

“The Word Became Flesh”
John 1:1-14
A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

Someone has wisely said that on that first Christmas morning “God shook the world with a babe – not a bomb.” And someone else said “The best way to send a message is to wrap it up in a man.” That is exactly what God did in the coming of Jesus Christ. Throughout the history as recorded in the Old Testament, God had tried to send His message of love for mankind through the prophets and others. But even when confronted with God’s message of love, the people – overwhelmed with hard hearts and spiritual decay – continued to reject God’s message and live unholy lives.

This unfortunate situation existed until, as Paul states in Galatians 4:5-6: “The fullness of time was come and God sent forth His Son, made of woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.” Isaiah, to some extent, had anticipated the coming of a Messiah who would in essence be a great light to those who were walking in darkness. But it is left to John to put this marvelous event in staggering and glowing language when he wrote in John 1:14: “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.”

Jesus Christ came to earth and lived a message from God – a message of salvation from sin and to eternal life. And because he lived that message in such total dedication to the Father’s will, Jesus was crucified on a Roman cross. But the Word of God makes it clear that death could not overcome the Son of God and the purpose for which He came. By the power of God, Jesus Christ, the Word of God became flesh, rose from the grave and therein accomplished eternal salvation for all who faithfully believe. Now, the resurrected Word which became flesh is with the Father making intercession for all of us.

The resurrected Lord, before His ascension, commissioned His followers – including all of us who are Christians today – to carry God’s great message of salvation to all the world. In Matthew 28:18-20, we read: “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. AMEN.”

The whole point of the message is this: The Word must become flesh in us, in you and in me. The Word did not become flesh and live a few years on earth and die. The Word of God is alive and by the transforming power of the Holy Spirit can become flesh in us. True Christianity is much more than going to church, reading the Bible, and praying prayers. Within the Christian life, all of these things are vital, but real Christianity is a distinctive way of life. The message of Christianity is proclaimed by the way the Christian speaks, by the way he lives at home, in his business, at school, on the

playground, and in his relationships with all other people. Christianity must embody itself in life, in action. Christianity must become flesh.

The Word became flesh in those early disciples of our Lord and it is flesh in many people today. During my student days at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, my pastor at the Wake Forest Baptist Church was Dr. Ben Lynes. I heard him tell the story of a missionary who went to a rather isolated place in Africa thinking that he was the first Christian missionary to preach at that particular location. He preached the Gospel of Christ to those people. After the sermon he was surprised at their response. They said, "Oh yes, we know this Jesus you are talking about. He was here and lived with us for a while some time ago." The missionary finally learned that another missionary had lived with these people for a few weeks at an earlier time. The first missionary was so much like Jesus Christ in his way of life that the people thought that he was the Jesus the second missionary was preaching about. This first missionary was one who had the marks of Christ. Here was a man in whom "The Word had become flesh." The Word must likewise become flesh in us.

We can keep the Word from becoming flesh in us if we so choose. By our godless and indifferent living, we can keep the Word from becoming flesh in us. Even during the glorious Christmas season when the call for the Word to become flesh in us is so great, we shun the divine call in the midst of last minute Christmas shopping and pressing social formalities. Dr. Lynes also shares the account of an imaginative story that appeared in a magazine. A night watchman in a certain department store found a man's body under a counter. The body was that of a man in his thirties, frail and thin, and poorly dressed. There was nothing in his pockets, so the body could not be identified. Officials believe that the man was trampled to death in the Christmas rush. They could not, however, account for the nail scars in the man's hands!

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; We have beheld his glory, glory as of the only son from the father." God gave His Son. Why, oh why, cannot we give ourselves to Him in total and unreserved dedication so that the Word may become flesh in us? Amen.

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