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**Introduction**

Thank you so much to our choir and to Lynn Loftus our choir director for this cantata. What a glorious reminder of the real meaning of Christmas:

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Born Thy people to deliver,  
Born a child and yet a King,  
Born to reign in us forever,  
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.  
By Thine own eternal Spirit  
Rule in all our hearts alone;  
By Thine all sufficient merit,  
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.

In this short Advent series of messages, we are considering together the question “Why did Jesus come?”, and this carol gives us some of the reasons: “Born to reign in us forever,” and “By Thine all sufficient merit, Raise us to Thy glorious throne.”

Today I want to share with you another wonderful and comforting but also challenging truth about why Jesus came: the truth that *Jesus came to reveal God to us*.

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Our Scripture is from the gospel of John chapter 14. This is the chapter where Jesus encourages His disciples by telling them He is going to prepare a place for them, and that they know the way there. They do not understand Him, and so Thomas says

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John 14:5-9

"Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him."

8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us."

9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? *Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father*. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?"

Do you hear what Jesus is saying here? He is saying “so you want to know what God is like? Just look at me, Philip!

There are profound truths in these verses, and we only have time to consider a few of them. Let me begin with the most important truth; the one that distinguishes Christianity from all other religions, which is that Jesus Christ is *wholly and completely and 100% God*.

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**1. Jesus Christ is wholly and completely and 100% God.**

Paul, writing to the Colossians, puts it this way:

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Col 1:15

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.

Do you see the force of Paul's statements? Jesus is God's exact image “the image of the invisible God”. Now we all know that God is invisible, and that no man can see his face and live. But Jesus is His exact image, so we can see God in Jesus. The word for image is the Greek word *eikon*, which in New Testament Greek meant an exact replica, a precise copy, or a representation. But then just in case you are tempted to think that Jesus is some sort of copy of God, Paul goes on to describe him as “the firstborn over all creation.” This does not mean that Jesus was some sort of created being, as several cults and Islam all claim. In the Jewish mind the firstborn was the one who inherited everything. So Paul is saying here that Jesus Christ is the inheritor of all creation. He

is the heir of everything. It doesn't mean necessarily that He had to be born or that He had to be the first one born. Think of Jacob and Esau; Esau was born first, but Jacob was the heir.

This truth is foundational to our faith as Christians, which is why it is attacked so vigorously, and why many people claim that Christians are narrow-minded and exclusionary because we take Jesus at his word when he said

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John 14:6 "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

As G. K. Chesterton put in the mouth of his fictional detective Father Brown "The first effect of not believing in God is to believe in anything" A recent Pew Research study proved the truth of this quotation when it found that a large and growing percentage of Americans believe in reincarnation, astrology, psychics, and the presence of spirits in nature. In fact, six in ten Americans accept at least one or more of these beliefs. Shockingly, that number is just as high among self-identified Christians. Even agnostics—over half, in fact—have adopted occult ideas, along with the overwhelming majority of those who call themselves "spiritual, but not religious."

And then Paul goes on to tell us that Christ created all things:

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Col. 1:16-17 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. 17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

Put these verses together with Genesis 1

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Gen 1:1-2, 26

1:1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the *Spirit of God* was hovering over the waters.

1:26 Then God said, "Let *us* make man in our image, in our likeness"

And we can see that both God the Father and God the Son and God the Holy Spirit were all involved in the creation of the world.

So these few verses, long with many others, teach us that our Lord is indeed "Very God of very God", as the Nicene creed states:

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I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

Who, for us men for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end.

So let me pause to ask you: do you believe this? Do you believe that the baby born over 2000 years ago in Bethlehem is "very God of very God". If you are a Christian, a Christ-follower, then you do. But some of you are not yet Christian believers. Do you understand who it is that you are refusing to trust? That the baby born in a manger is the Lord of Heaven and earth? And that He will one day "come again, with glory, to judge the quick (the living) and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end."

Oh yes, Jesus reveals God to us because He is God.

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**2. Jesus is the complete and perfect revelation of God's love**

The Bible reveals many truths about God, teaching us of His mercy and His power and His grace, but it speaks about two of these characteristics in a special way by teaching that God *is* light and God *is* love.

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1 John 1:5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God *is* light; in him there is no darkness at all.

1 John 4:8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God *is* love.

And Jesus Christ reveals God's heart of love in an amazing way

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John 3:16

"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

The first verse of one of the carols the choir of King's College Chapel often sings in their Christmas Eve service of Lessons and Carols reads:

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Of the Father's love begotten,  
Ere the worlds began to be,  
He is Alpha and Omega,  
He the source, the ending He,  
Of the things that are and have been,  
And that future years shall see,  
Evermore and evermore.

And this reminds us of the truth that our Lord is from everlasting to everlasting; the alpha and omega, the first and the last, and has been so from the beginning because of God's love.

And we see God's love in action as we study the life of Christ

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Matt 9:36

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Matt 14:14

When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

Mark 1:41-42

Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured.

John 11:2-3

So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

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**3. Jesus is the complete and perfect revelation of God's holiness**

Jesus lived a sinless life, so that He could say to the Jewish leaders

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John 8:46

Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me?

And His presence and power convicted people of their sin

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Luke 5:4-8

4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

5 Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

6 When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. 7 So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" Why did Peter say this? As an astute businessman, you might have expected him to make a deal with Jesus to guarantee a supply of fresh fish for the Capernaum market, but he does not do this. Instead he is filled with awe at Jesus' power – but not just his power, but the realization that he was holy, so that Peter realized his own sin in a new and vivid way.

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**4. Jesus is the complete and perfect revelation of God's power**

First of all there is Jesus' power in creation, as we have already seen:

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John 1:3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Jesus also reveals God's power by the miracles He performed, and many of these miracles parallel those performed by God or one of the prophets in the OT. It is almost as if Jesus is saying through these miracles "You all know what God did in the Old Testament (the Jewish bible) to demonstrate His power. Well, just follow me around and see what I am doing, so you can figure out for yourselves who I am"

Some examples

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Old Testament	New Testament
The Manna from Heaven Exodus 16:14-35	Feeding the five thousand Matthew 14:21
Parting of Red Sea Exodus 14:6	Stilling the storm on the Sea of Galilee Luke 5:4-8
Naaman Cured of Leprosy 2 Kings 5:10-14	Healing of a leper Mark 1:40-41
Elisha's servant given sight to see the angels 2 Kings 6:17	Healing the man born blind John 9:1-6
Raising the Shunammite's son 2 Kings 4:32-37	Raising of Lazarus John 11:1-43

These and many other miracles reveal God's power working in and through our Lord Jesus, and Jesus used them to show the Jewish leaders the truth about himself

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John 10:37-39

37 Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. 38 But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."

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**5. Jesus will reveal God's judgement**

In chapter 5 of the book of Revelation the apostle John sees a vision of a scroll with seven seals. This scroll contains all the future judgements of God on the earth, and he weeps because no one was found who was worthy to open it. But then he looks, and he sees a Lamb

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Rev 5:6-10

6 Then I saw a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders. He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. 7 He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne. 8 And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

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Rev 5:9-10

9 And they sang a new song:

"You are worthy to take the scroll

and to open its seals,

because you were slain,

and with your blood you purchased men for God

from every tribe and language and people and nation.

10 You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God,

and they will reign on the earth."

So our Lord Jesus himself is the one who will open the scroll and reveal God's judgement on this earth and every living soul. So where does that leave us? Well, you will have to wait until next Sunday to get the full story, when Jeff will preach on the meaning of Jesus' death. But I will give you a clue: the Lamb who opens the seals of God's judgement is also the Lamb who paid the price for our sins by his death on the cross.

I like the way John Piper explains how God will judge us on the Day of Judgement, and this last section is from a devotional he wrote. It is appropriate for this end of the semester, when final exams have been given. *Quote:* What about the last judgment? Will our sins be remembered? Will they be revealed? Anthony Hoekema puts it wisely like this: "The failures and shortcomings of . . . believers . . . will enter into the picture on the Day of Judgment. But — and this is the important point — the sins and shortcomings of believers will be revealed in the judgment as forgiven sins, whose guilt has been totally covered by the blood of Jesus Christ."

Picture it like this. God has a file on every person (the "books" of [Revelation 20:12](#)). All you've ever done or said ([Matthew 12:36](#)) is recorded there with a grade (from "A" to "F"). When you stand before "the judgment seat of Christ" ([2 Corinthians 5:10](#)) to be judged "for what [you have] done in the body, whether good or evil," God will open the file and lay out the tests with their grades. He will pull out all the "F's" and put them in a pile. Then he will take all the "D's" and "C's" and pull the good parts of the test out and place them with the "A's", then put the bad with the "F's." Then he will take all the "B's" and "A's" and pull the bad parts out of them and put them in the "F" pile, and put all the good parts in the "A" pile.

Then he will open another file ("the book of life") and find your name, because you are in Christ through faith. Behind your name will be a wood-stick match made from the cross of Jesus. He will take the match, light it, and set the "F" pile, with all your failures and deficiencies, on fire and burn them up. They will not condemn you, and they will not reward you.

Then Jesus will take from your "book of life" file a sealed envelope marked "free and gracious bonus: life!" and put it on the "A" pile (see [Mark 4:24](#) and [Luke 6:38](#)). Then he will hold up the entire pile and declare, "By this your life bears witness to the grace of my Father, the worth of my blood, and the fruit of my Spirit. These bear witness that your life is eternal. And according to these you will have your rewards. Enter into the everlasting joy of your Master." *End of quote*

How wonderful to know that our sins will be burned up in God's judgement, and we will be welcomed into God's kingdom

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Matt 25:34

34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.

If this describes you, give renewed thanks and devotion and service to the one who died so that you could live. But sadly for those who are not believers, who have not trusted Jesus Christ for salvation, there is only going to be those terrible words

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Matt 25:41

41 "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

If this describes you, let me plead with you to seek God's forgiveness by accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour.