

THE WORD BECAME FLESH

John 1:14

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh

1 Tim 6:14-16 ...until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ which God will bring about in His own time. *He is* the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, ¹⁶ the only One who has immortality, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom none of mankind has seen or can see, to whom be honor and eternal might. Amen.

0. INTRO: GOD↔MAN GAP

- Christmas: customs, culture, feelings ↔ faith, Bible, theology
- map ↔ road :: theology ↔ life (on road without map→lost; on map without walking→dead)
- we have to *live* but also to know *how* and *why*! → theology of Christmas

0.1 WHY IT IS IMPORTANT

Aber freilich für diese Zeit, welche das Bild der Sache, die Kopie dem Original, die Vorstellung der Wirklichkeit, den Schein dem Wesen vorzieht, ist diese Verwandlung, well Enttäuschung, absolute Verächtung oder doch ruchlose Profanation; denn heilig ist ihr nur die Illusion, profan aber die Wahrheit. Ja, die Heiligkeit steigt in ihren Augen in demselben Masse, als die Wahrheit ab- und die Illusion zunimmt, so dass der höchste Grad der Illusion für sie auch der höchste Grad der Heiligkeit ist.¹

- God-man gap: (1) ontological (2) ethical (3) positional/functional
- Man: spiritually dead for the *Real God* → idolatry (CALVIN: Whence we may infer, that the mind [*ingenium*] of man is, if I may be allowed the expression, a perpetual manufactory of idols. [*perpetuam ...idolorum fabricam*]).²

In our culture Christmas is viewed as times of joy – even though some people suffer more during this time than any other time.

Customs in general require explanation – the Christmas customs including.

Christmas – remembering Jesus' birth, His incarnation – we know what Christmas is all about, but it's good to look deeper so that we could admire God more deeply for what He's done

Biblically, Christmas leads us to eternity

John 1:14 = the essence of Christmas – God/the Word/light/ultimate wisdom became human/humiliating body

0.2 HOW WE CAN THINK ABOUT IT

- the Word → light
- **John 1:3-5** All things were *created* through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created.^a ⁴ *Life* was in Him,¹ and that life was the *light of men*.⁵ That light shines in the darkness, yet the darkness did not overcome¹ it.

1. WHAT IT MEANS IN THEOLOGY/PHILOSOPHY

- **Col 2:9** For in Him the entire fullness of God's nature dwells bodily

¹ FEUERBACH, L. *Das Wesen des Christentums*, p. 32.

² CALVIN, J. *Institutes 1.11.8*.

- **John 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
Gn 2:7

1.1 GOD → HUMAN BEING

- ANSELM: God is "...that than which a greater cannot be thought..." (*id ipsum quo maius cogitari nequit*,)³ – your idea depends on your hierarchy of values!

1.1.1 THE TENSION

- absolute opposites? – idealism ↔ materialism; power ↔ weakness; knowledge ↔ ignorance; blessedness ↔ troubles; life ↔ death;
- "LOGOS" ...embodies a conception or idea (THAYER);
- "SARX" *the body*, not designating it, however, as a skilful combination of related parts ('an organism,' which is denoted by the word *σωμα*), but signifying the material or substance of the living body

1.1.2 SOLUTIONS

- monism: deny spirituality (atheism...)
- move up: deny body (Platonism; Christian Science; philosophy)
- move down: *INCARNATION* – God's solution

1.2 INFINITE MIND → FINITE REALITY

- *Finitum non capax infiniti.*
- **Col 2:9** For in Him the entire **fullness of God's** nature⁴ dwells bodily⁵

1.3 ETERNITY → TIME

- **1 Tim 6:16** the only One who has *immortality*, dwelling in unapproachable light, whom none of mankind has seen or can see, to whom be honor and eternal might.

2. WHAT IT MEANS FOR US

2.1 CONTRA

2.1.1 ...THE CRITIQUE OF CREATION (PLATONISM)

- creation is *good!*
- not just an *epiphany*⁶ of God as a human being (like to Abraham)
- God can be *organically* united with his creation!

2.1.2 ...CRITIQUE OF THE INCARNATION (DOCETISM)

- not just an *epiphany*⁷ of God as a human being (like to Abraham)
- became = change for ever

2.1.3 ...EXCUSES FROM OBEDIENCE (ANTINOMIANISM)

- "...*tertius usus legis*, the third use of the law. The law is a rule of life for believers, reminding them of their duties and leading them in the way of life and salvation. This third use of the law is denied by the Antinomians."⁸

³ ANSELM *Proslogion* 3.

⁴ Or the deity

⁵ nature lives in a human body

⁶ an appearance or manifestation especially of a divine being (Webster)

⁷ an appearance or manifestation especially of a divine being (Webster)

⁸ BERKHOF, L. *Systematic Theology* p. 615.

Is it not clear that where the law exists, where the *parere* exists, there is not and cannot be any freedom, that freedom is inextricably bound to that *jubere* which we have become accustomed to consider as the source of all errors, all absurdities, and all that is forbidden?⁹

- it is possible to live according to the will of God → **Heb 11:7** through his faith that Noah ... His faith was a judgement on the world,

2.2 PRO

2.2.1 ...OUR UNITY WITH GOD

- search for God – close to you (Rom 10)
- **Heb 2:11** For consecrator and consecrated are all of the same stock; that is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers

2.2.2 ...THE LOVE OF GOD

- identification → John 3:16
- **Gal 4:4** But when the completion of the time came, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,

2.2.3 ...REDEMPTION

- **Ecc 3:11** He has also put eternity in their hearts → desires
- **Heb 2:14** Now since the children have flesh and blood in common, He also shared in these, so that through His death He might destroy the one holding the power of death-- that is, the Devil--¹⁵ and free those who were held in slavery all their lives by the fear of death.

God who had no body, exists independently on everything became a dependent human – a body which needed to eat, sleep etc. and has bridged the gap between men and God.

God saw that people were not able to reach Him so He came down to their level. He exchanged His glory for a place full of hatred and murders knowing he'd be killed.

Jesus came and dealt with our real problems. The unlimited God became limited in a human body.

We don't know the exact time of Jesus' birth but we remember it at Christmas.

He's taken upon Himself everything that we want to get rid of – we can come to Him as to our brother. When I don't like being created in the way I am or created at all, or I don't know what the future will hold – I need to remember that the Creator became one of the created, has endured God's judgment, has taken my sins so that I wouldn't need to fear anything.

God's close to me and I can meet Him in Jesus – that's what Christmas is about. He changes my mind and takes away the idols of my mind. God gave Himself – we remember it by giving each other gifts at Christmas.

3. CONCLUSION

- To begin to understand Christmas, we need to see the gap between us and God.
- The greatness of Christmas is in God's initiative to bridge the gap by the hardest way imaginable.
- To really enjoy Christmas we have to experience Christ's Easter.

⁹ SHESTOV, L. *Athens and Jerusalem*, p. 72.