And He dwelt among us!
This is designed to be read as a family Christmas devotion. Have one person read this, and someone else read the Scripture toward the end.

The Tabernacled Incarnation

What is Christmas all about? It seems like it’s becoming less and less about Jesus all the time. Many businesses these days have even shifted to “Happy Holidays” instead of “Merry Christmas.”

As we celebrate Christmas this year, let’s make sure we’re focused on the right things. Christmas is about Christ. Jesus Christ. It’s about the incarnation – the coming of Christ into the world. It’s about God becoming a man so that He could provide a way for us to be saved from our sins and sinfulness.

The Christmas story in the Bible is a wonderful story, but before reading it, let’s look at a verse in the book of John so that we can really understand how glorious it is that Jesus came.

John 1:14 says “And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us...”

This is a huge concept. We see the word “dwelt” and think about dwelling or maybe even hanging out. In the original Greek, the word means “to pitch a tent.” What he is saying is that this Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us.

The idea of “Tabernacle” also helps. It’s likely that you’ve never used the word. Maybe you’ve never even heard the word before, but it’s definitely a word you should know. Understanding it can really open up the meaning of Christmas.

Now the idea of Jesus “pitching a tent” among us is definitely a little strange. The Bible doesn’t tell us that Jesus set up any tents while He was here on earth.

There’s a very important reason why John says it this way. To really understand how important this is, we’re going to look briefly at the Old Testament Tabernacle and what it means.
The Tabernacle (Tent)

The Tabernacle in the Old Testament was the place where God met with His people. The tabernacle was covered by a tent. It was even referred to as the “Tent of Meeting.” In the front room was the holy place. The inner room was the holy of holies where the Ark of the Covenant was. (For a detailed description of the actual tabernacle, see Exodus 25:10-25; 27:21 and 37:1-9)

In Exodus 29 we see the significance of the tabernacle.
- The tabernacle is where God meets His people.
- The tabernacle is where God reveals Himself to His people.
- The tabernacle is where God’s people are consecrated and sanctified.
- The tabernacle is where God’s wrath against sin is satisfied.
- The tabernacle is where God’s people could have fellowship and communion with Him.
- When Moses would go into the tabernacle, all the people would drop everything and say “Hey! Moses is going into the tent of meeting!” They were in awe.
- The tabernacle is where God came down and met with Moses. A cloud would descend on the tabernacle when he went in.
- The tabernacle is where God would speak to Moses.
- The tabernacle was where God’s people would worship Him.
- Finally - it was a place of intimate fellowship between God and His people.

In Exodus 40, the tabernacle was completed. Here’s what the passage says: “Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle. Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it and the glory of Yahweh filled the tabernacle.”
Christmas: Jesus pitches His tent among us!

The Angel announced the coming to Mary: He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

When John says that the Word, who is Jesus, came and dwelt among us, this is what he’s talking about. When Jesus came and became a man, this is what He was doing. He came to be with us, to be in communion with us, to reveal Himself to us so that we can worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. Now – as the Christmas Story is read, keep this in mind.

➔ Have someone Read Luke 2:1-20

As we celebrate Christmas, let’s praise God for the gift of the incarnation. Let us worship Him. The Eternal God Himself, the One who created all things, the one who is the Life and the Light of the world – this God became flesh and dwelt (tabernacle) among us. Christmas is the celebration of the incarnation of Jesus Christ.

“And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us...”

Always remember that Christmas is about Christ and His incarnation.

This devotion is adapted from an article about the Incarnation written by Mike Riccardi and posted at www.thecripplegate.com