

The Word made flesh (1899)

By Ellen G. White

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"And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in His sight; if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; . . . whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the Word of God; even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints; to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Christ came to this earth working the works of God, healing the sick, and raising the dead to life. "In Him was life, and the life was the light of men." But the priests and rulers of the Jewish nation refused to acknowledge Him as the Messiah. "He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

The scribes and Pharisees accused Christ of blasphemy because He made Himself equal with God. But He promptly met and denied their accusations. "Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead?" they asked Him; "whom makest Thou Thyself?" Jesus answered: "If I honor Myself, My honor is nothing; it is My Father that honoreth Me; of whom ye say, that He is your God; yet ye have not known Him, but I know Him; and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be a liar like unto you; but I know Him, and keep His saying. Your Father Abraham rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it, and was glad. Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."

Here Christ shows them that, altho they might reckon His life to be less than fifty years, yet His divine life could not be reckoned by human computation. The existence of Christ before His incarnation is not measured by figures.

"Before Abraham was, I am." Abraham greatly desired to see the Messiah in His day. He offered up the most earnest prayer that he might see Him before He died. "He looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. . . . Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the seashore innumerable. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth."

But Abraham saw Christ. A supernatural light was given him, and he acknowledged Christ's divine character. He had a distinct view of Christ, the Messiah. He saw His day, and was glad. He was given a view of the divine Sacrifice for sin. It was Jesus Christ that had promised him, "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be."

But Abraham was tested. The command came for him to take his son, his only son, Isaac, and offer him as a sacrifice upon a mountain which God would show him. O, in what an agony of conflicting emotion Abraham bowed at the foot of the altar which he had reared for Jehovah, praying for light! But the more he prayed, the darker his mind became. He heard the command, "Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt-offering." He thought of the promise, "As the stars, so shall thy seed be," yet he was on his way to sacrifice the son in whom this hope was centered. With his own hand, by the divine command, he must cut off the only hope of having this promise made true.

But as Abraham stood with knife upraised to obey God, his hand was stayed, and he heard a voice, saying, "Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything unto him; for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me."

This terrible ordeal was imposed upon Abraham that he might see the day of Christ, and realize the great love of God for the world, so great that, to raise it from its degradation, He gave His only-begotten Son to a most shameful death.

Abraham learned of God the greatest lesson ever given to mortal. His prayer that he might see Christ before he should die, was answered. He saw Christ; he saw all that mortal can see and live. By making an entire surrender, he was able to understand the vision of Christ, which had been

given him. He was shown that in giving his only-begotten Son to save sinners from eternal ruin, God was making a greater and more wonderful sacrifice than ever man could make.

"And Abraham called the name of that place Jehovah-jireh; as it is said to this day, In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." This was kept in mind by the Jews. When brought into the most difficult places, where there seemed to be no way of deliverance, they would say, "In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen."

This lesson was of great value to all Israel. By it Abraham was shown that God does not require parents to offer their sons and daughters for the sins of the world. This was done by heathen nations, and at times had been practised by the people calling themselves the Israel of God. But they were ever to bear in mind that no human being can be accepted as a sin-offering. The Son of God alone can bear the guilt of the world.

"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by." What a history is this! The Jews were so blinded by the deception of the enemy that, without any form of trial, they would have stoned Christ to death. They saw that He made Himself equal with God, and because they had no knowledge of God or of Jesus Christ, they thought this to be blasphemy. Had they had a knowledge of God, they would not have rejected His Son, and charged Him with blasphemy.

How many to-day are passing over the same ground! In their ignorance of God, in their misinterpretation of His Word, men wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction. They cherish error as truth, and have a zeal not according to knowledge.

The incarnate I Am is our abiding Sacrifice. The I Am is our Redeemer, our Substitute, our Surety. He is the Daysman between God and the human soul, our Advocate in the courts of heaven, our unwearying Intercessor, pleading in our behalf His merits and His atoning sacrifice. The I Am is our Saviour. In Him our hopes of eternal life are centered. He is an ever-present help in time of trouble. In Him is the assurance of every promise. We must acknowledge and receive this almighty Saviour; we must behold Him, that we may be like Him in character. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name."

John the Baptist sent messengers to Christ, saying, "Art Thou He that should come, or look we for another?" Jesus said to the messengers, "Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached."

The divinity of Christ's religion is shown in its adaptability to meet suffering humanity, its condescension to a low estate. Its glory is reflected upon those who receive it. But the Pharisees could not believe it; for they looked for a Saviour who was never promised. The Gospel is to be preached to the poor--not to the spiritually proud, those who claim to be rich, and in need of nothing, is it revealed, but to those that are humble and contrite. One fountain only has been opened for sin, a fountain for the poor in spirit. It is free to all who thirst for the water of life. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price."

Jehovah is the name given to Christ. "Behold, God is my salvation," writes the prophet Isaiah; "I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation. And in that day ye shall say, Praise the Lord, call upon His name, declare His doings among the people, make mention that His name is exalted." "In that day shall this song be sung in the land of Judah: We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on Thee, because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever; for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength."

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven," Christ declared; "if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, which I will give for the life of the world . . . Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed."

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