

## The Word Became Flesh January 25, 2009 - Skip MacMillan

**"The Word (Logos) became flesh and made his dwelling among us"** (John 1:14).

The eternal Logos who created all things in heaven and on earth-  
The Logos who is the light of the world-  
The Logos who reveals Himself to various peoples and cultures throughout history-  
This Logos has taken on flesh and dwelled among us.

### **God the Son becomes flesh**

#### ***eimi and en***

We have made the point that *Jesus has been God for an indefinite time in the past.*  
*en* the imperfect of *eimi* "to be" in John 1:1-2 is best translated "had been".  
"Before there was any beginning, the Word had been, and the Word has been toward the God, and God had been the Word" (John 1:1-2).

Jesus Christ, The Word, had always been, in His eternal self-existing state, God the Son.

Today, we are looking at something very different. Jesus becomes something He was not.  
*en* "to become" something that one was not before.  
"The Lord Jesus at a particular time in the past became that which He was not before, a physical being. Before that He was essentially Spirit (Jn. 4:24). It also implies continuing to be that" -Spiro Zodiatas.

**Incarnation** = "to enter into or become flesh." The eternal pre-existent Son of God became human in the person of Jesus. "Enfleshment" (Romans 8:32; 1 Corinthians 2:8; Hebrews 2:11-14; 1 Timothy 3:16; Galatians 4:4).

**Hypostatic Union** – concerns the union of the two natures (Divine and Human).  
"In the Incarnation of the Son of God, a human nature was inseparably united forever with the divine nature in the one person of Jesus Christ, yet with the two natures remaining distinct, whole, and unchanged, without mixture or confusion so that the one person, Jesus Christ is truly God and truly man" -The Concise Evangelical Dictionary of Theology.

#### **Westminster Confession of Faith –**

"... being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, in the womb of the virgin Mary, of her substance. So that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition or confusion. Which person is very God, and very man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man."

**Jesus Christ is one person with a divine nature and a human nature, fully God and fully man, from conception on into forever.**

In this way, Jesus can and did experience fully the human condition, nature.  
In this way, Jesus could experience every last drop of humanity and yet be without disobedience, fault or sin.

### **The Struggle and Tension**

#### **1. The church struggled to understand how this worked.**

1st Cent. - **Docetists** – "appeared" human, **Arians** – 4<sup>th</sup> cent. first and highest created being.

Today, we're mixed, some find it difficult to believe He was divine, others that He was human.

If you **question Christ's divinity**, look to the early church's struggles. This was not their struggle.

For those of us **struggling with Jesus' Humanity**, this is no man with a halo; He is fully human, fully tempted and fully suffered.

If Jesus was kind of human, tempted, kind of felt pain, then He kind of suffered and died but not really.

However, if He really struggled, really felt emotions, frustration, hunger, pain, betrayal, love, then you now have someone to draw near to who knows you, knows what it is to be human.

## 2. Trying to understand what the Scriptures say? Charles Hodges:

"In the Old Testament, He is set forth as the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Judah and the family of David; as to be born of a virgin in the town of Bethlehem; as a man of sorrows; as meek and lowly; as bearing the chastisement of our sins, and pouring out his soul unto death. He is everywhere represented as a man. At the same time He is everywhere represented as God; He is called the Son of God, Immanuel, the Mighty God, Jehovah our righteousness; and He is spoken of as from everlasting; as enthroned in heaven and receiving the adoration of angels.

In the New Testament, the same mode of representation is continued. Our Lord, in speaking of Himself, and the Apostles when speaking of Him, uniformly speak of Him as a man. The New Testament gives his genealogy to prove that He was of the house and lineage of David. It records his birth, life and death. It calls Him the Son of Man, the man Christ Jesus. But with like uniformity our Lord assumes, and the Apostles attribute to Him a divine nature. He declares Himself to be the Son of God, existing from eternity, having all power in heaven and in earth, entitled to all their reverence, love and obedience due to God. The Apostles worship Him; they call Him the great God and Savior; they acknowledge their dependence upon Him and responsibility to Him; and they look to Him for pardon, sanctification, and eternal life. These conflicting representations, this constant setting forth the same person as man, and also as God, admits of no solution but in the doctrine of the incarnation. This is the key to the whole Bible. If this doctrine be denied all is confusion and contradiction. If it be admitted all is light, harmony and power. Christ is both God and man, in two distinct natures, and one person forever. This is the great mystery of Godliness. God manifest in the flesh is the distinguishing doctrine of religion of the Bible, without which it is a cold and lifeless corpse"-Hodge Systematic Theology.

## 3. Kenosis - "ekenosen" greek root, from Phil. 2:7 means "emptied himself, to make of no effect, of no account".

"Christ made Himself of no account, of no reputation, did not assert His divine prerogative, but took the form of a servant" -Berkhof.

"He became subject to the demands and to the curse of the Law and in His entire life became obedient in action and suffering to the very limit of a shameful death" -Berkhof.

This truth should cause us to come to Him with openness, honesty, without shame.

The point is not to show you how to climb the mountain in the hopes of getting to God, but to show you how God came off the mountain to be with you. The Logos becomes flesh.

#### 4. Importance: 1 John 4:2-3

#### 5. Mystery of God, the finite trying to comprehend the infinite.

### "The Word became flesh"

#### Flesh = Sarx (Greek)

- "Regularly used to isolate the physical aspect of human nature."
- "a material body, composed of flesh and blood, in everything essential like the bodies of ordinary men. It was not a phantasm, or mere semblance of a body" -Hodge Systematic Theology.
- "Paul uses (*sarx*) over and over again to describe what he called 'the flesh,' human nature in all its weakness and in all its liability to sin" -Barclay.

**Jesus took on human nature**, submerged Himself in the human condition, real humanity, human will; not the appearance of, or what seemed to be, but real human flesh.

#### **Think about it:**

What would it be like if the God you serve and worship knew exactly what it was like to be in your shoes?

What must it have been like for him to assume human flesh, to be born, to live in the confines of a human?

Conceived in the womb of Mary – prophesied in Genesis 3:15, fulfilled in Luke 2  
Born a natural birth - Luke 2:40, 7:9; Mark 2:15, 14:33, 15:34  
Grew up, became strong and was filled with wisdom - Luke 2:40  
12 years old in the Temple - Luke 2:42

Hungry, Matthew 4:2

Ate, spit, saw, touched, smelled, spoke, learned.

Got tired, John 4:6

Slept, Matthew 8:24

Was thirsty, John 4:6-7 even on the Cross, John 19:28, 30; Drank

Troubled in heart, John 12:27

Cried, John 11:35

Was angry, Mark 3:5

Was frustrated, Mark 9:14-29;

Did not know when the day of judgment would be, Matthew 24:36, therefore, had a finite human intelligence (Hodge).

Compassionate, Matthew 9:36,

Distressed and anguished, Luke 22:44, "He offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears" (Heb. 5:7);

Experienced betrayal, felt pain, experienced injustice, was tempted in every way, experienced joy when Peter got it "you are the Lord," He loved, therefore He bled, body to be stabbed in the side, and hands and feet were nailed to the cross, died, John 19:30

Jesus experienced our insecurities and vulnerabilities.

Jesus takes on the complete human experience and lives within a fallen world as a human. He knows what it is like to live in your shoes.

## **Importance of “the Logos becoming flesh”**

### **1. The God you worship knows what it is be human, to live this life.**

Able to sympathize with our weaknesses, Hebrews 4:15.

Tempted in every way, Hebrews 4:15.

Suffered when He was tempted, Hebrews 2:18.

Therefore He is merciful and gracious, Hebrews 4:16.

We can approach Him with confidence, Hebrews 4:16.

He is able and willing to help you when you are tempted, Hebrews 2:18.

Who else has done this for you?

Uniquely Christian – God who become a human.

### **2. God teaches us how to live this life with all its variations and possibilities.**

He gives us the supreme example of how to live this life.

#### **His life teaches how to:**

be in relationship to God the Father

treat people

live out Scripture

live in-tune with the Holy Spirit

live in the will of God

what submission looks like

pray

be angry

what goals to pursue

what priorities to have

how to surrender your will and life to the Father, even when it doesn't make sense!

- Jesus taking on flesh and living among us shows us “how to” live this life! Follow Him!
- “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ” (Ephesians 5:1-2).
- You are now the body of Christ in this world, His hands, mouth, feet – follow His ways!

### **3. What He accomplished as the God-Man, Jesus Christ**

“He might taste death for everyone. . . bringing many sons to glory” (Hebrews 2:9-10).

“Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants. For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted (Hebrews 2:14-18).

Destroyed the devil.

Freed us from the fear of death.

He is merciful toward us.

He is your faithful high priest – interceding for you continuously.

He made atonement for your sins, once and for all.

“And where these have been forgiven, there is no longer any sacrifice for sin” (Hebrews 10:18).

He is able to help those who are being tempted.

**Jesus says, “Here am I, and the children God has given me” (Hebrews 2:13).**

#### **4. What is the overall message we get from the Logos becoming a human?**

"I want to be with you!"

He (lived and) died, the just for the unjust that He might bring us near to God -Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology.

Ask yourself why else would he do this?

He sits down in the cubicle with you, sits at your kitchen table, not the dining room but the den; He is high and exalted but He has stepped down to be with you.