

Message #1037  
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"IN THE BEGINNING...!"  
{John 1:1-2}

Trinity Presbyterian Church  
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## ADVENT

Today we begin the Season of Advent. The usual idea is that Advent is preparation for the birth of Jesus; however, that can be confusing, since Advent is not a season of Christian make-believe during which the church pretends that they are back in the period before Christ hopefully awaiting and pleading for the Messiah to come. No, instead, during Advent, Christians remember the Christ who came, and now look forward to His second advent. Therefore, Advent is looking back...and...looking ahead at the same time.

...looking back with thanksgiving for the Christ who came.

...looking forward with hope for the Christ who is to come.

Advent then is the season of nativity...and...Advent is the season of eschatology.

To understand the end of the story...we must rediscover the meaning of the incarnation...and...we do that by going back to the beginning!

Our theme at Easter is "Alleluia" and our theme during Advent is "Come."

During the next four Sundays our goal is to understand the true purpose of Advent...incarnational Christology!

"IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD...

...and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning." {John 1:1-2}

These words constitute the prologue to the Gospel of John and are two of the most significant verses in the Bible. They basically tackle the questions...

...Who is Jesus...really?

...Where did He come from?

These two verses contain John's most profound convictions about Jesus.

He focuses on the central fact of the Christian faith: Christianity is NOT a philosophy; it is about a Person...and that Person is central to the Christian faith.

...to remove Jesus from Christianity would be like taking numbers out of mathematics

...like taking physicians out of medicine

...like thinking of daylight without the sun!

Jesus is central to the Christian faith...and that is what distinguishes Christianity as a unique religion!

All the other great religions on earth center upon the teaching, the ideas, the philosophies that are represented in them...but NOT Christianity! It centers upon one Person...Jesus Christ!

Jesus was easily the most shattering, the most radical and true revolutionary character that ever has appeared in human history! Therefore, in this prologue to the gospel, John answers for us the question: Who is Jesus?

It's important to remember that John was one of Jesus' disciples! He believed in this Man...and that is made clear in his first letter...

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched--this we proclaim

concerning the Word of life. The life appeared, we have seen it and testify to it; and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us...we proclaim to you what we have seen and heard..." {1 John 1:1-2}

John was speaking out of personal experience and saying in essence what he wrote in his gospel...

...Jesus--"the Word"--was from the beginning

...Jesus was with God in the beginning

...Jesus was God

WHO IS JESUS?

John begins his prologue with the phrase: "In the beginning..." echoing Genesis: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

...Mark opens his gospel with John the Baptist

...Matthew with Abraham and David

...Luke with the story of Adam

But John goes all the way back to before time began.

...this story is not defined by other stories

...this is the story that defines everything

Right from the starting block John wants his readers to understand that JESUS IS GOD!

JESUS IS THE WORD OF GOD

"In the beginning was the Word..."

The "Word" here is the Greek word, "logos," which means the same as our word, "W-O-R-D."

...what is a word?

...it is an audible and/or visual expression of a thought

Thoughts are incommunicable until they are put into words. Several times the Bible asks: "Who has known the mind of the Lord?"

...response: no one!

...nobody knows what God thinks until He tells us!

As a matter of fact I could well ask, "Who knows what is going on through my mind right now?"

...response: no one!

...I am trying to convey that to you this morning via my words

...You listen to what I say...and then you are then given privy as to what are my thoughts...they are only conveyed through words!

That is what John is saying in our text of the morning...JESUS IS THE WORD OF GOD.

...He expressed to us what was going on in the mind of God

...He told us the thoughts of God.

Jesus came to unfold for us the thoughts...the mind...of God!

When Jesus said..."For God so loved the world...!" He is/was conveying the inner thoughts and feelings of God for us verbally!

John knew his audience and he purposely used the word "logos" as one that would communicate to his readers.

Remember the words from "Faust" when he attempts to translate the New Testament into German--

"Tis written: 'In the beginning was the Word!' Here now I'm balked! Who'll put me in accord?"

It is impossible, the Word so high to prize.

I must translate it otherwise

If I am rightly by the Spirit taught.

'Tis written: In the beginning was the Thought!

Consider well that line, the first you see,

That your pen may not write too hastily!  
Is it then Thought that works, creative, hour by hour?  
Thus should it stand. In the beginning was the Power!  
Yet even while I write this word, I falter,  
For something warns me this too, I shall alter.  
The Spirit's helping me! I see now what I need  
And write assured: In the beginning was the Deed!"

John used "Logos" to speak to his culture. Note, he does not begin by naming Jesus. The word "logos" was filled with meaning for both the Jew and the non-Jew in his time.

...the Stoics understood "logos" to be the rational principle by which everything exists.

...Philo makes a distinction between the ideal world, which he calls the "logos of God," and the real world

The word "logos" was a powerful concept for the Jew...

...in the Old Testament the word "dabar" of God is connected with God's powerful activity in creation, revelation, and deliverance.

...God spoke and world was created: "'Let there be light!' and there was light!"

{Genesis 1:3}

..."The word of the Lord" came to the prophets, bringing revelation,

...and God's word was a delivering word.

There was no word more suitable...and powerful...for John to use than "logos" for to speak to his culture in the first century!

How best might we speak to our culture about Jesus?

...what kind of terminology do we use?

...how would you begin your gospel?

In speaking to the Star Wars generation, perhaps you would say: "In the beginning was the force!"

...or, we might say: "In the beginning was the Matrix"

...or, "In the beginning was technology"

...or, "In the beginning was the fellowship of the ring!"

...or, to those struggling with addictions: "In the beginning was the Higher Power!"

We need to be creative and relevant as was John when he wrote: "In the beginning was the Word/logos!"

JESUS IS THE ALPHA {"THE BEGINNING"}

...He was before ALL things

...He was "in the beginning"...the ALPHA!

...He was part of creation...

"God said: 'Let US make man in OUR image, in OUR likeness...!'" {Genesis 1:26a}

The "Logos" was eternally existent...

...He has always existed

...Jesus is the eternal Son...and the eternal Word!

Jesus introduced Himself to John on the Isle of Patmos as... "I am the ALPHA and the OMEGA, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the ALMIGHTY!" {Revelation 1:8}

He was "in the beginning" of everything

...He was identified by Joshua as "My Lord"

...He was identified by Nebuchadnezzar as "A son of the gods"

...In the New Testament, however, He is "the logos"--

...God's "only begotten Son"

...Gabriel named him to Mary as: "You are to give Him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High!"

...the angel told Joseph: "Mary will give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins!"

And, Jesus identifies Himself as one who was from the beginning when he said:

"Before Abraham was born, I am!"

"In the beginning was the Word...the Word was with God...and..."

"...THE WORD WAS GOD!"

This is the very essence of our faith--JESUS WAS GOD...God with skin!

...Jesus was NOT "a God" as perpetuated by the Jehovah's Witnesses

...the ONLY way this verse can be translated is: "And the logos WAS God!"

...thus, the TRINITY...or TRI-UNITY...is introduced to us for the first time John says: He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made!" {John 1;2-3}

#### CONCLUSION

John in verse 11 tells us...

"The Word {"logos"} became flesh and lived for a while among us. We have seen His glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth!" He came as "the logos" to tell us that God loved us!

...He came as "the logos" to tell us God's message of salvation

...to convey that God is a God of grace and mercy

And...He came to invite you to come to know this God personally and intimately.

The Apostle Paul wrote of this so beautifully in Philippians... "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death--even the death on a cross! Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus ever knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, to the glory of God the Father." {2:5-11}