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The Word Became Flesh

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. John 1:1-3

Key verses: John 1:1-18

Key personalities: God, Jesus the Word, Humanity

Timeline: The God of Eternity; then, He entered as a Man, being fully God and fully Man, at a fixed point in time, about 4-6 B.C.

We are being introduced to the *Word*, the Creator, Sustainer and soon to be Redeemer, fully God. He becomes flesh and dwells among us, fully Man. Jesus Christ is the Word, the eternal, always-existing, One and only true God who created everything, and now comes as fully God and becomes fully man and gave us eternal life—all of us who believe in Him and confess Him Lord of all. He is the life source and reason for the universe. He is Who will defeat the darkness. He is not a god, but The God—the only and one True God! God is now one of us, God among His people, personally conveying His Love, personally giving us His grace!

You will notice in John's Gospel, there is a lot of word repetition. This was a Jewish literary device to emphasize the importance of the message. What is more important than God saving us?

Key Happenings: The Word, the Eternal God, Creator and Redeemer!

He is the "Logos," the Word, the Eternal God, Creator and Redeemer who descended from His magnificent place of preeminence in the universe to come to earth as fully God and became fully man so that He would identify with us, pay our debt of sin, and give us undeserved redemption. Jesus **is** the Supreme Reason for and Hope of the universe. We are given the everlasting and physical, corporeal life of Christ. He brings hope and reconciliation. The goal of John, Chapter 1 was to proclaim Christ Himself so people of all religions and all times would realize who He was and is and *live in His name*, coming to a saving, transforming, and growing faith that would be marked by trust and obedience without hypocrisy or shallowness (John 1:1-2, 14-18; 20:31).

- *Beginning.* This key word is set in a statement that parallels the opening of the Jewish Torah--the Old Testament of the Bible. The theme is that God is solely unique. There is none like God. He is the omnipotent, eternal Creator who brought all things into existence while He always exists with no beginning or end. This also means God, being pre-existing in nature and over creation, also has eternal wisdom and purpose that was before the creation of matter and life. (Gen. 1:1).
- *Word.* In Greek, this is *logos*, and it means "reason"--a term that Plato used for the divine force and structure of the universe that brought together matter, logic, harmony, and order. Aristotle also used this term for *insight* and *thought*. This harmony of the universe is what scientists now seek for the explanation that bridges chemistry, physics, and quantum mechanics in one theorem--the Unified Field Theory. This has eluded the most brilliant and diligent scientists because it is only God who creates and sustains. The Greeks understood this foundational truth. John uses this word picture, also from Philo and Jewish philosophy, to refer to the "ultimate reason." John uses this word picture as all of the above that depicts Jesus Christ as the eternal, active, True God Who holds the structure of the universe and brings us and all of Creation into harmony, and that true reason is personified in Christ (Gen. 1:1-3; Ex. 3:12; 19:17; Deut. 32: 46-47; Psalm 19:8; 33:6; 107:20; 119: 105, 130; Prov. 8:27; Hos. 1:1; John 1:7-9, 13).
- *The Word was with God.* The Word of God is also used as a title for God in Exodus 3:12 and 10:7, and is the most compelling language possible to affirm the Deity of Christ. This means that Jesus was not

created, but eternally exists as there is only One God and that Jesus Christ is God, a Person of the Trinity. It also shows us that He is eternal and forever deeply connected to and in loving communal relationship with God the Father. Jesus then becomes "incarnate," which means He enters humanity as a man who is born, lives, and physically dies. Even by this, He is still fully God and demonstrates this by His resurrection, which enables Him to conduct our salvation (Isa. 43:10-11; John 1:18; Rom. 16:27; 1 Thess. 3:4; 1 John 1:2).

- *The Word was God.* This means that Jesus Christ is God. There is only One God (monotheism), and He is the eternal God Who holds all things and Who holds us. Jesus is the embodiment of God, the Law, and the revelation of the Scriptures. This is the only human word that has ever been fathomed that comes closest to our understanding Who God is, yet even this word *logos* seemingly fails because no human word can contain or confine God to a definition. We can only catch a glimpse of His shadow. For the Jew, wisdom and God were not separated ideas—the two were inextricably linked. For us, it means Christ is the eternal God; when we trust Him, as well as being a Jew, we honor the Law. We can identify ourselves in and with Him, so we can trust in and hope in Him. Some cult groups use this passage to prove that Christ was a god and a created being. However, in the Greek, the emphasis of *Theos*—without a definite article, "the"—points out that there is only One God—not three gods or some other form of "tri-theism" or "polytheism." There is a distinction of God to Christ, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three Persons, but with one essence; three manifestations and personalities and roles, but One Godhead (Gen. 1:3; Ex. 34:12-22; Deut. 32:46-47; Psalm 19:8; 33:6; 119: 105, 130; Isa. 6:1-13; 44:6; Hos. 1:1; John 1:1-13, 17; 12:41; 17:5; Rom. 9:5; 1 Cor. 8:4; Phil. 2:6-8; Col. 2:9; Rev. 19:13).
- *Was.* This is the Greek verb "to be," meaning continual existence, not just in the past or no more, but always eternally present.
- *With.* This, in Greek, emphasizes the quality of the subject, indicating a close proximity or being in the company of; here it means eternally close, "face to face" fellowship.
- *He was with God in the beginning.* The Trinity is One God, each having a face-to-face intimate, personal, yet distinct relationship. Christ is the ultimate purpose and meaning of life in all things we are to do!
- *Through Him.* Christ is the source and agent of Creation and in context, in relation to God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. Also, the creation reveals God (Psalm 19:1-6; Rom. 1:19-20; Cor. 8:6; Col. 1:16; Heb. 1:2).
- *All things were made.* Meaning all things in the created order came into being because of Christ and by His making. God is the sole Creator and creates by His wisdom and reason. This is another statement to clearly and unequivocally state that Jesus Christ is God. It also refers to His power, Lordship as Judge, as found in Isa. 11:4; John 1:1; 12:48; and Heb. 4:12-13. (Psalm 33:6; 148:5; Prov. 8:30; Col. 1:16-17; Rev. 19:13).
- *Life.* This refers to our physical and spiritual life, the world in which we live, and the substances we need, all coming from Christ. It refers to us as living, corporeal beings who are sentient—we have the ability to live, breathe, and function physically while at the same time, we are able to think, reason, and be competent to act either morally or immorally. How we live and the choices we make will determine our longevity as in effectiveness, according to the Old Testament and Promised Land of the Israelites. The application also means that it is our duty to obey God and His call and decrees, in which we respond with our gratitude for His creation as well as His promise of reward. One of our chief goals in the Christian faith is to commit to faith and practice our obedience with joy and passion! This statement is also an affirmation to the Deity of Jesus Christ (Ex. 20:12; Deut. 5:16; 8:1; 11:9; Psalm 123; John 5:26; 6:57; 8:12; 9:5; 10:10, 28; 11:25; 14:6; 17:3; 20:31).
- *Light of men.* *Light* in Scripture is usually symbolic for God and righteousness, whereas darkness is symbolic for sin, death, ignorance, and separation from God. For Jewish thinkers at this time, this meant righteousness and the duty to trust and obey God that forms one's worthiness to be God's child, as Abraham demonstrated. For us, it is the practice of *Thy Word* from Psalm 119, which refers to God's Holy

Law and Scriptures that point to Christ who now fulfills it. The Law is now fulfilled, but we are still called to trust and obey God and His written Word so we can be agents who ignite a dimly lit world, and who dispel sin by dispensing righteousness as a display in order for others to see God (Psalm 119:105; Isa. 9:2; Matt. 14:6; John 8:12).

- *Darkness.* This is a contrast between the goodness of God and the darkness of evil, the light of faith and the darkness of doubt, the light of righteousness and the darkness of sin. The Light of the World, Christ will be triumphant! This sets the tone for Jesus' purpose and why He had to redeem a broken and sinful humanity even though most will not accept His gift of grace. This has several meanings: one, *God can't be destroyed or affected by anything.* Second, *God will always triumph over evil.* Third, *with the creation of good and free will, sin enters the world not by fault of God, but by the will of man.* Fourth, *the spiritual conflict that is in the world, the conquering power and spread of the Gospel, and the defeat of evil and the resulting growth of faith.* God does not make evil. God does not want evil. God does not condone or excuse evil. He created the conditions for it so there can be free choice and real life. However, we make evil; we turn away from our loving Creator, and we bite the hand that made and sustains us. Evil and sin do not comprehend what is good and righteous. Goodness and mercy do not make sense to one who is worldly and self-focused. However, when one is with God, he/she can understand His principles of personal trust and obedience. This darkness can then be overcome because Christ overcame it for us (Prov. 6:23; John 3:15; Rom. 13:11-14; Eph. 2:5; 1 Thess. 5:4-7; 1 John 1:5-6; 5:12-20).
- *Has not understood it/comprehend it not.* This refers to not being able to take a hold of something, unable to reason or consider correctly. In context, spiritual warfare is also in view here and the fact that Satan can't overcome Jesus or those in Him (Isa. 11:4; John 1:1; 12:48; 19:11; Heb. 4:12-13).
- *The Word became flesh.* This means Christ, who is fully God--the ultimate reason, the same substance and essence of God, the Creator--came into His creation as both an eternal being and a created being, a man, 'fully' God and 'fully' man. The Holy Spirit and the full force of God came together. This is called the "Incarnation." Christ, who is not a created or made being, came into the world as one of us. This means that Jesus Christ, being fully Divine, was also born into the world as a full-fledged man who would live in our place, fulfill the law, and become our substitute for the penalty of sin we incurred. He took that penalty and paid it by His sacrifice on the Cross with His blood shed. This is the heart, the purpose, the reason of Christianity--of whom and what Christ is and what He came to do. Without this incarnation, we have nothing of real substance, nothing that can save us; rather, we just have a meaningless religion with good ideas (Joel 2:32; Matt. 20:28; 26:36-46; John 1:14-19; 29; 3:13-18; 8:28, 58; 19:35; 21:24; Rom. 5:8; 8:32; 9:5; 10:9-13; 2 Cor. 5:19-21; 8:9; 12:8-9; 13:14; Phil. 2:5-8; Col. 1:15-17; 2:9; Titus 2:13; Heb. 1:3-12).
- *Dwelling/dwelt.* This means being in a tabernacle where God can be found or to pitch your tent with God, as when He personally guided His people through the Exodus for 40 years. This also indicates the temporary period of time Jesus would be on earth and, in context, the eternity He gives us to be with Him. Here is Jesus, being fully God, dwelling among His people, and now living in our hearts and in eternity. This is also a retort to early Gnostics and some Greek philosophers who stated (and got in trouble for) that God and man cannot co-exist together. The divine is dynamically opposed to human nature. Although this is true, God made it possible for Jesus. It was common that most of the Greek and Roman gods impersonated people. One of these, "Heracles," was a mortal-half man and half god, but not an eternal full God and full man like Jesus (Ex. 3:12-14; 25:8; 33:7-11; 40:34-35; John 6:35, 48-51; Acts 14:11; Col. 2:9).

Key Takeaway: What Christ speaks into the universe is done in the universe! The question becomes *is He speaking in you? If so and He is, do you hear His Word?*

When one becomes a Christian, he/she is in right relationship; a deep, unbreakable bond is formed with our living Lord, Jesus Christ. We also have His insight and reason to help us know Him through His Holy Spirit and the Bible. The Bible is the platform that contains His Message, Word, and Plan. By this, we are enabled to live unto God, to know and trust Him, to have His spiritual light so darkness does not surround or influence us. We do not have a relationship to the Bible, but the Bible is our guide to our path. This is what Psalm 119:105 states and is also personified in Christ as He embodies and fulfills it...but we are still called to trust

and Obey Him and His written Word. This is so we have His information and insights for righteousness and can avoid the darkness of sin and bad choices so that we do not stumble.

This Word is also personal and effectual and refers to the Bible and to Christ Himself, which is now fulfilled. The point is that if we have life by Him, then we accept Him. We should love Him; this love is demonstrated in how we follow His precepts.

The Call to the Church? Through the fact that Christ is our *Dwelling*, we must respond to that in leadership. Now, we have an active, involved, loving, and caring God who knows us as our Creator and who also lives humanity's experiences firsthand. He is the One in whom we can place our hope, love, and faith. We **MUST** point our people in that direction by example and instruction.

Questions to Ponder

1. What was it about Christ and Christianity that first attracted you? Has it changed? How does this motivational mindset prompt your faith and behaviors?
2. Who is the *Word*, and how would you explain it?
3. Christ had to redeem a broken and sinful humanity who desperately needed a Savior, so why will most not accept His gift of grace?
4. What does it mean to you that the eternal, always existing, One and only true God who created everything gave you life and purpose and salvation (if you have accepted Him as Lord)?
5. What does it mean to you that God is now one of us? How would you communicate to someone that God lived amongst people, personally conveying His Love by personally giving us His grace?
6. What does it take today to tell people to trust in Christ so they can receive His rich blessings?
7. In science and philosophy, there has to first be something in order to create something as something can't come from nothing. So, how can a natural scientist claim something can come from nothing?
8. Christ is the One who holds all things and who holds us. How does this help you in your faith and in daily life?
9. How is it that the way we live and the choices we make will determine our "longevity" with regard to effectiveness?
10. What does it mean to you that Christ speaks into the universe and into you? *Do you hear His Word? Does His Word move and mold you?*
11. The question inlayed in this passage is *what will you do now? How then shall you live? What are you going to do to move your faith forward?*
12. What do you and your church need to do to help your people know and experience Christ is our *Dwelling*?