

Grace, mercy, and peace be yours’ in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and King. Amen. The title for today’s sermon is “The Word Incarnate” and is from the appointed Gospel reading for the Nativity of our Lord, from John chapter 1. Let us pray.... Amen.

What is the meaning of Christmas. If you simply look at the structure of the word Christmas, it comes from Latin: *Christ* – Christ, the anointed Saviour; *Mas* – Birth. Simply defined Christmas means Christ’s birth.

But the full definition of Christmas is something far greater than just a birth day for someone born over 2000 years ago. Christmas is when we remember the Word incarnate; when the Word took on our flesh and blood to save us! This Word is the one which the disciple John describes in the first chapter of the Gospel of John. **“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.”**

This birth of a baby boy we remember at Christmas was no ordinary child. Yes He was flesh and blood just like you and I, but there was a whole bunch more to this child, born that first Christmas and placed in a manger. This child was the Second person of the Trinity; He is the Incarnate Son of God. He is the Word, who from before the beginning was with God and who is God; He is the one through whom all things were created. Nothing, nothing in all of creation was created apart from the Word, now made flesh. This Word is the one whom Paul describes as: **“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”**

Yes He was born of Mary, but at the same time this Word stood before creation and through whom all of creation was born. This Word incarnate who took on form as He developed in the womb of Mary was the one who developed and gave form to all of creation, and He is the One who continues to hold it all together. While He would later build things out of earthly material with His earthly adopted father Joseph, in the beginning, with God the Father the Word created all things in heaven and on earth out of nothing. In Him all things held together.

On top of that, **“⁴ In him was life, and the life was the light of men.”** This Boy Child, who received life from the breast of Mary is the one who breathed life into Adam and who formed Eve from Adam’s rib. In this child, whose earthly birth we rejoice and celebrate, is life, eternal life, and it is this Word Incarnate who is the light of men.

This Incarnate Word is your Lord and God. Jesus, whose birth we celebrate in this season, is Lord. Deny that Jesus is Lord, and you deny all of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. You cannot have the Lord Jesus in the womb, birthed of the Virgin, who is not also the Lord who birthed the whole world. You cannot have the Lord in the manger as an infant who is not also the Lord who knew you before you were made. You cannot have the Lord working miracles and shining His light in Galilee, Capernaum, and Jerusalem who is not also the Lord now shining His light of salvation in Africa, Asia, and around the world. You cannot have the Lord on the cross who is not also the Lord resurrected and coming back to judge all the dead and the living, who

was not also born in a stable in Bethlehem and placed in a manger. Jesus is Lord over all these events.

Because of His Incarnation, His birth, His life, His death, His resurrection, and His ascension, His Name is proclaimed and His light shines. His light is life, not just temporal, not just in this time, but the Light of the Word is eternal and for the salvation of all people. Jesus is **“⁵The light which shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”** The darkness cannot overcome it because this light is the Light of God Himself. Darkness cannot overcome it because Jesus has already defeated and overcome the darkness of sin, the gloom of guilt, the shadows of shame, the abyss of all evil.

The Word became incarnate for the purpose of rescuing us from that darkness, for liberating us from that gloom, for releasing us from those shadows, for reclaiming us from the abyss we put ourselves in. We needed the light to come to us, to enlighten our way, and to pull us out because we were lost, with no humanly possible way save ourselves.

So the Word took on your flesh and blood and came for you. He is the one about whom **“God spoke to our fathers by the prophets”**(Hebrews 1:1) about. He is the One the Old Testament reading longs for, waiting to hear the voice of the watchman so they could **“sing for joy; for eye to eye they would see the return of the Lord to Zion.”**(Isaiah 52:8) The people of the Old Testament were looking forward to when God would redeem Jerusalem and all the ends of the earth would see the salvation of God.(Isaiah 52:10)

Thanks be to God, He sent that watchman in the person of John the Baptist. For **“⁶There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. ⁷He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. ⁸He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light.”** As important as John’s job was, it was simply to point to the Word incarnate in the flesh and blood. He was to prepare people to see the Light. John wasn’t the Light, since **“⁹The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.”**

But when Jesus first came to John, John rejoiced and kicked while John was still in utero in Elizabeth his mother, when he heard the voice of Mary, the mother of God,. Many years later, when Jesus came to be baptized, John rejoiced and he proclaimed, **“Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!”**(John 1:29) John boldly rejoiced as he saw the Light, the Word incarnate, come for the salvation of the world.

We rejoice with John the Baptist at the coming of our Lord and Saviour, in flesh and blood because He takes our sins away. Jesus came so all people would believe in Him and in Him have eternal life.

But despite the fact that **“¹⁰Jesus, the Word incarnate, was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.”** This was true 2000 years ago. But has much really changed in 2000 plus years. As at Jesus birth, many today still do not see the Light. As through Jesus life and ministry many people did not believe, today people continue to choose darkness instead of allowing themselves to be drawn by God to the Light.

The long awaited Saviour ^{“11} **came to his own, and his own people did not receive him.**” He came with His gifts, gifts so wonderful and awesome only God can give, and the people rejected them, as some continue to reject them today. Today the incarnate Word comes with the gift of faith, with forgiveness, with Light, with deliverance from death and the devil, He comes with eternal life in His light. He came for all, yet some still choose to reject His gifts. The problem is that anyone who reject the gift of salvation in the Word incarnate, they reject Christ, His salvation, and they choose for themselves the only option left, and that is eternal condemnation.

Jesus, the Word incarnate is very clear why He was sent and why He came. **“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. ¹⁸ Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God. ¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.”**(John 3:16-19)

But not everyone rejected the Word. ^{“12} **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.”** To all who believe in Him, those who hear the Word, faith is given. In these, in you, and for all who are baptized, God made you His own child. In baptism, the Incarnate Word came to you, and marked you as God’s own. He came to you, you who are re-born, **not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but by God** through water and the Word. There, here God gives you a magnificent gift this Christmas and every day; forgiveness, deliverance, and eternal life.

At Jesus birth the world saw that ^{“14} **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.”** But this was not limited to just 2000 years ago. Jesus, the incarnate Word continues to come down from heaven to you and for you with His own flesh and blood for you to eat and drink, here shortly in the Lord’s Supper. Here the incarnate Word made flesh and blood comes to you now with His own flesh and blood, the same flesh and blood as was placed in a manger and which was crucified for you on the cross. Here He comes again to proclaim to you your sins are forgiven, your shame taken away, your guilt removed, and you are delivered from the power of death and the devil. The Word incarnate has come, and now comes again for you and your salvation. Christ’s richest blessings be yours today as you celebrate your salvation in the Word incarnate, Jesus Christ. Amen.

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