

The Word Became Flesh

- ☆ God from God (vv.1-3)
- ☆ Light from Light (vv.4-9)
- ☆ True God from True God (vv.10-13)
- ☆ Begotten, not made (v.14)

In the Name of **The Word** that **Became Flesh**, dear hearts aching for grace and truth:

One of the things I love about the Bible is how the Holy Spirit anticipated all the arguments men would raise against God. And the children say, “Yes, Pastor, we know! God can read our thoughts.” So true, but God can even read the thoughts of people who do not yet exist, centuries before they were born.

This little sermon has four parts you’ll recognize. The place was a city of Asia Minor, modern Turkey, called Nicaea. The year was A.D. 325. The heretic was Arias who claimed he was a Christian, but that he did not believe Jesus Christ is God from all eternity. Church representatives studied the Bible, debated, and wrote what we confess today as the Nicene Creed. In fact, we say the Nicene Creed when we celebrate Holy Communion. Remember why? The only way Jesus can give us His body and blood – in, with and under the bread and wine – is if He is truly the Almighty, All-powerful, All-Knowing, eternal God. Many Bible passages say it. Our text nails it – long before Arias lived to lie. His heresy nearly destroyed the Trinitarian church. Why did he fail? Because **The Word Became Flesh** as...

☆ God from God (vv.1-3)

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was in the beginning with God. ³By him everything was made, and not one thing was made without him. ¹

See how the Holy Spirit speaks of the Word as a separate Person, yet *“the Word was God.”* Years after He inspired Matthew’s Gospel account for Jews, Mark apparently for Gentile Romans and Luke for Gentile Greeks, the Holy Spirit inspired John to write for a world in wonder. Jesus’ name was all over the Roman Empire. People wondered who He was. Can there be any doubt from these simple words?

You know we get to verse 14 before *“the Word”* is finally identified as Jesus. Yet with divine skill the Holy Spirit takes us back to the very beginning when God spoke and all things came to be. God had already been speaking in the eternal councils of Father, Son and Spirit. So *“the Word”* existed before anything was made because God says through John, *“By him everything was made.”* And in case someone like Arias might come along and try to squeeze a lie in there, John continued, *“And not one thing was made without him.”* **The Word** was not just existing *“with God”* *“in the beginning,”* the Greek word (πρὸς) here literally means *turned toward* God. This was illustrated for me when one of our babies was newborn. She just lay there peacefully in her mother’s arms while they kept looking at each other. It was as if there was no one else in the world for those two than the baby *turned toward*, with her mother. That’s the context here in John 1, of the Father *turned toward* the Son in the eternal bliss of heaven. Think of warm and gentle Mary holding baby Jesus as He was *turned toward* her and she *toward* Him. That’s how *“the Word was with God.”*

¹ W.P. ~ Wartburg Project – Luke popular review – unless otherwise stated the Bible text. [M.C. 12/25/2014]

☆ Light from Light (vv.4-9)

⁴*In him was² life, and the life was the light of mankind.* ⁵*The light is shining in the darkness, and the darkness has not extinguished it.* ³ Darkness cannot destroy or understand **Light from Light**.

This time of year the lights of Christmas are especially welcome. The sun sets so early and rises so late, but my neighbors have decked their homes in brilliant light to honor “*the Light of the world.*” “*For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.*” (2 Corinthians 4:6 NIV84) We get to look into the face of God too as we gaze with Mary on that tiny Baby. How could God do this? I don’t know, but I kneel in wonder “*for in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form*” (Colossians 2:9 NIV84) We’re not looking at part of God, but all of God in that infant Son of the Virgin Mary. Jesus truly is **Light from Light** since He brings the light of God’s truth and comfort to where we hurt the most.

My sister Ramona and I were talking about our stepfather’s struggles with cancer and how he is triumphing by faith. He’s at peace knowing he does not need to pursue heroic medicine to keep him breathing a few hours longer. God can take us anytime, His own way. Ramona shared this story with me.

I remember our good friend, Bev, who was beside herself at choir practice, thinking, and saying to me....I have to get home, Gary is there (sick and with dangerously high diabetes) and what if something happens to him while I’m gone (enjoying myself at choir). I put my hand on her arm and calmly said, Bev—your being home, or not, will not determine when Gary goes to Heaven. God already knows the exact moment, and it doesn’t depend on you being there or not. She settled right down, peaceful.

Within a few months, she was diagnosed with Lou Gehrig’s disease. She lived only a few more years. Gary (husband) is still alive and Bev is in Heaven. God knows!

☆ True God from True God (vv.10-13)

⁶*There was a man, sent from God whose name was John.* ⁷*He came as an eyewitness to testify about the light so that everyone would believe through him.* ⁸*He was not the light, but he came as a witness for the light.* ⁹*The genuine light that enlightens everyone was coming into the world.* ¹⁰*He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not recognize him.* ¹¹*He came to his own, yet his own people did not accept him.* ¹²*But to all who did receive him, to those who believe in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.* ¹³*They are not born of blood⁴, nor of the impulse of the flesh, nor of a husband’s desire, but they are born of God.*

When the Gospel writer John mentions “John,” it’s never about himself. He refers to himself as “*the disciple Jesus loved.*” But this is John the Baptist, forerunner of Christ. Faithfully he confesses that Jesus is **True God from True God** who gives sinners like us “*the right to become...born of God.*”

How good are you at speaking truth to yourself? For example, when I’m on my way to church, I’m in a hurry. I have work to do. Why does it seem so wrong when other people cut in front of me, but okay for me to find a way to rush around them? Why does it sometimes take months for me to see my own hypocrisy? It’s good for men to marry strong women who can speak the truth to them. But, ladies, don’t forget how Eve also refused to admit she was wrong in the Garden. Jesus speaks God’s truth to us.

² 4 Some witnesses to the text read: “is”

³ 5 Or “has not understood / overcome it.”

⁴ 13 “Not born of blood” literally negates physical birth by human ancestry or family tree.

For the study behind this sermon or for copies email m.cordes@comast.net .

You can also call: 651-484-1169. Hear the sermon at www.wels.us/newlife .

New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church
180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126

☆ Begotten, not made (v.14)

The year was “Y2K,” 2000. Our Children’s Christmas service ⁵ was based on this last verse of our text: *And the Word became flesh and lived among us.* ⁶ *We have seen his glory, glory belonging to the only-begotten* ⁷ *Son who came from the Father’s side, full of grace and truth.*

We don’t really understand what it means that Jesus is “*begotten of the Father from eternity.*” God proclaimed to the eternally existing Jesus, “*You are my Son; today I have become your Father.*” (Psalm 2:7 NIV84) There is nothing in creation to which we can compare this declarative act of the Creator. But we can say with certainty that **The Word Became Flesh – Begotten, not made.** Back in the opening verses we heard how **The Word** made absolutely everything as the Creator Himself.

The lesson here for us is close, caring and wonderful. Some of you may remember Christmas 2000 and the manger scene under the tent up here near the altar. Gary and Sandy Rasmussen’s kids were little then. To help the children remember the lesson of this verse I made two signs for an Old Testament Hebrew word and the New Testament Greek word in this verse. When it says, “*The Word became flesh and lived among us,*” it literally means “tented among us.”

The picture was familiar to ancient Israelites because every year they celebrated the Feast of Tabernacles, or tents. It was a national campout, vacation for everyone! You had to go! Everyone made shelters outside their homes to live in where they could *SHAKAN* together with each other and in family fellowship with God. So when the Holy Spirit here says through John that “*The Word...tented among us,*” Jesus’ fellow Jews knew this was God come to earth. And it’s how God describes the way He will live with us in heaven. A year after that Christmas someone asked in a Bible Class, “Pastor, what was the Greek word for ‘tented’?” Before I could remember, little Sam Rasmussen a third grader said, “Skanow.” (σκηνόω) Amazing, isn’t it, how the Holy Spirit helps children remember?

Remember how the Holy Spirit says through John in Revelation: “*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Now the dwelling [tent] of God is with men, and he will live [tent] with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away. He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’*” (Revelation 21:3–5 NIV84)

All this is ours to enjoy because **The Word Became Flesh** and truly is now and forever:

☆ God from God
☆ Light from Light
☆ True God from True God
☆ Begotten, not made

Amen.

⁵ *God Dwells Among Us – A Children’s Christmas Service* by Chris Gebert and Donald Patterson. NPH (1-800-662-6022)

⁶ 14 Literally: “tented among us.”

⁷ 14 The Greek word for “one and only” also means “one of a kind,” “unique.” In his eternal essence as the Word, Jesus is the “only-begotten” Son of the Father.

For the study behind this sermon or for copies email m.cordes@comast.net .
You can also call: 651-484-1169. Hear the sermon at www.wels.us/newlife .

New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church
180 County Rd F - Shoreview, MN 55126