



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sermon Series: The Light (Advent Series), Part 4

Sermon Title: When God Moves Into the Neighborhood

Speaker/ Date: Armin Sommer/ December 23, 2018

JOHN 1:14

How do you think the creator of heaven and earth expressed His love to His creation in a way that they'd comprehend? God sent to us someone who looks like us and experienced everything we experience. God became a person who looks like us, was born in a manner similar to how we were born, walked the same earth we walk, and felt the same emotions we feel.

BIG IDEA: GOD HAS MADE HIMSELF READILY ACCESSIBLE TO US THROUGH “THE WORD”

That central truth becomes clear when we ask 4 questions about John 1:14.

1. WHO OR WHAT IS THE WORD THAT BECAME FLESH? (MANIFESTATION)

“The Word” is not a “what” but a person, because in verse 2 and 3, John personifies the “Word” and refers to it as a “He” and a “Him.” When you read a little further into the chapter and it becomes clear that the “Word” is a reference to Jesus Christ.

John chose that term because he was writing to both a Jewish audience and a Greek audience. The Greeks understood the concept of “The Word” as a reference to an impersonal principle of Reason that gave order to the universe; it was an academic understanding of God. Whereas the Jews (and Christians) understood “The Word” as God’s personal involvement in speaking creation into existence (So, think Genesis 1:1). This is John’s way of using a terminology that was common in his day to convince, not only religious Jews, but also unbelieving Greeks that Jesus Christ IS God in flesh!

During His time on earth, people could see God’s glory shining through Jesus Christ. They saw it every time he taught (Luke 4:32). They saw it every time He performed a miracle (Matthew 8:27). It’s also why, shortly after the supernatural events following Jesus’ death on the cross, “[The Roman] ...centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, ...were terrified, and exclaimed, “Surely he was the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:54).

2. HOW/WHEN DID THE WORD BECOME FLESH? (INCARNATION)

When we talk about WHEN Jesus Christ actually entered the word, we have to back up earlier than the manger scene in Bethlehem. When you think about it, Christmas really began in the womb of a virgin girl. The creator of the universe, the One through whom all things were made, humbled Himself by spending His first 9 months on earth as a preborn baby.

During Mary's first trimester in [Luke 1:41,44](#), she goes to go visit her cousin, Elizabeth, who is in her second trimester with John the Baptist growing in her womb. And as soon as Mary knocks on Elizabeth's door, scripture says the baby in Elizabeth's womb starts kicking and celebrating because he recognized the LIVING presence of divinity in Mary's womb!

3. WHY DID THE WORD BECOME FLESH? (HABITATION)

The reason why Jesus moved into the neighborhood was to save us from our sin by paying OUR impossible debt to God. Even the smallest sin that we engage in is committed against an infinitely Holy God; one theologian describes it as having committed, "Cosmic Treason." Even at your best behavior (which the Bible says is comparable to filthy rags), you and I owe God a great debt that we can never pay back.

It's for THIS reason that "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." ([Colossians 2:13-14](#)). Jesus' death on the cross satisfies the debt we owe God.

4. WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS (FOR US) OF THE WORD BECOMING FLESH? (INVITATION)

The most important gift that you WILL need to receive this Christmas will not be wrapped in bright paper with a fancy ribbon, rather it is the God-child wrapped in swaddling clothes who was born in a manger. It is a personal gift from God to you that must be personally received! And it's that gift of eternal life.

The Bible says in [Romans 10:9-10](#), "...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."

Discussion Questions:

- **What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?**
- **Was Jesus coming to earth a passive act or an aggressive act? Why did he choose to be born into such humble beginnings rather than be born into luxury?**
- **Why is it important to know that “The Word” in John 1:1 is referring to Jesus?**
- **Why would God go to these lengths to save sinful people rather than just wipe out creation and start over?**
- **Is there any part of God becoming flesh that you struggle with believing?**
- **The world seems to be chipping away at removing the biblical Christmas story from our society. What would your response be if you had a manger scene in your yard and someone approached you and said they were offended by it?**