

The Word was God

1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. 2 οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. 3 πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν 4 ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων:

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. 4 In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

The event of the conception and birth of Jesus Christ is not only the birth of a human baby, but the entry of God, the Son of God, into his own creation. In eternity, the Triune God shared in all things, most especially the glory of God. This is confessed by Jesus in his prayer in John 17: “The glory I had with you, Father, before the world began” (John 17:5). His eternal existence, his everlasting love, and his great intention and will to bring created beings-- you and me-- into a heavenly home to live with him there forever, all was in his heart and on his mind before the beginning. Let’s go back to that event.

There was not yet any heaven. Before the first word was spoken by God, before the world was brought into being as a featureless sphere of water, before there ever was solid ground, or stone, or any element, or light, or reckoning of time, there was God. I wonder whether God describes his own existence in that eternity before the present age when he explains his name to Moses by saying, “I am.” It was the existence of God apart from time, apart from any frame of reference for us. There was no possibility for any imperfection in that infinite, eternal ‘now’ or state of being for God.

But God is love, and in that infinity, God also loved you. Please be selfish for the moment, and consider what Bible tells us: Everything that happened, happened, because God loved you and planned for you and for your place with him in heaven-- the heaven he had not yet created-- in eternity. And so God spoke, and the world came into being with light. He spoke again, and there was a perfect division of water from water as God made the sky with you in mind, drawing it apart from the sea and fastening it in place. He spoke again on the third day, and drew land up out of the sea with you in mind. The sun, moon and stars came next, and then creatures filled all of the places he had made, and finally your ancestors, the man and his wife, Adam and Eve.

But sin came into the world through the devil and the temptation of our first parents, but God still had you in mind. His plan was to send his Son into the world to heal the creation of the sickness of sin.

Why the Son? Why didn't the Father assume flesh, or the Holy Spirit? Well, John answers this question here: Because it was through the Son that all things were made. All three Persons of the Trinity were involved in the creation, but the Father used the Son to do the work of creating, and since the Son made all things, and "without him nothing was made that has been made," it was not only fitting but necessary that the Maker himself would be the Re-Maker, and so that what had been corrupted would be re-formed by the one who formed.

Also, we can and should think about this act in terms of the restoration of the Divine Image that was lost in the fall. Mankind was created "in the image of God" according to Genesis 1:27, but this was lost in the fall, and people are born in the image of their fallen parents. But the Bible tells us that when faith is created in us, this is "**the putting on of the new self,**" (I am quoting Ephesians 4:24), "**created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness,**" that is, in the restored image of God, although retaining our sinful nature in this lifetime until we die. Our rebirth is rebirth in faith, faith in the Son of God. He is restorer, the sacrifice, the Savior.

And now, consider what he gave up to be one of us. In eternity, and throughout the Old Testament, he enjoyed the existence of pure spirit, appearing whenever it suited him as the Angel of the Lord, or walking unseen, if he desired, among his creation. Deathless, impervious to pain or grief, set apart from enduring cold or being tired, unable to become weak, or to be subject to punishment, or the foul odors of human existence, the foul presence of unbelievers around him-- a thing that cannot ever happen in heaven, because an unbeliever can no more approach the Living God and live than a moth can fly up to a flame and land upon it.

But to rescue us, he became one of us. This was more than a matter of a man putting on a sweater than he can later take off again. For every passage that speaks of the body of Christ speaks in the present tense. "In Christ," Paul teaches us, "all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form" (Col. 2:9).

He did this at his conception, so that we are forced to acknowledge the immense vastness of the infinite Son of God entering into a single egg of a virgin girl, fertilizing it with his presence, with his being, and there apart from the involvement of a human father, was a human man. Only by this miracle could he be born without the stain of sin, as we are told in the book of Hebrews (4:15).

Now, he did not cover himself up with a human form, like a child playing dress-up, but as we confess in the Athanasian Creed, “**not by changing the deity into flesh, but by taking the humanity into God.**” So now, with beating heart, seeing eyes, hearing ears, breathing nostrils, and singing voice, God has become man.

We come to the fourth and final verse of our text and we are taught: “**In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.**” Life was given to all creation through God’s only Son, and life is given again when we put our faith in him.

For the devil tore away our faith as he himself fell in his pride and dissatisfaction for his nearly supreme place in the heavens. Being only one or two steps from the very top did not satisfy Satan, and he desired what would never have occurred to mere man, but God threw him down, and as he fell he saw himself falling past even we puny human beings, and it entered his mind to ravage God’s creation with his own plummet. He tempted Adam and Eve, he ruined every human life, he upended, stained and scarred everything beautiful and good, and he set his putrid stink throughout the universe-- even the other worlds closest to the earth are afflicted with the ruin of rust and wreckage.

You and I cannot lift a finger without the sad stain of sin. The leanings of our lives, Moses tells us, are always evil, all the time. Only those with faith in Christ are able to please God, and by the grace of God, we have been rescued from the wreckage of sin.

The first thing brought forth by God in the creation was light. Here we learn that true light is life in Christ. This is how we see God’s will, God’s works, God’s grace, God’s way. Without life in Christ, there is only death forever. But through Christ, we are brought into the wide and welcoming halls of heaven, where valleys and hills stretch into the far horizon, where the tree of life gives a different fruit with each eternally turning month, and the very leaves of the Tree of Life are for the healing of the nations.

There is no part of heaven, of God’s eternal Paradise, that is not beneficial to every one of us. Every detail is a proclamation of God’s glory and the gospel of the forgiveness of sins. The very distance between windows and doors, ceilings and floors, kneeling beasts and winging, singing angels bringing the saints home to glory is for our benefit and God’s everlasting praise.

This was what we were made for in the first place. This is why God’s Son gave us life, and why when it was necessary, he entered his creation to give us life once again. For all of that beautiful fresh spring and summer of forever was made by God with you in mind, from the very thought of your heavenly Father, in eternity. And this is why Christ became incarnate, taking on our flesh, your flesh, to rescue you. Amen.