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St. John's & Immanuel Lutheran Churches – Kimball, NE & Burns, WY

Christmas Day

December 25, 2015

Text: John 1:1–18

Grace be to you and peace from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Merry Christmas!

John's prologue, today's gospel reading, sets aside the nitty gritty, earthly details surrounding the Lord's birth. Instead of decrees of taxation, filled inns, shepherds, and mangers, John gives a sublime meditation on who the Word of God. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God" (vs. 1–2).

John's Gospel doesn't take us back to Bethlehem with its shepherds, angels, or even its pregnant virgin. Instead, we go back to the beginning, not the days of creation, not that beginning, but to eternity past. By divine inspiration, John takes us up into the mystery of the eternal Trinity. In the beginning was the Word.

Before there was light or darkness, or heaven or earth, or dry land, seas, animals, angels, or even man, there was the Word. And the Word was with God. The Word of God made all things. "All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made" (vs. 3).

It's Christmas morning, and I know that you've come to church for one reason...to learn some Biblical Greek!! Each year, the Christmas Day bulletin cover has a similar image of a baby two Greek words, ho logos. Say that with me, ho logos. It translates as "the Word." Logos is the word from which we get logic. But its Greek meaning is much more varied, much richer than simply Word or logic. It can also mean account, reason, or source.

"In the beginning was the logos, word, account, reason, logic, and the logos was with God, and the logos was God...All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him (i.e., the logos) was life, and the life was the light of men" What John is claiming in these marvelous words is that what stands behind all creation is this divine logic, reason, accounting, Word. The order

and beauty of the universe reflects and testifies to this divine Word, the logos. That is why Christianity is the seedbed in which scientific knowledge flourished. Don't let the secularist and evolutionist succeed in rewriting history. China and the Far East certainly made a number of early scientific discoveries. But science flourished and exponentially grew in the culture and context of Christianity and Judaism.

The reason for such flourishing is summarized beautifully in John 1: those early scientists, most of whom were Christian, believed that by studying creation they were studying the logic, reason, and account of God Himself, the logos. "All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men." What stands behind every atom is the logos. The vastness and grandeur of the universe reflects the Word. The beauty of music and its delicate harmonies display the order of the logos that is God and was with God in the beginning. Everything in all creation, without exception, without fail, provides us insight into who this Logos is. The Word stands behind all creation!! It's marvelous and glorious to consider.

But here's another Christmas shocker. Last night I made mention of the shock behind the words, "And she laid Him in a manger." This morning, the shock comes in vs. 14, "And the Word (the logos) 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." That drawing on your bulletin cover of a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in manger is none other than the logos of God made flesh. The Jesus of Bethlehem is the logos of God. That's the wow of John 1 which makes last night's shocker all the more shocking.

The Logos of God that stands behind every single atom of creation was laid in the poverty of the manger, an animal's feeding trough. On second thought, maybe I didn't quite do justice to the surprise of Christmas last night. The logos of God became human flesh and blood in the womb of a very young virgin woman. And was born, laid in a manger, worshipped by shepherds, proclaimed by angels. The logos of God made flesh submitted Himself to the relatively speaking, petty authority of Caesar Augustus who issued the order of taxation that required Joseph and Mary to travel the 90 miles south to Bethlehem, Joseph's ancestral home. The Word, account, reason, order, logic, and source of all creation became flesh and dwelt among us! My mind is short-circuiting!

Christmas is the celebration of one of the greatest mysteries man has ever had to consider. Only the Trinity Himself remains more mysterious and wonderful. How God can be three persons: Father, Son (i.e, logos), and Holy Spirit and yet one God. John's prologue even gives insight into that greatest of all mysteries. For the Logos, the Son, was God and was with God the Father in the beginning.

And we mortal human beings have seen this glory of the Logos made flesh, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. In Jesus, we see all the fullness of God in human flesh and blood. No wonder the angels sang the first cradle song, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace to His people on earth." God in flesh has been born. A Savior, Christ the Lord, can be held and nurtured by human parents. He who is the wisdom of God, the Logos, will also grow in wisdom. He who is the account and reason of God, the Logos, will also grow in stature.

Jesus is the logos behind every miracle. Jesus is the logos behind every forgiven sin. For on the cross, the Word of God made flesh, will suffer and die for the sins of the world. On Easter morning, the Word of God made flesh will rise again having thus destroyed the power of sin, death, and hell for all eternity. It is Jesus, the Logos of God, who is interceding on our behalf before the Father's throne. The Logos is also preparing a place for each of us in His Father's kingdom. On the Last Day, the Word made flesh and blood, will return in the glory of His heavenly Father to take us unto Himself so that we can live in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.

Such is the mystery and joy of Christmas. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The Logos of God dwells not only among us. But now, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, the Word dwells within us for all eternity.

A Merry Christmas to you all!!

✠ In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. ✠ Amen.

Now the peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus unto life everlasting. Amen.