

**1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was with God in the beginning. **3** Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. **4** In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome[[a](#)] it.

**6** There was a man sent from God whose name was John. **7** He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. **8** He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

**9** The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. **10** He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. **11** He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. **12** Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

### The Word Became Flesh

In school if you were caught copying word for word, you're paper would be called into question, you might be called into the office, you may have to rewrite the paper, but the worst case scenario is that you find yourself removed from school. Copying from a single source is called plagiarism. Something that was difficult to avoid in gradeschool when the only resource we had was a set of Encyclopedias. Copying from a single source is plagiarism. It's looked down in the academic community. However, I was also taught that copying from multiple sources is called research.

So what do make of John's Gospel? Plagiarism or research? He doesn't seem to be copying from the other gospels. John seems to be the odd one out again. He doesn't include a Christmas story with Mary and Joseph, it's almost as if the birth isn't important. While Matthew and Luke supply a considerable amount of detail surrounding the conception and coming of the Christ child, and Mark passes over these details, beginning with his Gospel with the ministry of John the Baptist, John starts with a prologue.

He starts with the most famous words, "In the beginning." It's like copying Dickens, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," and hoping no one would notice. He seems to go to a

single source, Moses. The beginning of John's gospel is largely lifted from Genesis 1:1 and following. He not only uses the exact words but he also takes from what was created when God's Word brought light to the very end when he created flesh. Matthew and Luke highlight the humanity of our Lord, John highlights the deity of Jesus. The Word Became Flesh.

Last night we learned that Jesus came into a dark world as a bright light. He was the light of salvation who needed to be both truth God and true man. So that under the law, he might fulfill the law and as a man he might die. True God so that he might pay for the sin of the world. It's not that John doesn't understand the Nativity... he assumes we already have heard the details, that you've heard about Bethlehem, Mary, Joseph, and Jesus.

But not everyone understood the magnitude of the events that occurred. They thought that maybe Jesus was just a great man, a great teacher, an example to follow, but they stopped short of saying, he is true God. That's why John writes, "***He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.***" Since they didn't recognize him John instructs them, and he starts in the most logical location, "***In the beginning.***" We are taken back to the beginning of time, "***When God created the heavens and the earth.***" John takes us back before the heavens and the earth. "***In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God***" There was one who was "with God." he was not alone. Though this little child lying in a manger doesn't look like much he is the God who created the world John wants us to know that "Jesus" is the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. More than this, the Jesus who is the Messiah is the Jesus who is God. And he did not have his beginning in Bethlehem. He did not even have His origins in Genesis 1 and 2, when God created the world. He was there; He already existed when the world was created. He was there with God. He was there as God.

So if it isn't Jesus' birthday what do we celebrate? We celebrate God coming down. Later John writes, "***The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us,***" This prologue sums up the contents of his entire Gospel, "The miracle of the ages is that the Word became flesh and dwelt among men."

The world was made through him. It was very good. Perfect. But there was a problem. This world didn't work the way he designed it to. The fault was not in the creator but in his creation that turned away from him. They believed a lie. A lie that said, "God doesn't love you. God doesn't care for you. God is withholding good from you. You will not die but you will be like God." What Adam and Eve didn't realize is that they already were like God. That God was and is working for their good. That he knows who this world works because he created it. God created them in his image. God created them to receive his gifts and then respond with love and thanksgiving to him and one another.

But then the devil tried to get an easy “A” and pass off God’s Word as his own, he corrupted the words, he copied, twisted, and lied. The thing about plagiarism is that they are never as good as the original. It’s a counterfeit. The world was plunged into darkness and doubt. The image of God was lost. We are no longer perfect but we sin. We often live contrary to our design and fail to fulfill the purpose for which we were created. Sometimes we don’t even recognize the God who is God over us. We don’t always recognized Jesus as God or the Bible as his Word. In fact we may even put our word above his and well his word is an old relic written by people of the past who just weren’t as knowledgeable as we are today. Instead of bringing our will in line with his we’ll find excuses to ignore what he has said. We still are stuck with the same darkness that clings to our hearts

But God has done something about that. He entered into it. He changed the story. No longer would the end be a nightmare but he wrote himself into our history by entering humanity.

***“The Word became flesh and lived among us, full of grace and truth.”*** Translated literally, the word for ***“lived”*** would be “pitched a tent:” the Word became flesh and pitched a tent among us. God chose a site in the human campground. the miracle of the ages that the Word became flesh and dwelt among us. When the “Word” came into the world, the world was in a state of chaos, spiritually speaking. When the “Word” appeared, He was the “light” that illuminated the darkness, revealing the righteousness of God and exposing man’s sin.

They couldn’t stand to see their sin in the light of the word so they sentenced Jesus to death. He willingly gave up his life for us. The Christmas miracle is not just that the Word became flesh, but that this enfleshed Word loves the world to the point of dying for it. And yet even the darkness of death could not silence his Word. ***In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*** John writes, “The darkness has not overcome it.” Could not master it, could not control it.

The Light of the World is not snuffed out, mastered, or controlled, by the darkness of death. The darkness of your sin, the darkness of those deep secrets and horrible thoughts, the darkness of depression, anxiety, and failure cannot overcome the glory of the Light of the World. The darkness could not master the light in fact it flees from the light. The world attempts to master the light or suppress the light have failed and it continues to shine even today through the people of God.

He rewrote the story. He rewrote your story. He came to win your salvation. Because God’s just judgement against sin we would have been cast off into outer darkness and doomed for all eternity. But God in his love wrote a new ending. His Son for our flesh. He would keep the commandments perfectly and in our place and then shouldered our sins on the cross as our

substitute. And because he was the very son of God - his blood is sufficient to pay for the sins of the world, yours and mine. You are forgiven.

Not only has he lived, died, and rose for you he gives your faith. Through faith we become children of God. We are born again, from above, of water and the Spirit in Baptism. Here he makes us children of God. Now we can call on him in prayer. His Word continues to leave an impression upon us as with each word he makes us more like him. Not a cheap imitation, counterfeit, forgery, or plagiarism but the real thing. He gives us his work, his righteousness, as our own, restoring the image that was lost, bringing light to dark places.

Jesus wasn't born for his own good, he was born for you. Christmas isn't about family, decorations, food, those things are nice but not what it's all about. Christmas is about the father's gift of light a gift that John's gospel carefully unwraps for us, more and more every year in his gospel. That's God's gift to you. That's the same gift you share with others. That's the greatest gift we could possibly share. It won't break, wear out, or be destroyed. But it is something worth copying word for word and repeated as often as possible.

John may not be the greatest writer. He speaks simply. He uses short sentences. He largely lifts portions of the OT and uses them in his own Gospel but he hasn't plagiarized anything. He picked up where Moses left off and he reminds us the story doesn't end with our fall into sin. It doesn't end with darkness or death. It ends with eternity. Paradise. All because the Word became flesh and made his home among us.

Amen.