The Fourth Week of Advent - A Reflection on John 1

As we think of Advent, another wonderful thing is the *Shekhinah*, “the dwelling of God”. Christ becomes the final *Shekhinah*. When we look at the Hebrew Scriptures in Exodus 40 God's presence *shekan* dwelt in the *mishkan* “the tent of meeting” and we saw the *Kavod* of God or “the glory of God”.

That glory left Israel. In the Book of Ezekiel, we see it leaving step by step leading to the Babylonian exile. Ezekiel sees it leaving the Mount of Olives. The rabbi said when Messiah comes the glory will come back. The Shekhinah will come back. John is alluding to that whole theme as an old man when he writes I believe as the author of the Gospel of John these amazing words: *Καὶ ὁ Λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν* “and the word became flesh” and *ἐσκήνωσεν* “pitched his tent among us” and we gazed upon his δόξαν “his glory”, “glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). I believe that John is doing a play on the word *shikon* to dwell with the Greek *ἐσκήνωσεν* almost a transliteration of the Hebrew. Jesus is the final dwelling of God himself in the second person of the Blessed Trinity in human flesh and we gazed upon his glory John says. This is an amazing thing because the word is eternal the word is co-eternal with God the Father that is God the Son who now has become the *Shekhinah* that was gone and has now come back.

Jesus also is the Good Shepherd. This is another theme of John's gospel in John 10. He's the good shepherd. In Psalm 23 how beautiful it says *ךְֵּ֨ג ַּ֤ם כַי—אֵלֵ֥ל בְּגֵֵ֪יא צֵל לְּמָָ֡וֶת לֹא־אֵירַָּּ֤א רָָּ֗ע כ י—א תָָּּ֥ה ע מָּדִ֑י ש בְּטְּךָּ֥ו וּמ שְּע נְּתֶָ֗ך הֵֵ֣מָּה יְּנִּֽחֲמִנ י׃* “when I walk in deep darkness, I will not fear evil for you are with me”. We have light in Jesus Christ who is the glory of God who is also the shepherd who accompanies us in the dark places of life just like David walking in that shadow of death, between in a valley where the sun is blocked. There is fear. Thieves could prey on the sheep. There could be wild animals. The good news is the shepherd is there. Jesus is there with us even in the dark moments of life. This is another theme that beautifully connects with the good shepherd and the *Shekhinah* because he's the dwelling of God. He's the light that has come into this world to give us light as we have our faith rooted in him.

I'm reminded years ago of taking a walk down a road and I saw this little cabin and it was getting dark and suddenly there was sort of a depressed feeling that came over me. Suddenly a light came on in this cabin and I thought that's what Jesus brought into the world into the world of darkness. He is the *Shekhinah* and being the *Shekhinah* even when we walk in the dark places of life in our own life experience, we can know that he is with us to lighten or to bring light to our path. What a beautiful fulfillment in the *Shekhinah* that Jesus brings by his Advent into this world as the God man.

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