

'The Word Became Flesh - the Mystery of It'

by A.W. Tozer

The sermon explores the mystery of the Incarnation, where God became flesh and dwelt among us, and the glory of Jesus Christ, which lies in His character and personality.

Scripture: John 1:14

Topics: "The Incarnation", "Grace and Truth"

Description

A.W. Tozer explores the profound mystery of the Incarnation, emphasizing how the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, bridging the vast gulf between God and humanity. He reflects on the significance of Jesus as the perfect embodiment of grace and truth, revealing God's character and love to mankind. Tozer highlights that the Incarnation did not compromise God's Deity but rather elevated humanity, allowing for a unique union between God and man. He asserts that Jesus is the channel through which all grace flows, and that understanding this mystery is essential for recognizing the depth of God's love and mercy. Ultimately, Tozer calls for a response to Jesus as both Lord and Savior, inviting believers to embrace the fullness of grace available through Him.

Transcript

The Word Made Flesh - The Mystery of It

Pastor and author A.W. Tozer

December 20, 1953

In the Book of John, the first chapter, verses 14 to 18 inclusive: and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. John bare witness of Him and cried, saying, This is He of whom I spake. He that cometh after me, is in time, is preferred before me, that is, in honor, for He was before me, that is in rank. And out of his fullness have all we received, grace following grace. For the Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him.

I remember years ago, I think I mentioned this before, reading somewhere, a great literary critic, comparing two men, Milton and Shakespeare. He said that Milton was great, but unquestionably, Shakespeare was greater. He said that Milton had imagination enough to select for his great work, a

theme as vast as Paradise Lost and Regained, which gave him full sweep from the dim dawn of empty nothingness through to the triumph of Christ after His resurrection. And Milton says, when he starts out, that he's going to soar above the Aeolian Mount, and justify the ways of God to men.

Now said the critic, Milton boldly declares that he's going to soar high and do amazing things. Then, says he, he astonishes us by doing exactly what he set out to do. But he said further, so much mightier and so much more brilliant was the imagination of the man Shakespeare, that He limited himself deliberately to small subjects in short sections of history. He said, If he had attempted anything as vast as Milton, that is, the sweep of time from timeless yesterday to timeless tomorrow as Milton did, he would have died of plethora of thought. He'd have had a brain hemorrhage. It would have been too big for him, because the vastness of it would have called so much out of the man that he would have exploded.

Now, that was one man's opinion. It sounds pretty good, and I introduced it here only because I feel in selecting this passage of Scripture, so completely inadequate, that if I blow up, even in a mild attempt, to expound what is buried here, you will know that it's only normal, because John, this mighty man who was infinitely mightier than even Shakespeare, takes us up into the Godhead where an old Milton could go; and certainly no secular Shakespeare could ever go, and introduces us to spheres and circles of Deity so high and lofty and noble, that if we follow him, we'll certainly die in the attempt. But all we can hope to do is to toddle along on our short legs and gaze heavenward like a goose that said, her wings clipped, and whose heart is in the skies but whose wings just won't take her there.

Now I've said all this because, my best faith, my loftiest expectations could not possibly allow me to believe that I can do justice to a text that begins, and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and ends, no man has seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, He have declared Him. We will do this then tonight. We will walk along the broad seashore of God and pick up a shell here and there and hold it up to the light and admire it's beauty. And then turn away and say, we've only picked up a shell again, and have a pocket full of shells maybe to take with us. But on all sides, there stretches the vastness of the seashore, round the great lip of the ocean, and far beyond anything that we can ever hope to see yet buried here.

Now we notice first of all that he says the Word became flesh, or the Word was made flesh. And I would point out, that we have here, and stated in four words, one of the darkest mysteries of human thought. How the Deity could cross the wide, yawning gulf that separates what is God from what is not God. For in the universe, there are really only two things, God and not God. That which is God and that which is not God. And all that is not God was made by God. And God was made by none.

So we have God and not God. And the gulf that separates between God and not God, that is, between the Creator and the creature, between the Being we call God and all other beings, is I say, a great and vast and yawning gulf, and how God could bridge this. How He could do this, I say, constitutes one of the profoundest and darkest mysteries that human thought can ever give itself to, and how God could join the Creator to the creature. If you have never thought very much about this, it may not seem so amazing. But if you have given it a little thought, you will see how astonishing it is, that unbridgeable gulf between God and not God.

For the very archangels and the seraphim and the cherub that shield the stones of fire are not God, so that there is a gulf fixed, a vast gulf, and the Gulf of infinitude, and how God managed to bridge that, and how He could join Himself to His creatures. And how He could limit the Limitless, or in the language we hear

more popularly, how the Infinite could never become the finite. And how that which had no limit which is God should deliberately impose upon Himself limitations. And how God and why God would favor one order of being above another. For if you read your Bible, you will discover that man is not the only order of being. Man in his sinful pride thinks he is. We don't even believe in angels anymore. We think angels are simply Santa Clauses with wings. And Protestants don't believe in angels anymore. Foolishly, you don't believe in angels.

No, we don't believe in cherubim nor seraphim nor creatures nor watchers nor holy ones nor any of these strange principalities and powers that walk so darkly and brightly through the passages of the Bible. We don't believe in them as much as we should at any rate, and yet they're there. And mankind is only one order of God's creatures. And why God should favor one above the other? For it is written in the Book of Hebrews, that God took not upon Him the nature of angels, but He took upon Him the seed of Abraham. Abraham certainly was not equal to an angel. One would suppose that God in stepping down should step down as little as He dared or could. That He would stop with an angel or a seraphim, but instead He came down to the lowest order and took upon Himself the nature of Abraham, the seed of Abraham. Paul throws up his hands, even that man Paul who was declared to be one of the six greatest intellects of all time. That great man of God threw up his hands and said, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh. And I don't know but what this is the most becoming approach to the whole subject is, to throw up our hands and say, O Lord God, Thou knowest. For there are so many more things in heaven and earth that are unknown in our theology, so that it's all a mystery.

And I would quote Wesley here, at least the gist of what he said, when I point out that it's a dark mystery how God could stoop down and become man and bridge the yawning gulf, enjoying Himself and limit to flesh and limit the Limitless. Wesley said, distinguish the act from the method by which the act is performed. And do not reject a fact because you do not know how it was done. I think that's very wise. And we would come, it would be very becoming to us if we should enter the presence of God, reverently bowing our heads, and singing these carols and saying that, it's so God, but we don't know how. We will not reject the fact because we do not know the operation by which it was brought to pass.

Now, this much we can know at least, we can know that the Incarnation required no compromise of Deity. Let us remember it, that when God became incarnate, there was no compromise there. The gods of the Roman Pantheon, the gods of Greece, and the gods of the Scandinavian regions, were gods that would compromise themselves. The old Valhalla was full of gods that were compromisers and the Elysian Fields and the Pantheon and all that. That wherever the gods were, they always were gods who had compromised themselves one way or another.

But the Holy God, who is God and all else, not God, that God, our Father who art in heaven could never compromise Himself, so that the Incarnation was wrought and accomplished, this deep, dark, yawning mystery of incarnation was accomplished without any compromise of the Deity. God did not degrade Himself by this condescension. He did not in any sense make Himself to be less than God. He remained God, and everything else remained not God. The Gulf still existed even after Jesus Christ had become man and had dwelt among us.

So that instead of God degrading Himself when He became man, He by the act of incarnation elevated mankind to Himself. He did not degrade Himself to mankind. That's pointed out in one of the old creeds. The Athanasian Creed pointed out very carefully. The old church fathers were very cautious here and they would not allow us to believe that God, when He became flesh, became flesh by a coming down of the

Deity in the flesh, but by a taking up of mankind into God. And thus, we do not degrade God, but we elevate man, that is the wonder of redemption.

Now we can know this again, that this union or union with a man and God is affected under perpetuity. God can never back out of His bargain. God can never cease to be, in that sense, man. The second person of the Trinity can never, what should we say, un-incarnate Himself or deincarnate Himself. He became incarnated forever, and the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Now at first God dwells with men.

I like to dream over the past. There's a book written called "Earth's Earliest Ages." I have never read that book. I have looked through it, and I have concluded that the man knows more about the antediluvian days than Moses did. And when I discover a man who knows more than Moses on a subject in which Moses is a specialist, then I shy away from his book. But I confess that those early ages have a great fascination for me. And one of the passages that greatly charms my heart is that one that says that God came and walked in the garden in the cool of the day, and looked for Adam and Adam wasn't there. Without reading anything into it, I think it's safe to assume that that had been a common custom there. That that wasn't the first time that God came to take a walk with Adam. In the cool of the day in the midst of birdsong and the fading light, God and man walked together. That was common. It was to be because God made man in His image, and would not degrade Himself by communing with man. He found Adam gone.

But there was God with man. Originally God dwelt with man. And then when man sinned, God rejected Him, drove him out and set up His flaming sword that he might not return. He sent him away from His presence. And after that, you will find through the Bible that God never dwelt with man again quite the same. He dwelt in the Shekinah hidden in the fire and the cloud. Occasionally, He would appear in what theologians call a theophany, an appearance of the Deity. And God would walk with a man briefly, or speak with a man as He did with Abraham in the tent door, or at Gideon there in the threshing floor. But never did He stay long, and always was He veiled and cautious. And even when He showed Himself to Moses, it was in the fire of the bush, or it was while Moses was hidden in the cleft of the rock. And God allowed only the hind or trailing parts of His garments to be seen. For sin had unfitted the eyes of men to look upon the majesty of Deity, so that the God who once was with men dwelt only intermittently with men, and then suddenly He came. And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us. Now, He is here again, to dwell with men in person, and they called His name Emmanuel, which means God with us.

So, I want you to take three prepositions here. I'm not a prepositional preacher I'll have you know, but occasionally, a strong preposition will do for us, even when it's the end of a sentence. What you can't get any other way, notice, when He appeared as man, He appeared to dwell with men in person and to be united to men, and then ultimately, to dwell in men forever. So, it's with men and to men and in men, that He came to dwell, to dwell among us. And says the Holy Ghost, we beheld His glory.

Now, it's right that we should inquire what was this glory which the man John said, we beheld or they beheld? We beheld His glory. Was it the glory on His works? For Jesus was a worker. And He was not only a worker, He was a wonder-worker. Our Lord, from the first miracle at Cana of Galilee to that last miracle. Wasn't that the last miracle? I was trying to recall tonight before I came downstairs. I said to myself first that I would say that last miracle was when He cursed the fig tree, but it struck He performed at least one after that. Maybe I'm wrong and I've forgotten a more recent one. But it seems to me the last miracle our Lord performed was when He undid that bit of impulsive ear cutting that Peter had done when

he took that sword and wizzed it past the servant Malcus' ear and cut it off. Jesus grabbed it and put it back on and said, that's no way to act. Put up your sword.

But all the miracles that lie in between were dramatic miracles, colorful and significant, whirlwind miracles in some instances. For our Lord was a wonder-worker. Every part of nature had to yield to Him. He turned the water into wine. And men have been arguing ever since whether it was Welch's grape juice or wine with alcohol in it. It mattered little. He turned water into wine. And the miracle was that He could do it. And when our Lord came to the sick, He healed them. When He came to the devil-possessed, He commanded the devil to go out. When our Lord stood upon the rocking deck, our tiny boat tossed by the buoyancy of the waves and blown by the fierceness of the winds, He spoke to the water and He rebuked the wind and there was a great calm.

Everything our Lord did was wonderful. The tenderness of a son, when He gave the widow back her boy when they were on the way to the graveyard. The tenderness of a brother, when He gave back Jairus his little 12-year-old daughter. Handed her with a smile back and said, here she is. Sit up daughter, it's time to go to school. He used the language, the simple language they say, that they used in those days to call children. You've called your child when it's school time. And Jesus used those words, and with the tenderness of a brother, He called his little sister up from her dead sleep, and all down through His ministry, what He did was wonderful. How tender and how kind when the woman who was bleeding over 12 years received a sudden deliverance, and with a word, He stanchd the debilitating flow of blood. And she went away with shining face to tell everybody that the hem of His garment had healing power in it.

So, the works of our Lord were always dramatic works. Always, they were amazing works. I wonder if John had it in mind when he said, we beheld His glory. We beheld Him still the waves. We beheld Him cast out devils. We beheld Him give sight to eyes long blind. We beheld Him as He raised the dead. I wonder. I think not my friends. I'd like to agree with you. I hear sermons on the radio sometimes that make the physical body everything, and works of miracle everything. And I wish that I could go along with such interpretation and say, the glory of Jesus Christ lay in his ability to cast out devils, that the glory of Jesus Christ lay in his ability to heal the sick and raise the dead and still the waves. Now, undoubtedly, that was wonderful. And He did get some praise to Himself from these necessary acts of miracles.

But, ah, I believe that there was a greater glory than merely works of wonder which our Lord manifested there. For always remember this, friends, that what a man is, is always more important to God than what he does. Remember that if a man were able to stand up and create pine trees and lakes and hills, and were not a good man, he would still be of no value to God. And let us remember, that if a man were a good man through and through, a good man and had no power at all to do any miracle, he would still be one of the sweetest treasures of God, and God would write his name on His own hands. For it is goodness that God is looking for. It is being in character and personality that God is looking for, not our ability to do amazing things.

So, it was what Jesus was that was glorious, not only what he did. In fact, what He did was secondary. What He was primary. So, Jesus Christ's glory lay in the fact that He was perfect love in a loveless world. That He was purity in an impure world. That He was meekness in a harsh and quarrelsome world. That He evinced humility in a world where every man was seeking his own place. That He showed boundless, fathomless mercy in a hard and cruel world. That He evinced selfless goodness in a world full of selfishness. It was the deathless devotion of Jesus and the patient suffering and the unquenchable life and the grace and the truth that were in Jesus, that they beheld. They beheld His glory, the glory as the

only begotten Son from a Father, full of grace and truth.

And so it was this that made Jesus wonderful. As little as the world knows about it today in all their wild money-inspired and profit-inspired celebrations, as little as the world knows about it. Even the poor, blind world is not celebrating turning water into wine. They're not celebrating healing the sick nor raising the dead. They're not celebrating the cursing of fig trees or the sticking on of cut-off ears. The poor, blind world, with what little bit of religious instinct it has left in it yet, is this season, celebrating what He was. And as we sing our songs and we read the editorials and squibs about Him in the magazines and papers, little is said about what He did, but everything is said about what He was. For the amazing thing was that it was God walking among men.

And here was something other than man and yet man. Here was something that was not man and yet was man. Here was God among men. Here was a man acting like God in the midst of sinful men. And this was the wonder of it all. And this was the glory that Alexander never could hope to reach for Alexander. That wild boy, the son of Philip leaped as Daniel would call him, like a goat, and trample the civilized world under his feet and conquered it and wept because there were no more worlds to conquer. Alexander never conquered himself. Alexander died a profligate, a disappointed profligate and spoiled baby. A genius on the field, but a baby in his own house.

And all together apart from His miracles, the glory of Jesus Christ shines like the brightness of the sun. For what He was had astonished the world. What He said has been amazing. What He did was wonderful, but what He was, was the crown upon all the doing and the saying. So, that we celebrate today a man who was. We celebrate today a God who became flesh. We celebrate this season, the miracle, the deep, dark mystery of the miracle of that which was not God being taken up into God, and being in flesh, so that we now have Jesus Christ, who is God, and yet also who is man.

It says, the man of God here of His fullness, have all we received in grace for grace. Out of His fullness of all we received. Now, what does that mean? Does it mean that everybody's received of all the fullness of Jesus Christ? No, it can't mean that. It means that Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son, is the only medium through which God dispenses His benefits with creation. And because Jesus is the Eternal Son, because He is of the eternal generation and equal with the Father as pertaining to His substance, His eternity, His love, His power, His grace, His goodness, and all of the attributes of Deity, He is the channel, He is the medium through which God dispenses all His blessings. Of His fullness have all we received out of his fullness. Ask the roe that goes down to the edge of the lake and drinks, have you received of the fullness of the lake? And the roe might answer yes and no, I am full from the lake, but I have not received of the fullness of the lake. I did not drink the lake, I only drank what I could hold of the lake.

And so of His fullness, out of the fullness of God, He has given us through Jesus Christ, grace upon grace. So that the only Medium through which God does anything is His Son. Whether He created or whether He is creating, it's all through Jesus Christ our Lord. If He speaks, it is through the Eternal Word. If He reveals Himself, it is because He who is in the bosom of the Father has revealed Him. If He provides it is through the medium of Jesus Christ, if He sustains, it is because it can be said that He upholds all things by the Word of His power and in Him all things consist.

Alexander Patterson wrote a great book that's now I think out of print, unless Moodys have brought it out recently. I think I heard they did. It's called "The Greater Life and Work of Christ." Dear old brother Gillespie gave me a copy of it years ago and I still have it. And in it, this great Baptist preacher attempts to

go back to the basic foundations of things and show just what I'm giving you now. That Jesus Christ is more than simply the Redeemer of man. He is the Sustainer, the Creator, the Upholder, the Holder-Together, the adhesive quality of the universe, the medium through which God dispenses grace to all His creatures, those that will be redeemed, and those who do not need to be redeemed. For there are orders upon orders and ranks upon ranks of creatures that do not need to be redeemed. And yet they live by grace as well as the lowest sinner who is converted.

Grace must operate wherever that which is not God appeals to that which is God. Wherever the voice of the creature crosses the vast gulf to the ears of the Creator, grace must operate. We have limited grace to John 3:16. We must forget that everything God does is out of grace of His fullness. How do the angels get their broad wings? Out of His grace. How did that covering cherub who had built into him pipe organs and who was wiser than the sons of men? How did he get his wisdom and his beauty? Grace out of grace. How do the principalities and powers and might and dominions and the ranks and the files and the columns of shining creatures that remarks through the pages of the Bible? How did they get what they have? Grace upon grace. Everything God does is by grace, for no man, no creature, no being, deserves anything. Salvation is by grace. But creation is by grace. And all that God does is out of grace. let's remember. Every human being has received of His fullness.

What have you received? Even though you may not be saved tonight, you have yet received out of the ocean of His fullness. What of life for instance? You've received the life that beats in your bosom. You have received the brilliant mind that lies inside your head under the protective covering of your skull. You have received a memory that strings the events that you love as a jeweler strings pearls around a necklace, and keeps them for you as long as you live and beyond. And all that you have is out of His grace, so that Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word, who became flesh and dwelt among us is the open channel through which God moves to give all of the benefits that He gives to saints and sinners and all the continued existence that may yet be yours. Don't think you've earned it. Don't imagine it's because you're good or not so bad. Remember, it's out of grace. And the whole universe is God's beneficiary. The whole universe joins to give praise to the Lamb who was slain. And under the earth and on the earth and above the earth, John heard creatures praising Jesus Christ. And all joined to say, worthy is the Lamb. For all things were made by Him and for Him, they are created and are made and were made, so that the whole universe is a beneficiary of Jesus Christ.

And when we present Christ to men as Lord and Savior, let us remember that they have already been beneficiaries and we're only presenting Christ in a new office. When we go to a man and say, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, we're only saying, believe on the One who sustains you and upholds you and has given you life and pities you and spares you and keeps you. Believe on the One out of whom you came. For apart from Jesus Christ, God never did anything. The stars in their courses, the frogs that croak beside the lake, angels in heaven above, man on earth below, all came out of the channel that we call the Eternal Word. All of His fullness we have received or, we have received out of His fullness. We only present Jesus as Lord and Savior.

I said some time ago, I don't remember where, and then I wrote it into an editorial, that there was no Saviorhood without Lordship. Somebody in the East cut out a paragraph from Sunday School Times and sent it to me. He said, read this. And I read it and I had never seen it. It was written by the man who used to be pastor of the Wheaton Bible Church. I never can straighten that name out although I know the man quite well. McCauley, McCauley, or McCauley, and here condensed into a paragraph he said what I took an editorial to say exactly the same thing, which appeared in the Sunday School Times, that Jesus Christ

is both Lord and Savior, and He is Lord before He is Savior. And that if He's not Lord, He's not Savior. And when we present this Word, this Eternal Word who was made flesh and dwelt among us, when we present Him to men as Lord and Savior, we present Him only in His other offices. Previously, He has been Creator and Sustainer and Benefactor. Now, we present Him and asked men to believe on Him as Lord and Savior. But it's the same Lord Jesus.

And he says, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Now, this is not to contrast that as grace and truth came by Jesus Christ, the law was given by Moses. This is not a contrast between the Old and New Testament. The theory that pits one testament of the Bible against the other is a false theory. The idea that the Old Testament is a book of law and the New Testament a book of grace is a theory completely false. There is as much about grace and mercy and love in the Old Testament as there is in the New. There's more about hell in the New Testament than there is in the Old. And when it comes to judgment and the fury of God burning with fire upon sinful men and sinful creatures, it's found in the New Testament, not in the Old. And if you want excoriating, flagellating language that skins and blisters and burns, don't go to Jeremiah, go to Jesus Christ. Don't go to the book of Jeremiah. Don't go to Elijah, go to the 23rd of Matthew.

Oh, how much often does it need to be said, the God of the Old Testament is the God of the New. And the Father of the Old Testament is the Father of the New Testament. And the Christ who was made flesh that dwelt among us is the Christ who walked through all the pages of the Old Testament. Was it law that forgave David when he had committed his great sin? No, it was grace. It was Old Testament. And was it grace that said, Babylon has fallen, the great harlot has fallen, Babylon has fallen? No, it was law.

So there is no contrast as we falsely assume. God never pits the Father against the Son. He never pits the Old Testament against the New. What He says here is, and the contrast is between all that Moses could do and all that Christ could do. The law was given by Moses. That was all that Moses could do, for Moses was not the channel through which God dispensed grace. Moses was the law-giver. And Moses did all Moses could do. For God did not choose Moses as the channel through which grace should flow to the world. He chose His only begotten Son. And so the contrast, the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ means only that all this could do would be to command righteousness, but Jesus Christ produces righteousness.

All that Moses could do would be to forbid us to sin. But Jesus Christ came to save us from sin. Not pit us against each other, but One doing what the other could not do, for Moses could not save, but Jesus could save. And the Holy Ghost in Romans says, the law that Moses gave was holy and just and good and must not be spoken against, but it could not save. But because Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son, the channel through which God dispenses grace to the world, grace came through Jesus Christ. And I ask you to notice, my brethren, that grace came through Jesus Christ before Mary wept in the manger. Grace came by Jesus Christ before He became flesh to dwell among us. For it was the grace of God in Christ that saved the human race from extinction when they sinned in the garden. It was the grace of God in Jesus Christ yet to be born that saved the eight persons when the flood covered the earth.

And it was the grace of God in Jesus Christ yet to be born, but existing in pre-incarnation glory that forgave David when he committed his sin, forgave Abraham when he lied, that enabled Abraham to pray God down to ten when He was threatening to destroy Sodom. He forgave Israel time and time again. It was the grace of God in Christ, yet before the Incarnation that made God say, I have risen early in the morning and stretched out My hand unto you. it made Him say, as a father pities his children, so the Lord

pities them that fear Him. Jesus is the channel through which grace comes. Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. And He said, I am the Truth. It's through Him that grace is released to the world, released through the wounded side, to sinners like you and me. And all the grace of God anywhere comes through Jesus Christ.

Then he says, no man hath seen God at any time. But the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father. He hath declared Him. I get quite amusement out of the problems of the translators, not being a translator or ever attempting it. I get a lot of, I don't know whether it's completely holy or not, but it's fun. I enjoy the frustrations of the translators. God's Word is just too big for them. They just can't make it. When they come to this word here in the Greek, but the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him; in English in the King James, it's declared. But in other versions, they, they skirt it, they go around it, they plunge through it. They use two or three words, and then they back down to one. And they do everything they can do to try to say what the Holy Ghost said. And then they give up. They can't say. Our English just won't say. We get to it and try to say it and we use a dozen synonyms.

And when we've used up our words, we still haven't said all that God has said, when He said that nobody had ever looked at God. Nobody had ever seen God, but Jesus Christ when He came, showed us what He was like. And I guess that simple, primer language is as good as any. No man hath seen God at any time but the only begotten Son who was in the bosom of the Father. He hath shown us what He's like. He has declared Him. He has set Him forth. He has revealed Him the translators say shifting their language to try to get at this wonderful miracle of meaning. The Man who walked in Galilee was God acting like God, with God limited deliberately, having crossed the mysterious, yawning gulf between God and not God, God and creature, taking upon Him the form of a man to become flesh to dwell among us.

No man hath seen God at any time, but it says, the only begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father. I want you to notice it's not who was in the bosom, who will be in the bosom, but is in the bosom. It's in the present, perpetual tense, continuous tense I think the grammarians call it. It's the language of continuous and even when He hung on the cross, He did not leave the bosom of the Father. You say, how then, Mr. Tozer? How could He cry, my God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? Was He frightened? Was He mistaken? Never, never. He was never mistaken about anything. Then what was it?

You say He never left the bosom of the Father. And He said, why hast Thou forsaken me? The answer is very plain. The answer is this, that even when Christ died on the unholy, fly-infested cross for mankind, He never divided the Godhead. You cannot, says the old theologians, divide the substance. Not all of the swords of Nero could ever cut down through the substance of the Godhead, to cut off the Father from the Son. But it was the Man who cried, why hath Thou forsaken me. It was Mary's son who cried. It was the body which God gave Him. It was the Lamb about to die. It was the sacrifice that cried. It was the human Jesus. It was the Son of Man that cried. But the ancient and timeless Deity was never separated. And He was still in the bosom of the Father when He cried, into Thy hands I commend my spirit. For, Father, Son and the Holy Ghost are forever one, inseparable, indivisible and can never be anything else.

So, the Eternal Father never turned his back on the Eternal Word, for He was always in the bosom of the Father. But the Eternal Father turned His back on the Son, the Son of Man, the Sacrifice, the Lamb to be slain. And in the blind terror and pain of it all, the Sacrifice, the Lamb temporarily become sin for us, knew Himself forsaken. God dumped all that vast, bubbling, boiling, seething, dirty, slimy mess of human sin on the soul of His Son and then backed away. And in that moment of anguish, He cried, why have You forsaken me? But in the next breath, He could say, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit.

So, the Cross did not divide the Godhead. Nothing could ever do that. One forever, indivisible, the Substance undivided, the Persons unconfounded. Oh, the wonder of the ancient theology of the Christian church. How little we know of it in our day of likeminded shallowness, and how much we ought to know it. No man hath seen God at any time, but the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father. He hath shown Him fully.

Now, the mystery of atonement had to be performed. Why in the Old Testament, why in the Old Testament, did the priests go behind the veil, perform the ritual of atonement, and then come out from behind the veil. And priests specially prepared, rush to close that thick veil and hide the holy place. It was God saying in beautiful symbolism that there would be a day when another Priest with other blood should enter into a realm where the mind of man could never penetrate. And there in a mystery too deep and dark and wonderful for a man to understand, all alone with none to help him. Not David His lover, not Abraham his friend, not Paul, no one alone in the silence and the darkness should make atonement for sin. That's what happened when God stepped back and allowed Him to die. But briefly and quickly, His heart was joined again to the love of God. And three days later, He was raised from the dead and ascended to the right hand of God the Father Almighty man from whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

And now, the closing line, He has declared Him. What is it He declared about God? There are profundities that He could never declare. There are depths that He could never declare. But there are some things He could declare and did and does. He declared God's holy being, and above all, for us for poor sinners, He declared His love and His mercy. So He set Him forth and Jesus Christ tells us in His tender, human being that God has a care for us.

I remember hearing years ago of some boys, at that time I didn't understand it as I might understand it now. Four or five sons had been reared in a home. And the old folks were wordless. They didn't say much. They didn't show much affection. Nobody did. And the boys didn't after they were babies. They quit kissing their parents and quit using words of affection and grew to be strong men and married and separated and got away. They seldom came home and seldom wrote. And then mother's time had about come they thought, and they sent for the boys. And they said, if you want to see her, come. They came, all of them, big fine fellows now, each with his own home and his own business and job. And they stood around her bed and one of them said, Mother, we want you to know that you meant a lot to us boys. We haven't been unappreciative. We've loved you, and we thank you. Then they separated. And when they were gone from her, she turned and said to someone by her side, oh, if they'd only told me before. These years, I wondered if I'd meant anything to them. These years, I thought I'd failed them, but now they tell me, we're so thankful. If they'd only told me.

You know, it's possible to feel a lot you don't tell. It's possible to have fine intentions you never make known. And how easy it might have been for God to have loved us and never told us. To have been merciful toward us and never revealed it. But the Scripture says, nobody ever saw God but the only begotten Son. Some translations say the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father. He has told us. He came to tell us what the silence never told us. He came to tell us what not even Moses could tell us. He came to tell us, God cares and God loves and God has a plan. And God is carrying out that plan. Before it's all finished, there'll be a multitude that no man can number redeemed out of every tongue and tribe and nation. That's what He told us. He set Him forth. He revealed God's being, God's love, God's grace, mercy, good intention, redemptive intention, saving intention. He set it forth. He bought. He gave it to us. Here it is. It's ours. Now, we have only to turn and believe and accept and take and follow. It's all ours.

Well, I think that's what I want to say tonight. May God bless us. Our wings aren't very broad, but by flapping them real fast we can at least get off the ground. Thank God for the Truth, for the Word, for the Eternal Son. For the One we present to you as Lord and Savior, is He your Lord and Savior tonight?

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-tozer/the-word-became-flesh-the-mystery-of-it/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net