

# The Glorious Uniqueness of Jesus

John 1:14-18

**BI: The mystery and glory of the incarnation of Christ should drive our souls to wonder, awe and praise.**

Read John 1:14-18

We have invested four weeks of study so far trying to get our arms around what the apostle John wants to communicate to us about Jesus' qualifications. He is taking great pains to explain who Jesus is so that we may "keep believing" that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing, we might have life in his name (John 20:30-31). We have learned so much about Him in our study of the first 13 verses, but today we come to a statement that reveals the main point that John has been building up to since the first words of verse one.

John began his Gospel by explaining that the beginning of all things is found in the Logos (Word) which was with God in the beginning, and is, in fact, God who created all things and sustains all things. This Logos, John explains, is the origin of Life and came to the world as the Light that exposes the darkness of sinful humanity.

To the original readers, this would have been shocking stuff! This would have been beyond amazing! The Greeks had always thought of the Logos as an impersonal force, but here John is revealing that the Logos is actually God, and that God had come to earth. But the point that would have been most startling to the original readers is found in the first four words of verse 14. Here John simply says, "The Word became flesh." "The Logos became flesh."

These four words represent the most significant and concise statement of the incarnation of Christ anywhere in the Bible. It tells us that God took on humanity; the infinite became finite; eternity entered time; the invisible became visible (Col. 1:15); the Creator entered His creation (MacArthur, p. 39). This is unfathomable! It's a revelation that shatters the limits of man's ability to comprehend. But it is the chief statement of the entire prologue. It is the great statement to which the whole introduction of John has been directed and the fountain from which the rest of this Gospel flows.

Why is Jesus qualified to be the object of your faith? Because He is nothing less than God in flesh. There is no one like Him. Not even close. So this morning I want to just spend a few minutes helping us think about the glorious uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

## **I. Jesus' Was Gloriously Unique in His Humanity:**

1. Read v. 14

2. What made the Jesus' nature so unique? It is unique because He is both God and man. In the theological world this is usually referred to as the "Hypostatic Union." In other words, it is the union of Deity and humanity in one Person.

3. "The Logos became flesh." The word "became" here is important. When John says the Word *became* flesh, he doesn't mean it in the sense that Jesus ceased being one thing and became

another. It doesn't mean He ceased being God in to become a man. For example, when Lot's wife *became* a pillar of salt she ceased to be the wife of Lot. However, when Lot *became* the father of Moab, he did not cease to be Lot. Even so, when the Word *became* flesh, it did not cease to be the Word (Hendriksen, p. 84).

4. So you see, when Jesus came to earth, He was still the Logos. But now He was the Logos in flesh. Jesus became everything that human beings are (yet without sin). And yet, in becoming human He retained everything that it means to be God.

5. Beloved, this is beyond amazing, and we don't have time this morning to consider the full significance of Jesus' dual nature, but there is one thing here that I want us to see.

6. That fact that he humbled himself to become "flesh" should drive our souls to worship. Think about the incredible condescension that He endured to become one of us. John says, "The Logos became *flesh*." Now that's interesting. Why didn't he say, "The Logos became a man?" Some theologians believe that John chose this word to emphasize the extent to which Jesus humbled Himself to become one of us.

7. The term "flesh" has a variety of definitions in the N.T. but here it refers to human nature. Not a sinful nature, but one which, living in a world under the curse of sin, was subject to weariness, pain, misery, and death. John Calvin writes that "When Scripture speaks of man contemptuously, it calls him *flesh*. Now, though there be so wide a distance between the spiritual glory of the Logos of God and the abominable filth of our *flesh*, yet the Son of God stooped so low as to take upon Himself that *flesh*, subject to the same miseries. He became a mortal man.

8. Consider for a moment what it would take for you to fully identify with people whom you perceive to be beneath you. Consider the filthy homeless person you will see on the street corner begging money on your way home from church today. Think about the dirt poor people who live in the garbage dumps of Haiti? Or what about the thought of moving in among the Muslims of Libya where the U.S. ambassador was just murdered. What would it take for you to leave the comforts and privileges of your home here in Fort Worth, TX, and fully immerse yourself among people like that? Most of us would never even consider doing such a radical thing. We love our comforts. We love living among people who are just like us. The places I have described are repulsive to us! And yet, the condescension of Christ to take on *flesh* and live among us required Him to stoop infinitely farther than anything I have just described. And yet when the fullness of time came, Jesus didn't hesitate.

9. Does that make you want to worship and adore Him? Jesus' condescension reveals His glory. Do Jesus' Humanity is Gloriously Unique.

## **II. Jesus' Was Gloriously Unique in His Deity:**

1. Now I realize that saying Jesus' deity is unique is to make an absurdly obvious statement. Of course its unique. No other person in human history could legitimately claim to be God. Nevertheless, the way John presents Jesus' deity here reveals with such subtlety, it is profoundly powerful.

2. John says, "The Logos became flesh and *dwelt* among us." The word for *dwelt* here is the GK

word “skēnōō” (σκηνώω) which means “to live in a tent or tabernacle.” Now, believe it or not, this one little word causes this whole passage to burst into life.

3. What is John alluding to when he says the *Logos* “tabernacled” among us? We get a clue further down in the text (17) where he mentions the law of God and Moses. What does Moses and the law of God have to do with a tabernacle. Everything!

4. You remember your O.T. history, right? James Boice states it plainly when he writes, “The word refers beyond any question to the portable wilderness tabernacle or temple of the Hebrew nation. The tabernacle was the center of their worship and the most important single object in their camp” (Boice, p. 86).

5. Let’s take just a moment to refresh on what the tabernacle was all about. It consisted of a large rectangular wall of curtains on the outside. No one but the priests were allowed in. Stepping through the main doorway of this curtain wall, however, you would discover another rectangular structure that was a full tent. In front of the tent (tabernacle) stood a large altar for burnt offerings. Beside that was a large basin full of water called the Laver or the Sea.

6. Stepping just inside the tent was a large room with wood-paneled walls that were covered in gold. This was known as the Holy Place. Against the wall to the right was a table called the Table of Showbread, where there were twelve loafs of bread representing the twelve tribes of Israel. Against the opposite golden wall was a large lampstand that gave off light for the priests to see by while ministering in the tabernacle. Straight ahead, up against a large curtain that separated the Holy Place from a smaller room behind it stood an incense altar that represented the prayers of the people.

7. Passing through that curtain (which was something only the High Priest could do once a year) we enter a much smaller room called the Most Holy Place, or the Holy of Holies. This room contained only one thing; namely, the golden Ark of the Covenant which represented the very presence of God.

8. What does this have to do with Jesus? Everything! You see, everything about the temple pointed to the coming Messiah. The laver was the instrument of physical cleansing. But in Christ, we have been cleansed of all our sin so that we can enter the presence of God. Hebrews 10:21–22 “since *we have* a great priest over the house of God [that’s Jesus],<sup>22</sup> let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled *clean* from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

9. The altar of burnt offerings was the place where animals were offered to God to cover sin. But Christ was the ultimate sacrifice for sin. John the Baptist spoke of Jesus when He said, “Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

10. Inside the tabernacle, the table of showbread represented God’s provision of food for Israel in the desert. But Jesus announced, John 6:35 “I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger.” And He said this while speaking to the Pharisees about God’s provision of manna for the ancient Israelites in the wilderness.

11. On the other side of the room was the golden lamp-stand which provided all the light that was needed within the tabernacle. And Jesus said of Himself, (John 8:12) “I am the Light of the

world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

9. Then there was the alter of Incense where the priests would pray for the people. And the author of Hebrews tells us that Jesus, “because He [lives] forever, holds His priesthood permanently.<sup>25</sup> Therefore He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (Heb. 7:24–25).

10. Then, most important of all, the Holy of Holies contained the Ark of the Covenant which represented the very presence of God. But we don’t need a golden Ark to represent God any more. We have Christ! He is the living revelation of God. In John 14:9 Jesus said, “Have I been so long with you, and *yet* you have not come to know Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”

11. I have often tried to imagine what it must have been like for the High Priest to step behind the curtain into the Most Holy place. The walls were all covered in solid gold and reflected the light of the lamp-stand just outside. But then, I wonder if there needed to be any light in that little room at all, for the very Shekinah glory of God settled there in what appeared as something like fire and smoke. It had to be an absolutely overwhelming experience to step into the room and see the very glory of God!

12. But look at what John says: “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory...” Just as God pitched His tent right in the middle of the nation of Israel and traveled with them 40 years in the wilderness, so the Logos came in the Person of Christ and “pitched His tent” among Israel for over 30 years. And John says, “We beheld His glory.”

13. It must have been a glorious thing just to walk with Him and listen to Him teach and watch him cleanse the lepers, give sight to the blind, heal the deaf and the lame, calm the storm, and give life to the dead. But beyond all that, John got to be one of the three disciples who were there on the mountain when Jesus was transformed right before their very eyes. Turn to Matt. 17:1-6. (Read).

14. Jesus was gloriously unique in his Humanity and Deity...

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