

Christmas From the Beginning

John 1:1-14

[1] In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. [2] He was in the beginning with God. [3] All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. [4] In him was life, and the life was the light of men. [5] The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

[6] There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. [7] He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. [8] He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.

[9] The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. [10] He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. [11] He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. [12] But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, [13] who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

[14] And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

In the Name of Jesus,

AMEN.

John begins his gospel account unlike Matthew, Mark or Luke. Rather than speaking about the birth of Jesus in a narrative form, listing a long genealogy, mentioning Mary and Joseph, the manger and shepherds, he calls Jesus the Word, and starts, not in the manger but "In the beginning..." In hearing the first verse of the first chapter of John's gospel, one can't help but think of the comparison to Genesis 1:1, and this is exactly what John intends, as the Word of God, who created "all things", would now become flesh, fully human, and dwell among us, His creation, fulfilling the Promise he spoke to our first parents in Gen. 3 after their fall into Original Sin. The backstory then, for Christmas, is the backstory of humanity, who ever since the fall and sin entering into God's perfect creation would perpetually rebel

against their Creator, unable to do anything about their predicament, no matter how much effort or willpower went into it. Mankind was in desperate need for someone coming from outside of us to save us, to cleanse us from sin and its horrific and tragic effects. The background of Jesus coming into the world is dark, and yet John tells us that the Word who came into the world was light. *"The true light, which gives light to everyone"* And yet *"the world he created and even his own people, whom he had given this promise to through the prophets did not receive him."* They were looking for what all of us in our sinful flesh look for, a system, a plan of action that we can do, to make ourselves clean. Some new teaching, religion or training that would make us holy and acceptable. With man, we are reminded again and again in the Word, this is impossible.

But thanks be to God that Christmas, and the coming of Jesus in the flesh, as true God and true man, is all about Him doing what we could never do for ourselves. It is about *as John records, "the right to become children of God. who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."* The Word who had created man, would now re-create them with His Word of forgiveness, His Gospel.

Jesus, would have a ministry where he would preach, teach, and speak, for He is the Word of God. And even in His speaking, things would actually happen, He would recreate that which was destroyed as a result of sin, He would undo the curse of sin. Blind men would see, the deaf would hear, the lame would walk, and even the dead would rise again. For his words weren't just the words of a man, although He was truly man, but He was also truly God, he was the creator as John makes clear, *"All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made."* Vs. 3 . His words spoke "Let there be light" and there was light. He would continue to uphold the universe by the word of His power, and yet He came to deliver to sinners, to you personally, His word of promise, the Word of all sins forgiven, and would create faith in you, so that by His power, you would trust Him, and trust in Him alone for your salvation. So that through His spoken promise to wash all of your sins, through Holy Baptism, He would make you His child, His son or daughter, not born of your will or effort, but born of God. Born from above. Heaven has come to earth. The one who walked with angels, now walks with you, and He is for you.

As we continue to hear from St. John's Gospel *"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" vs. 14* Immediately anyone familiar with the Old Testament and the tabernacle of Israel would understand the richness of this phrase. Jesus was the one present, in the holy of holies in the tabernacle that delivered this Word of forgiveness to God's saints. The tabernacle is where, through the sacrifice, atonement for sins was made, and the sinner was cleansed. God Himself would speak the verdict through the priest, the office of the ministry given by God. The tabernacle was the center of Israel's worship, and it went with them wherever they wandered. Now, John is saying, Jesus is the true tabernacle, and Christmas is about the real tabernacle coming to be among His people in real flesh and blood. The God of glory, who filled the tabernacle and later the temple of Solomon, the One who is the maker of heaven, earth and everything in it, has come as a human and is full of, not anger and wrath, but grace and truth. For in His suffering and death on the cross, Jesus would take the wrath of God that you deserve as penalty for your sin, for you, in your place. God has spoken, the author of Hebrews tells us in these last days through His Son, and this is Christmas, the Word has become flesh, for you. Christmas shows us beyond a shadow of a doubt that he so loves us that He gave His only begotten Son, not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. Christmas proves God has loved you with an everlasting love, from the beginning, and given to you His Word of promise. The same Jesus who is the Word who became flesh, comes to you this Christmas morning in His Body broken for you, and His blood shed for the forgiveness of your sins. This is why the prophet Isaiah, hundreds of years before the first Christmas and Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ could say, "Isaiah 52:7

[7] How beautiful upon the mountains

are the feet of him who brings good news,
who publishes peace, who brings good news of happiness,
who publishes salvation,
who says to Zion, "Your God reigns." (ESV)

In the Name of Jesus,

AMEN.