

THE WORD MADE FLESH

John 1:1-3,14

Intro: We are at that time of the year when the world gives attention to the birth of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. However, year by year there is such a commercialization of Christmas, that very, very few pay any attention at all to the birth of the One Whose advent we unconsciously recognize every time we write down the date. Time for us is marked by so many years B.C., *before Christ*, or A.D., *anno Domini*, meaning, *in the year of our Lord*. In just a few days we will be *in the year of our Lord 2000*. And yet I doubt very much if any of us have heard the new millennium described that way. A few year ago when an attempt was made by some to “put Christ back in Christmas,” I remember that the criticism was voiced by several that “some people want to put religion into everything.”

And so, just as many people try to define a Christian without saying anything about Christ, so people can talk about Christmas all of the time without giving a thought to Jesus Christ. And yet you can’t write the word “Christmas” without writing “Christ.” However, more attention is paid today to that fictitious character Santa Claus than to the greatest Person Who ever walked upon this earth, our Lord Jesus Christ. Countless millions of people will spend eternity wishing that they had given more attention to the message of Christ.

The Bible makes it very clear that our Lord Jesus Christ and His birth, His life and works, His death, His resurrection and ascension are the focal point of all history. No one who ever lived can ever begin to approach Him in importance. All of the OT anticipated His coming, and, after you get through the Gospels, the rest of the NT explains the meaning of His coming, and anticipates His return. But in the Gospels, all four of them, we have the divine record of the coming of Christ to the earth, and much of what He did while He was here. I say “much” because in the last verse of John’s Gospel he had this to say,

And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen (John 21:25).

It is interesting to observe the different ways in which the writers of the Gospels approached the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Matthew began with a genealogy, and then proceeded to tell what happened to Joseph when he discovered that Mary, to whom he was engaged to be married, was expecting a child. He felt that he must break the engagement, but he loved her so much that he did not want to disgrace her, and so he planned to do it as quietly as possible. But it was then that the angel of the Lord appeared to him, and this is what Matthew recorded about the angel's message:

20 But while he 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.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins (Matt.1:20-21).

And then Matthew added this important explanation from Isaiah 7:14:

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us (Matt. 1:22-23).

In the last two verses of the chapter we are told what Joseph's response was:

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS (Matt. 1:24-25).

Mark did not include any account of the birth of our Lord. Instead he simply stated at the beginning, in chapter 1, verse 1, "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God." And then he went right on to speak of the ministry of John the Baptist, who, in turn, introduced the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Luke gave us the fullest account of the birth of our Lord, telling first of how the birth of John the Baptist was made known to John's father, Zacharias, and then he went on to tell how the angel of the Lord appeared to the virgin Mary to tell her that she would give birth to a Son, Whose Name was to be JESUS.

But I have announced my text from the Gospel of **John**. And he gives what is the briefest account of the birth of our Lord. He simply said, "**And the Word was made flesh**" (John 1:14a). There you have only six

words. In the Greek there are only five words. And we could translate those words, *And the Word became flesh*. That is how John announced the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. But the Spirit of God, under whose direction the Apostle John was writing, had a wonderful way of packing a lot of truth into just a few words.

Let me read to you what David Brown in the JFB commentary said about John's Gospel. Here is his comment:

As the Fourth Gospel was not written until the other three had become the household words and daily bread of the Church of Christ, thus preparing it, as babes are by milk, for the strong meat of this final Gospel, so, even in this Gospel, the great keynote of it, that "The Word was made Flesh," is not sounded until, by 13 introductory verses, the reader has been raised to the altitude and attempered to the air of so stupendous a truth.

We are going to leave those words for the time being although I will come back to them before I complete my message today. First, I want to pay attention to the Name which the Apostle John gave to our Lord. He called Him:

I. "THE WORD."

I think that most of you have learned that the Apostle John is the only one in Scripture who used this Name, or Title, for our Lord Jesus Christ.

You have it three times in the first verse of John's Gospel.

The next time we come to it is in the first verse of 1 John. I will read that verse and verse 2 with it:

- 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;
- 2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) (1 John 1:1-2).

This title for our Lord is also found in 1 John 5:7, but it is not found in many of the better MSS. Nevertheless, I will read it to you:

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit: and these three are one (1 John 5:7).

The last time John used it is in Rev. 19:13 where John was describing our Lord when He will come in His glory. I will read verses 11 and 12 so you can see the connection:

This is truly a strange Name, or Title, for our Lord to assume with His many other Names, but as His other Names have special significance, so it would be a mistake for us to think that this Name does not have special significance along with the others. *Let me suggest two important points which have to do with our Lord having this Name, "the Word of God."*

- A. This first is that this Name immediately links our Lord with the Book which God has given us, which is called "the Word of God."

We had one of those verses which speaks of the Bible as the Word of God when we were going through 1 Peter; where Peter described the new birth with these words:

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Peter 1:23).

But over and over again we read in our Bibles about "the word of God," or "the word of the Lord." And we are all familiar with the way the prophets announced their messages with, "Thus saith the Lord," or, "Thus saith the Lord God.." It would be a blessing to read all of these, but I doubt if it could be done in the time I have with you today. But let me give you just a few which I am sure most of you will recognize.

First, Eph 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." And then 1 Thess. 2:13:

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

And we surely should include Heb. 4:12:

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

God has given us His Word, and we know that this is a book which tells us

about Christ from start to finish. When the Lord was with those two disciples on the road to Emmaus after His resurrection, perhaps you will remember that Luke made this statement about what the Lord did with them. We find it in Luke 24:27:

And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Christ is the Key Who unlocks the Scriptures. He is the living Word of God; the Scriptures are the written Word of God. And the living Word and the written Word are forever joined together.

But there is a second meaning to this expression that we all need to understand. And it has to do with the meaning of the Greek word that is used in most of the passages that I have given you.

B. The word *λόγος* has to do with *a message*.

We communicate with each other with words, don't we? You and I have probably spoken more words than we realize just in talking to each other during the time we have been together today.

Jesus Christ is the Word of God, the living Word, because He is in Himself God's message to us. As Hebrews 1:1 and 2 tell us,

1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

2 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;

3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high (Heb. 1:1-3).

Our Lord not only spoke the Word, but He was the Word, and He still is the Word. All that God has to say to us is embodied in His Son. And there is more in that statement which I have just made than I understand, and more than it is possible for anyone to understand.

Now the question is, and this is my next point:

II. WHAT IS GOD'S MESSAGE TO US THROUGH CHRIST?

The answer to this question has a past message which takes us into that period before creation. Second, we move on to His incarnation, His birth. And third, we look ahead to His coming in glory.

A. Christ before creation (John 1:1).

And this idea is conveyed to us with the verb “was.” And it is further established by the statement in verse 3 regarding creation. So this is a “beginning” which precedes the “beginning” of Genesis 1:1.

As we look back before creation we find that this One Who is called “the Word” “was” always there. There was no time when Christ began to be. He is eternal. There was a beginning to this universe in which we live, and a beginning to all life upon the earth – plant, animal, and human. But the Lord Jesus Christ existed eternally before anything was created.

B. “The Word was with God” (John 1:1).

And here the key is in the preposition “with.” The preposition is the Greek word *πρός*, and it is full of meaning as we think of the relationship between Christ and God.

First it means that They are two distinct Persons. But it means more than that. That word *πρός* means, according to A. T. Robertson, “perfect fellowship with God,” and it “presents a plane of equality and intimacy, face to face with each other” (Vol. V, p. 4). So, while God and Christ are distinct Persons, they are equal, on the same plane with each other, in a perfect fellowship which has never been broken. It speaks of Christ's total and eternal acceptance with God. God has always delighted in Christ, and only in Christ.

So we should not be surprised at the third statement which the Apostle John made.

C. “And the Word was God.”

Here the Apostle John, speaking by the Holy Spirit, declared the full Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is where we must begin in learning about Christ. This is the truth teaching, the true doctrine, concerning our Lord Jesus Christ. He is eternal. He was equal with God, always in perfect fellowship with God, face to face with God, and He always has been Deity.

And verse 2 emphasizes the middle of these three statements, and we have πρὸς again.

And verse 3 tells us that our Lord was working with the Father in everything that was created. Our Lord is both God and Creator.

Now let us move on quickly to verse 14. And here we have the Apostle John's account of:

II. THE INCARNATION OF CHRIST (John 1:14).

Notice that the Apostle John used the same Name for our Lord that he had used in verse 1. So this means that all that was declared of our Lord in verse 1 *remained unchanged as we come to the birth of Christ.*

Men who have been interested in Christ have wondered what changes took place in our Lord when He "became flesh." And the Apostle John has given us our answer by saying that it was "the Word" who "was made flesh." The verb "was" indicates that He became something that He had not been before. He became a real human being. He was born of the virgin Mary. He came into this world as a little baby, and then He grew and developed like any other child. But through His conception and His birth, and throughout His life on earth, ***He continued to be "the Word"!*** While we will never in this life be able to understand fully how God and man could be joined in one Person, yet that is exactly what happened. And this accounts for the sinless character and life of our blessed Lord.

So as a baby nursing at the breast of the virgin Mary, our Lord was still "the Word of God." He was a real human baby, but He remained perfect Deity.

His life did not change this. His death did not change this. His resurrection was proof of this, and since His ascension He has been seated at the right hand of the Father, enjoying the same perfect fellowship that He and the Father enjoyed before the world was!

But now let us complete the story by looking ahead to:

III. OUR LORD'S COMING IN GLORY (Rev. 19:11-13).

I read this passage to you earlier in my message, but let me read it to you again.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.

12 His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself.

13 And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God (Rev. 19:11-13).

This is an event that is still future, but it means that when the Lord comes to the earth again, He will still carry that marvelous Name, “the Word..” He, even after becoming sin for you and for me, He will still have that same Name, “the Word.” – still eternal, still equal with God and precious to God, still the only One Who was qualified to carry out the work of salvation completely.

Concl: Now from all that we have learned, do you see how important it is that we listen to what the Lord had to say as “the Word of God”? Nothing He ever said was unimportant. In fact, all that He said, and all that the Scriptures tell us about Him, continues to be extremely important. He is God’s message to us.

There are many things I could say as I close, but let me emphasize just one of the many things our Lord said as His message to us from the Father. It is found in John 14:6. Make sure that you understand it, and make sure that you are trusting in Christ, the living Word, as the only way to God. Our Lord said this:

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man [or woman, or young person, or boy, or girl] cometh unto the Father, but by Me.