

**Subject: *The Word Became Flesh – Part 1***

**Scripture: *John 1:1-18***

Though he is not mentioned by name, the apostle John is regarded as the writer of this gospel. John wrote a total of five books in the New Testament: the Gospel of John, three epistles, and the Book of Revelation. These five were the last NT books written.

John wrote this last of the four gospels from Ephesus where he served as pastor. He wrote 85-95 A.D., some 20 years after the other three gospels were written. John presented the life and ministry of Christ from a different perspective. Over 90% of the contents of the Gospel of John are found only in this gospel. As you know, the gospels of Matthew and Luke describe the birth of Christ, but John writes about Christ long before Bethlehem and the nativity.

One of the unique features of his gospel is the introduction or prologue (John 1:1-18) in which he describes Christ as the eternal Word, the creator of all things, the giver of life, the light of the world, and the fullness of God's glory on earth.

John used simple words that have profound meaning. His statements are clear, but his truth is deep. As we look at this magnificent text, it would be good to remember the words of Charles Spurgeon: "You may study, look, and meditate, but Jesus is a greater Savior than you think He is, even when your thoughts are at their highest."

### **1. The IDENTITY of the Word**

John begins in 1:1 writing of "the Word" (3x). We know the Word is a person because John refers to Word as "him" not it (vs. 3, 4). We are still not sure who John is talking about until we come to verse 14 where he says "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" and his glory was of "the only begotten of the Father." We know John was talking about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The "only begotten" (Gk, *monogenes*) means unique, one-of-a-kind. John uses this term twice in John 1, twice in John 3, and once in his first epistle.

**John 3:16** *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

**1 John 4:9** *In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.*

What is the significance of describing Christ as "the Word"? This is a name that John uses in his first letter.

**1 John 1:1-3**<sup>1</sup> *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; <sup>2</sup> (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) <sup>3</sup> That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

This is not a reference to the Bible as the Word of God. The Bible tells us about Christ, but Christ and the Bible are not the same. Christ and the Scriptures are inseparable, but they are not identical. The Scriptures reveal the truth about Christ, but they are not Christ.

**John 5:39** *Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.*

Christ is identified as “the Word” because He is the clearest, fullest, and final revelation of God to man. We use words to communicate, whether in speaking or writing. Christ is the ultimate communication from God to men. He is the perfect expression of who God is.

**Hebrews 1:1-3** <sup>1</sup> *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,* <sup>2</sup> *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;* <sup>3</sup> *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.*

In the past God spoke in different ways and through different prophets at different times, but now in the last days He has spoken through Christ. What more could He say?

One of the most interesting events in the life of Christ was on the Mt. of Transfiguration, when He took Peter, James, and John with Him. On that mountain these disciples saw for a brief moment the glory of Christ. Moses and Elijah appeared to them on the mountain.

**Matthew 17:4-5** <sup>4</sup> *Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles (tents); one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.* <sup>5</sup> *While he yet spoke, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear Him.*

Christ is not just another prophet of God; He is the prophet of God. He is the final Word.

## **2. The ETERNALITY of the Word**

Christ did not begin at Bethlehem. Christ had no beginning. He is eternal. Let's read again verse 1, “in the beginning was the Word...” This sounds a lot like Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” The tense of the verb “was” supports the truth that Christ always existed before anything else was created. “Was” is imperfect tense which indicates continuous action in the past.

What does the Bible say about Christ *before* He came to earth. How is He described? Where was He? What was He like? First of all, Christ was in perfect unbroken fellowship with the Father.

### **A. Christ was eternally active**

***Micah 5:2*** *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*

B. Christ was eternally with the Father

***John 1:1*** *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

The English translation doesn't bring out the richness of this statement. "With God" means face to face, and describes the intimate fellowship between the Father and the Son.

***John 1:18*** *No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him.*

C. Christ was eternally glorified

***John 17:5*** *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

D. Christ was eternally rich

***2 Corinthians 8:9*** *For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*

J. Oswald Sanders said that Christ enjoyed "the immunity of a heavenly life."

E. Christ was eternally equal with the Father

***Philippians 2:5-7*** <sup>5</sup> *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: <sup>7</sup> But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.*

What a description John gives us in this first chapter: Christ is the full and final Word and He is the eternal Word. He is the Word given to man, the Word sent to earth, the eternal Word that entered time so that we could know Him and be with Him for all eternity. We call this the "Gospel of John" for a reason. The word "Gospel" is the good news about Jesus Christ, who He is and what He did for us.

The Gospel is good news only if you receive it and believe it.