

## Sunday Lesson – January 2, 2022

### GOSPEL: John 1: 10-18

*"The Life-Light"*

#### Context



“Each of the gospels begins with an account of Jesus’ origins. John, however, pushes his account of Jesus, the Word, back to the beginning of time itself. Before anything else had been created, he was. In fact, using language that adopts yet stretches Philo’s imaginative ruminations, Jesus, as the divine Logos, was not only with God in the beginning, but was God. To further stress the centrality of Jesus in God’s identity and purpose, John’s prologue also claims that creation itself originated through his life-giving agency: apart from the Word, “not one thing came into being” (verse 3).” (*Excerpts from workingpreacher.org/commentaries/narrative-lectionary/word-made-flesh/commentary-on-john-11-18-2*)

#### Insight

“The statement “In the beginning was the Word” encapsulates the eternality of the Word, the creating power of the Word, and the revelatory nature of the Word. As John later defines the Word as being Jesus (John 1:14–18), the purpose of the Gospel of John becomes clear—“that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31). Jesus is the revelatory and actual eternal Creator—the object of the Christian’s faith. He is not simply a representation of God, but He is God, and He has always been so: “In the beginning was the Word.” The remaining chapters of the Gospel of John endeavor to show this statement to be true.” (*Excerpts from gotquestions.org/the-Word-was-in-the-beginning.html*)

#### Gospel Reading

“The Life-Light was the real thing:  
Every person entering Life

he brings into Light.

He was in the world,

the world was there through him,  
and yet the world didn’t even notice.

He came to his own people,  
but they didn’t want him.

But whoever did want him,  
who believed he was who he claimed  
and would do what he said,  
He made to be their true selves,  
their child-of-God selves.

These are the God-begotten,  
not blood-begotten,  
not flesh-begotten,  
not sex-begotten.

The Word became flesh and blood,  
and moved into the neighborhood.

We saw the glory with our own eyes,  
the one-of-a-kind glory,  
like Father, like Son,  
Generous inside and out,  
true from start to finish.

John pointed him out and called, “This is the One! The One I told you was coming after me but in fact was ahead of me. He has always been ahead of me, has always had the first word.” We all live off his generous abundance,  
gift after gift after gift.

We got the basics from Moses,  
and then this exuberant giving and receiving,  
This endless knowing and understanding—  
all this came through Jesus, the Messiah.  
No one has ever seen God,  
not so much as a glimpse.  
This one-of-a-kind God-Expression,

who exists at the very heart of the Father,  
has made him plain as day." The Message

### What It Could Mean?

"Where, then, to focus for the second Sunday of Christmas? One possibility would be to focus on verse 14, which so vividly expresses the substance of the incarnation: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth" (NRSV).

As many commentators have remarked, the Greek verb translated "lived" in this verse is *skenoo*, which means more literally, "pitched his tent." Just as God traveled with the people of Israel in the wilderness by means of the "tent of meeting" in their midst, John announces that God has chosen to "tabernacle" among us in an even more radical way, by the Word embodied in human flesh.

The God who created and loves this world understands the need and longing for physical presence. The Word became flesh and pitched his tent among us. God has always been present with God's people and has always spoken to God's people through human voices such as those of the prophets. "But in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds," says the writer of Hebrews.

God has not left us in fear and confusion. "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." In order that we might know beyond a doubt that God's love and compassion for us will have the final word, the Word took on our flesh. Martin Luther expresses this truth so well in his Christmas sermons. He says that reflection on the divinity and majesty of God may very well terrify and crush us. That is why Christ took on our humanity, that he should not terrify us but rather that with love and favor he should console us. Luther writes:

See how God invites you in many ways. He places before you a babe with whom you may take refuge. You cannot fear him, for nothing is more appealing to a person than a babe. Are you afraid? Then come to him, lying in the lap of the fairest and sweetest maid. You will see how great is the divine goodness, which seeks above all else that you should not despair. Trust him! Trust him! Here is the Child in whom is salvation.

Of course, the baby in the manger is only the beginning of God's message to us in the Word-made-flesh. But in this baby, we begin to see and understand the very heart of God. "No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known" (John 1:18). In the Word-made-flesh, we see a heart so full of love for us that it will go to any length to reach us. It will stop at nothing to make us God's own. Not even the frailty of human flesh nor the darkness of suffering and death can keep God from us, nor us from God. For "the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5)." (Excerpts from *workerpreacher.org*; Revised Common Lectionary by Elizabeth Johnson)

### Readings for Further Study

- Psalm 33:6/Genesis 1:3; 6; 9; 11; 14; 20; 24; 26 God created everything through words
- 2 Timothy 3: 16-17 & John 14:6 God continues to interact with creation through use of words

### Thought for the Day

"God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world." ~ C. S. Lewis

### A Prayer

All-powerful, ever-living God, we thank You for the human birth of Your Son, which is the source and perfection of our Christian life and worship. Number us among His people, for the salvation of all mankind is found in Him, who lives and reigns with You in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. **Amen.**