

## **The Word Made Flesh, Merry Christmas**

***John 1:1-18 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.***

***2 He was in the beginning with God.***

***3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.***

***4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.***

***5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.***

***6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.***

***7 He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him.***

***8 He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.***

***9 The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.***

***10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.***

***11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.***

***12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,***

*13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

*14 And 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.*

*15 (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'")*

*16 For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.*

*17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.*

*18 No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.*

Synopsis: A Christmas Message of Particular Truths about Christ.

So I have chosen this text with some fear and trembling that I would do an injustice to it by treating it with one sermon.

But I like it for two reasons.

**One is that it is a great Christmas passage.**

The key verse that shows this Christmas orientation is:

**Verse 14: "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."**

This is the meaning of Christmas.

God has come into the world, born of virgin, in the person of Jesus Christ.

The second reason I have chosen this text is because it is so full of particular truths about Jesus Christ that we desperately need to know and embrace.

This is especially important today because, even the major non-Christian religions of the world are speaking these days as though they esteem and honor and, in some sense, believe in Jesus.

You hear this especially, these days, from Muslim leaders who want to draw the fact that they even honor Jesus more than we do because they don't think God would allow him to suffer the death of a criminal on the cross.

So it is crucial that **Christians** know Jesus Christ very well, and can tell the difference between the Christ of the Bible and the Christ which other religions claim to honor.

So what I would like to do with this great paragraph about Jesus Christ, written by the one who knew him on earth more intimately than most, the apostle John, is to point out and explain over five take-aways concerning the Word made flesh, and then contrast two starkly different responses that you might give to him this morning.

My aim is that we might see Him for who he is and be moved to draw closer to Him as our Lord and our God.

My Christmas prayer is that we will embrace Him in a more intimate way and treasure Him and delight in Him and follow Him and display Him more than we ever have in our lives.

First lets look again at ***Verse 17 For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.***

"Jesus" was the name Joseph was told to give the child by the angel of the Lord because it means "savior."

***In Matthew 1:19, "An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.***

***She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."***

"**Christ**" was the title that referred to the long-awaited king of the Jews who would give victory to the people and bear the government of the world on his shoulders.

When Andrew, Peter's brother, told him that he had met Jesus he said (**in John 1:41**), ***'We have found the Messiah' [and John adds] (which means Christ).***"



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So the person we are speaking of in these verses is known in the Bible and throughout the world as "Jesus Christ."

And each name carries tremendous meaning: **He is Savior and King.**

The **Word-Made-Flesh** existed as God and with God before He Was Born as a Man on Earth

Look again, at ***Verse 1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."***

There have always been groups who have resisted the mystery implied in these two phrases: "**the Word was with God,**" and "**the Word was God.**"

They say, in their bondage to human logic, you can't have it both ways.

Either he *was* God, or he was *with* God.

If he was *with* God, he wasn't God.

And if he *was* God, he wasn't with God.

So to escape the truth of these two sentences, sometimes they change the translation (as the Jehovah's Witnesses do) so that it reads, "The Word was with God, and the Word was *a* god."

But there are good grammatical reasons as well as contextual reasons from other parts of the Gospel of John and other books of the Bible for why the Christian Church has never accepted such teaching as truth.

What verse one teaches is that the one we know as Jesus Christ, before he was made flesh, was God, and that the Father was also God.

There are two persons of the trinity and one God.

This is why we worship Jesus Christ and say with Thomas in **John 20:28**, *"My Lord and my God."*

Pay close attention to this, **Before He Became Flesh, John Called Him "The Word"**

**John 1:1**: *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."*

Why was he called **"the Word"**?

One way to answer this is to ponder what he might have been called and why this would have been inadequate in relationship to **"the Word."**



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For example, he might have been called "**the Deed**": "**In beginning was the deed and the deed was with God and the deed was God.**"

**One of the differences between a deed and the Word is that a deed is more ambiguous.**

If we think our *words* are sometimes unclear and subject to various interpretations, our *deeds* are far more unclear and ambiguous.

**That's why we so often explain ourselves with words.**

Words capture the meaning of what we do more clearly than the deeds themselves.

God did many mighty deeds in history, but he gave a certain priority to the **Word**.

**One of the reasons, I think, is that he puts a high value on clarity and communication.**

**Another example is that John might have called him "the Thought."**

**"In the beginning was the Thought, and the Thought was with God and the Thought was God."**

**But one of the differences between a thought and a word is that a word is generally pictured as moving outward from the thinker for the sake of establishing communication.**

I think John wanted us to conceive of the Son of God as existing both for the sake of communication between Him and the Father, and for the sake of appearing in history as God's communication to us.

**A third example is that John might have called him "the Feeling."**

**"In the beginning was the Feeling, and the Feeling was with God and the Feeling was God."**

But again, I would say, feelings do not carry any clear conception or intention or meaning.

**Feelings, like deeds, are ambiguous and need to be explained – with words.**

**So it seems to me that calling Jesus "the Word" is John's way of emphasizing that the very existence of the Son of God is for the sake of communication.**

**First, and foremost, he exists, and has always existed, from all eternity for the sake of communication with the Father.**

**Secondarily, but infinitely important for us, the Son of God became divine communication to us.**

One might say, in summary, calling Jesus "the Word" implies that he is "**God-Expressing-Himself.**"

All That Is not God Was Created through the Word

**John 1:3:** "*All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*"

There are at least two reasons John says this about the Word here.

**One is that it underscores that he is God.**

When we think of God, we think immediately of Creator.

God is the origin and explanation of all that is except God.

So when John says, "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made," **means he is God and he is *not* created.**

The other reason comes out in **verse 10:** "*He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.*"

The point here seems to underline the seriousness of the world's guilty blindness, and the greatness of the world's evil in rejecting Jesus.

He comes to us as our *Maker*, and *still* the world will not receive him.

Let's go deeper into our passage, **John 1:4**: "*In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men.*"

All life originates in the Word.

That is obvious because, as we have seen already, he is the Creator of all things.

In other words, there are two overwhelming problems we humans face: we are spiritually dead and therefore spiritually blind.

John is saying here: Jesus is the remedy to both of these problems: He has the life we need, and this life becomes the Light we need.

**John 5:21** says, "*The Son gives life to whom he will.*"

In other words, he does for us spiritually what he did for Lazarus when he stood before Lazarus' tomb and said to the dead man, "*Lazarus, come forth*" (**John 11:43**).

And how does that life, given by Jesus, relate to light?

In two ways.

**One is that it enables us to see.**

When dead people are given life, they see.

Or, to change the image, when you are born, you see.

So it is spiritually.

***Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3).***

So first Jesus gives *life* and then that life becomes *light* – the ability to see spiritual reality.

The other way that the life Jesus gives relates to the light is not that it enables you to see, but that Jesus himself is the Light that is seen.

What, after all, are we blind to, when we are unbelievers?

We are blind to the truth and beauty and worth – the glory – of Jesus.

So when John says, "In him was life and that life was the Light of men," he probably means that Jesus Christ, the Word-Made-Flesh, is both the power to see spiritual splendor *and* the splendor seen.

That's what verse 14 says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have *seen his glory*."

And that is what Jesus prayed for in **John 17:24**, "***Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory.***"

And that's what he claimed when he said twice, "**I am the Light of the world**" (**John 8:12; 9:5**).

So the Word-Made-Flesh has life in himself, and that life becomes the Light of men.

He is the power to see and the splendor seen.

Summing up, what five truths about the Word-Made-Flesh have we seen?

- 1. He is Jesus Christ after he is made flesh:** Savior and God-anointed King of all.
- 2. He is God:** He was with God and was God.
- 3. He was called the Word:** God-in-communication, God-Expressing-Himself.
- 4. He is the Creator:** all things were made through him, but he himself was not made.
- 5. He is life and Light:** the living power to see and the all-satisfying splendor to be seen.

Finally, then what are the responses you might give to all this revelation about Jesus Christ, the Word-Made-Flesh?

### **One Response: I Don't Know Him and I Don't Receive Him**

One is described in *verses 10-11*, "***He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.***

***(11) He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him."***

You might hear this and say, "I do not know him and I do not receive him."

That is a very frightening thing to say about your Maker and your Life and your Light.

At the very least I plead with you, Don't say that lightly this Christmas.

### **Another Response: I Know Him and I Receive Him**

The other response is found in *verses 12-13*, "***But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name,***

***(13) who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."***

This is the response I pray for this morning.

Receive this great Word-Made-Flesh. Receive him as Savior and King and God and Word and Creator and Life and Light. And all that God is for you in Him!

Christmas is like God sending his Son into the world to find all the evil people of the world, hiding in the caves of darkness and death.

Instead of throwing flames into the caves, he first stands at the mouth of the caves and says, "Come out into the light for I have died on the cross for sinners; if you will receive me as your God and your Substitute and your Treasure, my death counts for your death and my righteousness counts as your righteousness, and you will have eternal life."

### **Five take-Aways for this Christmas Message**

- 1. He is Jesus Christ after he is made flesh:**
  - a. Savior and God-anointed King of all.
- 2. He is God:**
  - a. He was with God and was God.
- 3. He was called the Word:**
  - a. God-in-communication,
  - b. God-Expressing-Himself.
- 4. He is the Creator:**
  - a. all things were made through him,



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b. but he himself was not made.

**5. He is life and Light:**

a. the living power to see and the all-satisfying splendor to be seen.