

The Eternity, Personality and Incarnation of Christ

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Date: 19 June 2016

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[0 : 00] For a few moments, seeking God's blessing and help, let us turn back to chapter 1 of John's Gospel and the first 14 verses of chapter 1 and those verses that we read.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. And the Word became flesh, says verse 14, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

There are many people in the world who would regard these verses, which is called the prologue to John's Gospel as being the most wonderful piece of writing that was ever written in this world.

And when we come, as we do this morning, to study them together, we may feel something like what Moses must have felt before the burning bush, as God spoke to him and told him to take off his sandals of his feet, for the ground where he stood on was holy ground.

There's always holy ground when we seek to come to examine and study the Word of God.

[1 : 48] But there are some parts of the Bible that are standing out among the rest, and this is one of those parts of the Bible.

There is no doubt whatsoever that this Gospel was written by the Apostle John, one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ.

He doesn't stay to introduce himself. He doesn't tell who he is. He is in a hurry, because he wants to lift up Jesus Christ.

He doesn't try to substantiate his own claims or try to prove his credentials, for he sees his purpose as being to show people not himself, but Christ.

And that should be the purpose of every preacher of the Gospel in every age, that people would not see him or hear him in the pulpit, but see Christ as he proclaims the Gospel to them.

[3 : 10] In chapter 20 and verse 31 of this Gospel, John says, John names the name of Jesus 247 times.

It's his human name, the name he was given when he was born in the stable at Bethlehem. It reminds us of his humanity.

But no one could ever accuse John of stressing the humanity of Jesus at the expense of his divinity. Because John's Gospel is the most profound and the most spiritual of all the four Gospels. In verses 1 to 14 here, he gives an explanation of everything that he intends to write after this.

And what John writes after this proves the accuracy of those glorious verses that are before us this morning.

[4 : 39] I see in these verses three things in particular. They seem to spring up out of the verses.

They are like as if you were looking out on a mountain range. And you see some mountains higher than others in the range.

These three things are the eternity of Christ, the personality of Christ, and the incarnation of Christ. These are the three things that seem to stick out more clearly than anything else. So we're going to look at these three things together with the help of God.

The eternity of Christ, first of all. In the beginning was the word. What does that mean?

[5 : 42] It means that before creation, before the universe was made, the word, Christ, was already in existence. Matter and material things began their existence here in this life, in this world.

They are not eternal. They are fleeting. They are passing. They were all created at some point in time. If it's this pulpit that I'm standing in this morning, it was made by joiners some time ago now. But before that, trees were planted and trees were growing. And they were cut down eventually. And eventually, this pulpit came into being.

They were all created at one specific point in time. But Christ, the word, existed before anything else was in existence.

Before the angels were created. Before the universe was made. Christ, the word, was there. Now we can trace the history of the world back to creation by the things that are recorded in the Old Testament for us.

[7 : 13] Like the children of Israel in Egypt for over 400 years. Abraham and all that happened to him.

The flood with Noah. And then right back to the fall of Adam. We can trace the history of the world back like that.

But here in this opening verse, we come to a gulf. A gulf that we cannot bridge. That we cannot span.

Human wisdom cannot bridge this gap.

Human intellect is incapable of bridging the gulf that is here before us. And here we come to the deep things of God.

[8 : 14] In the beginning was the word. And therefore, all we can do when we come to a place like that in Scripture is to fall down before God and worship him.

And praise him that he is so mysterious that we are unable to grasp all that he is. By our own wisdom.

And by our own thinking. So John's Gospel account doesn't begin in this world. But in the eternity that is past.

He speaks about the life of Jesus in eternity. Before the worlds were created. And that life that he speaks about was a glorious life.

A life that was rich. In the company of the Father and of the Holy Spirit. A life that was lived in infinite delight. A life that was glorious and blessed.

[9 : 28] The noun that we find in this first verse that arrests our attention right away. The word. The word.

Only John uses this in speaking about Jesus. It is the Greek word logos. And yet it is not rooted in Greek. But in Semitic and Hebrew thought. In the Old Testament the word of God. Is sometimes. Represented as a person.

Represented as a person. And. And. And. And. For example in Psalm 33 verse 6. By the word of the Lord the heavens were made. And all the host of them by the breath.

Of his mouth. So it goes back into Hebrew. And Semitic thought. Now a word can do many things.

[10 : 30] A word can. Give expression to what you are thinking. In your mind. In your heart. And it can reveal what you are thinking.

To other people. Round about you. As well. We can say that. Jesus is the word of God. In both these ways.

Because. He expresses something. Of what was. In the mind of God. And he reveals. What God is like.

To sinners like. You and like me. He said himself. In John 14 verse 9. He who has seen me.

Has seen the father. Now we would not have known. What the father was like. Yes. He was. Unless Jesus.

[11 : 26] Had revealed him. To us. Now I want you not only to notice. The noun that is there. In the first verse. But also. The verb that is there.

In the beginning was. That word was. In the beginning was the word. The word was.

Is in the imperfect tense. And it means. And it speaks of something. That is continuous. Something that was going on. And on.

It is something that. Cannot be described. Or measured. As we. Describe things. And measure things. In this life.

We use time. In order to. Describe things. In this world. But time is only.

[12 : 21] The marking of. Of eternity. To help us. While we are on earth. Until we reach eternity. We speak of. Time.

In order to help us. We will not need. Time. Time. When we go into eternity. We leave our watches.

We leave our clocks. Behind us. When we die. We don't take them with us. And that is because.

We don't belong to time. We belong to eternity. The sheep and the cattle. In the parks. Around us. They don't bother.

With clocks. And watches. Because they belong to time. They belong to this world. Lord. But we belong to eternity.

[13:18] And that is why we measure. Time in the way that we do. Watches and clocks. Are only useful. While we are in this world. And therefore.

We learn from all this. That Jesus Christ. Did not become the son of God. When he came into the world. In the stable at Bethlehem.

He was the son of God. Before. He came into the world. He was the son of God. From all eternity. And fallen angels.

Are the sons of God. By creation. Men and women. Who are converted. And saved. By the grace of God. Are the sons and the daughters of God.

By the grace. Of salvation. And adoption. But Jesus Christ. Is different. From everyone else. He is the unique son of God.

[14:18] By eternal creation. By eternal. Generation rather. Because he was not. Created. And who is able.

To understand that. What. Person. What. Person. Can understand. What it means.

That Christ. Was. The son of God. By eternal. Generation. You see a glimpse of it.

In Psalm 2. And verse 7. We hear God. Speaking and saying. To the son. You are my son. Today. Today. I have begotten you.

And there is a profound depth. In these words. Which no human. Mind. Can fathom. We haven't. An adequate. Plumb line.

[15:13] To measure. The depths. Of these words. This day. This day. When was that? This day. God says. I have begotten.

You. The eternity. Of Christ. Is brought before us. Secondly. The personality. Of Christ. Is brought before us.

As well. The word. Was with God. Now that word. With. Means. In communion. With God.

The word. Was in communion. With God. The word. Was in intimate. With fellowship. With God.

You see this. Coming out. In Genesis.

Chapter 1. Verse 26. Let us. Make man. In our image. According to. Our likeness. There you have.

[16:10] The Trinity. Speaking there. Before. Man. Was. Created. You see it. Again. In chapter 6. Of Isaiah.

At verse 8. Also. I heard. The voice. Of the Lord. Saying. Whom shall I send. And who will go. For us. Whom shall I send. And who will go.

For us. The Trinity. Again. Consulting. One. With another. The words. Of John 1.

Verse 1. Could be translated. Like this. And the word. Was face. Face to face. Face to face. With God. Jesus Christ. In past eternity.

Was face. To face. With God. For you see. The closest. And the most. Intimate. Fellowship. Existed.

[17:07] Between the Father. And the Son. And the Holy Spirit. The Lord Jesus Christ. Had fellowship. With the Father. And the Son. And the Holy Spirit.

From all eternity. And this fellowship. Was precious. To him. So much so. That. It was at the forefront.

Of his. Mind. The night. In which he was. Betrayed. You remember. The prayer. That he prayed. To the Father. Before he went out.

To the cross. John 17. Verse 5. And now. O Father. Glorify me. Together with yourself. With the glory. Which I had with you. Before the world was.

He was remembering. In his humanity. He was remembering. The glory. That he had. Before the world was. And when you think.

[18:04] Of these things. You see. So clearly. That it was. Sheer love. That brought him down. To this world. To suffer.

And to die. On a cross. For you. And for me. For Jesus. Christ. To come into this. What dark world. Of sin. Meant that. He loved his people. So much. You see. The Father. Had given them. To him. In past eternity.

As a gift. Of his love. But they fell. Into sin. And they. Became polluted. In thought. Word. And in action.

And before he could. Take them. Into heaven. With him. At the last. They had to be. Reconciled. To God. They had to be. Cleansed.

[18:59] From sin. In. And so. He prays. In this way. And he loves them. So much.

That he wants. Them to be with him. At the last. Father. He said. At the end. Of the. Great prayer. In John 17. I will. That they also. Whom.

Thou hast. Given to me. Be with me. Where I am. That they might. See my glory. The glory. I had with you. Before the world was.

Now in this. Glorious fellowship. Jesus. Christ. You see. He enjoyed. The same status. As the father. And the Holy Spirit. He wasn't.

The little boy. In the family. At all. He was. The same. As the father. And the Holy Spirit. The same status. As the father.

[19 : 58] And the Holy Spirit. And the verse. Goes on. And says. And the word. Was God. So that shows you. That.

Jesus Christ. In past. Eternity. Was. On the same level. As the father. And as the Holy Spirit. And the word.

With. There. He was. In the beginning. With God. Speaks. Of. United. Action. As well. As nearness. He was near to him.

As we said already. In. Intimate. Fellowship. But he was also. Near him. In. United. Activity. All things.

Says. Verse 3. All things. Were made. Through him. And without him. Nothing was made. That was made. All things. Made.

[20 : 53] Individually. Separately. Separately. One. By one. And Christ. The word. Was the agent. Of God's action.

Now that confirms. To you. Again. That Christ. Himself. Was not created. And that all things. Visible. And invisible. Were. Made.

By him. All things. Were made. Through him. And without him. Nothing was made. That was made. That means. That he wasn't created. Because he was there.

Before. Creation. Paul. Underlines that. In Colossians 1. Verses 16. And 17. For by him.

That is by Christ. All things. Were created. That are in heaven. And that are on earth. Visible. And invisible. Whether thrones. Or dominions. Or principalities.

[21 : 50] Or powers. All things. Were created. Through him. And for him. And he is before. All things. And in him. All things.

Consist. He is the one. Through whom God. Worked. At the beginning. He was the agent. Through whom God. Worked. At the beginning. And he is the one.

Through whom God. Works. In every age. And in every generation. To this very day. He was the fountainhead. Of all life.

Says John. In him was life. From all eternity. Life. Resided. In the sun.

In the word. And this takes in. Physical life. As well as spiritual life. Life. Because both. Physical life. And spiritual life.

[22 : 45] Comes from him. From all eternity. There was. Founded in him. The fullness of God. Wisdom. Power. Holiness. Justice.

Goodness. And truth. Oh. The Lord. Jesus Christ. Is different. From the. The idols. Of the heathens. All over the world. He is different. From them. They are dead. Idols. Who do not see. Or hear. Or have compassion. In any way.

Whatsoever. But he gives life. He not only. Has life. In himself. But he. He gives. This imparts. Life. As well. And when this. Life is imparted. And manifested. It is called. Light. In him.

[23 : 40] Was life. And the life. Was the light. Of men. Verse 4. Now light. Is pure. And. Gentle. And revealing. And all.

Pervasive. It goes into all. The corners. Of the church. When you put the lights on. In the winter time. Every crook.

And every cranny. Of the church. Is lit up. Because of the light. Christ. The word. Was the light. In Adam. Before he fell. Before Adam. Sinned. In his. Unfallen state. In the beauty. And the peace. Of paradise. Christ.

Christ. Was the light. Of Adam. And of Eve. Christ. The word. Was there.

[24 : 36] In the paradise. Of beauty. And peace. But since the fall. Man has been in darkness. Man has. Fallen.

Into darkness. And will remain. In darkness. And end up. In eternal darkness. And live. Unless the life giver. Gives the command.

Let there be light. In that person's heart. And soul. Isaiah 60. And verse 1. Arise. Shine. For your light has come. And the glory of the Lord. Is risen upon you. And that's what happens. When a person is converted. He is. Born in darkness. He is born dead. In trespasses. And sins. And blind. In every sense. Of the word. And then the miracle.

[25 : 30] Takes place. The sheer. Sovereign. Grace of God. Comes. And chooses. A person there. And a person here. Arise.

Sunshine. For your light has come. We see flashes. Of the light. Of Christ. The word. In the darkness. Of the Old Testament. Dispensation. For example. We see it. In the promise. That was given. In the Garden of Eden. That there would come one. From the seat of the woman. Who would bruise the head. Of the serpent. A flash of light. There. In the darkness. Of the awful. Ness. Of that. Situation. Where Adam had just. Sinned. Against God. You see it.

[26 : 27] In the brazen. Serpent. That. Was lifted up. In the wilderness. Darkness. You see it. In the Passover lamb. You see it. In the sacrifices.

Another flash. Of light. In the Old Testament. In the ritualism. Of the. Jewish church. There were flashes. Of the light.

The word. The light. Of the world. In those. Far off days. Now in verse 5. Darkness is mentioned. For the first time.

By John. And the light. What shines. In darkness. Now darkness. Can come. In two ways. When we remove the light.

Darkness. Comes. And when blindness. Hits us. Darkness. Comes as well. As well.

[27 : 25] Now in this. In the case of. The human race. The darkness. That John. Mentions. Mentions here. Was caused. By loss of sight.

Not by the light. Being removed. But by. Us being blinded. As a result. Of sin. And although the light. Shone. In providence.

And creation. Around us. We are so blind. That we couldn't see. Any of these things. The darkness. It says here.

Did not comprehend it. That means more. Than it. Than it. That it didn't. Understand it. It can also be.

Translated. Did not overcome it. The darkness. Did not comprehend it. Did not understand it. But also. Did not.

[28 : 21] Overcome it. You see. The darkness. Is actively. Engaged. In opposition. To the light. At all times.

The darkness. Hates the light. And those who are in darkness. That's the reason. Why they don't like the gospel. That's why they don't like. Coming to church. Because they don't like.

The light. Jesus himself said. Because their deeds are evil. They prefer the darkness. To the light. Now before God sent his son into the world.

To illumine the hearts of men and women. And young people. He raised up. A man called John the Baptist. To prepare the way for him. As his.

Forerunner. There was a man. Sent from God. Whose name was John. Now John the Baptist. Didn't come with a new message. But to speak to men and women.

[29 : 24] Of the light. That was already in their midst. Jesus Christ. He was only six months older. Than. John. Than Jesus. John was the first cousin of Jesus.

According to the flesh. And he was already there. Among them in Nazareth. And John came to. To tell them about the light. And the emphasis in verse seven.

Is on Jesus. For he is the light. That is referred to. This man came as a witness. To bear witness of the light. That all through him. Might believe.

John the Baptist. Was only. A reflector of the light. And the intention was. That. As he preached. That.

Those listening to his preaching. Would come to believe. And trust. In Jesus Christ. As their own personal savior. That was John's intention.

[30 : 24] That was his remit. That was the reason. Why he was sent. Into the world. Jesus Christ. In verse nine. Is called. The true light.

Which gives light. To every man. Coming into the world. Though Christ does this. When God. Takes. The teachings. Of his word. And applies them. To the hearts. Of sinners. Here and there. But it is also. Through that. When a person. Comes to sit. Under the preaching. Of the gospel. He will never. Or she will never. Be the same person. Ever again. They might not. Be converted. And they might die. In their sins. But they'll never. Be the same person. That they were. Before they heard. The gospel. And so. It's. Of the utmost. Importance. That.

[31 : 21] We give heed. To the gospel. Or it will be. Our damnation. Forever and ever. That we sat. Under the faithful. Teaching and preaching.

Of the word of God. And that we never. Responded positively. To it. So the person. Who hears the gospel. And. Who sits. Under the ministry. Of God's word. Will never. Be the same person. Again. As long as he lives. However. The majority. Of people. Do not accept. The light. As we said. Preferring. The darkness. And it's only. When the sovereign. Grace of God. Comes. And touches us. That any of us. Begins. To want the light. And embrace. And go on. To embrace. More. Of what God.

[32 : 16] Offers. To us. In the gospel. You see this. So clearly. When a person. Is. In the. Service. Like this. In God's house. And the word of God.

Comes with power. And touches. That person's life. And he wants. To hear more. About this. He wants. To know more. About Jesus. And more. About the teachings. Of the gospel. And what happens. Is this. The next. Prayer meeting. Night. After that. He'll appear. In the prayer meeting. And. If you would ask him. Why are you here? I want to. Hear more. Of the teaching. That I heard. On Sunday morning. Or Sunday evening. Why. Why are you really here? I'm here. To get more light. I want to get to know.

[33 : 12] This Christ. Better. And therefore. I'm. Here. To sit under. The teaching. Of the word. Of God. That's what.

Moves. People. To the prayer meeting. During the week. They want to hear. More. About what they heard. Before. water. So here. Before us. But there's the incarnation of Christ. For us. Here as well. It's very sad to read in verse 10. Those words. He was in the world and the world was made through him. And the world did not know him. the world that he had created ought to have known about him ought to have embraced him the Jewish nation when he appeared ought to have put their arms around him and welcomed him into their midst with joy and with gladness the Messiah, the blessed Saviour promised at the beginning of time has come at last but they did not accept him they did not believe in him they did not acknowledge him he came to his own and his own received him not but the Jews are not the only ones to blame here there are those who have been brought up in Christian homes for years and went to Sunday school, went to Bible class went to Crusaders, went to the Youth Fellowship and so on and they still haven't accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour so don't throw any stones at the Jews we who have been brought up with the gospel privileges around us all our lives if we are unconverted today are as much to blame as the Jews ever were but praise God there are those who do respond to the gospel in every age and even in those far off days verse 12 says as many as received him to them he gave the right to become the children of God to those who believe in his name they became children of God not by physical right or by any biological force he gives them the right and the authority to be God's children irrespective of colour irrespective of nationality and the life that is in him comes and enters into them from outside and they are born anew by the spirit of God and we come in verse 14 to the very climax of the chapter and indeed the very heart of the gospel itself and the word became flesh from being with the father in heaven from all eternity he came down into time and became a human being like us pitched his tent among us for a while as Wesley said in his great hymn veiled in flesh the Godhead see the Godhead was there in Christ walking the streets of Galilee the one who walked the streets of Galilee is the same one who was in the glory of heaven from all eternity in his essence in the essence of his being he underwent no change but took upon himself a human body

with all its weaknesses and yet without sin he became flesh not in the sense that he stopped being what he was before for he assumed the human nature without laying aside his divine nature he was both man and God and John testifies that he saw him and met with him and oh he said he was full of grace and truth you remember that John lay upon his breast at the last supper he lay upon his breast

he was the closest of the disciples to him he was the youngest probably of the disciples and he lay upon that breast he could hear the heart of Jesus beating and every bit was saying John I love you I love you I love you and he said it was full of grace and truth grace is God giving you things that you don't deserve and mercy is God keeping back from you things that you do deserve and he was full of grace and truth he said you see this so clearly in the way he dealt with Oman who was taken in adultery they were ready to stone her to death Moses in the law said this is what we should do to her they said as they gathered up stones what do you say about it she was caught in the very act [39 : 01] Jesus said the one who is without sin let him throw the first stone at her then and none of them did and you see the grace and the truth of Christ coming out so clearly when he was left alone with the woman has anybody found you guilty he said nobody she said I condemn you neither he said I don't condemn you either I don't condone what you were doing but I don't condemn you go in peace he said to her your sins are forgiven that's grace she didn't deserve that he gave her something that she didn't deserve go in peace he said your sins are forgiven sin but the other side of it was this truth go and sin no more those words would go like a a narrow to the heart of that woman and if she was ever tempted tempted to go back to her old ways these words would ring in her ear go and sin no more go and sin no more

I want to ask you as we close have you met this Christ personally yet has he changed your heart has he changed your life has he changed the ambitions you had for yourself the dreams and the castles that you had been building has he knocked them all down and has he given you a new life with a new purpose well if you haven't experienced that you're missing out on the best thing you could get in this world the eternity of Christ the personality of Christ the incarnation of Christ may God bless to us these thoughts on his word let us bow in prayer gracious God we thank you for your word today we've only managed in the time given to us to scratch the surface but oh God what a surface and what is beneath the surface will keep us longing and yearning to know more and more until we see you face to face and then throughout eternity will be wandering lost in wonder love and praise at the great salvation that you have won for sinners oh the people of God should be the happiest in the world we have a right to shout and sing for the way is growing bright and our souls are on the wing we are going by and by to the palace of our king the palace of our heavenly father of our saviour we long for that day to come hear us in our prayers and help anybody who wants to know more about Jesus to be moved without any shame to come throughout the week to hear more about what God can do for us if Christ comes into our lives and into our hearts we ask all this in Jesus name Amen Amen amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen