

The divine majesty of Christ

The Word of God John 1:1–14, Philippians 2:6-11

With all the tinsel, the presents, school nativity plays, our own living nativity, crib service, carol service, Christmas communion, have we got the message of Christmas, has it really sunk in, the reality of what we are worshiping, this incredible miracle a baby born in Bethlehem, a vulnerable tiny child was and is the Son of God, or as Paul states it in Philippians; Jesus Christ is Lord. This is what we believe, you cannot walk away from this fact, you have to respond, I am sorry that's how it is. You cannot take down the tinsel and forget Jesus until next year, or may be just wake him up a bit for Easter.

This is the first of a five sermon series on the Divine majesty of Christ Jesus and I chose the Jerusalem bible passage from Philippians 2 as an introduction because for me this summarises who Jesus Christ is: Christ's state was divine, God raised him high and gave him the name which is above all other names Jesus Christ as Lord.

We will look at Christ's divinity through The Word of God, Lord of creation, Name above all names, The Lamb of God and the King of Kings.

So we start with The Word of God, or as John states at the start of his Gospel; "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

First let me comment on words. Words have great power, as James said in his letter; James 3:5-10 "The tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole body, sets the whole course of one's life on fire, no human being can tame the tongue. With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God's likeness. My brothers and sisters, this should not be."

If only one of our world leaders would read and inwardly digest this passage before picking up his phone and taking to the twittersphere. I don't need to look to Trump for an example of the consequences of ill thought out words spoken in the heat of the moment.

Sadly I may be slow to anger most of the time, but, when provoked, can explode with a tumult of words that I will regret. It is hard to take things back once they are spoken. Such is the power of words. Fortunately unlike Mr. Trump and occasionally me, the Word of God is not a destructive thing but a positive loving creative Word.

Tom Wright's translation of Isaiah 40:10-11 tells us "God's word will go out of his mouth and bring life, healing and hope to Israel and the whole creation."

John's choice of 'Word' at the start of his Gospel is his way of telling us who Jesus really is. "In the beginning was the Word."

"In the beginning was the Word" so let's look at the beginning for a moment. The beginning of the Bible, Genesis chapter 1, the story of creation, 7 verses start with the words "And God Said". God spoke; the word of God, Jesus is the creative part of God, when God spoke the world was created. John wants us to understand at the outset of his Gospel that Jesus is wholly part of God expressed as his creative word.

Jesus, the son of God was there at the beginning and as John says "All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being."

As Tom Wright puts it in his book John for Everyone "The start of Genesis, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth'. Whatever else John is going to tell us; he wants us to see his Gospel as the story of God and the world, not just the story of one character in one place and time. John's Gospel is about the creator God acting in a new way within his much loved creation. It is about the way in which the long story which began in Genesis reached the climax the creator had always intended. In Genesis 1 the climax is the creation of humans made in God's image. In John 1 the climax is the arrival of a human being, the Word become flesh."

What else does this opening passage of John's Gospel tell us about Jesus? "What has come into being in Jesus, the Word, was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it..."

The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world..... The Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of grace and truth."

John by his careful use of language connects Jesus directly to the creator God; the links are plain to see. From Creation to Word, Word to Life, Life to Light, Light coming into the World, which John sums up in verse 14; "The Word became flesh, Jesus, and lived among us."

The Word of God is used a number of times in the Bible both in the old and new testament which help give further insight to the meaning of this phrase and it's relationship to God and Jesus. Here are some examples:

Ephesians 6:17 "Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

Colossians 3:16 "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."

Hebrews 4:12 "Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart."

1 Peter 1:23 "You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, through the living and enduring word of God."

John's message to you and me from the beginning of his Gospel is clear, verse 12; "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God." The Word of God, the Word made flesh and dwelt among us, the Word, Jesus, the Divine majesty of Christ.

Psalms 33: 6-9 "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth..... Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the people of the world revere him. For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm."

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