

The Word Became Flesh

John 1:1—14

Introduction

There are hundreds of Christmas movies out there. The one I've watched every year since I was a boy is **White Christmas** with Bing Crosby and Danny Kaye. It's just pure fun. By now, I have all the songs and most all the lines memorized. But the best Christmas movie of all time, the one that really captures Christmas is **A Charlie Brown Christmas**.

The Problem

The movie opens with Charlie Brown talking to his good friend, Linus. Charlie Brown says, *I think there must be something wrong with me, Linus. Christmas is coming, but I'm not happy. I don't feel the way I'm supposed to feel. I just don't understand Christmas, I guess. I like getting presents, sending Christmas cards, decorating trees, and all that. But I'm still not happy. I always end up feeling depressed.* As the movie progresses, Charlie Brown tries to get involved with everyone else and their celebration of Christmas. But nothing seems to work. He is tasked with getting the Christmas tree for the play. He ends up with a scrawny twig of a tree with very few needles on it. In a way, the tree is like him, and he knows no one else will take it. But all his friends do is make fun of him. In desperation, he shouts, *Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?*

Society Today

Charlie Brown is everyman. He is characteristic of our society today. Many people just see Christmas as time off from work and an excuse to overeat and overdrink, getting ready for New Year's Eve. Like Charlie Brown, they like getting presents, sending Christmas cards, decorating trees, and all that, but they have no happiness or joy at Christmas. They've forgotten what Christmas is all about. All they have is the secularized, commercialized Christmas. What is the answer?

Linus' Answer

Linus answers Charlie Brown, *Sure, Charlie Brown. I can tell you what Christmas is all about.* He walks to center stage, asks for lights, clears his throat, and recites **Luke 2:8—14** (read **Luke 2:8—14**). *That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown.*

John 1:14

Linus' answer brings us to our Gospel lesson today. **John 1:14** sums up what Christmas is all about. *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.* Let's unpack that verse.

The Word

The Word is how John identifies Jesus Christ here, the Son of God. He gives us a glimpse into the Trinity in verse one, where he says, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God.* He also identifies the Word as Creator and the life and light of the world.

Became Flesh

The Word, the Son of God, *became flesh*. He became one of us. No one else's god has ever done that. This Word who is the Son of God is also the Son of Mary. He had a body, just like ours, except it wasn't marred by sin. He felt all the pains and joys that we, as human beings, feel. The only difference is that He was without sin.

Dwelt Among Us

He dwelt among us. The word literally means He "tabernacled" among us. He pitched His tent with us, so to speak. He wasn't just passing through, but the fact that He tabernacled shows us the temporal nature of this life. We are just pitching our tent here. Our home is with God in heaven.

We Beheld His Glory

Was John thinking about the Mount of Transfiguration when he says, *We beheld His glory*? Or is he thinking about the cross? The cross was Christ's throne on earth. The cross was also where He won His victory over sin, death, and the devil. This is where the promise of **Genesis 3:15** was fulfilled, when God told the serpent that the Seed of the woman would *bruise [Satan's] head, and [Satan] shall bruise His heel*. Christ's death on the cross wasn't the defeat all the onlookers thought it was. It was His greatest triumph.

Grace and Truth

The grace and truth of His glory is that God hates sin, so it demands death. Jesus Christ, the Word, the Son of God, the Creator took our penalty upon Himself on the cross. The Word became flesh in Mary and was born in the manger, but He accomplished His mission on the cross. This is what Christmas is all about.

*And the peace of God,
Which surpasses all understanding,
Will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.*
