

In many and various ways, God spoke to His people of Old by the prophets, but now in these last days He has spoken to us by His son. Grace to you and peace from God our Father and from the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ. Amen.

By quoting the opening words of Genesis, "In the beginning," John takes us clear back to the beginning. With a simple vocabulary, John begins to unlock the great mystery of the Son's divine nature: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. The Word, that is the Christ, is apart from time and before time. When the Word became flesh, the timeless God slipped into our human time. When the Word became flesh, God became man while yet remaining God.

In one short and shattering expression, God reveals the heart of the Christian faith. The place of God's dwelling is the flesh of Christ. The tiny body of the baby that grew in the womb of the Virgin Mary, the infant body of the baby that lay in the Bethlehem manger, was the body of both God and man. He upholds the universe, yet his infant body is upheld by his mother's arms. In one sense that is a mystery. It is indescribable and unspeakable. But in another sense it is very describable and revealing for that is what words do. Words reveal and explain and clarify. And Jesus is the Word made flesh.

"Flesh" is a strong, almost crude way of referring to human nature. He could have said "The Word became man..." or "The word took on human form or a body..." But he bluntly said "flesh." The problem with our flesh is that it is corrupted by sin and lives in the darkness. The way of the world, our flesh, is to live in the darkness of sin that we all live in. And we wouldn't even know this unless God revealed it to us through the Law of Moses. An excuse offered by our sinful flesh is to say, "I'm only human," as if that makes our sin excusable and will open heaven to us. But it won't! That's why God himself opened heaven! That's why the Word became flesh!

What is the Good Word this Christmas? Christmas! The Nativity of our Lord! It is so simple and yet so amazing. It is so mysterious and so marvelous and like it or not, so messy. It is the heart of all that we believe and yet, humanly speaking, it is unbelievable. Through the Word all things were made – when God spoke the word, creation came to be. God's Word is the eternal Son, Jesus, and today we celebrate the Word becoming flesh to save us! God as Man, God as a baby, has laid Himself into the manger to redeem us selfish men.

The eternal Word who at creation spoke and it came to be, was conceived by His own Word in the womb of a virgin. The Holy Spirit overshadowed her. In David's town, Bethlehem, a Son was born – the Savior of the world. Tiny, infant helplessness hides the Holy Lord of heavenly armies.

The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.

It is Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh! He is the one who reveals and explains God. He is the one who makes God known to us. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God.

The Word who became flesh did so without sin. He was perfect in every way. Some say he came in the flesh to understand us better – to “walk in our shoes” as it were. And I suppose there is some comfort to knowing that God knows what we go through – that he’s been there (or here). But sympathy was not the reason the word became flesh.

He took on flesh so that flesh could die. He took on flesh to save our flesh by destroying his own. He took on our human nature, and though he had no sin of his own, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus took His flesh, loaded with the sins of our flesh, to the cross.

He has redeemed us. He has rescued us out of death, out of gloom and despair. And though we still live in the darkness of our sin, no one can snatch the Word made flesh from us. Long after the glitter and schmaltz and the crowds at the stores are gone, the Word they still shall let remain. We know the Truth. The Word became Flesh. We've seen the Light that overcomes the darkness. The Lord has bared his Holy arm, and we've felt the watery Hand of God as he places His Name upon us, claiming that we are His. This will abide. It will last.

He endures forever. He is that blessed Word that came from God to save our race. He is that blessed Word sent from God to speak us back into fellowship with Him. He is not done. The Last Word is not finished speaking. He still speaks, coming here to Bethlehem in bread and wine to be Flesh for food of Life, that Flesh once laid into a manger and later nailed to the cross, made alive out of death again, is laid upon the tongues of men and gives us grace upon grace. His Word does what it was sent to do. He calls us back. He speaks us clean. He forgives our sins and gives us faith.

Nothing can ruin that. The devil already tried. He could not overcome the Light. Grace and Truth have come through Jesus Christ and you are here because Jesus Himself declares it to you. Here is joy that no one, no thing, can snatch away light in the midst of darkness, life in the midst of death, hope in the midst of despair, God in the midst of men. The Word became Flesh.

Merry Christmas – In the name of Jesus. Amen.