

John 1: 1-5; “And the Word Was God”, A Sermon for the Christmas Season
Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on December 3rd, 2023,
in the Morning Worship Service.

Since we are now moving into the Christmas season I wanted to preach to you today about the essential glory of our Savior in relation to His Incarnation. In reading to you these first five verses, John would have us to know that our Lord Jesus Christ was, and He is, infinitely glorious in His Being as the 2nd Person of the Divine Trinity. I would like us to dwell at this time on the meaning and the implications of the 3 descriptive titles which are given to us here. 1st of all – That Christ is the Eternal Word of God. 2nd – That Christ is the Creator of all things. And 3rd – That Christ is the Light of this fallen World. How blessed a thing it is for any of us, when we can by faith behold the glory of our Pre-Incarnate Savior and Lord, and also our now Incarnate Savior and Lord.

1st of all – Let us understand that our Lord Jesus Christ is the Eternal Word of God.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The only True and Living God speaks to men through His Son, the Word. “Logos” is the Greek word which means “Word”. Listen to how John Calvin translates the first verse. “In the beginning was the Speech, and the Speech was with God, and the Speech was God.” I would say, in relation to Calvin’s translation, that God has given to the whole World in every generation a Speech. And that Speech is not only coming through Christ, it is Christ Himself who is the Speech.

God the Father spoke the Incarnation and the Word was begotten in eternity past. The very thoughts of God, the very mind of God, the very heart of God, is declared to us in, and by, and through God the Son. God the Father has said that Christ is His beginning Word to all mankind. And He is His final Word to all mankind. The Word, the One who would become the Lord Jesus Christ, would be the Alpha and the Omega of everything that the Father would do in time and space and history.

In Revelation 1: 8 the Lord Jesus says, “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, says the Lord, who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.” And Revelation 22: 12 and 13 Jesus says, “And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.” “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.” So, everything that has been made, including ourselves, has a beginning. But God Himself has no Beginning. The beginning that is being spoken of here is not simply the beginning of the world, although it includes that.

The beginning that is spoken of here is the thoughts in the mind of God; His decrees, the plans and purposes agreed upon by the Father and the Son in Eternity past, before the world ever was. And it was before time began. That truly was the beginning. The Word was already in existence then, and indeed He always had been with the Father there. The Eternally Begotten Son was already there with the Father. He was a Divine Person who fully shared in the Essence of God with the Father and the Holy Spirit. And He is not to be thought of as an inferior part of God.

Let me turn you to a couple of passages of Scripture to confirm this. First of all, Isaiah 9: 6. Here we have a prophecy of Christ’s coming into the world to establish His kingdom through His Incarnation as a child. “For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder.” “And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” Now, I would have you notice that this One who would become a Child is called by two names here. And these names prove to us that when God the Son would become a man in time and space, that He would indeed retain His Deity.

He is called here, the Mighty God. And He was also called the Everlasting Father when He came into this world as a Child. This was not written to confuse our understanding of three distinct Persons in the Godhead. It was written to show us that God the Son is not only not inferior to the Father, but that He is one with Him in substance and essence. He is One with Him in purpose, in regard to all that would be done in His Incarnation. He would be the father of eternity for all of God’s chosen people. He would be the father of a multitude of sinners whom He would save by His

becoming a man. Now turn with me over to John 14: 1-9. Here Jesus is getting ready to go to the cross and leave His disciples for a time. But eventually, after His resurrection, He knows that He will return to heaven, to sit at the Father's right hand.

Listen to what He says. "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house there are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know. Thomas said to Him, Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way? Jesus said to him, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me. If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him. Philip said to Him, Lord show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us. Jesus said to him, Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father, so how can you say, show us the Father?"

Here we find Jesus declaring His Essential Oneness with God the Father. He who has seen Jesus has seen the Father. It is not as though they are the same Persons. No, they are to be distinguished, each according to his respective Divine Personhood. In the Beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. But they are not to be distinguished in essence. And the Word was God. God the Father is spirit, and as such cannot be seen. But in the Incarnation, men saw a man named Jesus. He was a man who was also God. They saw the miracles that He performed. They saw His transfiguration on the Mount, they heard His words, and they were able by the grace given to them, to perceive His purity of character. His disciples would be seeing the Father in Jesus.

Now let us apply the truth that we have learned. First application – If Jesus Christ is the Eternal Word, do you see that it is essential to your being saved that you believe that He is God? The Lord Jesus Christ didn't become the Son of God when He was born. He was the eternally begotten Son of God before He was born. In being born, to become the Savior of the World, He took on human flesh. As God the Son He assumed together with His Person, a true human nature. "Veiled in flesh the Godhead see; hail Incarnate Deity, pleased as man with men to dwell, Jesus our Immanuel; Hark the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King."

No, when you take Jesus as your Savior, you must also take Him as Lord, because He is not merely a Prophet, Priest, and King. He is Immanuel, God with us. And because this is the case, we must also say that He is God in us and with us when we are saved. Therefore, as it says in Psalm 37: 3 and 4 – "Trust in the Lord and do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness." "Delight Yourself in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart." God's faithfulness to us is all based upon the sending of His Son to be our Savior. Praise God for the Incarnation!

We seek to obey God because He is our God through Jesus Christ our Lord. He is worthy of your worship and all the obedience and praise that you can render to Him because He sent His only-begotten Son, begotten from all eternity. How can a mere man save you from your sins? He cannot. But Jesus Christ is God, and therefore all of His works of redemption on your behalf are eternal and infinite in value, and they shall be accepted by the Father. The redemption accomplished by Christ while He was here upon the earth will be applied to your soul because of His faithfulness.

Your sins shall all be forgiven, because Jesus Christ is God. Second Application – Let us see where the love of God and Christ began. It began in eternity past. It began in the plans formed long ago in perfect faithfulness. It began in the counsels of the Covenant of Redemption. Jeremiah Chapter 31, verse 3 says, "The Lord appeared of old to me, saying: 'Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with lovingkindness I have drawn you...'" If God has loved you with an everlasting love in the eternal counsels of Election, dear believer, He loved you even then, seeing you as fallen in Adam. If this is the case, then He will most certainly love you now and forever through Christ. Can you doubt such love since you have believed the gospel? Will you doubt that Christ has suffered, bled, and died for you the sinner? You need not do that! You have believed in the everlasting gospel; that Christ is the Lamb of God who slain from the foundation of the world.

And since that is the case, will you not see that the plans and the purposes of the Father and the Son are one in regard to you? They will all be fulfilled in due time. They will never fail to be fulfilled in you. The beginning of that redeeming love was found in the electing love of the Father and the Son in the counsels of God before time began. Do you know this love to you personally? The only way that you can know it is if you will believe in the gospel of Christ. And then you will hold fast to the truth that salvation is all of grace, and not by sacraments or by your good works.

Now 2nd – Christ in the Essential Glory of His Person and Nature is the Creator of all things. (verse 3)

“All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” Once again we find an astounding truth, given to us here, that we must consider together more carefully. “Christ was in the beginning with God”. It was then that the Persons of the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, together created the world based upon the Divine counsels and decrees which they worked out in eternity past. They did this before they laid the foundations of the earth. “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

God the Father, you might think, seems to be doing all of this work of creation of the world by Himself. But we know that this could not be true, because when we come to the 1st Chapter of Genesis, verse 26 it says this: “Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” Who are the “Us” of verse 26? They are the 3 persons of the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

So, indeed, we have it confirmed for us here, that God the Father created the heavens and the earth in 6 literal days through the Son. And then He rested from all the work that He did on the 7th day. And He instituted the Sabbath in relation to the first creation; that is the physical world, and all the people whom He created. And, we should add, even the institution of the Sabbath, which was done for man’s sake as a rest from the labors of the creation, was instituted for and through and by the Son of God. For Jesus Christ our Lord is Lord even of the Sabbath, in both Old Testament and New.

This, the Father’s purposing to place Christ in the highest possible position in relation to all created things in heaven and earth, is confirmed for us if we turn over to Colossians Chapter 1, verse 15. “The Lord Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.” “For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.” “All things were created through Him and for Him.” “And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist.”

When it says that Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, it does not mean that He was a created being. The word, “firstborn”, is the word *prototokos* (πρωτοτοκος) in the Greek. “The firstborn” is a title of privilege and dignity, which in this particular case, belongs only to God’s Son. He was the One and only One, begotten by God in eternity past. John 1: 18 – “The only Begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.” The angels were not begotten by God the Father; they were created by Him through His firstborn; that is, His first-and-only-begotten Son who was the whole reason for creating the world and making man in His own image and likeness.

In Proverbs 8, verses 22 to 36 we find that the Eternal Word, the pre-incarnate Lord Jesus Christ, is giving us a description of what it was like to stand beside the Lord His Lord; that is His Father God, as a master craftsman. He was daily His delight, in all the six days of creation. He was always rejoicing before Him; rejoicing in His inhabited world, and His delight was with the sons of men. When God the Father prepared the heavens, God the Son (the Word) was right there with Him. When God the Father drew a circle on the face of the deep, the Son was right there beside Him. “All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.” If all things are made through Him, then dear Christian, do not allow the Lord Jesus Christ to be placed in your

thinking on the same level with Buddha or Mohammed or any of the other false prophets of the past or present.

See that Christ's glory is the glory of God and not a mere man, and proclaim His glory to everyone around you. Tell them that it is only Christ as God who can create and sustain what He has created by the Word of His power. Tell them also that He is the only One who can change the sinful human heart in the New Creation, the New Birth, to make a person who is unable and unwilling to come to Him for life, still come, and pray for the free gift of salvation.

3rd – Christ in the Essential Glory of His Person and Nature is the Life and Light of this fallen World. (verses 4 and 5)

“In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” “And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” We need to see that it was the life of the Word, the Pre-incarnate God the Son, that became the light of all men in Old Testament times while believing men waited for the Son of God to be born and to appear. It was He who met with Abraham that wonderful day when He came down to talk with him, with the two angels with Him. God the Son came down and sat and talked with Abraham. And He told him that Sarah would have a child the next year at that time. (Genesis 17: 21)

It was the life that was in the words of the Essential Word of God, speaking to him personally, that gave Abraham hope that he would have a child. The Pre-incarnate Christ's words built his faith. And He even gave him and Sarah joy and laughter. It was He who gave Sarah life in her womb; the strength to conceive seed, and to bear a son, even in her old age. This life, this Infinite Being of Wisdom and Power, coupled with perfect Righteousness and Holiness, was the light of men. Only God has this life, and only He can convey it to the souls of men.

It is true that this Eternal Word has given natural life to all men, so that the text says that “not one single thing was created apart from Him”. But we have greater reason to rejoice here today. Because God did not leave mankind to attempt to save themselves from the dread predicament of sin. We see the mercy of God to all men that even after the fall of man in Adam, He would still allow them to retain a portion of their natural light; the ability to reason, and a conscience which is still able to accuse and defend them.

But still, He who is infinitely wise, knew that on their own, sinfully blind men and women cannot change their own hearts. He knew that even though His spiritual light is always shining in the darkness, that the darkness would not comprehend it. Unbelieving people cannot see spiritually, the truth of the gospel, without His having mercy on them. Unless He gives them spiritual life, and illumines their darkness, they will not respond to us when we proclaim the gospel to them.

But this is not a reason for us to be silent. Let us remember what Psalm 36: 9 says – “For with you is the fountain of life, and in Your light we see light.” This is telling us that it is only when the light Christ shines upon us that we can begin to see the light of the truth of God's word. Only the Lord God can shine His light in such a way that a person will want to come to Him for life. And when He shines, what does God shine His glorious Light upon? He shines it upon His blessed word the Bible. And He shines it upon the gospel as it is preached.

And He shines it into the minds and hearts of people whom He will save, and upon the people whom He commands that they should believe. But even true Christians need to let the light of Christ shine upon them. For in Ephesians 5: 8-14 Paul says – For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says – Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light. See that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. And you are the light of the world with Christ in your heart.