

Someone might ask, “How do I know that God cares about me?” It’s a good question, a serious question. And it deserves a serious answer. “How do I know that God cares about me?” Well, let’s say that God wanted to do something to prove to us that he cares about us humans. What could he do? What could God do to prove to us that he is committed to us humans, that he loves us and cares about us? Well, He could *tell* us that he loves us and cares about us. And he certainly does that in his word. But if God wanted to do something tangible to prove to us that he loves us and cares about us and is committed to us humans, what could He do? Well, I suppose he could himself become a human. That would show us that he is committed to us humans, if he himself actually became a human. Well, the apostle John tells us that that’s exactly what God did. He became a human. **“The Word became flesh” (1:14)**. This means that God the Son became a human. He didn’t stop being God. He’s just also a human now. Of course Jesus right now is risen from the dead and glorified. But he’s still a human. And he will be a human for the rest of eternity. What greater sign could God give us that he is committed to us?! **“The Word became flesh.”**

Let’s consider this sentence a little bit more: **“The Word became flesh.”** Who is “the Word”? Well, to know who the Word is we have to look back at verse 1. In verse 1 John says, **“In the beginning was the Word” (John 1:1)**. Now this would have meant something to the people of John’s day. You see the people of John’s day looked around and they realized that this world is not pure chaos. There is a kind of order to the universe. Every morning the sun rises. And every evening the sun sets. In a rather predictable way, you can plant a seed in the ground and give it water and sunlight and a plant will come up. They realized that there is some reason and order to the universe and they called this reason and order, the “logos.” Now John says, “In the beginning was the Word.” And if you were to read John’s sentence in the original Greek it says, “In the beginning was the Logos.” John is saying to the people of his day, “You’re on to something. You’re right that there is a reason and order to the universe. But what you’re missing is that there is a person behind that. There is a person who set up the universe so that the sun would rise every morning and set every evening.” You see they thought of the “logos” as an impersonal principle or force. But John says, “No, there’s a person behind all of that. There’s a person who set up the universe this way.” And so he says, **“In the beginning was the Word.”**

Who is this person who was there in the beginning? Who is “the Word”? John tells us who he is. John says, **“The Word was *with* God, and the Word was *God*” (John 1:1)**. So this person is distinct from God. **The Word was with God** and so he’s distinct from God. And yet he is God. **“The Word was God.” (John 1:1)** How can that be? How can he be distinct from God and yet also be *God*? This is the doctrine of the Trinity. There is only one God. And yet there are three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Word is another name for the Son. The Son is distinct from God the Father. **“The Word was with God.”** He’s distinct from God the Father. And yet the Son is God: **“The Word was God” (John 1:1)**. And John says that the Word became flesh. So the Son became flesh. The Son became a human being. The Father didn’t become a human being. The Father sent his beloved Son to become a human being. And his name is Jesus.

And John goes on to say that long before he became a human being, Jesus existed and Jesus was very much involved in creating the universe. John says, **“In the beginning was the Word.”** What other book of the Bible starts with, “In the beginning”? Genesis. The book of Genesis begins **“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1)**. So Jesus was there in the beginning, at creation, and he was very involved in creating the world. John says, **“Through the Word all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made” (John 1:3)**. So the Word was intimately involved in creation. And when he created this world it was all perfect. But then the world that he created fell into sin. John talks about how there was “darkness” (John 1:5). And when he saw his creation fall into sin, he could have scrapped his whole creation.

But instead of scrapping his whole creation, he became part of his creation. **“The Word became flesh.”** At Christmas, the Creator became part of his creation to save his creation.

One poet put it this way. He said:

Light looked down and beheld Darkness.

“There will I go,” said Light.

Peace looked down and beheld War.

“There will I go,” said Peace.

Love looked down and beheld Hatred.

“There will I go,” said Love.

So came light and shone.

So came Peace and gave rest.

So came Love and brought life.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.¹

Let me bring out a few implications of the fact that the Word became flesh. The first implication of the fact that the word became flesh is that you can know who God is. You see all people have built into them a sense that there is a God. But you can't know intuitively everything about who that God is or what this God is like. God has to tell you what he's like. This is another reason why Jesus is called the Word. You get to know what someone is like through their words. I heard a pastor² use this example once and I think it's a good one. Imagine that you want to invite a coworker over for dinner and you're not sure if you should serve coffee or tea. How are you going to know if they like coffee or tea? You just ask them and they will tell you with their words, "I like tea." If you want to know what someone is like, you listen to their words. Jesus is the Word made flesh. If you want to know what God is like, listen to Jesus. It's one of the reasons we come to church every week because we want to just hear Jesus talk. Because he tells us what God is like. He's the Word made flesh.

Here's another implication of the fact that the Word became flesh. You have a God who cares about you. I mentioned at the beginning of the sermon that some people, "Does God really care about me?" At Christmas he answered that question with a resounding Yes. He cares about you so much that he became a human like you. I was visiting someone in the hospital the other night and they said to me that they had to be at this specific hospital because there were two other hospitals that were full. They didn't have any rooms. It was one day before Christmas Eve and all the hospitals were full! And that reminded me that Christmas can be a hard time for people. But Christmas really does give us comfort for those situations because Christmas isn't just about a cute baby and a serene nativity set. Christmas means that God came to join us in our suffering. He took on frail flesh. And because he took on frail flesh, he got sick and he experienced hardships just like we do. The book of Isaiah says surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows. He took upon himself all of our weakness and all of our suffering and all of sin and he swallowed it up and then three days later he burst forth from the tomb in glorious splendor. And that means that everyone who is connected to him by faith will also burst forth from the tomb in glorious splendor.

So what proof do we have that God loves us? What proof do we have that God is committed to us and cares about us? We have a baby in the manger. We have the Word who became flesh. So in your heart hold this baby in your arms and know that he's holding you in his. Amen.

¹ Laurence Housman. Quoted in Leon Morris, *Commentary on John*.

² Pastor Caleb Bassett, St. Stephen Lutheran Church, Fallbrook, California.