“The WORD Was Made Flesh”

A Christmas Message
(Selected Scriptures)
12/25/2022



Introduction: The WORD

**** The Eternal Christ left Heaven and entered the Human Race. Why?***

The WORD was made flesh…

I. To <u>Reveal</u> the <u>God</u> we could Never See
(John 1:14, 18)

The WORD was made flesh…

II. To <u>Live</u> the <u>Life</u> we could Never Live
(Hebrews 4:15; Romans 8:3)

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III. To <u>Pay</u> the <u>Price</u> we could Never Pay
(Galatians 4:4-5; Hebrews 2:9)

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Introduction: John 1:1-3, 10-11, 14

The WORD

On December 25, much of the world will celebrate the birth of Someone they don't know, don't believe in, and don't want in their lives.

It amazes me how the world methodically and consistently keeps Christ out of Christmas.

Satan has successfully tricked the world into accepting substitutes for Christ and His salvation.

The world honors a substitute Christ -
Santa Claus

The world engages in substitute gift-giving -
Each other rather than Christ (Mt. 2:11)

The world imposes a substitute emphasis -
A mere Babe in a manger, rather than the God who became flesh

The world proclaims a substitute message -
A time of hilarity, socializing, alcohol and exquisite food, wishing each other "Happy Holidays" rather than a time to remember what Jesus came to accomplish (I Tim. 1:15)

"Christmas" is summed up in the phrase: "He was in the world" (v.10)

"He" - Christ's presence was personal

"Was" - Christ's presence was factual

"In the world" - Christ's presence was visible.

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

John begins his epistle of I John with a similar description of Jesus Christ --
1 John 1:1
That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

Who is the **"Word"** referring to? None other than eternal God (v. 1), who created all things (v. 3); who entered the world by becoming incarnate (v. 14) and who dwelt on earth in the days of John (v. 14).

Christ is identified as the "Word of God" in Revelation 19:11 – 13.

"A word is composed of letters, and Jesus Christ is "alpha and omega" (Rev. 1:11), the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet" (Warren Wiersbe, The Bible Exposition Commentary, p. 284).

Words communicate
(Jesus was God's ultimate communication to man – Heb. 1:1-2)

Words command
(Jesus "by speaking the word only" gave orders that were carried out with swiftness and accuracy – Matt. 8:8, 4:20)

Words create
(Jesus' words not merely created impressions, they created reality – Heb. 11:3)

Jesus Christ is called "the Word" (*logos*) because He is the Revealer of God (Jn. 1:18). He is the outward expression of God. He is the manifestation of God.

When He speaks, God speaks. What He does, God does. Ever major act that God the Father ever accomplished, He accomplished through the instrumentality of His Son.

--He created through His Son (Heb. 1:2)
--He provided redemption through His Son (Col. 1:14)
--He sustains creation through His Son (Col. 1:17)
--He will judge through His Son (John 5:22)

Jesus is the self-disclosure of the Father. As the *logos*, He expresses God by the powerful acts of creation, revelation, salvation, judgment.

The Word existed before time, space, & matter

v. 1

"In the beginning" – John's Gospel begins with the same three words as the book of Genesis (which is the book of beginnings).

The word "beginning" points to the time when all forms of substance and life had their origin. In other words, the Word, Jesus Christ, existed prior to the beginning of the material and immaterial *cosmos*. Before the creation of physical and spiritual realities.

Before God created the sun, moon, and the orbit of the earth (features by which we measure time), He existed.

Jesus Christ is Eternal!

Proof:

1. His name is *"Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end"* (Rev. 1:11, 21:6, 22:13)
2. He is the eternal *"I AM"* (John 8:58, 18:5-6)
3. He gives eternal life (Jn. 10:28)
4. His descriptive name is *"eternal life"* (I Jn. 1;2, 5:20)
5. He is called *"the everlasting Father"* (Is. 9:6)
6. The Redeemer said, *"I am the first and I am the last, and beside me there is no God"* (cp. Rev. 1:8, 11)
7. Christ is the Creator of Heaven and earth and all the contents thereof (Jn. 1:3, 10; I Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2)
8. Christ did not begin to exist in Mary's womb but came from Heaven (Jn. 6:51; I Tim. 1:15; II Cor. 8:9; I Cor. 15:47)
9. Christ's *"goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting"* (Micah 5:2; Mt. 2:6)

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(John 1:14, 18)

v. 14

"The word was made flesh" – implied: The Word pre-existed, and then entered the human race. He became what He was not prior (Heb. 2:14).

"Dwelt among us" – The Word made His home in this world for 33 ½ years.

"And we beheld His glory" -

John and the other disciples were eye and ear witnesses of Christ's splendid glory.

They saw His perfection, His brilliance, His shining, glowing radiance.

Everyone could plainly see that He was different than everyone else. No one else ever talked like Jesus, conducted Himself like Jesus, taught like He did, worked like He did, cared like He, forgave like He, performed wonders and signs and miracles like He, lived sinlessly like He did, etc.

His glory surpassed all, because His glory was that of the **"only begotten"** (one of a kind or unique) Son of the Father.

The visible manifestation of God the Father radiated from Christ's life.

"full of grace and truth" – Christ was completely full of grace and truth.

His every act demonstrated grace, and His every word was filled with truth.

Man can at times demonstrate grace, and can frequently speak truth (but not to perfection).

Jesus was absolutely, 100% of the time gracious and truthful.

v. 15

John the Baptist shouted out the pre-eminence of Christ.

Although John was born six months before Christ and began His public ministry before Christ, yet Jesus who came after is infinitely superior because He (as God) existed "before" John.

John the Baptist frequently uses the phrase **"preferred before me"** (1:15, 27, 30) to emphasize how Christ was of surpassing rank, surpassing power, surpassing honor, and surpassing everything!

v. 18

Since **"no man hath seen God at any time,"** every appearance of God in the Bible had to be an appearance of Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament, all visible forms of God (who is Spirit) were Christophanies (or appearances of Christ).

All Old Testament references to someone seeing "God" (Elohim) or "the LORD" (Jehovah), must refer to God the Son.
Why? The reason is simple. The Bible states that no one (that is, no mortal human being) has ever seen God the Father (Ex. 33:20; Jn. 1:18, 6:46).

Jesus appeared in the Old Testament as a "Theophany" or a self-manifestation of God.

Such appearances of Christ (specifically called "Christophanies) describe Him as "The Angel of the Lord" (Lit. "the messenger of Yahweh").

1) Jesus was manifested to <u>Hagar</u>

He claims the prerogatives of God -- "<u>I will</u> multiply thy seed" (Gen. 16:10).
He is called "LORD" (Yahweh/Jehovah - this name was treated sacredly and used with honor).
He is called "God" (El) - "Thou God seest me" (Gen. 16:13).

2) Jesus was manifested to <u>Abraham</u> (cp. John 8:56).

He is called "LORD" and appears in the form of a man along with two other angels (cp. 18:1, 2 with 19:1).
---He reveals omniscience -
(He, being LORD, knew Sarah "laughed within herself")
Abraham stood before the LORD (Gen. 18:22).
---He is reverently honored as King or Master (Adonai) (Gen. 18:27).
---He judged Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19:24)

NOTE: two persons in view - both called "LORD" (Jehovah): "The LORD (God the Son) rained down fire from the LORD (God the Father).

---He speaks as God (Gen. 22:11-12, 15, 16)
In Hebrews 6:13,14 the "Angel" speaking to Abraham is identified as God.

The "Angel of the LORD" (v.15) speaks as "LORD" (v.16) and is <u>not quoting</u> the Father as some might assume by the phrase - "saith the LORD."
[Note: The word "saith" means to "affirm" The phrase "saith the LORD" is never used to introduce a quote, but is always used to affirm (or emphasize) the statement that precedes the phrase. See Jeremiah 49:13 for the same sentence structure. Compare with Numbers 14:28.]

3) Jesus was manifested to Isaac

--He "appeared" to Isaac and directed him (Gen. 26:2-5).
--He "appeared" to Isaac and gave assurance of blessing (Gen.26:24-25).

4) Jesus was manifested to Jacob

--He spoke to Jacob in a dream as the "Angel of God" (Gen. 31:11) and as God Himself (31:13).
--He wrestled with Jacob in the form of a man (Gen. 32:24-30) (This One who wrestled with Jacob is called "the Angel" of God in Hosea 12:3-5).
--He redeemed Jacob (Gen. 48:15, 16).
(NOTE: The "Angel" (v. 15) is directly linked to "God" (v. 15)

5) Jesus was manifested to Moses

--He appeared to Moses out of a "burning bush" (Exodus 3:2-6).
--He identified Himself as the "I AM" (Ex. 3:13-15) (cp. Jesus is the "I AM" - Jn. 8:58, 18:5).

--He was enveloped in a cloudy pillar (Ex. 14:19; cp. with Ex. 13:21).
--He stood upon a rock that provided water for the entire nation (Ex. 17:5, 6; cp. I Cor. 10:4).

6) Jesus was manifested to Joshua (Josh. 5:13-6:5)

--He appeared to Joshua as the "Captain of the LORD's (Yahweh's) host (army)."
--He is worshipped as God 5:14).
--He demands honor because He is holy (5:15).
[NOTE: Joshua is confronted and commissioned with the holiness of God as was Moses - cp. Ex. 3:5.]

--He is called "LORD" (Jehovah - 6:2)

7) Jesus was manifested to Israel

(Judges 2:1-7)
[Note: The first person pronouns "I . . . my" (v. 1-3). "The Angel of the LORD" claims responsibility and authority that belonged only to Jehovah God - cp. v. 7.]

8) Jesus was manifested to Gideon

(Judges 6:11-26)
He bears Jehovah's name (v. 14); claims Jehovah's authority (v. 16); and demonstrates Jehovah's power (v. 21).
Gideon feared death (v. 22-23), knowing that no man could see God's face and live (Ex. 33:20).

9) Jesus was manifested to <u>Samson's parents</u>
(Judges 13:3-22)
His name is "a secret" (v. 18) -- lit. wonderful or indescribable (cp. Is. 9:6).
Seeing Him was seeing "<u>God</u>" (v. 22).

v. 18 cont.

"Finally, Jesus Christ revealed God to us (John 1:18). As to His essence, God is invisible (1Tim. 1:17; Heb. 11:27). Man can see God revealed in nature (Ps. 19:1-6; Rom. 1:20) and in His might works in history; but he cannot see God Himself. Jesus Christ revealed God to us, for He is "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15) and "the express image of His person" (Heb. 1:3). The word translated "declared" gives us our English word *exegesis* which means "to explain, to unfold, to lead the way." Jesus Christ explains God to us and interprets Him for us. We simply cannot understand God apart from knowing His Son Jesus Christ." (Wiersbe, p. 286)

"He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father"

The WORD was made flesh…

II. To Live the Life we could Never Live

(Hebrews 4:15; Romans 8:3)

Hebrews 4:15

"We have" - This High Priest is personally ours. He does not say, *"There is a great high priest,"* but rather, *"We have a great high priest."* Showing how personally related to us Jesus is.

As ***"the Great High Priest,"*** Christ is the sole mediator between God and man (I Tim. 2:5).

"Not . . . cannot" - a double negative makes a positive; Jesus is touched.

"Touched with the feeling" *(sumpatheo)* - to suffer along with; "to share the experience of someone, to sympathize with someone. The word is not to be understood in a psychological sense, but rather in an existential sense. The exalted One suffers together with the weakness of the one tempted." (Michel, cited by Rienecker, p. 677).

"Infirmities" - areas of weakness; struggles wherein we lack strength. Vulnerable areas of our life that are easy prey for temptation.

"In all points" - In all areas that could be tempted (Mt. 4:3ff)

--Lust of the flesh (body)

--Lust of the eyes

--Pride of life (I Jn. 2:16)

"Tempted" - (passive) Jesus was tempted from without (by the world [Mt. 19:3; Mk. 8:11; Jn. 8:6] or Devil {Mt. 4]).

"Yet without sin" - Two possible ideas: without a sin nature; or without sinning.

Jesus never missed the mark of His own divine standard. Jesus is the only One who never ever sinned (Heb. 7:26; I Pet. 2:22; II Cor. 5:21; Is. 53:9).

Jesus could only be tempted (passive) by someone outside of Himself.

[His natures--divine and human--were sinless (Heb. 4:15, 7:26; II Cor. 5:21; I Pet. 2:22). Therefore, His temptation could not come from within Himself as it does with mortal men (Ja. 1:13-15). Rather, the source of temptation had to come from without.]

Jesus could only be tempted in respect to His human nature, not His divine nature.

Christ's human nature had needs (appetites for food, drink, sleep, etc.), but His divine nature had no needs and no unsatisfied desires. Therefore, His divine nature could never be a target for temptation. Such an attempt would be foolish.

Christ was "in all points tempted like as we are" (in respect to His human nature).

Because of Christ's divine attribute of holiness (absolute separateness from all sin and impurity), sin was an impossibility.

If this is so, was the temptation legitimate (real)?

Yes, because it is possible to attempt the impossible.

Though Christ was not able to sin, His temptation was nonetheless real and awful.

Important principle: "Only the sinless Individual can know the power of temptation in its full intensity, because only that individual endures until the temptation is broken. We who fall never know the full power of temptation, simply because we yield before we experience the full measure of the demonic onslaught. Christ knows all there is to know of Satan's power to tempt, simply because He withstood the full measure of such temptation." --Bookman, notes, p. 25

Many wonder how Jesus could know what we go through if He never experienced sin. A surgeon can know all about heart surgery without ever needing surgery himself. Jesus never sinned but understands sin better than any man (MacArthur, p. 113).

Romans 8:3
"What the law could not do" - what the Law was powerless to do. The Law was powerless to free us from condemnation.

"It (the Law) was weak" - lit. without strength

"The Law was weak (powerless) because it demanded what human nature could not provide.

"Likeness of sinful flesh" - the word "likeness" shows that Christ in His incarnation took upon Himself flesh, but not the sinful nature of man that is housed within every man's flesh.

"Likeness" - does not mean that Christ only appeared as a man; it does not mean He came as a phantom, as the Gnostics believed (I Jn. 4:1-3). What it means is that He took on a body, a body that looked no different than any other man's body. The only exception is that man's body houses sin inside; Christ's did not. He was sinless (II Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15, 7:26; I Pet. 2:22).

"God sending" - the initiative for our salvation was with God!

It has never been man's initiative to find God; it has always been God's initiative to seek and to save man!

"For sin" - for (on behalf of) our sin

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins..."
(I Pet. 3:18)

"Christ died for our sins" (I Cor. 15:3).

"Condemned sin in the flesh" = the reason we are not condemned for our sin (v. 1) is because our sin was condemned in Christ.

God judged your sin in the flesh of His Son.

The Father "laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Is. 53:6); Christ bore "our sins in His own Body on the tree" (I Pet. 2:24); Christ was made a "curse for us" (Gal. 3:13).

God being a just God must condemn sin. He must judge it. It must be paid for. He cannot violate His Law, and "sweep sin under the carpet" and hide it as if it never took place.

In God's wondrous plan, however, He judged sin by putting it on His Son, and judging His Son!

The "Law of double jeopardy" states that a man cannot be tried twice for the same crime. Since Jesus Christ paid the penalty for your sins, and since you are "in Christ," God will not condemn you. (Wiersbe, p. 539).

ILLUS: Hymn "It is Well With My Soul" - third stanza:

"My sin, O the bliss of this glorious thought,
My sin, not in part, but the whole
Is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more,
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!"

Christ gave you His righteousness (v. 4a)
(Justification)

Because of Christ, it is as if those "in Him" have never broken God's law. Christ took the full load of man's sin and paid for it so "that" (Purpose) the righteous demand of the law would be fulfilled in us.

The law said, "here is the standard"; and in Christ, we meet the standard. We measure up because He measures up, and we are in Him!

The WORD was made flesh…

III. To <u>Pay</u> the <u>Price</u> we could Never Pay

(Galatians 4:4-5; Hebrews 2:9)

Hebrews 2:9

Christ had to temporarily become lower than the angels because angels cannot die.

"By the grace of God" - we did not deserve our Lord to humble Himself so low as to die a shameful death to pay for our sins.

"Grace" = **G**od's **R**iches **A**t **C**hrist's **E**xpense

"Taste death" -

God became man so that He might <u>die</u> for men.

*Since God is <u>eternal</u>, and since He is pure <u>Spirit</u> (Jn. 4:24), He could <u>not</u> die.

Therefore, He subjected Himself (in the person of Christ) to a temporal and mortal body so that death might be possible.

--Matthew 20:28 - "...give His life a ransom for many."
"The Son of God became the Son of man so that we--the sons of man--might become sons of God."
--I Tim. 1:15 - "...came into the world to save sinners"
--John 6:51 - I will give my flesh..."for the life of the world"

The main purpose of Christ's incarnation was ***"for the suffering of death."***

Christ was born to die. "Those tiny hands fashioned by the Holy Spirit in Mary's womb were made to take two great nails. Those little feet were made to climb a hill and to be nailed to a cross. That sacred head was made to wear a crown of thorns, and that tender body wrapped in swaddling clothes was made to be pierced by a spear" (MacArthur, p. 63).

"Taste death" - to fully experience death.

"For every man" - for all people (lit. everyone); not a select few. The Bible does not teach a Limited Atonement. (it is limited in its application but not in its provision).

Christ's death is sufficient for all, but is only efficient for those who believe.

Conclusion:

John 1:12-13

"As many as" – To <u>all</u> who receive Him, to everyone who welcomes Him.

"Received" – *lambano* – to accept unto one's self, to welcome into one's life. To "take" or receive as one would receive money offered to him (Mt. 10:8; Acts 20:35).

The word is used of the disciples' receiving Jesus into the ship with them (John 6:21).

"Power" = Authority, or the right.

Jesus, who has all the authority in the universe (Mt. 28:18), gives authority to all who receive Him to become a child of God.

"Sons of God" – Children of God (not natural children, but adopted children).

There is only One "only begotten Son" (unique, one of a kind, divine Son) (John 3:16). All other sons of God are made sons by means of spiritual adoption into the family of God (Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:5; Eph. 1:5). This is the "new birth."

"Even to them that believe" – This phrase is added to explain what it means to "receive Him." God is saying that "receiving is believing" and "believing is receiving."

"On His name" – The "name" represents the specific person who is named. The new birth only comes to those who sincerely trust upon the specific Person of Jesus Christ.

Acts 4:12
Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

A summary of verses 12 – 13; teaching on sonship.

--Sonship is offered to all (**"as many as"**)

--Sonship is available to all who receive Christ (**"receive Him"**)

--Sonship is conferred upon people by the authority of Jesus Christ (**gave He power"**)