

# And the Word Became Flesh...

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**Readings: John 1:1-2, 10-14**

John 1:14 = **most revolutionary verse in NT**

Greek philosophers could accept vv.1-2 (Word = rationality that held the universe together and gave it meaning), but **never** v.14 (Word became flesh...) e.g. Augustine, *Confessions*, VII: 9.13-14. "I found this [verse] nowhere there..."

**What is so amazing about v.14?**

- And the Word became flesh
- And made his dwelling (pitched his tent) among us. [**18<sup>th</sup> January**]
- We have seen His glory, [**25<sup>th</sup> January**]
  - The glory of the One and Only (the Only-Begotten),
  - Who came from the Father,
  - Full of grace and truth.

**What does it mean that "the Word became flesh"?**

Note: phrase is "Word became **flesh**, not Word became **man**" - Greeks had concept of gods appearing [temporarily] in human form (e.g. Homer, *Iliad* 13, where Poseidon appears in human form), but never that they became flesh (i.e. actual humanity).

"Flesh" = *sarx* (English word "sarcastic" comes this): 4 shades of meaning:

- Flesh (as in meat)
  - Body (e.g. flesh and blood)
  - Living creature (e.g. upon all flesh)
  - [especially] Mere human nature, apart from Divine influence therefore prone to sin and opposed to God.
- Matt.26:41//Mark 14:38 "The Spirit is willing, but the body (*sarx*) is weak" (early English/Russian computer translation: "the vodka's OK, but the meat's gone off...")
  - Gal.5:16-23 vv.19-21 <sup>19</sup>"The acts of the sinful nature [*sarx*] are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; <sup>20</sup>idolatry and witchcraft, hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions <sup>21</sup>and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like."

**In John's Gospel, *sarx* "indicates full human reality", not necessarily sinful *per se* (Rudolph Schnackenburg, *Gospel According to St. John*, 1:268)**

## **What If God Was One Of Us? (Alanis Morissette)**

If God had a name, what would it be?  
And would you call it to his face?  
If you were faced with Him in all His glory  
What would you ask if you had just one question?

Yeah yeah God is great  
Yeah yeah God is good  
Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah

What if God was one of us?  
Just a slob like one of us  
Just a stranger on the bus  
Trying to make his way home

If God had a face what would it look like?  
And would you want to see  
If seeing meant that you would have to believe  
In things like Heaven and Jesus and the Saints  
And all the Prophets

Yeah yeah God is great  
Yeah yeah God is good  
Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah

What if God was one of us?  
Just a slob like one of us  
Just a stranger on the bus  
Trying to make his way home  
Just trying to make his way home...

God became flesh: not just **entered into flesh** [encapsulated, separate and distinct from us = Docetism] but **became fully one of us = total involvement of the Incarnation** ("Very God" >>> "Very man" – **not** just 70% God, 70% man) = core of NT:

- 1 Tim.3:16 "Beyond all question, the mystery of godliness is great: 'He [God] appeared in a body [in the flesh]...'"
- Heb.2:14 "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity..."

### **So the Word becomes flesh >>>**

- A God with BO (Luke 22:44), dirty feet (Luke 7:44) and calloused hands (Mark 6:3)...
- A God who ate (Matt.11:19), drank (Luke 7:34) and slept (Mark 4:38)...
- A God who could rejoice (Luke 10:21), weep (John 11:35), and lose his cool (Mark 9:19)...
- A God who knew hunger (Matt.4:2), thirst (John 19:28), weariness (John 4:6) and anguish (Luke 22:44)...
- A God who experienced both friendship (Luke 7:34) and betrayal (Luke 22:48)...

### **What are the implications of the Word becoming flesh?**

#### **1. He knows us through and through (*He's been there...*)**

Jesus experienced all that **we** go through (>>> empathy)

Heb.4:15 "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin."

Heb.2:14, 17-18 – “<sup>14</sup>Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity ...  
<sup>17</sup>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. <sup>18</sup>Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.”

- Temptations of Jesus **genuine** (He “sat where we sit” – poverty, oppression, etc.)
- Cecil B. De Mille, *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (scene with Mary Magdalene)

## 2. He is there for us *where we are*...

- Role as high priest and *parakletos* (“One called alongside to assist” [1 John 2:1 – advocate = “one who speaks to the Father on our behalf”])
- Jesus’ association with “sinners” (Luke 15:1-2 “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them”): Darlinghurst Road, Kings Cross (2008)

## 3. The Gospel is Personal and Incarnational

- Gospel is **personal/incarnational** (John 1:12), as well as **propositional** (John 17:18 “As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world”; Francis of Assisi?: “Go and preach the Gospel, and if necessary, use words”)
- Being incarnational in the world.