

## **The Word Became Flesh**

Pastor Jeff Wood

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When I went to Hephzibah, GA, just outside of Augusta, in that countryside I came upon Donald standing outside his little house. It was a pretty 20x20 structure with a blue exterior, a nice door, and several new windows. What was fun was to walk inside and see it not yet finished. The 2x4 studs were there with the pink insulation rolled in between, the electrical wiring moving through designated holes to receptacles. In a gap in the floor I could see the foundation.

Every entity we see has a structure inside and a foundation underneath. Each week I attach to our sermon reading a verse from John 1, “and the Word became flesh.” I love hearing those words. I love saying them to you. I thought for today we would look at the context from which those words come, John 1:1-14. This passage tells us about our world, our reality and the structure inside and the foundation beneath.

We already know that inside a human body there is a skeleton and inside a drop of water there is hydrogen and oxygen. As we bore down into all reality what is at the most inside, what is at the most bottom? You’re curious, aren’t you, about what’s behind the scenes, about what we find when we lift the veil? Knowing is something that can happen and with it confidence and joy.

We pray.

In the name then of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit these words: John 1:1-14

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was with God in the beginning.*

*[3] Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. [4] In him was life, and that life was the light of men. [5] The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.*

*[6] There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. [7] He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. [8] He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. [9] The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.*

*[10] He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. [11] He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. [12] Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- [13] children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*

*[14] The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

*[18]No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.*  
The Word became flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth and from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace.

Dr. Bernard Lewis is a world-renowned expert in Islam. He is regarded as such by both the west and the east. He is at Princeton University and his most noted work was published many places including the Israeli Department of Defense and the Islamic Brotherhood Press. In the Islamic publication there was a comment that Dr. Lewis was a faithful friend or a candid foe.

I once heard Dr. Lewis interviewed. Somewhere early in the interview he noted for us that Christianity and Islam have much in common. ‘For example, if one member of one of these faiths says to one member of the other, ‘You are an infidel and going to hell,’ the other pretty much knows what he means for they both mean the same thing by infidel and hell.’ He furthered his point by saying, ‘If one of these faiths said this to a member of the Hindu faith, there would be fundamental incomprehension because in Hinduism you don’t have those same categories (infidel or hell).’

Now I mention this because in the ancient world Jew and Greek operated with different categories. When the categories are different how do you communicate? You have to find some common ground.

John, in his brilliance fired by the Holy Spirit, found a way to communicate with both audiences. God wants to communicate and he helped John help him do so. John found the common ground by referring to “The Word.” (“In the beginning was the Word.”)

I’m speaking words and you’re hearing words and the human race is blessed to be able to speak and hear and write and understand ... words. Logos means those kind of words to be sure but in the Greek worldview *logos* also meant the rationality inside and underneath reality. So there is the logos as in prologue (the words at the start of book) but also logos as in logic (reason or rationality).

The Word to the *Jew* was the expression of God ... his mind thinks, wills, speaks and it comes into being. So God and his thought can be considered logos. “And God said, ‘Let there be light’ and there was light.”

That word to the Jew is not just knowledge or information but it is wisdom indicating there is discernment and application about what is good and beautiful and worthy. So the Word to the Jew was the

written and spoken word of the Law and the Prophets. It is the Wisdom spoken of in parts of Proverbs.

John would present, I believe, that reason is not just out there but generates out of a person. So he'd say to the Greek, there's a rational being behind the universe. And that being, he announces, became flesh ... showed up as a human person.

It's possible to have a non-bodily person and power. That's what a spirit is. It's possible to have a non-bodily mind. That's what a spirit is.

Our experience is full of thought from people with bodies so that is what we know best. But there is that which we don't know best that nonetheless is there. For example, dark matter in physics. Scientists have discovered, different from anything heretofore known, matter that doesn't respond to light. Everything we know responds to light. But now there is something that doesn't. So we're experienced with minds and thoughts in persons with bodies but there is mind and thought from a person without a body.

But then He got one! That's Jesus.

I've enjoyed being able to travel in Europe from time to time. One of the thrills for me there is the cathedrals. Those majestic spaces! In England alone there is Salisbury and York and even Birmingham's more modern one is beautiful. One of the finest is St. Paul's Cathedral in London.

St. Paul's was created by Sir Christopher Wren. In fact, his tomb is there. For the greatness of the man the tomb is nondescript. One can read in Latin on that tomb these words: "Reader, if you seek his monument, look around you." All this architecture, you see, in which the reader is standing is an *expression* of Sir Christopher Wren. It is his mind expressed. We, of course, in our lives are within a vast global, universal, cosmic architecture and *it* is the expression of God's mind.

Sir Christopher Wren was here, passed from among us, but he has left this expression of himself. But now think about this. What if you could have had the architecture before the man? If you could have had people looking at the Cathedral and wondering what yet unborn being created it ahead of his appearing? If he had been able to get the plans here ahead, got the workers doing it, and all the people wondered about who was behind this creation and then he showed up and explained it, showed all the hidden little specialty marks that no one would have known were there unless you put them there. “All this is an expression of me not that I left behind but that I put in place before.”

And *that* is what John tells the Jew and the Greek *and us* -- that the creative inner thoughts of God, the Word, the reason in God’s mind, the reason indwelling and structuring all things *showed up as a person*.

I have a friend Bob. He builds computers. He services computers. He has little internet software robots that monitor and update computers all over the country. He keeps ours here running smoothly. We see the results of his work. Occasionally, one of us picks up the phone and asks him a question. We hear a voice. Sometimes he remotely comes into the computer and we can see him move the cursor and open/close windows on the computer. Imagine one day he travels here and walks in the door. We would say you are the computer mind present in the flesh! That’s what John is saying.

God expresses himself not just creatively, audibly, legibly, or philosophically but he expresses himself personally. The One Who Made It All expressed himself not just in a mountain or in algorithms or a theology book but expressed himself as a person.

You might say to me, “Such and such a sermon you preached, Jeff, or such and such an article that you wrote, Jeff, really, really expressed you.” But there is

fundamentally a *you*, a Jeff, behind the expression. The universe is a sermon preached, an article written and the you behind it, the reason in it ... can be met *in person*.

This is what John says. And he says it in a way that recalls Genesis 1. In Genesis 1 God makes man and in John 1 God becomes man. It's as if there were seven days of creation and now after all this time there is an eighth day of creation. In Genesis 1 God made man. In John 1, on the eighth day of creation, God became man and that man is none other than Jesus Christ.

In Jesus Christ, you see, we meet God. He is the meaning for both Jew and Greek. In the face of Jesus Christ we see God's face. In the heart and actions of Jesus Christ we see God's heart and actions. Someone says, "I don't think God cares." Does Jesus care as he takes in the sick and the lame? Yes. That's God, he cares. "I don't think God is effective." Is Jesus when he heals and loves? Yes. That's God, he's effective. What does God look like? Jesus. What does God do? What Jesus did. God didn't just send Jesus Christ to us. God came to us in Jesus Christ. And he is never more clearly God than when he goes for our sakes to the cross. God didn't just show us in Jesus Christ that he would suffer for us. God suffered for us in Jesus Christ. People, that's God, caring for us.

John says many didn't understand this momentous expression, God as Jesus. The way John puts it is that his own did not receive him. But he also says that some did come to understand, not completely, not fully, but enough to try to receive him. To them God gave the right to be children of God.

How about you? God's still speaking through Jesus Christ. Will you open to this message that God was in Christ loving the world to himself? Will you be in that world that is loved to him? Would you become a child of God? Receiving him (the language of John) is a matter of

bending the knee to him twice, once in surrender and homage as the God who is the architect of all life and shows his heart to be that of sacrificial love. Then we bend the knee in service saying, “Since you are God, I will go where you would have me go and I will do what you would have me do.” Bend the knee twice and be a child of God.

Remember Winnie the Pooh? I remember reading it to my children. There’s a scene where Tigger has treed himself and is stuck. The narrator says something and Tigger asks, “Who are you?” The narrator says, “I’m the narrator.” Tigger then says, “Well, narrate me down out of this tree.”

Not just the narrator but the author of our story speaks. And he doesn’t just narrate us down out of our situation. He joins us in it. He comes into the story. He becomes a person ... to help us and love us. The Word became flesh.

*If you would like to talk with someone about this message or your spiritual life, or to have someone pray with you, the pastors and elders of the church would welcome your call. [pastorjeffwood@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjeffwood@gmail.com) [www.welovefirst.org](http://www.welovefirst.org)  
[www.facebook.com/welovefirstsebastian](https://www.facebook.com/welovefirstsebastian)*