

“The Word that has become flesh” John 1:1-18 Christmas Day 2024

What is the Word that has become flesh? If we humans have a word, it is something that we speak, or perhaps something that we think. But when God has a Word, it is a Person.

When God creates, He uses the Word. Through the Word all things were made, and without the Word nothing was ever made. So, God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. Somehow the act or content of speaking was the vehicle to create the entire universe.

Even more than that, the Word of creation was the Son of God, a being distinct yet also one with the Father and Spirit. The creative, powerful Word is the only begotten, without beginning or end.

This Word has become Man. The one without beginning assumes a beginning by being conceived in the Blessed Virgin. She becomes the mother of the Son of God, even though He is ageless and infinite, before time was time.

The Word is life. All life comes from Him. The Word is light because He is the Light of the world. In Creation and in Redemption, the Word creates all life and light. Only in His life and death and resurrection can there be any life at all for fallen humanity. If anyone is to be enlightened by God, he can only be enlightened by the Word which is Christ.

There is too much here for our fragile brains. Our limited, sinful intellects cannot grasp how a Word can be a Person, nor how a Word can take flesh. Yet we faithful believers confess what is beyond our understanding. We say what God has said, even though we cannot fully grasp it.

So, we say, “The Word became flesh.” We also say, “and was made Man,” in the Nicene Creed. We are privileged to say, “Christ, the

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Son of God, was born of the Virgin Mary.” Such powerful words for our humble lips!

Such a fantastic wonder occurred in the manger that the heavens were amazed, and the depths of hell shivered in fear. For on this day, there was a baby who was the eternal God.

We can imagine His chubby little fingers, so clumsy and weak. Yet this Baby is the all-powerful God who somehow remains above in heaven, filling all creation. Somehow, He is upholding the universe with His preserving power, while He gurgles and spits and wiggles.

So, heaven rejoices and hell groans in fear. Now there is a Man who is God. He comes in weakness, not using His full power and glory as God. Yet God He is. He has not counted our earthly lives as beneath Him. He did not avoid the dirtiness, the pain, or any of the shame of God acting like a weak man.

Consider that He was willing to be born. We might think that too lowly and disgusting a process for the High King of all kings, the Monarch of the universe. Yet the Lord of hosts did not avoid this messiness. He said, “I will do all the things they do, except for sin. I will be one of them.”

Think of the honor now heaped upon our human race. God has become our brother, one of us. He did not just come in human form or come in human disguise. No, He became one of us, forever a Man. He did not take humanity for a little while. No, He became flesh for all eternity.

This is the terror for Satan and his hosts. The Word became flesh means that Christ will always be a human being. The Son of God has thrown His lot in with us.

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He was like us, weak, struggling, and stumbling. Yet always He was the Word. Always the power was His to do whatever He wished. He did not need to struggle. He did not need to be weak. In Himself, He always was and always is the Omnipotent King, even as the Baby in the manger. Yet He did not use His majestic glory.

So, He came into the world that Christmas Day as a weakling. Mary or Joseph holds God in their hands. He does not move about under His own power. He must spend months learning how to walk. Why does He do it? Why not summon cherubim and ride upon them? Because He came to be like you.

This is His love for you. He wanted to redeem your life, so He lived your life. He went through childbirth, teething, crawling, learning to speak. He who is the Word had to be taught words. He who created all language babbled. Why? To redeem everything that you are and do.

Cry out to the heavens in joy this Christmas Day, “The Son of God is my brother!” Now humanity has a new dignity. Once created in the image of God, we broke that image. Now the human race has a new glory and greatness because one of us is Christ the Lord.

We were in darkness. But the Light of light has come to enlighten us. We were dead. But the Life of all the living has brought us to life. How? By speaking Himself. The Word speaks the Word, and we are resurrected.

Our will had failed. Adam and Eve, as our representatives, failed in the garden. We each in our own lives have failed because we are their true children. Our first parents used their free will to fall into sin and plunge all humanity into sin and death. So, we lost free will to

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choose God. Our will power became tainted by sin so that no one could choose to be born again.

Yet now we have this Name to believe in: the Word, the Christ, the Son of God, the Lord Jesus. His Name is Wonderful. His Gospel gives us faith where our human power of decision could not. His powerful Word grasps us and makes us His own.

That was why He took our flesh. He wanted to make us His own again. That was why He came as a Baby, filled with grace upon grace. His very existence was the gift of God to mankind. Every intention and moment and thought and word and action He ever produced were for us. His was a perfect life as we cannot even imagine perfection.

The Word is the truth of God. The truth is this: You are sinners, but Christ has come in your human flesh to pay the price. He has come to be your life. And that is a life that never ends.

So, when we consider the Babe in Bethlehem, we must conclude that there is far too much contained in that manger for our fragile brains to grasp. The eternal God who fills the universe fit His essence and glory into a tiny Baby's body. He who is bigger than all creation, who made it everything by His power, entered His own creation to live within it, as one of its creatures. What glory and prize did He hope to win by this? Simply you. He looked upon us sinners with compassion and said, “I will suffer all that must be suffered. I will be one of them. I will be flesh.”

So, He became, and so He lived, and so He was born. And the angels sang, and the demons trembled.

All glory be to the Incarnate Word, who worked so mightily by becoming a little Baby. Amen.