

Jesus, the Living Word

(John 1:1-5)

This passage from John always startles me when I come across it in the lectionary, when this reading comes shortly after the beginning of the year.

(Lectionary, for your information, is a list of Bible readings on specific days of the church calendar.)

So again, this passage startles me because we encountered it only a couple of weeks ago in a darkened sanctuary on Christmas Eve, framed by the gentle flicker of Advent candles and the quivering anticipation of children anxious to get to sleep so Christmas morning can arrive. It seems natural to find it there; these verses of John's gospel seem custom-designed to be accompanied by earnest worshipers raising their candles and singing "Son of God, loves pure light."

What then, do these first verses of John hold for us in the cold, clear light of January? Christmas has come and gone. The candles from Christmas Eve have been

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packed away with the rest of the decorations and put away until next November, when we will scour closets and other areas searching for them. Why pull John's Prologue out again so soon, as though we're resurrecting Christmas Eve before we've had the chance to tell the rest of Jesus' story?

Well, the Prologue of John's gospel is not just the beginning of Jesus' story; it is Jesus' story. The Word was with God. The Word was God. Without Jesus nothing that is would be, and nothing that would be would truly live.

As our Christmas Eve services come to an end, we extinguish our candles as though we've gotten our fill of light for the year and now it's time to snuff it out. Encountering these verses again so soon reminds us that nothing can extinguish the light: not the powers and principalities of this world; not the animosity or indifference of society; not even our own short attention spans. The true light, which enlightens

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everyone, was coming into the world. Christ has come, and he is here to stay.

This passage is one of the summits of Scripture. In fact, it probably reaches the highest of human thought. What is the thought the reaches the heights of human concepts? It is this: Jesus Christ, the Son of God **is**...the Word of God...the Creator of life...the Very Being and Essence of Life.

These **three** truths have to be deeply thought about to understand their meaning. A quick reading of this passage leaves a person disinterested, not even close to understanding what is being said. However, the importance of the truths lie at the very foundation of life. If Jesus Christ is the Word of God, then men must hear and understand the Word or else be lost forever in ignorance of God Himself.

So, the **first** truth is that **Christ is eternal**. Note **two** profound statements about Christ, the Word. The

first profound statement about Christ is that **Christ was**

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preexistent. This means He was there before creation. He has always existed.

“In the beginning” does not mean from the beginning. Jesus was already there. He did not become; he was not created; He never had a beginning. He “was with God in the beginning” (John 17:5; 8:58). The word “was” in the Greek imperfect tense is the word so often used for deity. It means to be or I am. To be means continuous existence, without beginning or origin. Which is what we can find in **Proverbs 8:23**, “I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began.”

The testimony of John was that Jesus Christ was the **Word**, the one who has always existed. He is the Son of the living God.

The **second** profound statement about Christ is that **Christ was coexistent**. He was and is face-to-face

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with God forever. The word with has the idea of both being with and acting toward. Jesus Christ (the Word) was both with God and acting with God. He was “with God”: by God’s side, acting, living, and moving in the closest of relationships. Christ has the ideal and perfect relationship with God the Father. Their life together – their relationship, communion, fellowship, and connection – was a perfect eternal bond. This is exactly what is said in **verse two**, “He was with God in the beginning.”

The testimony of John was that Jesus Christ was the Word, the One who has always coexisted with God. He says “the Word” was God. He omits the definite article. John was saying that “the Word,” Jesus Christ...is of the very same nature and character of

God the Father, but he is not the identical person of God the father...and he is a distinct person from God the Father, but he is of the very being and essence or perfection of God the Father.

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When a man sees Christ, he sees a distinct person, but he sees a person who is of the very substance and character of God in all His perfect being.

The testimony of John was that Jesus Christ was the Word, self-existent and eternal, the Supreme Majesty of the universe who owes his existence to no one. Jesus Christ was the Son of the living God.

The **second** truth about Christ, that I mentioned earlier, is that **Christ is the creator**. Note several things. **#1** All things mean every detail of creation—not creation as a whole, but every single detail. **#2** The words were made mean came into being or became. Note what this is saying. Nothing was existing—not substance, no matter, whatsoever. Matter is not eternal. God did not take something

outside himself, something less than perfect (evil) and create the world. **#3** Christ was the one who created all things—one by one. Among the Godhead, he was the active Agent, the Person who made all things. Creation was

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his function and work. Note that two statements of fact are made. The positive statement of fact:

“Through him all things were made.” The absolute statement of fact: *“Without him nothing was made that has been made.”*

Now, note a critical point for man. The world is God's; He made it, every element of it, one by one. This means God is not off in some distant place far removed from the world. God cares for the world deeply. The problems of the world are not due to God and his attitude. The problems of the world are due to sin, to the attitude, and the evil of man's heart. The answer to the world's problems is not men and their technical skills. The answer is Christ: for men to turn to Christ, surrendering and giving

their lives to know Christ in the most personal and intimate way possible. Then, and only then, can men set their lives and world in order as God intends.

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The **third truth** about Christ is the **Christ is life. Christ is the source of light.** Note the statement in verse 4: “That life (Christ) was the light of men.” The knowledge of the life of Christ was to be the light of men, the beam that was to give real life to man, to infuse energy and motivation into man so that he might walk and live as he should. That life (Christ) was to be the light of man’ purpose, meaning, and significance upon earth.

Christ is also the answer to darkness. Very simply, since man brought darkness into the world (by sin), the life of Christ was the light of man, the beam that showed man the way, the truth, and the life. Christ showed man the way God intended him to love.

Christ showed man the truth of life, that is, the truth about God and man and the truth about the world of man. Christ showed man the life, that is, how to save his life and avoid the things that can cause him to stumble and lose his life.

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So, what are the lessons we can learn from this Scripture reading from John?

This Scripture reading teaches us profound lessons about Jesus' divine identity as the eternal "Word" who **is** God, the source of all life and light, present at creation, and ultimately, a light that darkness cannot extinguish, offering eternal life and purpose against evil and unbelief.

Please bow your heads as I pray.

Thank you, Father, that the light of Jesus has shone into my heart, for I have trusted Him alone as my Savior and Lord. May the light of your love shine through me, until it is not **I** that shines in my life, but the light of Christ shines through me. This we ask in

the name of your Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ.
Amen.