

Last week—we examined through v13—bringing us this morning to v14, and one of the most amazing statements in all of Scripture—but—before I come to verse 14—I want to first say a brief word, byway of introduction, about John's prologue—throughout these 18 verses, John describes the coming of Christ as [1] a new creation, [2] a new covenant...

[1] A new creation—throughout, especially the first 5 verses—John uses imagery and language originally used of the first creation—[a] in the beginning (vv1-2), [b] all things were made or created (v3), [c] light shining within the darkness (vv4-5)—thus—scripture often speaks about salvation as a second or new creation—a redemption that reverses all that happened through the fall—a creation with a new heaven and earth—paradise restored...

[2] A new covenant—from v6 through v18—John continues his comparison, not between the two creations, but two covenants—[a] the children or people of God (vv12-13)—under the OC the people of God consisted of those physical born into the covenant, under the NC, only those born again become covenant members, [b] tabernacle (v14)—as we shall see in a minute, the Greek word found in v14 is the same used throughout the Greek OT, for tabernacle, here we learn that Christ himself is the tabernacle in and through which He dwells with His people, [c] Moses and the law, Christ and grace (vv15-18)—here John contrasts both covenants, showing what was shadowed in Moses is realized in Christ...

I. The Text Explained

II. The Text Expanded—or, Five ways in which the tabernacle typified Christ

I. The Text Explained

1. Here I simply want to move through each of the five phrases in v14—offering a brief explanation of each one...
2. [1] The word became flesh—this simply phrase, carries within it, all of the profound mysteries of the incarnation...
3. [a] He became what He wasn't—"The word became flesh"—that is—He took to Himself real human nature...
4. Now—you may know that the NT uses the term "flesh" is two ways—of sinful principle and human nature...
5. Here—of course—it refers to the second of these—to human nature in its fallen or weak condition—sin excepted...
6. He took to Himself a real human nature—a soul and body—that He might mediate between God and men...
7. [b] He remained what He was—"The word became flesh"—but He never ceased being the eternal word of God...
8. This is obvious in that—God can never change with regards to His nature essential being—He's immutable...
9. Thus—when the second person of the Trinity—became man—He never ceased being all that He was from eternity...
10. Two natures—one fully man the other fully divine—not mixed or confounded—joined together in one person...
11. Thus—the incarnation must be viewed as an addition and not subtraction—He became what He was not—while remaining what He was...
12. Now—I want to mention in passing—that John could have used a different word than the Greek word *sarx* [(flesh)]...
13. It seems John likely had in mind a dangerous first century heresy—that denied Christ had a real human nature...
14. Thus—John uses the more coarse or stronger word "flesh"—so that his point would be clear—the word became flesh...
15. 1Jn.4:1-3—"Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. 2 By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that

- confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, 3 and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the *spirit* of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world [2Jn.1:7]..."
16. [2] He dwelt among us—the Gk word rendered "dwelt" literally means—"to dwell, pitch a tent or tabernacle..."
 17. It's the verb form of the noun translated "tabernacle"—it could be rendered—"to tabernacle or tabernacled..."
 18. YLT—"And the Word became flesh, and did tabernacle among us, and we beheld his glory, glory as of an only begotten of a father, full of grace and truth..."
 19. Rev.13:6—"Then he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme His name, His tabernacle [noun], and those who dwell [verb] in heaven..."
 20. Rev.21:3—"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle [noun] of God *is* with men, and He will dwell [verb] with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them *and be* their God..."
 21. Thus—the OT tabernacle was typical of Christ's human nature—the word becoming flesh and dwelling among us...
 22. Now—this goes back to what I mentioned in the introduction—John is comparing two different covenants...
 23. The OC was made with the physical nation of Israel, was entered through physical birth and had a physical tabernacle...
 24. The NC is made with spiritual Israel, is entered through a new or spiritual birth, and has Christ as its tabernacle...
 25. John will make this contrast more explicit in v17—"For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ..."
 26. But before he does that—he drops several hints, both regards to entrance into the covenants and their respective tabernacles...
 27. Ezek.37:26-27—"Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them, and it shall be an everlasting covenant with them; I will establish them and multiply them, and I will set My sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; indeed I will be their God, and they shall be My people..."
 28. [3] We beheld His glory—that is—John, and the other disciples, beheld His magnificence, excellence, and splendor...
 29. Now—I want to suggest that the glory John beheld—can be attached with earlier and later parts of the verse...
 30. That is—it's the glory of—"the word became flesh"—and—"the glory as of the only begotten of the Father"...
 31. [a] His essential glory—that is—that glory of Christ that belongs to Him as the eternally begotten Son of God...
 32. By "essential glory" I mean more than merely necessary—but that glory that belongs to God's very essence...
 33. V14—"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father..."
 34. That is—the glory that John beheld was the glory of divinity—he beheld in Christ the glory of God's only Son...
 35. Pink—"From the beginning to the end of His earthly life and ministry the Deity of the Lord Jesus was plainly evidenced. His supernatural birth, His personal excellencies, His matchless teaching, His wondrous miracles, His death and resurrection, all proclaimed Him as the Son of God..."
 36. [b] His official glory—by "official glory" I refer to that glory associated with Christ as the Godman mediator...
 37. 2Pet.1:16-17—"For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. 17 For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased..."

38. [4] The only begotten of the Father—literally—"the only one born of the Father"—the Father's unique Son...
39. The Gk word rendered "only begotten" is a combination of two words "only" and "begotten or born"—only begotten...
40. This statement asserts what our Reformed fathers called—the eternal generation of the Son—His eternal begottenness...
41. It underscores two important truths about the Son—[a] His equality with the Father, [b] His distinctness from the Father...
42. [a] His equality with the Father—the title "Son of God" is a divine title that confirms His absolute divinity...
43. Jn.5:18—"Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because...[He] said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God..."
44. A physical son derives his being from His Father (and mother)—the Word derives His being or essence from His Father...
45. Thus—this generation or begottenness from the Father is eternal—it never had a beginning and it will never end...
46. From eternity past—the Father always existed as the Father and the Word always existed as the begotten Son...
47. Jn.1:1—"in the beginning was the Word, and he Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God..."
48. [b] His distinctness from the Father—the Son is begotten from or of the Father—the Son is NOT the Father...
49. Now—this is where things become rather mysterious and many have erred—the Son is equal and yet distinct from the Father...
50. Historically—we put it like this—the Father, Son, and Spirit equally and fully—possess the divine essence...
51. Yet—the Father, Son, and Spirit—each possess specific attributes or properties—unique to that divine person...
52. The Father begets and is not begotten—the Son is begotten and does not beget—the Spirit proceeds from the Father and Son...
53. Thus—while each person equally and fully possesses the divine essence—there is a distinction between them...
54. The Father is NOT the Son and the Son is NOT the Father, and the Spirit is NEITHER the Father NOR the Son...
55. This is important because it was the Son, not the Father or Spirit—who became man—"the word became flesh..."
56. Thus—the eternal Son of God—become flesh—the Godman—fully God and fully man—in one person forever...
57. [5] Full of grace and truth—Christ, as the Tabernacle of God, came into the world—"full of grace and truth"...
58. [a] Grace—"grace" refers to "unmerited favor"—it here refers to—God's favor in the form of a full salvation...
59. The gracious salvation of God—God's unmerited favor toward lost and guilty mankind—is found in Christ...
60. Thus—the "grace" here referred to— isn't so much an attribute—but a provision—there's FOR US in Christ...
61. Now—let me simply say something about this word "full"—He was "full of grace and truth"—filled with grace..
62. The idea again is to abundant provision—there's grace enough within Christ to save a sanctify the entire world....
63. V16—"And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace"—grace upon grace, or grace after grace...
64. All the grace we need to get right with God is in Christ—but also, all the grace we need to live for God is in Christ...

65. [b] Truth—"truth" here refers to "the truthfulness or faithfulness of God"—in tabernacling among mankind...
66. In Christ the truthfulness of God—both to His own righteous character and OT promises—are fully realized...
67. Ps.85:10—"Mercy and truth have met together"—that is—Christ would be BOTH—full of grace and truth...
68. Thus by "truth" is meant—Christ is the truth of God's OT promises—which through type foretold of Christ...
69. Verses 16-17—"And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ..."
70. Notice—Christ is something that we personally experience—we receive from Christ—"grace upon grace"...
71. John doesn't say that we experience "truth" in the same way we experience "grace"—we receive grace for grace...
72. Christ is full of grace in that He's the Father gift to mankind—He's full of truth in that He fulfills God's promises...
73. Let me put it like this—Christ is "full of truth" in that He's the fulfilment of OT types and shadows of grace...
74. Jesus Christ is the TRUE light, the TRUE bread, the TRUE tabernacle—He's the fulfillment of the Old Covenant...

II. The Text Expanded—or, Five ways in which the tabernacle typified Christ

Now—in the first place—I need to remind you that while the tabernacle and temple basically had the same purpose—there were several important differences—the tabernacle was temporal, mobile, and modest—the temple was permanent and glorious—thus—as I suggest various similarities between the NC tabernacle (Christ) and the OC tabernacle—I'll also point out their dissimilarities...

A. The tabernacle was modest and unattractive

1. As we consider the construction of the OC tabernacle—it becomes apparent that it was a structure of contrast...
2. It rested on large foundation of one hundred blocks of pure silver—each block weighed one hundred pounds...
3. Furthermore—all of the wood within the tabernacle was covered with gold—48 upright boards and 5 horizontal...
4. The roof of the tabernacle—had an inward and outward layer—the inward layer was made of fine threaded linen...
5. Thus from within—as someone would look up—the ceiling of the tabernacle—was gloriously constructed...
6. Yet—the outward layer of the ceiling was a layer of ruff leather—made from badger skins—humble and unattractive...
7. In addition to this—there were large curtains, made of goat's hair, that draped down from the roof to the ground...
8. Col.2:9—"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"—outwardly humble, inwardly glorious...
9. Isa.53:2-3—"For he shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground, He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected by men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him..."

B. The tabernacle was used in the wilderness

1. The OC tabernacle, if you recall, was constructed by Moses and the Israelites—after their redemption from Egypt...

2. Thus—the tabernacle was the gracious presence of God among His people—while in sojourning through wilderness...
3. Now—dear brethren—while I don't want to become overly inventive—this truth provides several practical lessons...
4. [1] This is not our home but a wilderness—this is illustrated in v10—"He was in the world...and the world did not know Him..."
5. Christ came into this world—this place of hardship, difficulty, and transition—this moral and spiritual wilderness...
6. Thus—throughout the NT this present world is likened to a wilderness through which Christians must journey...
7. The church of the Lord Jesus Christ is on a journey—we're traveling together to a land better than Canaan...
8. Stephen, in Acts 7:38, describes the OT people of God as—"the church in the wilderness"—that's what we are...
9. Oh brethren—how often we need to be reminded of this point—this is not our home—we are merely passing through...
10. Heb.11:13-16—"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that *country* from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly *country*. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them..."
11. [2] Christ dwells in our midst while in the wilderness—this is found back in OT where the 12 tribes of Israel encamped around the tabernacle...
12. Ex.25:8—"And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them"—in the midst of His people...
13. [3] Christ protects His people throughout their wilderness journey—this is illustrated by the cloud above the tabernacle...
14. Ex.40:36-38—"Whenever the cloud was taken up from above the tabernacle, the children of Israel would go onward in all their journeys. But if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not journey till the day that it was taken up. For the cloud of the LORD *was* above the tabernacle by day, and fire was over it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys..."
15. There would be two very dangerous elements within the wilderness—[a] the scorching sun and [b] the darkness...

C. The tabernacle was a temporary appointment

1. That is—the OC tabernacle was only a temporary provision—but looked forward to the permanent temple...
2. That is—Christ's humble and modest character was only temporary—His humility had a beginning and end...
3. Now—most of you know that reformed theology—examines Christ's work within two states—humiliation and exaltation...
4. His humiliation consists of the time between His incarnation and crucifixion—His exaltation the time between His resurrection and second coming...
5. [1] His state of humiliation—Christ in His first advent, His first coming, came as a humbled and modest Servant...
6. [2] His state of exaltation—Christ in His second advent, will come as an openly glorious and powerful Sovereign...
7. Thus—I suggest that there's a sense in which these two—the tabernacle and temple—describe both comings...
8. Jn.2:19—"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up...But He was speaking of the temple of His body..."
9. Phil.2:8-11—"and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the

name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father..."

D. The tabernacle was where God's glory resided

1. Ex.40:34-35—"Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. 35 And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle..."
2. This passage accounts what happened after the tabernacle was fully constructed—the glory of God filled it...
3. That is—before the glory of God filled the tabernacle it needed constructing—it was first built then indwelt...
4. Well so too its antitype—the human nature of Christ was first constructed from the substance of Mary and then indwelt...
5. Heb.10:5—"Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me..."
6. Thus—within His incarnation—the glory of the Lord filled His humanity—and dwelt among the people of God...
7. Now—within the OT few people were permitted to behold this glory as it resided within the Holy of Holies...
8. The Jews referred to this "the Shechinah glory"—that special manifestation of light that resided above the mercyseat...
9. Within the NC—because every covenant member is a priest—everyone one us are enabled to behold this glory...
10. 2Cor.4:6—"For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ..."

E. The tabernacle was where God met with man

1. It was in or through the tabernacle that God dwelt in the midst of His covenant people—but there's something very important to keep in mind...
2. Technically speaking—the Lord met man not in the tabernacle in general—but He met man at the mercy seat...
3. This was located—on top of the Ark of the Covenant, which was located beyond the veil in the Holy of Holies...
4. In other words—the very heart of the tabernacle was the MOST HOLY PLACE—where blood was poured out...
5. This brings us back to our text—WHY did the Word become flesh—but for the purpose of becoming the Lamb of God...
6. Thus it's within the God-man crucified and resurrected—that poor sinners find grace upon grace for their salvation...