humanity... much less **BECOMING** flesh... Jesus then (to them) was not divine... but merely another prophet

**Mormons** –on the opposite side of the spectrum.... (not hard for them to think of Jesus in the flesh) because they believe **God the Father** is nothing more than an exalted **man... with flesh and bones...** Jesus is his son by physical procreation.... by the way... they say... Lucifer was Jesus' brother...

**JW** – Essentially the arc angel Michael (therefore a created being) who became man... now that he is ascended ... he is Michael again... but he goes by Jesus...

**Hindus-** Jesus was just another **avatar** – an emanation of God... a virtual reality...and one among thousands.....

**Buddhists-** an enlightened teacher... certainly nothing unique...

That is why.... young people... as you go to college... and you meet people who are have come up with their own custom blend of Eastern Religions with Christianity....

Realize that is utterly FALSE... and from the pit....

Because The Word who became Flesh is God... and He is the **ONLY** begotten Son of the Father... full of grace and truth!

Jesus is ONE of a KIND.... not one among many...

**Christianity**...says God is Spirit.... He **is** HOLY... but He so loved the world ....

He so wanted to DELIVER us from our sin against HIM... that He sent His **only** SON!

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us...

He lived a **perfect life** among us....

He died a **real**... sacrificial... substitutionary DEATH **for** us.....

God raised Him from the dead on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day..... so that all who believe in Him would not perish but have everlasting LIFE....

This is NOT a peripheral issue.... it is the **HEARTBEAT** of the self revelation of the God of Israel.... the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- I want you to ask God to expand your capacity to comprehend it....

because this DEMONSTRATION of God's love toward you..... is designed to SHAPE and regulate the way **you relate** to all other people....

**Philippians 2:5-7**

"Have **this mind among yourselves**, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was

in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but **made himself nothing**, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men."

I do not doubt that some of you have had **conversations** already today...- (if not today, certainly yesterday)..... whether it was with your spouse...or your parents.... or someone at church... where you thought... I can **not believe** I am having to waste my time listening to and talking to this person.....

"I guess I will **stoop** down and show how merciful I am...."

Jesus says **NO**... you are self-deceived!..... you are thinking FAR TOO **highly** of yourself ...

that conversation was merely one sinner talking to another one..... **if** in fact you are condescending ..... the distance is so **miniscule** it is not worth even considering... ..

.0000000001 % difference....

I am God Almighty... Whom became Flesh ...I spanned ETERNITY....

I made myself **nothing** in order to SAVE you from eternal damnation...

Repent of your **arrogance**....

Humble yourself under God's mighty HAND....and have **THIS** mind among yourselves....

Because, the WORD did not become flesh....to have **one conversation**....

he **dwelt** among us.....(see that in the middle of v. 14?) He LIVED among us....

He **grew up**....like a tender shoot before His father..... He worked.... He was tempted...

He skinned his knee.....

The Greek wording here... literally means "he pitched his **tent**" among us...

You are aware aren't you... that Paul refers to **our bodies** as a mere **TENT** ....

- That this body is **TEMPORARY** housing..... if this tent is torn down we have another (not made with hands) eternal in the heavens...

But the tent John speaks of here is same word used to translate **TABERNACLE**... in the OT...

- Remember the Tabernacle?..... that **HOLY tent** that God commanded to be pitched in the very center of the 12 tribes of Israel as they were going through the wilderness...

After God delivered the Jews from Pharaoh.....He caused the **Shekinah** glory of His Presence to be resident with them in the tabernacle..... not ONLY **while** they were marching in obedience to His commands towards the promised land.....

- But even for 38 years while they were **walking around in circles** ....because they were being punished for their DISOBEDIENCE.

(I had never thought of that before) God was TABERNACLED among them!..... His **glory** was resident among them.... even while they were being disciplined....

**JESUS** is now the fulfillment of that OT picture.....

Jesus is the Word made flesh.... who not only dwelt among His disciples in the **good** times...

when they were following close behind him...laughing and enjoying His teaching.... eating His loaves and fishes.....

But this Incarnate Word... was WITH them ...among them... as they were denying Him before the Romans..... when He was left alone to be hung from a tree for THEIR sin.....

Jesus was dwelling **WITH** them... and is now with us..... even in our DISOBEDIENCE....

Even in our **Unfaithfulness**.....

If you are a Christian.... that is what brings you to your knees in repentance....

Jesus... the Holy Word of God who tabernacled among His people.... has now come to take up residence in **YOUR** tent...

By His Holy Spirit..... He is dwelling with you.....personally.....manifesting the goodness of His presence....

Being **patient** with you..... even when you are walking around in CIRCLES...

Like Israel....some of you may be suffering this morning because of your own disobedience.....it could be that God is disciplining you because of unfaithfulness...

Good News!

The Word who became flesh is **WITH** you.....

He has not and will not ever leave you or forsake you.... You are not ALONE.... God has bridged the gap to come be with you!

God Became Human!

## 2. To Reveal His Personal Beauty

America **loves** beautiful people.....beautiful on the outside that is.....

Whether airbrushed or surgically improved..... we are enamored with good looks...

We have beauty pageants... beauty contests....

All to bring GLORY to particular persons..... because we find them attractive.....

That's NATURAL, ... to like beauty.....

There is a type of beauty ...once you behold it, you can not take your eyes off of it...

It is called...**Glory** = the splendor of God's personhood...

That is why the deepest desire of your heart is actually..... to **SEE God**.....

You might try to fill it with lesser things you find attractive.....

But your soul was designed to LOVE the Personal Beauty of God.

That is why...as Moses drew near to God in prayer.... the desire of his heart spilled out.....

### **Exodus 33:18**

"Moses said, "Please, **show me** your glory."

If you are familiar with that passage... God's answer was.... I am going to make my goodness pass before you... and I am going to proclaim **my NAME**... the LORD.....

But you **can not** see my face.....

I will hide you in the cleft of the Rock and make my glory pass by you.... and you will see my backside but not my face... for no man can see my face and live....

The **wattage** of the astounding beauty of God the Father... is too much for us to handle.....

So.... God sent His Son... clothed in human flesh.... to show us **His FACE**.....

**John 1:14b**

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have **seen his glory**, glory as of the only Son from the Father,

**How** did John see His glory?

First of all.... the word the ESV translates "seen" (other translations – beheld) = to see with your own eyes....

It never (in the NT) refers to a vision or a dream....

So this glory... was manifested in a **PHYSICAL** way....

and **Yet**.....we do not get the impression....from the Bible..... that Jesus was a **handsome** man....

Isaiah gives just the opposite impression....

**Isaiah 53:2-3**

"For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and **no beauty that we should desire him**. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not."

Nobody in Jesus' graduating class was picking him most likely to succeed...

John says.... Yes... it was in a regular **old TENT**.... but we saw His **GLORY!**

Part of what he is referring to is that **golden** day.... when Jesus took he and Peter and James up on the mountain and was **transfigured** before them....

God pulled back the tent flap... (if you will)...

And Jesus' face shone like the **sun**, and his clothes became white as light.....where they heard the Father say... this is my beloved son...Who gives me **great pleasure**....

That was PART of what John was describing here..... but not all.....

the **MAIN** type of beauty he was testifying about....was the amazing display of God's infinite **GOODNESS**.... "manifesting itself in normal human conditions"

In other words... against the **DARK** backdrop of ordinary selfish people..... Jesus was a brilliant display of Who GOD is...

J.B. Lightfoot – "He did not glisten in any worldly pomp or grandeur, according to what the Jewish nation fondly dreamed their Messiah would do. But He was dressed with the glory of holiness, grace, truth, and the power of miracles."

Jesus came and LOVED those who **hated** him without a cause...

Jesus came and touched the OUTCASTS... dined with the wicked.... and forgave the sexually immoral.

God's glorious GOODNESS was seen in Jesus **overriding evil** .... delivering the oppressed and healing the sick...

The Personal Beauty of God was seen... in Jesus **servicing** those whom He had created...

He washed their feet....

**Ultimately...** His glory was seen in Him laying down His life for His friends....

And drinking the cup of wrath that had their name on it.... because of sin.

- In Jesus.... **we behold the beauty** ... of the Person of God....

He was... as Paul will later describe him.... The **MAN of Heaven**..... come to earth...to die for the men of **DUST**.

John testified:... we have seen the **ONE and only!** And we are stricken by the **beauty** of His LIFE!...

We are still seeing that glory today..... as Jesus lives His resurrected life (in some measure) through the children of God in this room....

ONE DAY... we will see His glorious FACE! The One and Only... **full** of grace and truth..

God Became Human!

### 3. To Open Up the Household of God

One of April's favorite activities is to go to Open Houses.... She says she just enjoys seeing the floor plans....and gets decorating ideas....

About the only thing I like about open houses are the cookies....

But the very nature of an open house.... is that all of what that potential home has to offer is put on display....

All of its beauty is seen (inside and out)...

God sent His Son into the world to reveal the all the treasure that is in His household....

so that you can plunder it by **FAITH**....

Through Jesus ... God is showing off the beauty of His **GRACE**.....

Giving **LIFE** to any sinner who will repent of sin... and trust in Jesus....

Through Jesus.... He is unveiling the **TRUTH** of Who He is...

over against every FALSE idea of what is being called GOD.... today...

And through Jesus.....

God is OPENING up His household....inviting you in to enjoy the goodness of His glory!

... through a relationship with His Son....

It is God's Open house today.....

He wants you to see the FULLNESS of the Godhead ....in the person of Jesus.

**John 14:6-7**

"Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."