

# The Word Became Flesh

## John 1: 1 to 14

### Shilo Varughese

The reading of the Gospel of John and Paul's letter to the Colossians responds to a question: who is Jesus Christ?

Tradition tells us that John lived longer than all the twelve apostles, and he was the only one among them who died naturally.

He wrote this Gospel late in the first century in opposition to heresies and false teachings.

One of the widely spread heresies in those days was Gnosticism which argued that the matter, the body, is essentially evil and the spirit is essentially good. So, God Himself cannot touch the matter.

Therefore, God did not create the world Himself; instead, He had to reach out through other means to the world.

The Gnostics questioned the divinity of Jesus and they argued that Jesus was just one of the ways which God reached out to this world.

Here John the apostle, who walked and lived with Christ, who witnessed the divinity and the humanity of Jesus proclaims with authority that the Word of God is Jesus and Jesus is God.

The Gospel of John indicates the divinity of Jesus and His co-existence with the Father as we read in chapter 1 verse 1: *The Word was with God and the Word was God.*

Through the second verse of this chapter John says that “Jesus *was in the beginning with God*”, which indicates the pre-existence of Jesus before any creation.

The theology of pre-existence and co-existence of Jesus is a testament to the authenticity of our faith that, Jesus is God.

Christians have always believed in what is called *creation out of nothing* and behind everything there is a God with a Trinitarian essence.

Thus, the second person, Jesus, in the Trinity is rightly called the Word. Today's Gospel chapter 1 verse 3 and the first reading from the letter to the Colossians chapter 1 verse 15 denote the supremacy of Jesus over the entire

creation. Both tell us that in Christ there is a visible link between God and the material world.

This world rightly belongs to God, who made it and is intimately involved in it.

The world itself is not essentially evil, because this world of matter is indeed the handiwork of the Almighty, who has entered into it in Jesus Christ.

Although the world itself is Holy, evil can enter into this world only through human beings.

Evil can enter through our attitude towards other creations, our attitude towards our fellow human beings and through our attitude towards our own life.

Therefore, can we never despise the world?

Can we never hate the world?

No, because it is essentially God's creation.

As Theologian John Stott mentioned in his writing, God gave us four gifts to overcome the evil.

The first gift is a mind with which to think.

Secondly, he gave us a textbook which is the Bible and its witness to Christ, in order to direct and control our thinking.

God's third gift to us is a teacher and guide, which is the Holy Spirit. The spirit of truth to open up the scriptures to us and illumine our minds to understand and apply them.

Fourthly, God has given us a School which is the Christian community that seeks to educate the public conscience to know and desire the will of God.

Life and Light are the two prominent points in verses 4 to 9.

This Gospel prologue reminds us that Jesus, the causative word of creation, is Life and that this life has become our Light.

This Light shines in our darkness, which guides us to recognize the giver of everlasting life.

Once we recognize and reveal ourselves to that light, no darkness in our life can overcome that light.

A state of darkness is the absence of light.

Jesus is the source of our illumination which gives us a clear vision for the path to eternal life.

In John chapter 8 verse 12 Jesus said, He is the light of the world, whoever follows Him will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life.

In John chapter 14 Jesus said to His disciples; He is the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the father except through Him.

Jesus also said to His disciples as we read in Matthew chapter 26 verse 41: the spirit is indeed willing but flesh is weak.

But Jesus the eternal Word entered into human flesh, who knows our weakness, who cares for our well-being, who is delighted to have fellowship with us, who wants us to sustain and to become children of God, saying to us: My children I am willing to enlighten your darkness, I am already opening the possibilities for you to come into the eternal Life as it was in the beginning.

This is our hope and this is our testimony, that we are not alone. Jesus the Word, the Light and the Life is with us.

In those days in Jewish culture, if you claim something, that claim is invalid unless you bring a witness.

It is evident in John Chapter 8 verse 13: when Jesus claimed He is the light of life, the Pharisees said to Him, you are testifying on your own behalf, so your testimony is not valid.

In today's Gospel prologue, John the Apostle brings John the Baptist as his witness to testify to the light.

The Apostles, the Fathers of the Church, the Martyrs and the Saints such as St Botolph and the laity who have given life to Christ throughout centuries have testified to this Word, light and life in their time.

As the body of Christ, now it's our turn to bear witness to the life of Christ, who is the light of all mankind.

In our present context, we have all felt in different ways that our own light may be extinguished for some time, leaving us lost in darkness.

But we also experienced that someone else is always there to hold the light of Christ for us until our darkness passes.

That someone else could be,  
anyone from our Church,  
anyone beyond our Church such as our front-line workers,  
teachers,  
scientists,  
our neighbours  
or our family members.

Whoever is shining the light for you today, we give thanks to God for them.

May the light of Christ shine in our darkness, and no darkness can overcome that light.

May the glory, grace and love of Christ always dwell among us.

Amen.