

# The Word made Flesh

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 03 May 2020

Preacher: Rev RJ Campbell

- [ 0 : 01 ]     Welcome to our services today as we come together around the Word of God. We seek his own blessing to be upon it and that his spirit may apply it to our hearts.
- Let us commence our worship by joining together in prayer. O Lord our God, our Heavenly Father, at this evening hour we give thee thanks that we can come together and that we can lay our petitions before thee.
- Knowing, O Lord, that thou art the one who is able to meet with all our needs out of the riches of thy grace.
- It is a comely thing to come and to praise thy name. For thou art good and thy mercies are lasting.
- We give thanks that thou art a covenant God. That thou art a God who delighteth in mercy. That thou art a God for whom judgment is a strange work.
- [ 1 : 33 ]     And we give thee thanks, O Lord, for that redemptive work that thou hast purchased for us through the shedding of the blood of thy Son.
- That we can have redemption. And we give thee thanks, O Lord, that we can be saved from the bondage and the slavery of sin.
- Through thy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. In whose name we come before thee with boldness and confidence. Seeking that mercy and seeking that grace to help us in our time of need.
- And we pray, O Lord, that as the gospel has been proclaimed. That it may go forth with power and with a demonstration of thine own spirit in convicting and converting.
- And in the building of thy church. That we may have in our hearts the words of another who said, All that men to the Lord would give.
- [ 2 : 44 ]     Praise for his goodness then. And for his works of wonder done unto the sons of men. And what can cause us more wonder than the work of redemption?
- Thine own redemptive purpose in thy Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Who came into this world and who took upon himself the sins of his people.
- Who suffered in their room and in their place. Who suffered what they deserved. Who took their sins upon his own body on the cross.
- Oh, what wonderful work that is. That he died and was buried and that he rose again. And that he has ascended to thine own right hand.
- We give thee thanks, O Lord, that in the midst of all our imperfections. And in the midst of all our blemishes and divisions.
- [ 3 : 50 ]     Yet, O Lord, that the day is coming. When our imperfections and blemishes and divisions will be swept away. When we shall all come to be united in him.
- On the day of Jesus Christ. On that day that thy people look forward to. The day beyond death. To thy return.

O Lord, we give thanks that we can anticipate that day. Through thy grace. The day when our body and soul will be united together.

And when we shall receive the apex of our redemption. When we shall be forever with the Lord in body and in soul. We ask, O Lord, that thou would bless our homes and our families.

And all our loved ones today. Remember those who are ill. Be near to them. And bless those who care for them. Bless those who mourn. We pray thee.

[ 4 : 59 ] O bless our young people and our children. We pray, O Lord, that thou would work a work among those who are indifferent and careless. O may the drawing power of thy spirit be upon them.

And we pray, O Lord, that we may all unite under the gospel. Under the good news of Jesus Christ. Bless thy servants who proclaim thy word this night.

Proclaiming the good news of Jesus Christ and him crucified. The only saviour for sinners. We pray, O Lord, that that message may go forth with power tonight.

And that we will see souls coming in repentance. Bown down before thee. And embracing that very gospel.

We ask, O Lord, that thou would continue with us. Forgive us for all our sins. In Jesus' name. Amen. We shall now read the word of God as we find it in the gospel according to John and chapter 1.

[ 6 : 11 ] The gospel of John and chapter 1. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, that all men through him might believe.

He was not that light, but was sent to bear witness of that light. That was the true light, which lighteneth every man that cometh into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not. 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, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

[ 7 : 26 ] 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. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake.

He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me. And of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

No man hath seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. And so on, may the Lord bless to us the reading of that portion of his word.

Now, seeking the blessing of the Lord, let us return again to verse 14, and meditate upon it. That is John's Gospel, chapter 1, and verse 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.

[ 8 : 38 ] The fourth gospel is unique in many respects. It is marvelously simple, yet inexhaustible in its depth.

This gospel was written by an eyewitness and disciple of Jesus, for in chapter 21 and verse 24 we read, This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things.

And we know that his testimony is true. Now, we know from the other three gospels that the disciples closest to Jesus was Peter, James and John.

And of these three, only John is not named in this gospel. We are told of one by the title, the beloved disciple, which is generally accepted as being John.

But the name John actually doesn't appear in the gospel. That is the name of John, the disciple. John was the son of Zebedee and Siloam, who is believed to be a sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

[ 10 : 04 ] John and his brother James were fishermen, whom Jesus met and called to be his followers. His brother James was the first of the apostles to die.

But on the other hand, John was the last to die. All of the apostles met a violent death. However, it is thought that John died peacefully in Ephesus at an advanced age around the year 100 AD.

It is said that shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD, that he moved to Ephesus, which is modern day Turkey, and that he became the pastor of the church in Ephesus.

And while in Ephesus, by order of the Roman emperor, that John was exiled to an island called Patmos. While in Patmos, he was given a vision by Jesus, which is now written for us in the New Testament as the book of Revelation.

He also wrote three general epistles that we have in the New Testament. Traditionally, it is thought that the Gospel of John was the last of the four Gospels to be written.

[ 11 : 19 ] And commentators give many reasons for the purpose of this Gospel. Some say it was to complement the other Gospels, and others that it was to combat heresies that were rising in the first century that denied either the full deity or the full humanity of Jesus Christ.

Although, John himself in chapter 20 tells us that his main purpose was, but these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Now, the structure of John's Gospel or the way in which it is made up, first, depending on which commentary you read. However, we can divide it up like this.

We have the first of all a prologue, which is chapter 1, verse 1 to 18, these words that we have already read. Then we have the book of signs from verse 19 of the first chapter to chapter 12, verse 50.

And then we have the book of glory from chapter 13 to 20, verse 31. Then we have the epilogue in chapter 21.

[ 12 : 40 ] One of the unique things that belong to the Gospel of John is some of the things that it doesn't mention, which we find in the other Gospels, like the birth of Jesus, Jesus' baptism, the transfiguration, the institution of the Lord's Supper, or Gethsemane.

It is also unique in the things that it does mention that we don't find in the other Gospels, like the resurrection of Lazarus, the washing of the disciples' feet, the discourse that took place between Jesus and his disciples in those final hours before the cross.

However, our text this evening comes within that section that we have identified as the prologue. The prologue itself can be subdivided up as follows.

The revelation of the word, verse 1 to 4. The rejection of the word, verse 5 to 11. And the reception of the word, verse 12 to 18. The subject of the prologue is the word, translated here as word with a capital W.

The Greek word is logos, which is one of the most significant terms that we can find in Greek philosophy. It was coined by a philosopher by the name of Hercules of Ephesus.

[ 14 : 04 ] His famous illustration was that you can never step twice into the same river. It is never the same because the water has flowed on. Everything he said is like that.

But if that is true, how can there be order in the world? His answer was the logos, the word or reason of God. And this was the principle that held everything together in a world of change.

And John seizes on this word and takes it and applies this term logos of God to Jesus Christ. While the gospel of Matthew and Luke begin with the birth of Jesus Christ, John's gospel begin with the pre-existence of Jesus Christ.

John goes back beyond Bethlehem where Jesus was born and beyond Nazareth where he was conceived. And he begins his gospel by transporting us into eternity, even beyond the beginning of time.

The first words of John's gospel, in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.

[ 15 : 19 ] All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. It echoes for us the words that we find at the beginning of our Bibles, in the book of Genesis.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. John places Jesus where we would expect God. In the beginning, God.

In the beginning was the word. In verse 1, we find these three simple clauses which contains the verb was. In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

In other words, John has declared that the Logos, who was with God in eternity, was himself God. He is the one who created all things.

Verse 3, All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. He is the one who was the source of life and light. Verse 4 to 5, In him was life, and the life was the light of men, and the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.

[ 16 : 36 ] Now, says John, this Logos became a man, so that the glory of the Father, particularly his grace and truth might be seen in him.

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.

Here in 14, we have the doctrine of the incarnation. It brings us to the conception and birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus did not come into being at his birth, as John has already told us, in the beginning was the word, but at a certain time, the word was made flesh and dwelt among us.

The apostle Paul puts it like this in writing to the Galatians, but when the fullness of time was come, God sent his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.

The incarnation has a preparation, a background of preparation and significance that we must not overlook.

[ 17 : 58 ] There is a preparation made for the incarnation from Genesis 3.15, where we have these words, and I will put enmity between thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed.

It shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise a seal. There is that promise given that God will act for the benefit of mankind by defeating the serpent or Satan, who used the serpent as its mouthpiece.

What is clear from this promise is that a male descendant of the woman will be involved and that triumph will come through combat and suffering and that the serpent will lose with a bruised head while the seed of the woman will sustain a bruised heel.

This preparation throughout the Old Testament concluded at the point when the Word was made flesh. P.P. Warfield, on the question whether the Old Testament holds out the promise of a divine Messiah, maintains that Psalm 45, verse 6, Isaiah 9, verse 6, and Daniel 7, verse 13, rightly understood, show that the Old Testament expected a divine Messiah.

He quotes from Goody, there was in the whole of the Old Testament from the patriarchal theophanies down to the latest prophetic vision, a constant current towards the incarnation as the goal of all these revelations.

[ 19 : 38 ] The appearance of the Messiah presents itself more clearly to the view of the prophets as the perfect theophany, the final coming of Jehovah.

A theophany is a manifestation of God that is tangible to the human senses. In its most restrictive sense, it is a visible appearance of God in the Old Testament period, often, but not always, in human form.

Some would also include in this term Christophanies, that is, pre-incarnate appearances of Christ. In Genesis 32, we have the angel who wrestled with Jacob who would be regarded as a theophany.

The Old Testament believers looked for a prophet like Moses, a king like David. They looked for the Son of Man. Well, they looked for the child born bearing the name Mighty God.

They looked for the child Emmanuel, God with us. And all the rituals of the Old Testament worship pointed to the coming of Christ. The book of Hebrews explains that for us.

[ 20 : 52 ] There was all this background preparation and in the fullness of time, he came. In the fullness of time, the word was made flesh.

The incarnation of the Son of God ought to fill us with wonder. It ought to fill us with humble wonder that a loving Father would send his Son.

John says that this is what divine loves look like. In this was manifested, he says, the love of God tells us because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world that we might live through him.

are you sometimes, my friend, lost in the sense of wonderment of a loving Father sending the Son of his bosom into this world to suffer and to die for sinners like myself and yourself?

this is how our Westminster Confession of Faith preached it. The Son of God, the second person in the Trinity, been very and eternal God, of one substance and equal with the Father, did when the fullness of time was come, take upon him man's nature, with all the essential properties and common firmities thereof, yet without sin, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary, of her substance, so that two whole, perfect and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition or confusion, which person is very God and very man, yet one Christ, the only mediator between God and man.

[ 23 : 04 ] The Son of God became a human in the fullest sense, without losing any of his divinity. Paul puts it like this, for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

Paul, writing to young Timothy, sums it all up, and without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.

When John says here that the word was made flesh, he does not use the term flesh in the same way as the apostle Paul uses that word. Paul uses the word flesh in reference to our sinful nature.

But what John simply means by using the term flesh and saying the word was made flesh is human nature. But we must remember that Jesus is sinless, he's uncorrupted.

That's what he took to himself, an uncorrupted human nature. I think very recently we noted when Pilate took Jesus out and said, behold the man, that the man that stood before the people, that was Jesus, that he had a true human body and a true human soul, that he had flesh, eyes, ears, nose, mouth, hands, feet, and all the internal organs exactly like me and you.

[ 24 : 41 ] He was true man, and yet he was true God. When people looked upon him they saw a man. He was an ordinary man but not an ordinary person, man, for he is God manifest in the flesh.

He is the word made flesh, a divine person, the son of God. He is an ordinary man, the son of Mary. In theological terms, he was the God man, God and man perfectly united, two distinct natures in one person.

The word was made flesh. He is the Lord from heaven. He is the last Adam. The first Adam was sinless, and for him it was a time of bliss, of harmony, of delight, and happiness.

For him it was paradise. The last Adam is also sinless, and yet for him it was suffering, pain, and death, because he was to be the redeemer of his people, who were sinners.

He took to himself a human body that enabled him to suffer death for us. He possessed a human heart. He felt all that we feel, including sorrow and joy and weariness and temptation.

[ 26 : 11 ] Luke tells us that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man. He lived a human life in the same world in which we live.

What does that prove to us? What does that say to us? Surely it says this to us, God's desire for our salvation.

Surely it brings that before us. God's desire for our salvation. Oh, the one who'd been in the form of God thought it not to operate to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and been found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient into death, even the death of the cross.

When we think of the dignity that God gave to humans above all that he created, first, God created us in his own image.

and then he sent his son to become the son of man so that we might become in him the sons of God.

[ 27 : 45 ] Oh, behold, says John, what manner of love the father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the sons of God.

John tells us not merely that the word was made flesh, but also that he dwelt among us.

Now, the word dwelt, there can be translated as tabernacled. So what John actually wrote was the word was made flesh and tabernacled among us.

And obviously he is directing our thoughts back to the book of Exodus when God said to Moses, and let them make a sanctuary that I may dwell among them.

The book of Hebrews gives a description of the tabernacle. For there was a tabernacle made, the first wherein was the candlestick and the table and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary.

[ 28 : 58 ] And after the second veil, the tabernacle, which is called the holiest of all, which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid, drowned about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant, and over the cherry beams of glory, shadowing the mercy seat.

now, between the cherry beams there in the holy earth of all, which was on the mercy seat, between those cherry beams was the Shekinah glory, which represented the presence of God.

the tabernacle foreshadowed the incarnation of Christ in many ways, but I just want to draw your attention to one, and that is one of the names that was given to the tabernacle, and that name was the tent of meeting.

It was the place where the people met with God, and Jesus is the meeting place with God. As the tabernacle was the only place of meeting with God for sinners of the Old Testament, so Christ, Jesus, is the meeting place with God for sinners.

He says himself, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

[ 30 : 50 ] Writing to Timothy, Paul says, for there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. And that is what I and you need.

We need a mediator. we need a place of meeting with a holy God. And the only place of meeting and the only mediator is the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ. And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us. He tabernacled among us.

And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Well, what glory does John have in mind?

Regarding the miracle of turning water into wine, John says, the beginning of miracles to Jesus and Cana of Galilee and manifested forth his glory. But John here defines for us the glory that he has in mind.

[ 32 : 05 ] First, he is the only begotten of the Father. It indicates that he is the only son of the Father.

What I want to take away from this, that Jesus is the only begotten is simply that when Jesus is called the only begotten son, that he is the only one who is in this special relationship with God.

He is the unique son of God. He is the one and only son of God. No one is son of God like he is.

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.

God. And secondly, here he brings before us not only that he is the unique son of God, like no other person is, but that he is full of grace.

[ 33 : 23 ] Grace for us is especially seen in God's provision for our spiritual need by sending his son to be our saviour.

Paul writing to the Romans says, but God commendeth his love towards us and that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

In the same book of Romans he writes, if God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justified, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

We have beheld him as the unique son of the Father, full of grace. Paul could say, but God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 34 : 43 ] And thirdly, John tells us that he is full of truth. He is the only begotten of the Father. He is the unique son of the Father.

He is the one who is full of grace. And he is the one who is full of truth. Now, truth is an accurate statement of reality.

For instance, when your children may be fighting among themselves, and you enter the room, and you say, what is going on here? And they begin to blame one another. She did this, or he did that.

And you stop them. And you say, now let's get the truth. You are saying there, let us establish reality. What really happened?

Well, Jesus Christ is the truth of God. Reality is what Jesus says it is. Remember when people turned back from following Jesus, he said to his disciples, will he also go away?

[ 35 : 52 ] Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art Christ, the Son of the living God.

We believe that thou art truth. 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. Well, have you seen the glory of God in the person of Jesus Christ?

Christ? Have you seen Jesus as the unique Son of the Father? Have you seen him as the one who is full of grace, the glory of God's grace in sending his Son to the cross for your salvation?

Have you seen the glory of God's truth in Christ? By nature, we are spiritually ignorant and spiritually blind, and in that condition we shall eternally remain unless we come and receive the truth which is in Jesus Christ.

[ 37 : 15 ] You see, the person who receives Jesus is left no longer spiritually ignorant or blind. The person who receives Jesus, he sees himself or herself as they truly are.

Reality sets in. They become aware of their spiritual need and they also see the sufficiency of Christ and him crucified to meet that need.

They come to see the true meaning of the cross. They come to see the true meaning of the death of Jesus and of the resurrection of Jesus and the ascension of Jesus. To know truth is to receive Christ.

You said, I am the truth. Can you say, I believe in Jesus Christ in the uniqueness of his person, in the perfection of his work as a way back to God.

I am so convinced of it that I place all my hope upon it. What does these words of John mean for you today?

[ 38 : 22 ] And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us. and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten the Father, full of grace and full of truth.

What does Jesus mean to you today? What does Jesus mean for you at this very moment? Do you see in Jesus that he is the only begotten of the Father?

do you see that he is the unique son of the Father? Do you see that in him is grace and in him is truth?

That he is the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. That he is God's provision for sinners.

like me and you. That there is salvation in no other but in Jesus Christ.



[ 39 : 35 ] May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Eternal and ever blessed Lord, we wonder at the marvel of the incarnation, that he who was in thy bosom, that he became flesh, that he took our nature unto himself, that there was a time when he was in thy bosom salvation, and that he was there as the eternal God, and that he, the second person of the triune God, came to take our nature to himself, so that we could have salvation, that we could be redeemed from the bondage, and the slavery of sin.

Oh, in him was grace and truth, and we give thanks to thee, O Lord, that through the work of thy spirit, that we have come to see him as that unique son of the father, that we have come to see him as the one that is full of grace and truth, that we have come to see him as the one and the only one in whom there is salvation for sinners.

We seek, O Lord, that we may at all times be impressed with the wonderment of our salvation.

We ask, O Lord, that thou would continue with us, and may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore.

Amen.