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“*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. ... And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth.*

— John 1:1-5,14

”

“In the beginning was the Word.” *En arche en ho logos.*

*Logos* is another wonderful, rich Greek word whose meaning is broader and wider than is possible to translate into English with just one word. *Logos* means “word,” but not in the simple sense of letters arranged on a page, or syllables spoken together. It means an expression of a thought. *Logos* is Divine thought, Divine intention, Divine meaning, put into a word we can comprehend.

In college I was an English major with a German minor. Two of the classes I took were Introduction to the Bible as Literature and Advanced German. In the Bible as Literature we started out reading the Gospel of John. In Advanced German, we read *Faust* by Johann Goethe. I remember being fascinated by the fact that there was a section in *Faust* where the main character is trying desperately to translate this word “*Logos*” from John 1:1.

Faust starts out, “*Im Anfang war das Wort!*” In the beginning was the word. But he is not happy with that translation, as he feels it does not convey the fullness of *logos*. So he makes another attempt: “*Im Anfang war der Sinn.*” In the beginning was the meaning, the reason, the purpose. But again, he is not satisfied. Next he tries out “*Im Anfang war die Kraft,*” the power, the strength, the force. But *die Kraft* didn’t work for Faust either. And so he ends with this: “*Im Anfang war die Tat.*”<sup>3</sup> In the beginning was the deed, the action.

Word, meaning, power, action. *Logos.*

The Word was with God. The Word was God. In the beginning. Everything created through the *logos*, the divine thought expressed in a way that we can comprehend, seen in the gorgeous, complex beauty of our universe. But it didn't end there.

John 1:14: “*And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth.*” The Word (*logos*) became flesh and dwelt among us. The word we translate as “flesh” is *sarx* in Greek. *Sarx* means physical body, human nature, from a human perspective.

This is the point that Faust missed in his struggles for one word to define *logos*: word, meaning, power, action. Out of great love, the *logos* made the conscious decision to become a part of creation. The *word*, the source of all *meaning*, the holder of all *power*, became *action* incarnate in this world. And we have seen his glory, his grace and truth and love and light, in the midst of our troubled world.

#### QUESTION:

What would it mean to you to be a leader who “incarnates” the love of God?

#### NOTES