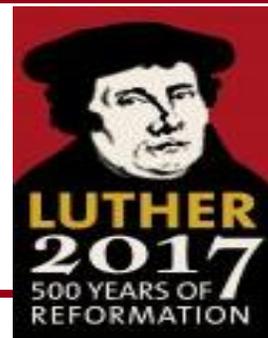


The Creator Born in Bethlehem

Isaiah 11:1-10 Colossians 1:15-20 John 1:1-18

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The **CHRISTMAS STORY** does not begin with Mary and Joseph in **Bethlehem**, nor does it begin with **John the Baptist** preparing a way as the promised forerunner, nor does it begin with all the **messianic prophecies** of the Old Testament. St. John teaches us that the Christmas story begins with the **very first verse of the Bible: *In the beginning!***

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. GENESIS 1:1

In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with God, and the **Word** was God. JOHN 1:1

St. John intentionally repeats the first verse of the Bible and takes us to the **Creation of the World** – and *even before it* – to teach us about the **Savior born in Bethlehem!**

St. John refers to Jesus as the “**WORD**”. The idea is that Jesus reveals God to us as words reveal what someone is thinking.

- † **Jesus the Word reveals** Who the one, true, and only God is and what He is like
- † **Jesus the Word teaches** us about God and His Kingdom
- † **Jesus the Word shows** us that God is loving, kind and compassionate toward us
- † **Jesus the Word demonstrates** that He Himself is God, equal to the Father and to the Spirit
- † **Jesus the Word spoke** and the heavens and the earth were created
- † **Jesus the Word became flesh** and lived among us as our Savior!
- † *No one has ever seen God, but the One and Only Son, who is Himself God and is in closest relationship with the Father, has made Him known. JOHN 1:18*

If it were not for
JESUS THE WORD,
we would only know
God as mighty,
powerful, and angry
at our sin.

When John introduces **Jesus** to us in His Gospel,

He teaches us that Jesus **is** God, and He **reveals** God to us; Jesus is God Himself on the earth! St. John uses four creation themes to begin his Gospel and introduce us to Jesus. Those four themes are that Jesus is **God**, He is the **Creator**, and in Him is **Light**, and He is the source of **Life**. John's gospel begins with these words:

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

St. John teaches us is that **Jesus is God**; God Himself has come into the world to be our Savior. God Who was "***in the beginning***" -- *and before* in eternity -- has come into the world. Jesus is the eternal, all-powerful Lord of Creation. And now, God has come to **save** His Creation. Only God could **rescue** us from the destruction that sin brought into the world, and into our lives. Only God who created the heavens and the earth with His **Word** can **speak powerful words** of forgiveness to us. Only God the Creator can **restore** His creation and reconcile us to Himself.

The way God restores creation and reconciles us to Himself is by taking our sins upon Himself and dying on a cross. Jesus is God, and He bore the guilt of all of your sins. Jesus was punished in your place when He died on the cross. In His resurrection, His mighty power overcomes death and brings life and eternal salvation to us all! St. John teaches us that **Jesus the Word** is **GOD HIMSELF** Who restores and reconciles us with God!

John also teaches us that **Jesus the Word** created everything seen and unseen. John writes, "***All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.***" JOHN 1:3

In this passage, there is a *double emphasis* on Jesus the creator of **ALL THINGS**. **Jesus the Word is God the creator, who created the heavens and the earth, and all things visible and invisible. It is a bold and strong statement about God as the creator of the world!** The God who created Adam and Eve cares about every single man, woman and child that He created ... including you. The emphasis on **ALL THINGS** reminds us that Jesus came into the world to reconcile **ALL THINGS** to God the Father.

Just as He **created** ALL THINGS, so too, He **reconciles** ALL THINGS. **EVERY SINGLE PERSON** is reconciled to God the Father through the death of Christ on the cross. In His resurrection, **EVERY SINGLE PERSON** is absolved of sin.

But sadly, most REJECT this Good News, and do not believe it. They turn away from it as if it were nonsense, foolishness, or unimportant.

But by the power of the Holy Spirit, you have heard this good news and believed it. You trust that God is telling you the truth and that you are reconciled to God the Father. **Believe that Jesus the creator came into this world save you from sin and bring you back to the Father!**

Jesus the Word reveals to us that He is both **GOD AND CREATOR**. The One Who was “*in the beginning*” came into the world to be our Savior. In Him we have all the gifts of salvation. John summarizes salvation with two words: **Life and Light**. *In him was life, and the life was the light of all men.*

JOHN 1:4

We certainly need **LIFE**; because our sin has left us in death. Death is a fearful enemy that none of us can overcome on our own. No matter how much medicine you take, or how many doctors you see, or how many surgeries you have, or how healthy you eat, or how much you work out, **you will still die someday.**

One of the most important aspects of salvation is that Jesus gives us life through His resurrection from the dead! Through faith in Christ, you have both spiritual life and eternal life!

† **Spiritual Life** means that you have been given faith in Christ, and you now **hear and respond** to God’s Holy Word. You live your life in God’s Kingdom, you hear obey His Word, you value His commandments and live your life in love toward others. Your life in Christ gives you your identity; it’s “who you are”; you belong to Christ and live your life according to His Word.

† At the same time, you have **Eternal Life**.

Eternal life means that you will live forever in Heaven in both body and soul. Physical death cannot interrupt the eternal life that you already possess. At the moment of death, your spirit will immediately be in the presence of Christ in heaven; and on the Last Day, when Jesus returns, He will raise your dead body from the grave, and you will live forever in body and soul in the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the Gospel of John, the Christmas story is pictured as God the Creator coming into the world to bring life and light to His sin-darkened, lifeless world.

All of this is possible only because of **JESUS, OUR GOD AND OUR CREATOR** – came into the world to give us **LIFE!**

A second way that salvation is described is as **LIGHT**. **Jesus, the Light of the World shines His light into your life and chases away the darkness of sin, guilt and death.** Just as Jesus once said, “*Let there be light* (Gen 1:3)”, and there was light in the universe, so now He speaks and you have the Light of Salvation! This happens as Jesus our God and creator works through His Word and Sacraments. The Light of Christ brings peace, comfort and hope.

In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. JOHN 1:4-5

The light of Christ is more powerful than the darkness. **The Light of Christ allows you to see that He Himself is your God and Creator, and that in Him you have both spiritual life and eternal life.** The light of Christ shines in your life, so you know how to live in God’s Kingdom, and walk in His ways. **The Light of Christ brings peace, comfort, and hope.**

The way that St. John introduces Jesus to us is by telling us that Jesus **reveals** God to us; He is the **WORD** of God. Jesus reveals that He Himself is **our God and our Creator**, and He has come into the world to bring **life and light** all people! As we begin our Advent preparations for Christmas, this forms our understanding of Who was born in Bethlehem for us: **Jesus is your God and your Creator, who has come into the world to bring you life and light!** AMEN!