

The Word, God's Self-Expression in Creation and Redemption.

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Date: 26 December 2021

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[0:00] This morning, even as we take a break from Luke's historical narrative of the early life of Jesus. This morning we're going to examine one of the foundational texts that reveals the identity of Jesus Christ as God and man.

This capstone of Christological text is the basis of our confession about Jesus. We say it every Lord's Day in the Nicene Creed as a statement of our faith.

We pronounce one Lord Jesus Christ. I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ. The only Son of God. Eternally begotten of the Father. God from God. Light from light.

True God from true God. Begotten, not made, of the same essence of one being as the Father. Through Him. All things were made.

We say this every Sunday. We recite this creed and we accept it as an article of faith because it aligns with God's self-revelation of Himself in the Bible.

[1:12] And that's what, this is what John is explicating in this prologue to his gospel in these verses. So turn with me, if you will, to John chapter 1. It's on page 1053 of your pew Bible.

If you have, there should be one in front of you there. Now the gospel of John stands apart from the other gospels in the fact that, in the way that John introduces his gospel.

For example, Matthew starts with a genealogy that shows Jesus as the son of Abraham, who fulfills the covenant. Luke traces Jesus' genealogy all the way back to Adam to show that Jesus is the second Adam, who fulfills the covenant that God made, that the woman's offspring will crush the head of the serpent.

But John, to begin his gospel, goes all the way to eternity past, before the word even came into existence.

As he talks about the origin of Jesus, he says, In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God. He was in the beginning with God.

[2:35] All things were made true him, and without him was not anything made that was made. Immediately, you hear echoes of the beginning of the Bible.

Genesis 1.1. The same exact word. The same exact opening to John's gospel as Genesis 1. In the beginning. And that's no accident.

That's precisely John's intention to do that. When you think of Jesus, John wants us to think of Genesis 1. He wants us to locate him right at the beginning of the world.

And it was not his beginning, right? We distinguish against Mormon friends and Jehovah Witnesses' friends.

I call them friends. I can't really call them brothers and sisters in Christ. But they're friends nevertheless. We distinguish against them in the fact that Jesus was not made in the beginning.

[3:35] He was there already in the beginning. Right? He was at the beginning. He is God himself. He was with God.

And he was God, John says. In this opening verses. John repeats for emphasis, which he plans to build his whole argument upon.

That in verse 2, he repeats again. He was in the beginning with God. Right? And John alone, in the New Testament, uses this Christological title for Jesus.

Logos. The Word. It makes sense that John would describe Jesus as the Word. Especially if he is drawing. Some have argued that he's drawing really from the Stoic philosophy of his days.

That's not quite true. He borrows from it. But he fills his argument with Old Testament Scripture. Old Testament knowledge about what God is. And he's borrowing heavily from his knowledge of the Old

Testament.

[4:37] In Genesis, we see, if you read Genesis, it was the spoken word that was the agent of creation. Right? If you read all the accounts of Genesis. God spoke his word and things came into existence.

This word, John tells us, is a person. Distinct from God. Since he was with God. Right? He's distinct from God.

But also, the Word himself is also God. Now, although John's construction of the term Logos was unique to his Gospel, and even unique to the whole of the New Testament, he was not the only one to show that Jesus Christ is God and the agent of creation.

There are other books in the New Testament that gives us a picture of that. For example, look at the author of Hebrews in Hebrews 1-2. The author of Hebrews said, That it is through the Son, that is Jesus Christ, whom God appointed as the heir of all things.

Through him also, God created the world. The second person of the Trinity as the agent of creation. Colossians 1, verse 14-16 says, That he, that is Christ, is the visible likeness of the invisible God.

[6:00] Through him, God created everything in heaven and on earth. Seen and unseen. Paul again in 1 Corinthians 8 says, For there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came.

And there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came, and through whom we live. So, John is not unique in saying that Jesus Christ is the agent of creation.

He joins the rest of the New Testament witness in saying that there is nothing in the created universe. Nothing at all that was not created by the word, Jesus Christ.

He is the source of all life. And speaking of life, I think Paul here does not mean this life that we have in Christ, salvation, right?

The salvific life. He's talking about creational life. He wants us to know that life, creational life, is given by Jesus.

[7:12] It is through him that the light of creation shone. Right? You remember the description of the world, right? In Genesis.

The absence of light is darkness. The void. The darkness described. Then God said. God said. Again, the word.

Let there be light. And there was light. So, the light of creation is the word. It's the word that dispels the darkness and brings life.

So, light and life are synonymous in this picture that John is painting for us. And they are both the word. Jesus Christ.

But John also wants us. He wants us. As we think about the creation of life. Right? And he's the source of life. But he also wants us to anticipate that he is also the light of redemption.

[8:10] As Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4.6. It is God that said, let light shine out of darkness. Was shown in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Right? This same light that brings creation about is also the light that will bring redemption about. And although the world, throughout the world, we're lovers of darkness and evil.

And they will not understand him, Paul tells us. They will reject this light. They will reject this life. But they will not be able to overcome him.

Right? That's what John tells us. They will not be able. They will reject him. They will not accept him. But they will not be able to overcome him. So in these early verses.

John tells us. Of the ultimate origins of Jesus. As the pre-existent one. The source. And the sustainer of life. Through whom all things.

[9:19] All things. Were made. And then he goes in verse 6. And talks about a witness. To the light. As we turn to the stage of human history.

So John has just. Taking us way back. Right? To even before. It's like. Before even creation itself. Before time. And space.

And the world was made. He tells us. This word was. Was. Then. And he was with God. And he was God. Now he brings us. To the stage of human history.

And Jesus' incarnation. John starts. As all other gospel writers do. With John the Baptist. The forerunner of Jesus. John.

John was the last. Of the Old Testament prophets. He was sent by God. To bear witness. With the purpose. That all might believe in Jesus. That is John's ministry.

[10:14] To bear witness to Jesus. So that all might believe in him. Although ours is not. A unique call. This is John's ministry.

This is John's call. And we. We are not. Like John the Baptist. Right. Ours is not a unique call. Like his. We do. Nevertheless. Stand. In this prophetic office.

When we like him. Bear witness. To Jesus Christ. With the purpose. That all might believe. Through us. What John. Is doing here.

Is a unique office. As the last. Of the Old Testament prophet. But it's a continuing office. That we are all called. To occupy. Right. To bear witness. To this Jesus.

And we ought to be like him. As he did it. We ought to point to Jesus Christ. We ought to point to Jesus Christ. Not to ourselves. And we ought to say like John.

[11:12] John the Baptist. He must increase. And I must decrease. And I must decrease. So this is the witness. To the light. That.

John points us to. In the person of John the Baptist. And then he goes on. And talks about the light itself. The light himself. Rather. The true light.

Which gives light to everyone. Was coming into the world. John tells us in verse 9. He says. He was in the world. And the world was made through him. Yet the world did not know him.

And he came to his own. And his own did not receive him. But to all who did receive him. Who believed in his name. He gave the right to become the children of God.

Who were born. Not of blood. Not of the will of the flesh. Not of the will of man. But of God. Now. We read that. If you.

[12:07] If you track it along with me. He's printed this picture of. Jesus Christ. As the pre-existent one. He was there in the beginning. He is God. He's painted.

A picture of the person. Who brought witness to him. And is coming into the world. This. This light. This life.

This word. Is the agent of creation. And he's also now. He's using the motif of light. Right. And the true light. Which gives light. Which gives light to everyone.

Was coming into the world. This true light. Imagine again. Look at the. Look back to creation. Right. It's the same light. That shone. Into the void. Of darkness.

And dispel. The darkness. Now. This light. Has come again. Into the world. The verb. That John uses here. It's. It's. Fortis.

[13:05] I'm not sure I'm pronouncing that right. In the Greek. But it means to give light. Or to shed light. Or to bring light upon. But in this context. That John uses it.

It's not referring to. The kind of. Inner illumination. That comes from. The regeneration of the Holy Spirit. Right. We talk. The Bible talks about. All of us. If we're in Christ.

As children of light. That's not what John. Actually. Has in mind here. He's not talking about. That illumination. That comes. By the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. And coming to be in Christ.

Here. Paul has in mind. An objective. Reality. Just like in creation. When the light shone.

And dispelled the darkness. He's saying that. This. Jesus. As he came into the world. Is the light. Right. That shines. How does he.

[14:03] How does he describe it? The light. That shines. To give light to everyone. Was coming into the world. John means for us to understand. That this light. Is the true light.

Of which all other lights. Are just merely a shadow of. The preeminent light. Of the world. Jesus Christ. To which all other lights.

Point to. As coming to the world. And in its coming. Into the world. It gives light. To everyone. Now. John again. John isn't. It doesn't mean. In a salvific way. John isn't a universalist. He's not saying.

That all of mankind. Will be saved. But he's saying.

Rather. That the light. That comes into the world. Objectively. The truth. Of the. Of its rays. Right. As it shines. The truth. Of the light. Shining into the world.

[15:01] Will be acknowledged. And felt. By all men. Because it is the true light. That's the point. That John is making. Everyone will know it. Everyone will.

Have a true sense. Of it. It is. It's the true light. In the sense. That it is the ultimate light. It is the full revelation. Of God's truth.

Of which all other. Revelation. Revelation. Were just. Provisional. They were just pointing to it. The author of Hebrew. Has this in mind. When. When. When he writes. In the beginning of. The book of Hebrews.

Long ago. At many times. And in many ways. God spoke to our fathers. By the prophets. He's thinking of the old. Revelation of God. Through the Old Testament. But in these last days. The author of Hebrews says. He is spoken. By his son. Whom he appointed. The heir of all things. Through whom also. He created the world. He.

[15 : 57] That is. Jesus Christ. Is the. Radiance. The light. The radiance. Of the glory of God. And the exact. Imprint. Of his nature.

Same essence. Same being with God. That's what he's saying. And he opposed the universe. By the word of his power. That's. That's what.

John also has in mind. When he says. This light has shown. Into the world. Jesus. Jesus. Is the ultimate. Self-disclosure of God. This is why. This season. Is so important. This is why.

As I said. Um. At Christmas Eve service. The birth of Jesus Christ. Is the most important. Most consequential event. In the history of mankind. It.

Jesus Christ. Coming. God. Reveals himself. In the most ultimate way. In the self-disclosure. Is. Because he's the perfect. Perfect representation.

[16 : 52] He's the perfect. Revealer. Of who God is. So. In his coming. Into the world. He shines. On every human. Being.

Being the true light. It's very much like. In literal terms. Right. When you bring light. Into a darkened room. What happens. When you bring light. Into a darkened room.

The darkness flees. Before the light's invasion. The light invades. That's how it happens. In real life. We would turn off this. All the light in this room. You know. It would be a bit dark. We turn the light on.

The light invades darkness. And darkness dispels. This is the kind of language. That Paul. This is what. John wants. Is evoking here. When he says. This light is coming to the world.

In the same manner. This light. Jesus Christ. Invades the world. In an objective way. But this is. This is the thing though. Not all would choose.

[17 : 48] To be illuminated. By this light. Not all will choose it. To be illuminated by it. This is what John means. By. Not all.

Will know him. Even though he appears. Now. He's saying to us. Everyone will see him. Everyone will sense him. But not all will know him.

Many will choose. Darkness. Rather than the light. When they're confronted. With the true light. Many will choose darkness.

John even says that. Even Israel. His own people. Were relationally. Connected to him. By covenant. Even they will not receive it.

But notice. I want you to notice here. That the refusing. The refusing. To know the light. That refusing. Not to receive the light. Is a moral choice.

[18 : 47] It's a consequential choice. No one can say. We didn't see the light. He is objectively known. That's what Paul is saying.

That's what John is saying. Rather. And he. Actually. If you go. To John chapter 3. Verse 19. He says this. Even in a more fuller way. Says. This is the judgment. The light has come into the world. And the people loved. The darkness. Rather than the light. Because their works. Were evil. So the very act. Of choosing not to know the light.

Or to receive the light. Is a very. It's a moral. Choice. That we're making. To refuse Jesus. Is to refuse God.

And it is to choose God's wrath. Rather than. His free offer. Of mercy and salvation. But John. Also.

[19 : 44] Immediately. Tells us. That. Although not all of mankind. Will be saved. Because many loved. The darkness. Rather than the light. There will be those.

Who do receive him. There will be those. Who do receive him. To receive him. Is to believe in his name. The name here. As Paul. John talks. Talks to it.

Is not just. A mere name. But the character. Of the person himself. In fact. The person of Jesus Christ. So when you believe. In his name. You believe in. In the person.

So to believe in his name. Is to believe in. His self-disclosure. As revealed. In the Bible. You know. Many will say. They believe in Jesus Christ. Many do say that.

Many go to church. Every week. Making that claim. Of faith in Jesus name. But upon closer. Examination. You will find that.

[20 : 39] The Jesus they believe in. Is an idol. Erected in their own image. Not the Jesus revealed. In the pages of. The Bible.

And I think that's a self-examination. That we all. Without exception. We all have to undergo. Does the Jesus I believe in.

The one fashioned. In my own image. Or is it the Jesus. That's revealed in the Bible. Verse 13. Talks about it. Right. Verse 13. Tells us. Of the new birth. Those who have undergone. This new birth.

Being born. By God himself. It is not. And it tells us. John tells us that. Right. It is not your DNA.

[21 : 36] That gives you. This. Right. As God's son. Who your father is. Who your mother was.

Or is. It's not what. Makes you. The son of. Sons of God. It's not on the basis. Of their faith. You've often heard this phrase.

Right. God has no grandchildren. It is true. God has no grandchildren. Only children. Each one of us. Must come to him. And choose him.

And believe in him. And receive him. Of our own. But all who do. Come to him. And receive him. And believe in his name.

All who do. Are given the right. Are given the authority. To be called. Sons. Through their faith.

[22 : 35] In. The person. Of Jesus Christ. In the pre-incarnate word. Made man. Jesus Christ. All.

That come. And receive him. There's no partiality. In that free offer. Of the gospel. Right. It's for everyone. Who comes. And everyone. Who receives. Gets to be sons.

Right. And it's a technical term here. John isn't saying. That only men. Gets to be. In. He's saying. He's using. The antiquated. Language.

Of. Of the first century world. Sons get to inherit. So he's saying. Everyone. Men. Women. Children. All come. And become sons. Right.

We. We can say. In the sort of. Modern language. Sons and daughters. But he's intentional. Just as Paul. In his epistle. He's intentional. He says. We are all sons. We are all sons of God. He's trying to invoke the fact that.

[23 : 31] There is no distinction. Like the author of. That Paul says in Galatians. There is no male or female. Slave or free. All are one. In Christ. All have equal.

Participation. With him. And in him. All have. Are all joint heirs. Children. Of God. There is no tier. Of sonship.

We're all sons. When we come to him. And receive him. And we're going to end here. In verse 13. But we will continue.

Covering the. Verse 14 to 18. In two weeks. When we return to. To this. John's prologue. But. But I want us to see here. This is the majesty. And beauty. Of our God.

This is it. As John. Tells us. That he who made you. He who created you. In every single cell. Of your body. He who grants.

[24 : 28] To you. The very breath. That you're taking now. By his sovereign power. That he who has done. All of this. In creation. Sovereign. Over it all.

Should also. Seek you out. Even after you've rebelled. Against his sovereign. His sovereign majesty. John shows. In his prologue. To his gospel. That God as creator.

Is also. God. The redeemer. And he actually. He's trying to show us. That he's our. That he's our redeemer. The fact that he's our redeemer.

Is granted in the fact that he's. The sovereign creator. If he was not our creator. He could not be our redeemer. That's. That's one of the points. That John is trying to show here.

By going. All the way. To the beginning. But this creator God. Has sought you out.

[25 : 25] He's coming to the world. And before we pray. I want to ask you. Solemnly. This morning. To do that self-examination. Have you come to trust.

In him. Are you resting. On the faith. That has been revealed. In scriptures. About him. Do you rest in him. And his finished work.

Are you resting. On the faith. Of another. Of your parents. Maybe. Of your upbringing. Is your confidence. In what Christ. Has accomplished. To save you.

On the cross. Are you resting. On. Sort of a. A self-justifying. Respectability. As a church goer. Paul.

John tells us here. The will of the flesh. Cannot save you. The will of the flesh. Cannot save you. Human decision.

[26 : 30] Or human determination. Cannot save you. The determination. To be better. To do better. Will not save you. Here's what John tells us.

Though. That we'll save. All who receive him. Will believe in his name. He gave the right. To become children of God.

And all of these people. Were not born. Not of blood. Not of the will of the flesh. Not of the will of men. But they were born of God.

Jesus alone can save. And that means. Coming. And coming to that salvation. Means coming. For you and I.

Coming to the end of ourselves. Acknowledging that our righteousness. Is like filthy rags. Turning to him. Your creator. Was also your redeemer.

[27 : 26] And today is the day. Now is the hour. To receive him. To believe in his name. Let us pray.

Amen. Everlasting God. We thank you for. Your mercy.

Towards us. Your mercy. And your grace. In creating the world. In love. And also your mercy.

In grace. In. In love. Seeking us out. To reconcile us. To fix that. Which we have broken. Thank you Lord.

For seeking us out. Thank you Lord. That in this time. As we celebrate. The birth. Of this. Child. In Bethlehem. Of Judea. Over 2000 years ago.

[28 : 25] It is not just. The birth of a mere child. But it is God himself. Coming into the world. To identify with us. To save us. And Lord.

I pray that if there is anyone here. That does not know. What that actually means yet. That you Holy Spirit. Will draw them to yourself. That you draw them to Christ.

That they will see Christ. That they will receive him. And believe in him. And I also pray Lord. That you will help us. That this light. That you have given us. By your Holy Spirit.

You have allowed us to respond to. If we are. For those who do. I have responded. That you will help us Lord. To be faithful witnesses. Of this light. To bear witness to it.

To our families and friends. And our loved ones. And in everywhere we find ourselves. That we will be faithful witnesses. Pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ. And to his great salvation.

[29 : 24] That he has wrought for us. Inviting others to come in. And receive the same salvation. We pray this in the name of our Lord and Savior. Jesus Christ. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.