

INCARNATE WORD
by Nan Allen

(excerpt from her new book "THE WORDS WE SING," releasing in 2010 from Beacon Hill Press)

You've heard the story about the child who was afraid of the dark and who started to cry one night at bedtime. The mother encouraged the child with these words, "But God is here right now in this room to protect you." And the child replied, "Yeah, but I need somebody with skin on him."

Well, that's what the incarnate word is all about. It is God in the flesh. Though the phrase "incarnate word" does not appear in scripture, the concept certainly does.

The Apostle John, who was witness to this very fact, wrote this:

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. "

(John 1:14)

He was talking about Jesus, of course. The Incarnate Word.

We mostly hear this phrase in songs at Christmastime. One of the verses in the carol "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" [\[i\]](#) uses the word "incarnate." (See IMMANUEL)

Hail, the Heav'n born

Prince of Peace!

Hail, the Sun of Righteousness!

Light and life to all He brings,

Ris'n with healing in His wings.

Veiled in flesh the Godhead see;

Hail incarnate Deity,

Pleased as man with men to dwell,

Jesus, our Emmanuel.

"O Come, All Ye Faithful"[\[ii\]](#) reiterates the concept if not the word in one of its verses.

Yea, Lord, we greet Thee, born this happy morning;

Jesus, to Thee be all glory given;

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing!

O come, let us adore Him,

O come, let us adore Him,

O come, let us adore Him,

Christ is the Lord.

In the hymn, "Come Thou Almighty King"[\[iii\]](#) each part of the Holy Trinity is described in the verses. The first verse is about the Godhead. The second verse describes Jesus.

Come Thou Incarnate Word

Gird on Thy mighty sword

Our prayer attend

Come and Thy people bless

And give Thy Word success

Spirit of holiness

On us descend

The third verse speaks of the Holy Spirit (See HOLY SPIRIT) and the last verse lauds the "great One in Three."

This phrase, "incarnate word," just refers to God with skin on Him.

[\[i\]](#) Words by Charles Wesley; Music by Felix Mendelssohn, public domain.

[\[ii\]](#) Latin hymn ascribed to John Francis Wade; Music by John Francis Wade, public domain.

[\[iii\]](#) Words anonymous; Music by Felice de Giardini, public domain