**The Word Became Flesh**

**By Jay S. McMullan © 2018 – All Rights Reserved**

At Christmas, it is kind of expected that people will teach or preach a lesson about Christmas. Now that I’ve been a Christian for 46 years, I have **heard the Christmas story AT LEAST 46 times**. I can tell you the Christmas story in my sleep. We tend to get tired of hearing stories over and over but the **Christmas story is a miracle that will never get old**. **May God give us revelation knowledge of just how powerful it is that Jesus came into the flesh to live as we do and to give His live for us!**

**John 1:1-14 (KJV)**

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

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5 And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.
6 There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.
7 The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.
9 *That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.
10 He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11 He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

13 Which 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 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.

Unlike the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, **John does not recount the birth of Christ. We don’t have any accounts of shepherds or wise men. Nor do we have the account of Mary or how Joseph and Mary had to take the baby to Egypt because Herod had ordered all the male babies under the age of two to be killed.**

John had no concern about how Jesus came into the world but about who He was, who He is and who He will be.

John’s gospel was written later than the other three, some **45 to 60 years after** Christ was born into his body. John was an old man by this time and he probably wrote this letter on the Island of Patmos where he had been exiled. Foxes Book of Martyrs tells us that John was put into a pot of boiling oil but he would not boil! What do you do with someone you can’t kill? You exile him to some far away place.

John was the only disciple present at Jesus’ crucifixion. He is also the only disciple that died a natural death.

In each of the gospels, Jesus is looked at in a different way. Matthew writes of Jesus being the **King**, Mark writes of Jesus as being a **Servant**, Luke writes of Jesus as being **Man** and John writes of Jesus as being **God**.

So, John has had a lot of years to think about the three years he spent with Jesus. When the apostles were called to serve with Jesus they **did not have the REVELATION OF CHRIST just yet**.

The Apostles thought that Jesus was going to physically conquer the Romans and make the Jews rulers of Israel. They thought they would be a part of that.

You may remember that John was brother of James and they were called the “Sons of Thunder!” We might even say they signed on with Jesus as revolutionaries! You may remember how Peter cut off the ear of the guard that came with the priests to arrest Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. When the disciples were called, they were young and I believe they were ready to give their lives as revolutionaries to defeat the Romans. But, Jesus had a different plan.

It wasn’t until after they were saved that they really understood who Jesus is. I believe this is the point that they really understood who Jesus is. They received revelation as their hearts were changed at the moment of salvation.

**John 20:19-23 (NLT2)**
19 That Suday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said.
20 As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord!
21 Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.”
22 Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.
23 If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”

**In verse 28, Thomas finally realizes who Jesus is and when he does he declares, *“My Lord and my God”* (John 20:28). Jesus isn’t just a good man or a good teacher or a representative for God. Jesus Christ is the second member of the Triune Godhead.**

In this scene, we see the disciples hiding behind locked doors, fearing for their lives when, all of sudden, Jesus is there. Can you imagine the hush that fell on them in that room?

Jesus had just been resurrected. Mary and Martha had gone to the tomb but Jesus’ body was missing. Then Marry saw Him and grabbed hold of him, weeping, probably wondering if she hadn’t gone crazy. But here He was, alive once again!

Then Jesus told her not to hold him, He still had work to do in the Holy of Holies in heaven! You see, Jesus was the “lamb that was slain.” He was also the “High Priest.”

Under the old covenant, each family had to go to the temple once a year with an animal they could afford. Some could afford sheep, others only turtle doves. The animal was taken by a priest, killed, cut apart and the blood was sprinkled on the family members and their sins were atoned for for one more year.

Jesus had to be the High Priest in heaven. He was also the Lamb. By looking at the duties of the High Priest in the Old Testament, we get types and shadows of who Jesus is. Once Jesus had sacrificed Himself, He sprinkled His blood, once and for all! No more having to do this once year!

The next time we see Him, is the locked room with the disciples.

Jesus spoke to them and did something unusual.

He breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit!” This is when they were saved. This is when their lives truly changed!

Never again do we see the disciples fearing for their lives. In fact, the next time we see them is in the upper room on the day of Pentecost. They are waiting for the promise of God, the Holy Spirit, the Comforter!

Then we see the Holy Spirit fall on them. They all begin to speak in tongues that they did not understand. Now they have power to be witnesses to all the world! You can have that same power if you are saved AND then baptized in the Holy Spirit.

**John’s Gospel does something different from the other Gospels.  This Gospel has soaked in the Jesus story for decades before pen is ever brought to paper.  This gives this Gospel a theological approach that is much more developed.**

**And while the other Gospels feel like accounts of Jesus’ time here on earth, John’s Gospel has a clearly different approach that is felt even in the first few words.**

**So with that, we have this beautiful exposition of “In the Beginning is the word and the word is with God and the word is God and the word was with God in the beginning.”**

**And while that’s beautiful in our English translations, as I often find, our English language does a poor job of capturing the fullness of the biblical Greek here in these first few verses of John’s gospel.  For in the Greek, this word for “word” is “logos” which means so much more than word.  It captures of the idea of statement… story… account… knowledge… a thought that has been gathered together in the mind… wisdom.**

**So “In the beginning the logos was with God and the logos was God.”**

**This logos translates to so much more than “word”.  It certainly isn’t “word” in the grammatical sense- but this logos translates to a living concept or idea—this logos is the very wisdom of God.**

**And this wisdom get personified as John’s Gospel reads, “He [this logos] was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him.”**

**God’s wisdom is personified.  And it is evident that this personification of wisdom does not originate with John’s gospel, for we already have lady wisdom, the Sophia of God, who is spoken of in very similar ways.**

**In the beginning of the Old Testament book of Proverbs, Wisdom cries out in the street and in the squares she raises her voice.  Proverbs says that at the busiest corner she cries out to urge people to follow the path that she lays out.  She is a woman with a voice.**

**And just a few chapters later it says,**

**“Blessed are those who find wisdom,
for she is more profitable than silver
and yields better returns than gold.
Her ways are pleasant ways,
and all her paths are peace…**

**And by wisdom God laid the earth’s foundations”**

**Through wisdom all things came into being and by wisdom God laid the earth’s foundations.**

**No—John’s gospel is not the first place we find God’s wisdom personified.  I mean, how’s the old saying go, wherever you find a great man—there’s a great woman beside him?  Clearly an Old saying–**

**So years and years after this Jesus is murdered on a cross- John’s gospel, saturated in theological exposition of who Jesus was—aligns itself with this wisdom literature of the Old Testament.**

**Because in the beginning was logos, wisdom, and all things came to being through logos.**

**And the crux of this passage—in all of the theological build up—with a God who is the creator of the universe, who “in the beginning” made the earth and the stars and set the waters in their places…  The God who made all of the earthly creatures—the beasts of the field, the creepy crawlies, the sea monsters and the birds of the sky.  The God who created all of this—this God created all of this with logos.  And this logos of God came and put on flesh and bones and dwelt among us.**

**This logos entered our human experience and put on a body.   This God who “In the beginning” created all of this—isn’t a God who lives out there somewhere.  We don’t live in a world where God is out there like a puppet master pulling strings.  No- this God who created all of this knows what it is like to put on a body just like ours—and I think that has huge implications for how we are to live in this world and what we do with our bodies.**

**A lot of Christians are concerned about believing the right things here on earth so that they can go somewhere else when they die.  It’s like a golden ticket into heaven.  If I just believe the right things here on earth, I will get into a better life.**

**There’s an old joke that us pastors like to tell.  St. Peter is at the pearly gates and he is gathering the new arrivals for their tour of heaven.  Once he has everyone gathered, he begins the tour.  “And over here we have the Catholics and over there the Methodists… and around this corner up on that hill are the Buddists and over there around that table are the Muslims.” And as the approached the next turn, he stopped the group and said quietly, “ And now as we round this next corner, I am going to have to ask you to be particularly quiet.” And someone piped up, “Why?” “Because” St. Peter said, “around the next corner are the Southern Baptists—and they think they’re the only ones here.”**

**Now I do not presume to believe that everyone is trying to get to a Christian heaven—but too many times our religion is too much about going somewhere else when Jesus comes here… and puts on a body… and dwells among us.**

**Because our bodies are important.  The incarnation, the Emmanuel.. the God with us… that is important.  How we live on this earth is important.  And when logos, God’s wisdom, shows up on this earth—it isn’t in a cloud or a mirage or a vision at night.  No—the fullest revelation that we have of God’s dream for this world—God’s approach to the world—we have this through this person who put on skin and bones… and saw things differently.  And lived in this world differently.  He shifted the perspective and gave us a much broader vision for what the kingdom of heaven actually looks like.**

**Our bodies—the physicality of our being—is important.  If God was more concerned about being out there, disconnected—I just don’t think it would have been very important to come and put on flesh and bones to live into this human experience.  And I think that has something to say about how we live into this bodily experience. As the old proverb goes, “It is easier to lie with the lips than with the body.”**

**Especially in a tradition that has been so quick to dismiss the body and shame it, I find it particularly interesting that this is how God’s wisdom shows up in our world.  Because our bodies are so much of who we are.  Jesus’ physicality, the incarnation, shows us most fully how to live into this world.**

**Gather around a table with your friends.  Eat with them.  Feel the nourishment you receive from the food.  Be present.  Sit with people.  But, as the body demands, make time to get away and rest… meditate and pray.  Live into the world that you born into.. but you must be willing to question the system and the way things have always been done.  Look deeply into the eyes of another and see the humanity that exists within them.  Be willing to be inconvenienced by another.  Feel the breath in your lungs and the air on your skin.  Be willing to be vulnerable for love’s sake.**

**When we live into our bodies like the incarnate Christ does, when we allow our bodies to inform our living and our being, we are given a fuller vision of who God is and God’s dream for the world.**

**And Jesus came, and put flesh and bones on to show us the way.**

In Colossian 1:16 Paul is writing about the pre-eminence of Christ and says, “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him.” In examining the operation of the Trinity it could be deduced that typically the Father is the planner, the Son is the doer and the Holy Spirit is the revealer. An example is in redemption. The Father planned our redemption, the Son accomplished it, and the Holy Spirit has revealed it to us. Here in creation the Father planned creation, the Son actually created all things, and the Spirit revealed it. All of the Trinity was involved in creation but the New Testament attributes the direct act of creation to the Son.

In America we have patent and copyright laws so that whatever we create we have the rights to. Jesus created you and has a right to your life. You really can’t say, “I’ll live life however I want to.” Your life is not your own, you were created and redeemed by Jesus Christ. He has absolute right to your life.

When you look at the life of Jesus Christ you see how life was to be lived. Jesus lived life to the fullest. In John 10:10 Jesus announced, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”

Jesus is God

Jesus is the Word, Wisdom

Jesus is Life

Jesus is Light

“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life” (John 8:12).

There is a philosophy that teaches the universal Fatherhood of God and the universal brotherhood of man. That there is one God but many paths that lead to God. That is not what Jesus told us. In John 14:6 Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Only when you receive Jesus do you have the right to be a child of God. It didn’t come by the flesh. You can’t work for, earn it, or deserve it. It comes by faith in Christ and it is a miracle of God. You can be born again and adopted into the family of God.

The Word must be received. Jesus is eternal life and you must receive Him to obtain it. It’s not enough to simply believe in God or to believe in a man of history named Jesus. You must receive Him as your Lord and Savior. You can’t save yourself. You can make yourself good enough for God. Have you received Jesus Christ as God and as your personal Lord and Savior? If you have, you are now part of God’s very own family. If not, you’ll have a chance to before this service is over.

For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

We are told that when Jesus came, He came to show us what God was like. The Word, the message from God, is Jesus. Moses gave the law. It helped man to see the character of God but there is no way that the full grace and truth of God could be revealed through the law. No one had ever seen God. Man was afraid of God. God was so distant, so awesome, that man could not really comprehend him. As such, God took on humanity to show us what he was like. This is God’s ultimate self-expression. In Jesus the invisible, all-powerful, distant God became touchable. The awesome glory of God became resident in a person. This was not God wearing a disguise. Rather he actually took on our humanity. He suffered hunger, pain, weariness, rejection and everything that is part of being human. God become one of us. Grace and truth now was embodied in a person. If man wants to see what God is like, He only needs to look at Jesus. He found God was not a tight fisted, mean, killjoy. Rather God was loving, and compassionate, and merciful, and generous, angry at sin, and absolutely head over heals in love with mankind. So much so that he healed, and delivered, and taught, and even sacrificed his own life for the human beings he had created.

Illustration: Soren Kierkegaard, the great Danish theologian of the 18th century, tells the story of a prince who was running an errand for his father one day in the local village. As he did so, he passed through a very poor section of the town. Looking through the window of his carriage, he saw a beautiful young peasant girl walking along the street. He could not get her off his mind. He continued to come to the town, day after day, just to see her and to feel as though he was near her. His heart yearned for her, but there was a problem. How could he develop a relationship with her? He could order her to marry him. It was in his power to do so. But he wanted this girl to love him from the heart, willingly. He could put on his royal garments and impress her with his regal entourage, and drive up to her front door with soldiers and a carriage drawn by six horses. But if he did this he would never be certain that the girl loved him or was simply overwhelmed with his power, position and wealth. The prince came up with another solution. As you may have guessed, he gave up his kingly robe and symbols of power and privilege. He moved into the village dressed only as a peasant. He lived among the people, shared their interests and concerns, and talked their language. In time, the young peasant girl grew to know him, and then to love him. This is what Jesus has done for us. The Word became flesh. The King of heaven put aside his heavenly robes and divine prerogatives. He came to us as one of us. He lived among us; ate with us; drank with us; felt with us — all to win our love. He could have forced us. He could have overwhelmed us, but he chose to romance us.

Jesus is God. As such he shows you what God is like. That God is in love with you. Don’t confuse God with mean, ruthless, stingy, and cruel religious people. God isn’t at all like that. He is the one we see in Jesus. He is someone who has time for little children and grieving widows. He is the one not afraid to touch a leper. Today you could say He is the God unafraid to touch a hurting AIDS patient. He loves and wants to help hurting, broken, and lost people. Someone will to lay his life down for yours. That is God. The God you always wanted to believe in. He has been revealed in Jesus. Dare to believe it. Dare to experience Him through Christ.

When the church youth program put on their Christmas program everyone had a part accept a sweet big hearted but mentally challenged young man. Finally, he too was cast as the Inn Keeper. He had only one line. When Mary and Joseph asked for a place to stay, he was to hold out his hand in a "no" position and respond, "no room." He practiced his line hard and was prepared to deliver it. When Joseph requested a room, he delivered his line perfectly, "no room." Again Joseph requested the room for the sake of his pregnant wife and the inn keeper again said, "no room." Joseph then waxed dramatic and got on one knee to beg for a room. But again the Inn Keeper replied sternly, "no room.’ As Mary and Joseph got up and walked dejectedly away the Inn Keeper cried out, "Ah, come back, you can have my room." They say it was the best Christmas program they ever had.

When there was no room for us in the presence of God – Jesus said you can have my room – and he made a way by becoming one of us and make a way to God through His cross.