

The Word Became Flesh

By Rt. Rev. David H. Lindrooth

12/12/2021

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory (John 1:14).

This morning, we reflect on a veiled statement about the Advent made by John some 2000 years ago. The statement is written in ancient Greek, a language that is filled with nuance and subtlety. It is difficult to translate into English without losing its full significance. But let's try.

“The Word became flesh” uses the Greek term **“Logos”** for “word. It doesn't just mean “Word,” but means ‘the central principal governing the universe’, or, ‘the central, transcendent Rationality which produces all things’. This concept of Logos helps us see the tie between the Word, with Its Divine internal living content, and the Soul of the Lord whose mission was the salvation for all humanity.

This “Logos” or Soul governing the Lord was this ‘transcendent Rationality also governing everything in the universe. Imagine the “Divine Wisdom directing all creative life itself”, becoming Human and **‘dwelling among us’**.

To **behold the glory of the Lord** reflects so many of the ancient prophecies contained in the Old Testament and is suggestive of the infinite creative forces of love and wisdom, spiritual light, and eternal life becoming truly and perceptibly present and available in our human daily reality.

And so, to paraphrase the verse from John, our Christmas season celebrates the Logos, the Central Governing Principal of all, with Its Wisdom which guides the universe, coming to live with us sharing His unique human gifts in eminently practical ways that allow us to experience His Glory and transcendent life. God was already living as the creative force for the Universe before the advent, and now that life was becoming newly available to humanity.

We could say that is truly glorious news. And is worth celebrating!

Here, in our reading, we are invited to share the Glory of the only begotten Son. In Luke, the shepherds see the angels enveloped in **Glory** of the Lord, and then spread the good news, **glorifying God**. I love the tie between the experience of Glory with its brilliant light and the descriptions of incarnation. The word “glory” is celebratory and joyful; it is also connected with enlightenment. Consider this passage from the teachings of the New Church about the glory experienced in heaven: We read, **“The Glory of heaven surpasses all worldly magnificence so completely that one cannot begin to compare it with earthly glory.... The glory of heaven consists in that which is of God shining out of every individual thing to be seen there, and in the perception of Divine realities and in the wisdom gained from that perception” (AC 5428).**

The Lord came on earth to share that inner heavenly, incomprehensibly magnificent glory (in other words His Divine Love and Wisdom) with us - in our individual lives here and now, available with His Word to help us even when we feel challenged and are struggling.

“**Glory**” is most basically a reference to light. And of course, we are really speaking about spiritual or heavenly light. Consider the prophecy from Isaiah 9 that we used in the recitation. **“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined.”** And then later in the same chapter: **“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. And the government shall be upon His shoulder. And His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace and of the increase of His government and peace there will be no end.**

The message is that the Lord, through His coming to earth shows up. He offers us His shining truths that radiate the warmth of His love. This Divine presence has the power to reach us, lift us up and help us when we find that we dwell in the darkness of despair or are imprisoned in the shadow of death. In those moments of life when we need Him most, He can be by our sides.

He entered the world as a Child with “the Logos” as His soul. And because He lived as a Human, He gives us the ability to make use of and receive His Divine gifts to us. Referring to that prophecy:

Being **Wonderful**, He shares the Wonder of His creation;
As the Divine Counsellor, His teachings always show us the wisdom of life;
As **the Mighty God**, He guards with infinite power protecting our souls when attacked;
As our **Everlasting Father**, He is always present watching over us;
And regardless of the external trials we face on earth, He is our **Prince of Peace**.

The Lord’s birth was the beginning of a strong, ever-lasting and clear vision of truth on earth that can guide us to salvation.

But what if the Word had **not** been made flesh? What if the Lord, with His unique power to govern all things of the universe had not come to dwell with us giving us access to His glory and might? The short answer is without a Divinely Human presence of that Logos, the human race would have lost that sense of Wonder and Glory, but more seriously, it would have lost what it means to be truly human.

Without the connection with the Divine, without the Lord, we would have sunk gradually into our own impenetrable darkness. Our life on this planet would be extinguished by our own growing persuasion that the only purpose of life is self-gratification – ultimately a persuasion that can never offer satisfaction because it is an effort that is in itself is dead.

The darkness caused by this selfishness is simple to understand. When we are focused on satisfying the demands of self-absorbed impulses, our materialism effectively blocks the light of the spiritual sun, all light of truth from the Lord.

To quote the Gospel of John, **“The light shined in the darkness and the darkness comprehended it not”** meaning that from a spiritual perspective, when we are absorbed by the demands made on us for self-satisfaction, these demands are so all encompassing that they block out the spiritual light being from the Lord.

From a historic perspective what happened at the time of the advent was that the Scriptures as they existed at that time had been so twisted and abused for materialistic purposes that they no longer were able to help people see the light and life of God.

The Advent was the Lord's answer to this. He renewed the Scriptures by showing their Divine Soul (or Logos) and by showing the power that the Word offers to connect people to an inner understanding of Divine Life. That is the true Glory of Christmas.

Christmas is an opportunity for us as individuals come together and deepen the experience the Word being made flesh. It is a chance for us to step out of our materialistic impulses and behold the Logos, that Reigning Purpose and Soul of God and invite God to dwell among us as the Divine Human so that we can truly behold His glory.

We can do this by focusing on Lord Himself and inviting Him to have a greater presence and impact in our life.

The miracle of the Lord's birth was that within that human life born on Christmas morning was the soul of the entire universe. The Logos – the divine wisdom that governs the creative forces of the Universe since before time began – the love that desires to bless each member of the Lord's creation, the love that reaches out and compassionately holds every human being on this planet out of a desire to bless them and save them.

Yet there is a difference between acknowledging His presence, and cooperating in partnership with Him. If you want to truly experience the Lord in your life, you need partnership. We are only human to the degree that we receive His Human life. And we only receive the Lord's infinite spiritual life to the degree that we cooperate with Him. That means incorporating the Lord's purposes in with our own and allowing Him through the Truths of His word to influence us.

The book “the Divine Love and Wisdom puts it this way: **“Life is a constant striving toward a human form. The reason this effort is toward a human form is that God is a Human, and Divine Love and Wisdom is the life of that Human. This is the source of every trace of life”** (DLW 400). Every trace of human life comes from the Lord through His Love and His wisdom!!!!

Another passage from the Divine Love and Wisdom: **“It is an item of angelic wisdom that the human mind, both in general and in every last detail is in a constant effort toward the human form, because God is Human.”** (DLW 388) Because the Lord is the perfect Human – and because we were created in His image and Likeness: Each of us is perfectly created capable of spiritually receiving everything the Lord has to offer! (DLW 287). But we must recognize that we are truly Human only to the degree that we receive the Lord's Life and not try to fabricate it ourselves.

How do we do that? We do it by modelling our lives on the Lord and learning to use our natural gifts to love the neighbor. Consider this teaching: **“A person is not born for the sake of himself but for the sake of others.”** (TCR 406) This is the key bringing the Lord into our lives! It is what shifts our relationship from a simple acknowledgement of the Lord to a full and rich sense that He is present in our lives.

So, this morning, I invite you to join in our Christmas preparation with an effort to be as truly human as possible. Let us prepare together by sharing the Glory of the Human God, the One shows us how to live from His Logos, the wisdom formed before the beginning of the universe. Let us articulate that wisdom in simple ways that demonstrate His unceasing Divine love and His desire to bless His Children.

-Amen