

# LESSON 286

## THE WORD MADE FLESH

Related Scripture: I John 1:1-10

**KEY VERSE:** *"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."—I Timothy 3:16.*

Lesson Scripture: John 1:1-5, 14-18, 29

### Introduction:

Communication between different persons is difficult at best, but the spoken or written word is the most effective means known to man of conveying one person's thoughts to another. Perhaps it is at least partly for this reason that the Son of God is called the Word of God. It is through Him that God communicates with man.

Of course, God has no difficulty understanding us; the difficulty is on our side. As creatures confined to bodies of flesh and blood, we find the incarnation, the fleshly manifestation of God, more appealing, understandable, and approachable than pure Spirit.

Much more important is the fact that the incarnation provides an acceptable Sacrifice for sin. Even the natural conscience of man, as evidenced in practically all religions, recognizes the need for some kind of offering or sacrifice to gain acceptance before God. Only the Bible, however, tells us of the perfect Sacrifice—God offering Himself as the perfect Man to Himself as the perfect God.

As the one and only sinless Man, Jesus alone qualifies as the acceptable Substitute for sinful man; as infinite God, His merit is sufficient to meet all the needs of all believers who come to God through Him. (He. 7:25.)

So the Word of God when received by us becomes also our Word to Him. Through the incarnate Word God reveals Himself to us; through the eternal Word we recommend ourselves to God.

Note the following outline:

1. Word Eternal, John 1:1-3
  - a. Eternal Coequal, 1, 2
  - b. Eternal Creator, 3
2. Word Effulgent, John 1:4, 5
3. Word Embodied, John 1:14-17
  - a. Exceeding glory, 14, 15
  - b. Exceeding grace, 16, 17
4. Word Exhibiting, John 1:18
5. Word Expiating, John 1:29

Notes on the Printed Text:

Word Eternal, John 1:1-3.

Men's words generally are soon forgotten, but the words of God will never pass away. His spoken word is as sure and lasting as He is righteous and true. The personal Word of God is self-existent and consistent from eternity to eternity, and will see to it in time that His spoken word is fulfilled to the letter.

Eternal Coequal, 1, 2.

Whatever beginning we may think of, the Word was there. Before there was a world, before the existence of angel or devil, in the beginning of eternity (if we could think of eternity as having a beginning), there was God; and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. In the beginning of all beginnings, God the Father and God the Son, here called the Word, were together and were, as they shall be, essentially one and the same God.

Eternal Creator, 3.

"By him" would be better translated "through him." All creation, all things that exist, came into existence through the power of the eternal Word. Not one thing has ever come into existence apart from Him. Evolutionists may in their ignorance shut God out of their theories, but they themselves are rebellious creatures of the God they deny.

Word Effulgent, John 1:4, 5.

Both life and light, even on the earthly level, are beyond human understanding, though we have some experience and knowledge of both. Perhaps we can at least recognize that divine life is of a higher kind than human life, so that the incarnate Word was effulgent with the life of God shining through the life of the only sinless man that ever lived.

Divine life in the midst of sinful humanity was like a bright light shining in the midst of darkness, and this the darkness did not understand; that is, men did not understand the true character of Christ, the Word.

Word Embodied, John 1:14-17.

"And the Word was made flesh." He never lost His eternal deity, and since He became flesh He has never lost His humanity. The true and full character of the Christ of the Bible is to be learned from His own written word, not from the vain imaginings of self-styled theologians or of fanciful promoters of new religions.

Exceeding Glory, 14, 15.

God has "many sons" (He. 2:10), but only one "only begotten." Some modern false translations have tried to rob us of this truth, but the fact is unchanged and is plainly declared in the original scripture, here faithfully translated in the KJ version. Among men born of women none was greater than John the Baptist (Mat. 11:11); and surely his was a glorious ministry; but John testified to the exceeding glory of his Savior Who came after John in His human birth and in His public ministry, but Who was before John in His eternal deity.

Exceeding Grace, 16, 17.

Moses knew and recorded the grace of God before and under the law (Gen. 6:8; Ex. 33:16, 19; 34:6), but we have received of the fullness of Christ, "and grace for grace." The emphasis of Moses was on the law of God, but the grace and truth of God were perfectly revealed through Jesus Christ.

Word Exhibiting, John 1:18.

In His essential deity God is invisible to the natural eye, though He has manifested Himself in various ways. But the personified Word of God, "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father," has exhibited to us in His incarnation the fullness of divine being. (Jn. 14:9; Col. 2:9.)

#### **Word Expiating, John 1:29.**

Yet to the redeemed the most important doctrine of the incarnation is that the Word made flesh is also the Lamb of God Who made satisfactory expiation for the sins of His people. "Ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins." (I Jn. 3:5.) Modernists, neo-orthodox, and other infidels may not believe this, but born-again Bible believers know it as a fact of life: "And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."

Let us not get so tangled in theology that we can never mention the gospel without lengthy discussion and attempted explanation of divine sovereignty, election, predestination, etc. Certainly all that the Bible says on these great subjects is true, and we must not shun to declare all the counsel of God. But we cannot tell everything the Bible says every time we open our mouths. Why can we not trust the Holy Spirit to make the appropriate application of every portion of His word? We do not need to twist or deny any part of the scripture to make it fit the whole truth.

God's message to any lost sinner is still the same as it was to Nicodemus: "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (Jn. 3:16.) Or, as Paul and Silas put it to the Philippian jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." (Acts 16:31.)

#### **Key Verse:**

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."—I Timothy 3:16.

"Justified in the Spirit" may perhaps be best interpreted in conjunction with Romans 1:4, I Peter 3:18, and Acts 2:32-36. Faith has no difficulty in accepting the facts stated in this key verse, though their full meaning is far beyond our understanding; and so we have a great mystery.