

And the Word was made flesh

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[0 : 00] But I'd like us to turn to a third portion of scripture in the Gospel of John and chapter 1, reading at verse 1. The Gospel of John, chapter 1 at verse 1.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John.

He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not that light, but came to bear witness about the light.

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

[1 : 09] He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. And we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

Especially words there in verse 14. And the Word was made flesh, or the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.

Every year the Christian world celebrates various feasts of the Christian year.

Whether it's Easter, or whether it's Whitsun, which is the Ascension, or whether it's the Incarnation, which is Christmas.

[2 : 29] And yet the Church seems very reluctant almost to emphasize the centrality of Christ to all these festivals.

Almost as though we're embarrassed in the world in which we live, to speak about Christ and our belief in him, and our hope, which is in him alone.

But in a day when the Christian faith is denied almost every opportunity to speak about their faith, surely these celebrations which the world engages in, a mixture of religion and paganism and commercialism, all mixed together, surely it's a time when the Church should use the opportunity which it seldom ever receives to speak about Christ.

And to speak about how Christ is the focus of all these celebrations that the world engages in. Now here in this first chapter of John, we have words which really speak about his birth, and the reason for his birth, and all that he accomplished by that birth.

Now John tells us very unambiguously, very clearly, that the Word was made flesh.

[4 : 01] If we go back to the beginning of the chapter, we have these great words which are an echo of Genesis chapter 1 verse 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

All things were made by him, and without him not anything was made that was made. So John, first of all, he talks about the Word.

The Word was made flesh. Now the person who John speaks about here is described in the words of that first verse.

In the beginning was the Word. Something we must always insist on as we speak about the Lord Jesus Christ, that he didn't begin to exist, he didn't begin his existence when he was born into this world of his mother, the Virgin Mary.

He didn't even begin to exist when the universes and the heavens were created. He had a pre-existence. There was never any time that he did not exist as the second person of the Trinity.

[5 : 28] Three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and they always existed. There was never a time that they were not in existence.

And we're also told that he was already in being. He is the eternal Word. Now, the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ doesn't mark the beginning of his existence in any form whatsoever.

We know that the Lord was born into this world. He was two distinct natures and one person forever. And one of the great teachings of the Scripture about the Lord Jesus Christ is that the second person of the Trinity took to himself a human nature.

He already had a divine nature which was pre-existence. One person of the Godhead. But into that person he took a human nature.

And so the person now is two distinct natures and one person forever. Not just while he is on earth, but as we shall see shortly, it is his continued sphere of living and existing in the world and in the world which is to come.

[6 : 55] Now, what the Lord did when he came into this world is that he brought himself into the experience of the world.

It's what somebody says he perforated the scene of time. He came into this time, he intervened in time and came into this world as one who came to do a particular task.

And then John also says that all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made. So in the beginning was the word.

Even before the beginning of the universe, even before everything we know that exists around us, the word was in being. And then John says all things were made by him.

He brought all things into being. He created all things by the power of his word in the space of six days and all very good. He is the Lord of creation.

[8 : 04] We read again about that in Acts chapter 17. That this God that you ignorantly worship, he is the one who brought all things into being.

He is the one whom Paul was going to declare to the people of Athens of that unknown God. And so we also have the opportunity as we live in this world to speak about the unknown God, the secular world in which we live, who he is, what he has done, and what his great purpose in coming to this world is all about.

Now what this means that he, all things were made by him, was that the Lord possesses all power. He is the seat of all power, and that has implications for us as Christians. He is the almighty God, the Lord. We very often major on the humanity of Christ.

But let's not forget that he is the God-man. He is the one who came to this world as the God-man. Yes, veiled in flesh, the Godhead see, hail the incarnate deities, the hymn writer says.

[9 : 21] But the Godhead is veiled, but he became flesh. He took to himself a human nature. And in that form, he is here as our Lord and our Savior.

Now all power, what this means that all power is in him. What this means for us that whatever power there is in this world, whatever powers try to rise against Christ, they are all subservient to who he is.

He is the seat of all power. He is the one in whom all power has to go to operate in any form whatsoever. They are subservient to him.

In fact, as the songwriter says, he has the whole world in his hands. The whole creation reflects the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

And in it, there is no un-Christlikeness at all. The world was created. Remember what God said? He created the space of six days, and it was all very good.

[10 : 34] There is a divine affirmation that the world was very good. And as we look at that original creation, in it, there was no un-Christlikeness at all.

It was perfect. It was created in the way God wanted to. And that's the very heart of our Christian faith.

As John says, the word Christ is God. Thomas once said, my Lord and my God.

Thomas, remember, was the one who was obstinate and hard-hearted and hard-headed and someone who wouldn't believe anything unless he saw it himself.

We can imagine how frustrated the rest of the disciples must have been. They'd seen the Lord Jesus Christ in his resurrection and they thought that they, Thomas should believe what they were saying.

[11 : 43] But Thomas went along on the same lines as they did when they heard the women say they'd seen the Lord. They didn't believe what the women had said. They were simply idle tales.

And Thomas reasoned along the same lines. What had got into his brothers? Saying that someone had risen from the dead. And so he refused to believe.

Until that time when the Lord appeared to Thomas on, or in the upper room there in Jerusalem. As there, he speaks these words that we just quoted, my Lord and my God.

And the very heart of our Christian faith is there in those words. Without it there could be no Christianity.

And there'd be no God made flesh. See we ascribe to the Lord Jesus Christ all power and all majesty and all authority.

[12 : 48] And the name that is above every name. We say that he is the only God there is. That's the way Paul describes him for us. He is the only God there is.

There is no other God. The God who will one day sit on the great white throne that's spoken of in Revelations. That God is the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the Lord of creation. He is the Lord of judgment. He is the one before whom one day we shall stand and answer for the deeds done in the body whether they are good or whether they are evil.

and so we ascribe all power and all authority to him. He also makes all other gods impossible.

We read in the Psalms all the gods are idle sum which blinded nations fear. But our God is the God by whom the heavens created were. And there we speak again about the Lord Jesus Christ.

[13 : 56] I said John chapter 1 verse 1 is an echo of Genesis verse 1. There we have or here we have in the beginning was the word in Genesis chapter 1 we have in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

And so we're talking about the same person. The same person of the Trinity who brings all things into being by the word of his power. And so every tongue must confess him every knee must bow and every heart must worship at the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Again if you go back to your catechisms he is of the same substance with the Father. not a different God but the only God.

He says I and my Father are one. And in so saying he is claiming to be God in his own right.

There is no other God than him. The mystery of the Trinity is something that we cannot really explain. We have a formula of words there.

[15 : 20] There are three persons in the Trinity. Father, Son and Holy Spirit and these three are one God the same in substance equal in power and glory.

But that's as far as we can go. But we know as we stand here as we worship we worship before the throne of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is our Lord he is our God. in fact as I said a short time ago he is the only God there is. And then John says as we read there in verse 14 the word was made flesh.

The incarnate word was made flesh. Theologians put it this way. he did not cease to be what he was.

But he became what he was not. John in no way suggests that when the word became flesh and dwelt among us the word ceased to be God.

[16 : 34] In fact he emphasizes the fact that he continues to be God. He continued to be God and man in two distinct natures and one person forever.

And Paul in his writing reminds us that taking to himself a true body and a reasonable soul he took on him not the nature of Abraham but of the seed not the nature of angels but of the seed of Abraham in order to be made like unto his brethren.

It's a condescension on the part of our triune God that the second person of that trinity takes to himself a human nature and so becomes man and takes upon him the form of a servant.

See the Lord doesn't appear as some people suggest as some sort of appearance or vision. It wasn't a theophany.

Now a theophany is something that has the appearance of God but is only there for a short time. If you remember the story of Sodom and Gomorrah well there were three men who were walking on the plains of Mamre when Abraham went out and saw them and invited them into his tent.

[18 : 03] And there one of those people is the angel of the Lord the Malachiawe which in fact is the Lord Jesus Christ as some would say trying on his humanity.

But it was a theophany. It was the appearance only for a short time. But when the Lord Jesus Christ comes into this world it's not as a theophany.

He became man. He became flesh. And as he does so he's exposed to all the limitations and all the experiences that we ourselves are.

He experiences hunger and pain and tiredness and flogging and crucifixion and temptation and even death itself.

And by becoming a man he also subjects himself to the needs and the desires of humanity. He needs human affection.

[19 : 06] You see that worked out in the way we're told that he chose twelve simply to be with him. People were following him all the time at the beginning of his ministry.

They followed him. They wanted to be near him. They loved the way he talked, the way he taught. He spoke not as the scribes and Pharisees talked but he talked with authority.

It's said that the scribes and Pharisees spoke from authority. That means they spoke from some teacher or somebody who had a greater reputation than they had.

So they spoke from authority. But the Lord Jesus Christ spoke with authority. He spoke as he spoke not as man spoke but he spoke with authority.

And as such he showed himself to be different to all those others amongst whom he lived. But in becoming a man he subjected himself to the need of human affections and desires in the way that he chose twelve simply to be with them.

[20 : 31] And of those twelve he chose three who were his peculiar companions. And of those he chose one the beloved disciple John whom we heard that who leant on his breast at the time of the establishing of the Lord's supper.

another occasion we're told that he beheld Jerusalem and he wept over it. Here are emotions that are uppermost in his mind.

He's come to his own people and his own people received him not as we just read. So he beholds Jerusalem as he comes down to the Mount of Olives and he sees the city laid out before him and he cries Jerusalem Jerusalem how often would I have gathered you as a hen as gatherer chickens and you would not.

They wouldn't receive him. They willed not receive him. And that no doubt affected him deeply. And we're told he wept over Jerusalem. He saw the eventual outcome.

That in AD 70 when Rome would destroy Jerusalem all the temple and all the buildings on the temple mount would be destroyed and they would be dragged into the valley of Jehoshaphat which was just there around the temple mount.

[21 : 55] And so he has these emotions. He has these feelings. He subjects himself to these things. He becomes obedient to his father.

He shows a willingness to fulfill what the father had given him to do. Isn't that one of his petitions in the Lord's prayer? I have finished the work that you gave me to do.

He willingly subjected himself to that to know it and to become obedient to it. In the days of his temptation in the desert after 40 days and 40 nights of being subjected to all the needs of the human body in the desert the devil comes to them and asks him to turn stones into bread and the Lord turns aside from such temptations he's not come to the earth to do some sort of tricks or magic tricks just to satisfy himself or to satisfy even the devil he's come to do the father's will so he doesn't turn the stones into bread although he could he chooses not to worship the devil he chooses not to throw himself down off the pinnacle of the temple all things which would prove to anyone who's looking on that here was something supernatural but also it was a way in which he could somehow circumvent the work that his father had given him to do and not go through with it but find a different way of doing it these choices were not effortless they weren't something that just came to him although he was sinless yet he was a man of like passions like as we are yet without sin the temptations were real they brought home to him his limitations and yet he works them out he's a man of faith he goes to pray he needs to go to his father he needs to ask for strength in his time of need and so all these limitations are placed upon the

Lord Jesus Christ as he comes to this earth for us and for our salvation in the garden he chooses the cup of sorrow in the garden there when his whole whole humanity is resisting the fact that he is going to come to be without God he sees in front of him the fact that there is going to be a time when God is not going to be there the whole of his life they were together the two of them together I am not alone my father is with me in the garden he's looking into that cup and seeing there's going

to come a time when that relationship is going to cease and there's going to be only darkness and only hopelessness and this whole being reels in agony against what's lying ahead of him another thing that the lord himself was not omniscient didn't know all things he had a mere human intellect there were many things that he didn't know in fact especially he didn't know the time of the second coming that was in the father's hand he was dependent upon his father behold my servant whom I uphold in whom my soul delights he had a perfect mind as we can demonstrate by the fact that he was in Jerusalem in the temple at the age of twelve sitting amongst the teachers and the lawyers and the scribes of that age and yet he was confounding them with his wisdom so he had a perfect mind but it wasn't an all knowing mind there are things he didn't know and things he had to be told and he was utterly dependent upon his father revealing these things to him do now what what does mean for us it has implications for us the Lord in his two natures and a divine mind and a human mind he will always be the god man in his humiliation when he came to the earth he remains god in his exaltation he remains man as I quoted a short time ago in his humiliations he remains God hailed in flesh that God had seen in his exaltation he remains man as Rabbi Duncan said the dust of the earth has ascended to the right hand of the majesty on high all these things are true about the Lord Jesus Christ that's the promise for us he is the firstborn among many brethren as he is now so we shall be that's the promise held out to us as he is now so we shall be brethren it does not yet appear what we shall be but we know that when he shall appear we shall see him as he is and we shall be like him that's the promise held out to all those who are in Christ Jesus and how any who can sit under the gospel week after week and yet go away having looked into the mirror of God's word of life and then turn away not knowing what sort of men and women we are without Christ confounds all those who are Christians cannot understand how those who have been brought to hear the great wonder and the wisdom of Christ and the beauties of Christ and the honour Christ gives to those will turn away and desire and desire not to know him well the Lord says we are to be conformed to the image of the son dwelling among us as the psalmist tells us he remembers that we are dust he our frame well knows he knows our frailty he knows our weakness he knows everything there is to know about us he knows our failings he knows our shortcomings he knows our sinfulness yet in spite of that in spite of all that he knows about us he wants us to be his he wants us to enter into a living trusting worshipful relationship with him that we might be the first born among many brethren that we might be part of that great multitude without number to the Lord new bereavement new pain new rejection humiliation and even the fear of death

[29 : 55] he even shared our experience of dying see Christ was a divine person what he did God did what he suffered God suffered you see you cannot separate the nature from the person two distinct natures and one person forever if the nature suffered it the person suffers it what God did or what he did God did what he suffered God suffered his church is God's church his body was God's body his blood shed on the cross is God's blood and so it's the person who becomes incarnate and it's the person who dies the last thing

John says here in verse 14 is we beheld his glory the glory of the only begotten of the father full of grace and truth and there for us is the promise held out that we shall see him as he is the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ the first born among many brethren the one whom came to give his life as a ransom for the many the one who this day sits on the right hand of the father full of grace and truth interceding for us bringing us to know the father more intimately I said earlier on that in the creation there was no un-Christ like this at all also in the father there is no un-Christ likeness at all three persons father son and holy spirit same in substance equal in power equal in glory equal in their desire that not one should be lost may the lord then bless these thoughts to us and give us a be a un-Christ