

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ,

The Christmas holiday is upon us. The word “Christmas” comes from the words “Christ” and “mass,” which when coupled together simply designate a time to cease from regular daily labor to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. Yes, Jesus is the reason for the season! It’s NOT about Santas and sleighs, reindeer and elves, or parties and presents, toys and trinkets, for it is Christmas!

My friends, JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREATEST GIFT this old world has ever had or could ever have, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; [and] the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (John 3:16-17; Romans 3:23; 6:23) Accordingly, we ought to be forever grateful to God for the gift of Jesus Christ our Savior.

Our Scripture selection can be of help to us in celebrating Christ and growing in appreciation of Him, as it informs us concerning another of His names, that being:

#### “THE WORD”

With that as our theme may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) Who the Word is
- 2) Who was the Word’s forerunner on earth
- 3) How folks reacted to the Word’s visible presence on earth
- 4) Why the Word is wonderful and worth celebrating

Verses 1 & 2, ----- (John 1:1-2)

Profound is that which the opening two verses of our text teach concerning the Word, especially as we bear in mind that 2 Timothy 3:15-17 states: “the holy scriptures... are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”

The Holy Bible’s first words, found in Genesis 1:1, are: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” Thus, before there was earth, sun, moon, or stars, there was God— the eternal existing one true God. And, our text likewise begins with the words: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.* Note well the WORD simply was present, and that very WORD was with God and was in fact GOD! Then it is repeated that the same WORD was in the beginning with God, thereby emphasizing the fact that the WORD is ETERNAL!

Now the fact the WORD was with GOD indicates a distinction of PERSONS; and yet, the fact that the WORD is GOD indicates a oneness of essence! These facts are profound and incomprehensible to us with our finite minds, but are nevertheless true because the Holy Scriptures are 100% truth!

To identify the Persons called God and the Word in our text, we need to look at 1 John 1:1-3, where we read: “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us:

and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.” Thus, we see that the eternal Word is Jesus Christ, God the Father’s Son. Additionally, 1 John 5:7 reports: “there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.” So, there are three distinct divine Persons, and yet they are but one divine essence, the one true God— the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Looking again at the opening two verses of our text, we read: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.* Thus, the WORD, God the Son, Jesus Christ, IS NOT inferior to God the Father, not a lesser-god, but fully equal to the Father, as is the Holy Ghost as well.

Verse 3, -----. (John 1:3)

Observe that in reference to the eternal WORD our text reports: *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* Hence, Christ is Creator no less than is God the Father, for we also read regarding Jesus Christ in Colossians 1:16-17, “by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” And, Psalm 33:6 clearly states: “By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.”

Verse 4, -----. (John 1:4)

The WORD, God the Son, IS the SOURCE of life— both physical and spiritual life. Yes, we just read: *In him was life; and the life was the light of men.* At creation man was made different than the beasts, for we read in Genesis 2:7, “And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

Verse 5, -----. (John 1:5)

The darkness is that of sin and unbelief, that is, spiritual darkness, which is every naturally conceived human being’s condition by nature since man’s fall into sin. And our text says: *the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.* Indeed, by nature we do not understand Christ the eternal Word or value Him aright, and we in fact flee from Him because Romans 8:7 informs us: “the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.”

The WORD, Jesus Christ the Son of God, is PURE LIGHT since in Him is NO darkness, for He is true and very God— the ultimate GOOD with NO evil.

Let’s look ahead for a moment at verse 14, -----.  
(John 1:14)

Think of it: *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* Thus, the only begotten Son of God, true GOD begotten of the Father from eternity, was made flesh in time, and became true man. Yes, Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary, and therefore the only begotten Son of God is also true man, sinless man, for Colossians 2:9 reports: “in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.” Accordingly, the WORD made flesh is our only Savior from sin!

Ponder the facts: our Savior had to be true man in order to take our place under the Law, and in order to be able to suffer and die in our place for our sins; and, our Savior also had to be true God in order that His perfect keeping of the Law might be sufficient for all people, and that His bitter sufferings, death and shed blood might be sufficient ransom for our redemption, and that He might be able to conquer death and the devil for us. Thus, Jesus Christ the living WORD IS OUR ONLY SAVIOR, our Rescuer from never-ending ruin! Let us therefore highly value the living WORD, and celebrate Him at Christmas, for it is written: “This

is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." (1 Timothy 1:15)

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As we continue to ponder our text, let us see who was the Word's forerunner on earth.

Verses 6 & 7, -----. (John 1:6-7)

The man sent from God as the forerunner of the Word on earth was John the Baptist. It's as we read in Luke 1:5-16, & Luke 1:76-80, "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judaea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren, and they both were now well stricken in years. And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course, According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense. And there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him. But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John. And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God. And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; To give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins, Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in

darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel." Thus, *There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.*

Verses 8 & 9, -----. (John 1:8-9)

John the Baptist was NOT the Light of the world, *but was sent to bear witness of that Light*, the LIGHT of the world who is the living WORD, the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, *that was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world* in that He is the Lord who gives physical life to all, and has provided spiritual and eternal life for all. Yes, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:19)

Take it to heart that John the Baptist never pointed people to himself; rather, John the Baptist pointed people to Jesus Christ the Light of the world who is the living WORD, the only Savior of sinners! It's as we read in John 1:19-34, "And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, Who art thou? And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, I am not the Christ. And they asked him, What then? Art thou Elias? And he saith, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No. Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself? He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they which were sent were of the Pharisees. And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; He it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose. These things were done in Bethabara

beyond Jordan, where John was baptizing. The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. This is he of whom I said, After me cometh a man which is preferred before me: for he was before me. And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him. And I knew him not: but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.” Thus, John the Baptist was the Word’s forerunner on earth. John the Baptist pointed people to the living WORD— Jesus Christ the Savior of the world.

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As we continue to ponder our text, let us see how folks reacted to the Word’s visible presence on earth.

Verse 10, ----- (John 1:10)

Just think of it: the living WORD became incarnate as the babe of Bethlehem and grew into manhood; *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.* Indeed, by and large the world did NOT recognize Jesus Christ for who He is: Creator, Savior, and Lord!

Verse 11, ----- (John 1:11)

These are some very sad words: *He came unto his own, and his own received him not.* The Jewish people had been God’s chosen people of old, for “unto them were committed the oracles of God.” (Romans 3:2) The Hebrew people had been given multiple clear prophecies concerning the coming Messiah, the Christ, the living WORD. For example, the prophet Isaiah wrote: “the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. For

unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.” (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6-7) However, when Christ came in the flesh as promised, the vast majority of the Jews rejected Him.

Verses 12 & 13, ----- (John 1:12-13)

Thankfully, some people from among both Jews and Gentiles did receive Christ the living WORD. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.*

Note well that those who did receive Christ the living WORD did so by the power of the WORD! Yes, no one can become an adopted son of God except by God’s power, for Romans 10:17 informs us: “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Therefore the ability to spiritually hear comes by the WORD of God; and, faith in Christ is worked in one’s heart by means of the Word, the Gospel of Christ in particular, “for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith, declares Romans 1:16-17. Hence, all who believe on Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and Lord do so by God’s power.

People are NOT spiritually born into the Lord’s family by means of *blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* It’s NOT true that one is saved because he or she has been born into this or that race. It’s NOT true that one is saved because he or she has determined to choose

Christ, for that is impossible since, as we noted earlier from Romans 8:7, “the carnal mind is enmity against God.” God does the saving, all of it! All praise and glory be to the WORD of God!

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As we ponder the remaining verse of our text, let us see why the Word is wonderful and worth celebrating.

Verse 14, ----- (John 1:14)

Think of the wonder of it all: *the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*

The eternal WORD took upon Himself a real human nature in time and came to earth to dwell among His fallen sinful creatures known as mankind. Sinful human beings were privileged to behold the WORD’s glory while He walked upon this earth, *the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* Yes, rays of Christ’s divine glory were seen in the thousands and thousands of miracles He worked— such as stilling raging waves, twice feeding thousands with but a few loaves and fish, curing all sorts of sickness and diseases instantly, and raising dead people back to life. Why, once upon a mountain top Jesus Christ even permitted a few of His disciples to behold Him in heavenly glory, for we read in Matthew 17:1-5, “Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

Fellow Christians, God has gifted us with faith in Jesus Christ and therefore we are adopted children of God. However, God the Father has but one only begotten Son who is Jesus Christ, the eternal living WORD who is God and man yet one Christ. Jesus Christ our Savior is FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH, for He who is the WORD comes to us with His Gospel through which He has granted us faith and keeps us in the same— faith which personally receives the forgiveness of sins and salvation He has earned for us.

Let us therefore daily and sincerely repent of our sins; let us continue to cling to Christ Jesus as our personal Savior and Lord, the WORD who we should appreciate and celebrate on Christmas and on every other day of our life. Amen.

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