

## THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH—AND DWELT AMONG US

On the Sunday *before* Thanksgiving, I mentioned that it doesn't happen very often that I can stick with the series I am preaching on—in this case the Word of God—and tie it in with the upcoming holiday—at *that time* Thanksgiving. Here we are now—exactly one week before Christmas Day—and I can *still stick with our series* on the Word of God! Although I'm going to be preaching from the book of John, notice on your outline the verses I have from **Hebrews 1:1-2a**... “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>Hath in these last days **spoken unto us by His Son**...”

Interesting verses, aren't they? God—in the past—spoke to our fathers (meaning *their* Jewish ancestors) at different times and in various ways by *the prophets*. But now—in these last days—He has spoken unto us *by who*? Not prophets—and not angels—but by *His Son*! God's greatest revelation of Himself—some suggest *even greater* than His written Word—is when the Word was made flesh—and dwelt among us! We see that marvelous truth in John 1. Let's turn there; please follow along as I read verses 1-14. What was God's message to us by and through His Son? That is what we are going to be looking at this morning.

Please know “right out of the gate” that this is one of the most *doctrinally rich* passages in the entire Bible! I bring that up for two reasons:

1) No matter how long you study and meditate on a passage like this one, we are reminded of how inadequate our hearts and minds are to comprehend the greatness... and goodness...and wisdom of God! I can't help but think of **Romans 11:33** “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how **unsearchable** are His judgments, and **His ways past finding out!**”

2) Closely tied to that truth is this one—I cannot possibly share with *you all that could be said* about this passage in one sermon! That, of course, means there will be things that I leave out. Try not to fixate on what I *could have said*—but didn't. Why do I say that? Because some people—like me—think that way sometimes 😊!

### 1. The meaning of “the Word”

Notice again vs 14 “And **the Word** was made flesh...” **What**—or better, **Who**—is the Word? The answer—as most, if not all of you know—*is Jesus*! So I certainly could say “And Jesus was made flesh” and move on.

But the details of how God through John describes “the Word” are too important just to skip over. So let's go back to verse 1 and notice the first 3 words: “In the beginning...”

Ever hear—or read—those words before? That's how the Bible starts, right? Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning...” What's *the next word*? Although I don't have it on your outline, many of you know it. “In the beginning.... **God** created the heaven and the earth.”

Back to **John 1:1**. Any reference to God creating anything in this verse? No; there isn't.

How about **John 1:2**? Any reference to God creating anything in this verse? Again, no there isn't.

Now **John 1:3**. Any reference to God creating anything in this verse? **Yes!** In fact, that is what the *whole verse* is about!

I certainly could be wrong, but it seems to me like God is using John 1:1 and 1:2 to expand on—to make a commentary about—who **God the Creator** of Genesis 1:1 was and is! Not sure if I explained that very well, but hopefully what I have there **in your outline** will help.

Gen 1:1 “In the beginning **God**” [the Word who was with God and was God, John 1:1-2—and later was made flesh, John 1:14] “created the heaven and the earth.” Even if John was *not making* a commentary on Genesis 1:1, notice John's progression of thought and what we learn about “the Word.”

1) The Word **was there** at the beginning of creation (John 1:1a “In the beginning was the Word...”)

2) The Word **was with God** at the beginning of creation (John 1:1b “and the Word was with God...”)

3) The Word **was God** (“...and the Word was God.”)

Everything that **God** was—and is; **the Word** was—and is!

4) The Word **was the Creator**. We see that in verse 3 “All things were made by Him [the Word]; and without Him [the Word] was not any thing made that was made.”

--This is not a trick question: According to verse 3, did the Word create **all** things? Yes!

--Again—according to vs 3—was **anything made** without the Word? No; nothing was created that He did not create!

--Here’s another question. It’s not a trick question—even though it might sound like one. Listen carefully: How many Creators can **create all** things? **Only one**, right? That means that since **the Word** created **all things**, no one else can make the same claim! There can’t be **two different** Creators of all things!

So here in John 1:3 we have a declaration that **all things** were created by **the Word**. Notice on your outline **Colossians 1:16** “For **by Him** were **all things** created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: **all things were created by Him, and for Him:**” Who is the “Him” being referred to in this verse? We’re not going to take the time to do this, but if we were to turn to Colossians 1 and read the surrounding verses, we would see that the “Him” who created all things **was... Jesus!**

So...how can **the Word** be the Creator of all things—and **Jesus** be the Creator of all things? They can’t, of course, **unless...**unless they are **One and the same Being** with two different names! And that is precisely what God wants us to understand. The Word = God = The Creator = Jesus!

**Hebrews 1:1-2**—the verses we started with this morning—reinforce that very thought: “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup> Hath in these last days spoken unto us **by His Son**, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, **by whom also He made the worlds;**”

Who is the Word? The Word is the Son of God...the Second Person of the Trinity...the Creator of all things.

Back to verse 14 “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...” I’m calling this...

## **2. The marvel of the Word – God became man!**

A. The Word was made flesh. Three truths regarding the enfleshment—the Incarnation—of the Word.

### **i. Jesus was made flesh before He was born**

I’m being technical here, but Jesus took on humanity **before He was** born. He wasn’t **non-human** in Mary’s womb; He was 100% human at the moment He was conceived—roughly 9 months before He was born!

### **ii. Jesus was not miraculously born**

Again, I’m being technical, but listen carefully. Jesus’ **birth** was not miraculous. Without getting too graphic, Mary **gave birth** to Jesus the same way she did her other children—four boys, named James, Joses, Simon, and Judas according to Matthew 13:55—as well as at least two sisters according to Matthew 13:56.

The **miracle** involved in **Jesus becoming man** was that He was **conceived** of the Holy Spirit—without **any physical intimacy** on the part of a man! Notice on your outline some verses that attest to that fact.

**Matthew 1:20** “But while he [Joseph] thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is **conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.**”

**Luke 1:31, 34-35** “And, behold, thou shalt **conceive in thy womb**, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus. <sup>34</sup>Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? <sup>35</sup>And the angel answered and said unto her, **The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee**, and the **power of the Highest shall overshadow thee**: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

Some of you might be thinking, ‘Okay, Pastor, please explain that to us.’ To which I reply, “I can’t!” It was a miracle God did and I accept it by faith. But since God **created the first Adam** from the dust of the ground—with no help from a woman or a man—He can certainly create the **Second Adam** without a man!

### iii. Jesus did not get His humanity from Mary

Many suggest—probably without thinking it through—that Jesus got *His “humanness”* from Mary and His deity—*His “divineness”*—from the Holy Spirit. Why is that a *faulty view*?

Because if Jesus *got His divinity* from anyone, He wasn’t divine *in the first place!* But He was always divine; He was...and is...and *always has been God* so He didn’t need to *get His “divineness”* from anyone!

Jesus got *His humanity*, then, not from Mary—but from the *miraculous work of the Holy Spirit*. Again, I can’t necessarily explain it, but God says it—so I believe it!

Not only was the Word made flesh, B. The Word dwelt among us

The word for “dwelt” in this verse is an interesting one. It literally means “to have one’s tent, to dwell.” Bruce suggests it means that the incarnate Word “pitched His tabernacle among us”—an obvious reference to the OT wilderness wandering when God manifested His presence in the tabernacle.

He then adds: “So, it is implied, as God formerly manifested his presence among his people in the tent which Moses pitched, now in a fuller sense he has taken up residence on earth in the Word made flesh.” (The Gospel & Epistles of John, F.F. Bruce; pg 40).

God was made flesh; He *revealed Himself to us* by “taking up residence on earth!” Those alive at that time got to behold—they got to see; they got to look upon—God in the flesh! And John was one of those close associates of the Word—the God-Man—when He “tabernacled” on earth.

### 3. The manifestation of the Word

So what did John see? How did God manifest Himself?

How did God portray Himself? We have the answer in vs 14: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

What did God reveal to us about Himself in this person called “the Word?” He revealed *the glory of the Father*—in a very different way than they had probably expected based on the Old Testament!

Let’s consider first... A. OT manifestations of God

Can’t spend a lot of time on this, but let’s think about some of the times God revealed Himself in the OT.

--In Exodus 3, God spoke to Moses from a burning bush. Remember what He said to Moses?

**Exodus 3:5** “...Draw not nigh hither: put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.”

--In Exodus 19, Moses met God on the top of Mount Sinai to get the 10 Commandments—and instructions on how to build the tabernacle. How did God manifest Himself to Moses?

**Exodus 19:18** “And mount Sinai was **altogether on a smoke**, because the Lord descended upon it **in fire**: and **the smoke thereof ascended** as the smoke of a furnace, and **the whole mount quaked** greatly.”

--In Exodus 40, we read of God’s presence *in the tabernacle*. When God manifested Himself then, Moses couldn’t even go in because the “glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.” (Exodus 40:35)

--And in Isaiah 6:1-5, we read of the prophet Isaiah’s encounter with God. How did God manifest Himself to Isaiah? Let’s turn there; please follow along as I read. “In the year that king Uzziah died **I saw also**

**the Lord sitting upon a throne**, high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. <sup>3</sup> And one cried unto another, and said, **Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts**: the whole earth is full of his glory. <sup>4</sup> And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> Then said I, **Woe is me! for I am undone**; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: **for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.**”

**But when John** beheld the glory of God in the person of Christ, he didn’t see any of those things, did he?

--He didn’t hear a voice saying, “Draw not nigh hither...”

--He didn’t see an awe-striking Being—surrounded by angels—crying “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

--And he didn’t see the Christ of Revelation 1 whose face was as bright as the sun (Rev 1:16)

Instead, God manifested His glory—the glory of the Father—as being **full of grace and truth**.

Did he mean that the **glory of God** is full of grace and truth—or **that Jesus** is full of grace and truth? To which I reply, “Yes!” Jesus **is** the glory of God—and Jesus is full of grace and truth! The grace and truth of God—as seen in Jesus—are far too deep and rich to try to cover in the little time we have left, though, so we are going to look at them next week (unless God leads otherwise).

What I want to do in the time we have left is briefly consider... **B. The NT manifestations of God the Son**  
What did people see—humanly speaking—when they looked upon Jesus? In other words, what did **Jesus look like**? And the answer is: we don’t know...much! We do know a little, though.

#### **i. Jesus had no halo**

You know what I’m talking about, right? Jesus didn’t have an unusual “glow” about His head—in the shape of a plate—that made Him different from everyone else. How do we know that? Because it is **never once mentioned** in the Bible! Here’s a couple of examples where it **would have been mentioned** if He had one.

--We know very little about Jesus’ childhood. We do know, however—according to Luke 2:42-45—that when He was 12 years old, He was **accidentally left behind** in Jerusalem. Remember where they found Him? **In the temple**. What was He doing there? “...sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions.” **Luke 2:47** “And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers.” They weren’t amazed by the **glow around His head**—they were amazed at the **knowledge in His head!**

--Here’s one more. When Judas Iscariot led the mob to arrest Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane, what did he tell them to look for? He said, ‘Look for the guy with the halo, right?’ No; he didn’t say that! What did he say? “Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He: hold Him fast” (Mt 26:48). The point is that in physical appearance, Jesus looked much like the other disciples so Judas had to make sure they knew which one was Jesus!

#### **ii. Jesus had no special features**

--**King Saul**—the first king of Israel—was the tallest person around—giants excluded. No such thing is said of Jesus.

--**King David** had “a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look to” meaning he was obviously handsome. That wasn’t said about Jesus, either!

In fact, the **one verse** in the Bible that does give us some insight into how Jesus looked is found in **Isaiah 53:2**; let’s turn there. “For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him.” Simply put, Jesus was not a handsome human!

I think it’s pretty safe to say that if God was **super concerned** about looks, when He came in the flesh and dwelt among us, He should have been the most handsome person that ever lived! But He wasn’t!

In looks, He was just a common, plain, Jewish-looking man. When the prophet Samuel was tasked to find a different man to replace King Saul, God had told Samuel: “...for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” (1 Sam 16:7).

It is not surprising, then, that the outward, physical appearance of the God-man was nothing special. The “specialness” of the Word being made flesh—and dwelling among us—was not in His **physical features**. It is in what He did! What did He do? We’re still in Isaiah 53; look at vs 4.

--vs 4 “He bore **our** griefs, and carried **our** sorrows”

--vs 5 “He was wounded for **our** transgressions, He was bruised for **our** iniquities: the chastisement of **our** peace was upon Him; and with **His stripes** we are healed.”

--vs 6 “All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.”

Verse 6 is actually the message of Christmas. We are lost sheep that refuse to follow the shepherd—we go our own way and do our own thing. What was God’s response to our lostness and waywardness?

Lay our sin—and the penalty of it—on Jesus so that sin would be paid for—and we could be forgiven!

Does that happen automatically? No; we have to **receive Christ**, don't we? We have to transfer our trust from ourselves and what **we can do** to what **He did for us**.

I believe it was Dr. Harry Ironside who said of vs 6, "We need to go in on the first 'all'—and come out on the last 'all.'"

What does that mean? To "go in on the first all" means we need to admit that we are like sheep that by nature want to wander—and also willingly choose our own way over God's way.

To "come out on the last all" means to look to...and count on...and believe in...and accept for ourselves the payment of our sins that Jesus made by dying in our place.

Have you done that? God wants you to do that—that's why the Word was made flesh—and dwelt among us.

So what does God want us to do with what we've heard this morning?

1. First, does your belief about Jesus match what the Bible says? He was...and is...and always will be, God! He has no earthly equal. His mother Mary was "blessed"—but she was not...is not...and never will be equal with Jesus. She was a sinner just like us.
2. Second, have you come to this Jesus for forgiveness? He came to earth to dwell among us—but ultimately to die! His death does you no good, though, if you personally have not received Him by faith.
3. Third—and this one may seem a bit odd—but don't judge a book by its cover! Jesus was not handsome as a human because God is not overly concerned about outward appearance. That means we shouldn't be either!