

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Christmas Day – December 25, 2025

“¹⁴And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

- John 1:14 -

Before my husband and I had children, we enjoyed tent camping. Our favorite spots were in Minnesota’s state parks along the shore of Lake Superior. We enjoyed pitching a tent on the campground. Often, the longest we’d stay at one campground was about three nights. We’d tear everything down, move on to our next campsite, and set everything up all over again.

It was a process. We laid out a tarp, which helped if it rained, we wouldn’t end up with a puddle of water at our feet. Once we had the spot situated, we got all our gear out: sleeping bags and pillows; flashlights and camp chairs. Then we’d get our fancy cookware out: skewers for our hot dogs and marshmallows and our coffee pot that made coffee right on our campfire... best investment ever! Oh yes, we were set! Set-up took at least an hour. Tearing down took longer. And then we’d do it all over again. Now the point of having a tent for camping is that it’s temporary. It isn’t intended for long-term living.

Today we hear from the Christmas story according to the Gospel of John. *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.* The Word, Jesus Christ, came into the world to dwell among us, among other humans. To better understand this, it helps to look at the original language these verses were written in, which was Greek. The word translated “dwelt” is translated from the Greek word ἐσκήνωσεν (es-kē-NŌ-sēn), which means, “he dwelt;” “he pitched a tent;” and “he made a tabernacle.” The Word of God pitches his tent with us. Despite the fact he’s got a much better arrangement available, Jesus sets up camp with the people of earth. When Jesus became a human being, God was setting up camp with humans. In the incarnation, God pitched His tent among the people. Jesus Christ—fully God—was dwelling in Heaven. Yet, He came down to earth, to live among us sinners. God sets up camp with us, pitches His tent among the people, and becomes a real flesh and blood human being.

Tents are temporary; they wear out; they only give partial shelter from the elements. The same things can be said about humanity. Human life is temporary. Human bodies wear out. The human condition gives only partial shelter from suffering. But Jesus came to be a real human being, experiencing mortality, pain, frailty, suffering, and humiliation. All experiences that God chose to embrace when He became human. Not at all like the divine experience of perfection, peace, and permanence.