

## The Preexistent Christ

John 1:1-5

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### Behold the Wonder Christmas series

Christmas is more than just warm feelings; it's a time for us to recapture the wonder of **"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us"** (John 1:14). In this series, we'll explore how Jesus' coming reveals God's glory, grace, and truth in ways that still transform lives today. As we marvel at the mystery of the Word made flesh, we'll rediscover the awe and hope that make Christmas truly wonderful.

\*Illustration - early Christmas presents, how soon is too soon?

*Advent* - "coming" the incarnation of Christ

-we get to celebrate Christmas all month long...

There's just something about this season...A season of giving, Christmas lights, warmth of traditions, etc.

-the beauty of the incarnation...without it the wonder of Christmas can only take you so far

Deconstruction today - for any number of reasons, Christianity too exclusive, sexuality and gender issues, moral failure in the church...

-but what about Jesus?

\*2 recent converts who were baptized were skeptical before they met Jesus

Jesus is the most well-known figure in human history, Christianity is the most influential religion in the world, The Bible is the most printed, sold, and read book on the planet, the teachings of Jesus are highlighted throughout society even today (i.e. "golden rule" slogan for companies)

-Any serious person seeking after truth has to look into Jesus and come to a conclusion

### Text:

John 1:1-5 - Bold claims

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. **2** He was in the beginning with God. **3** All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. **4** In him was life, and the life was the light of men. **5** The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it...**14** And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth....**17** For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

\*Life changing trip to Israel

What can we know about Jesus outside the Bible? (the importance of apologetics)

Who is He really? *Will the Real Jesus Please Stand Up?*

*Historical Jesus*

“What advantage did the Jews gain by killing their wise king?” –Mara bar Serapion (c. AD 73)

“Christ had been executed in the reign of Tiberius by the procurator Pontius Pilate.” (\*see Luke 3:1) -Cornelius Tacitus [AD 56-120]

Luke 3:1

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee...

“And so he (Ananus, the high priest) convened the judges of the Sanhedrin and brought before them a man named James, the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ, and certain others. He accused them of having transgressed the law and delivered them up to be stoned.” (\*see Matt. 13:55) -Josephus Flavius [AD 37-105]

Matthew 13:55

Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?

“At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good, and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.” –Josephus Flavius

“Jesus escaped to Egypt and a teacher has said Jesus the Nazarene practiced magic and led Israel astray.” –Babylonian Talmud (Sanhedrin 107b)

Jews never denied the miracles but questioned where his power came from...have only named a few, but other writings from the first century

*Other factors –*

**Q.** Why is Jesus so well received in other religions?

(Islam, Hinduism, Ba'hai, Mormonism, Jehovah's Witnesses, etc.)

People always promote Jesus' love and teaching, perhaps even his miracles

**Q.** What kind of Jesus do you believe in?

A Jesus who is only worthy of your worship at Christmas (or Easter)?

A Jesus who never disagrees with you or your lifestyle?

A Jesus of your own choosing? (only love, only judgment, my Jesus this, my Jesus that)

Can't pick and choose what parts we like and don't like

**\*What about Manuscripts** - handwritten copy of an ancient text (or portion of it)

Jesus - disciples began 30 years after, still had eyewitness to account for details. Over 300 years, 24,000 ancient Biblical manuscripts (mile high)

\*There is greater quantity and quality of manuscript evidence for the NT than any other ancient book...by far (also Dead Sea Scrolls)

(the more you have the less likely it is that they could have been corrupted, or taken from legend)

**\*What about Archaeology** - the archaeological record helps establish the historicity of Scripture

-helps us to make reasonable claims as to whether a certain event happened or not (objective)

-Bible, not just an ancient text but a historical record (think genealogies, laws, numbers, places, people, etc.)

\*David - "house of David" inscription found in 1993 (9th century B.C.)

Hezekiah (didn't know if he existed before) - royal seal found in 2009

Pontius Pilate - inscription found "prefect of Judea"

Only 10-12% of Biblical sites actually unearthed (unearthing Pool of Siloam while we were there)

**Breakdown: John 1:1-5**

\*Jesus' genealogy - Matthew 1 (42 generations) back to Abraham

Luke 3 - all the way back to Adam

\*Jesus goes back even further  
John - eternity past

In this passage:

**We will look at who He is and what He's done**

### **V 1-2 Who he is: personhood**

**v. 1** - In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

#### **1. Jesus has always existed**

Just like Genesis 1:1

Psalms 33:6

By the word of the Lord the heavens were made,  
and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

\*John writing from Ephesus, Jews and Gentiles alike familiar with Greek philosophy

*Logos* - God's spoken word, the principle of reason, order, and meaning in the universe

Greek - the rational mind that rules the universe

Revelation 19:13 - He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

*"was with God"* differentiates the Word from God

*"Word was God"* shows that He is God

#### **1. Jesus has always existed**

#### **2. Jesus is God**

**v. 2** - He was in the beginning with God.

reinforces verse 1

1. His preexistence
2. His distinctiveness
3. His deity

God the Son, the second member of the Trinity (and the Holy Spirit)

John 8:58 - ...before Abraham was, I AM  
John 10:30 - I and the Father are One

Daniel - "Ancient of Days"

Revelation 1:8 - "I am the Alpha and the Omega," (beginning and the end) says the Lord God, "who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty."

False teaching

\*Arianism - Jesus was a created being

Mormonism - early 1800s, angel Moroni appeared to Joseph Smith, Jesus a created being  
Book of Mormon: another testament of Jesus Christ, the doctrine and the covenants, pearl of great price

Jehovah's Witness - early 1900s, Jesus was a created being - and was actually Michael the archangel

Jehovah's Witnesses - the watchtower publication, the 144,000

New World Translation: "...the Word was with God and the Word was a god"

Galatians 1:6-9

<sup>6</sup>I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—<sup>7</sup>not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. <sup>8</sup>But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. <sup>9</sup>As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

2 Corinthians 11:4 - ...Satan disguises himself as an "angel of light"

Islam - Gabriel supposedly gave Muhammed the Quran in the early 600s

\*Islamic takeover in the Middle East and Africa

Nigerian pastor Tony Oyedepo conversation, ways to pray:

1. God would strengthen Christians in Northern Nigeria (small number)
2. God would strengthen churches in Central Nigeria (where majority of persecution is happening)
3. Political leaders would address the imbalance taking place (President and VP both Muslim)
4. God would revive the Church in Southern Nigeria as they have become like the church of Laodicea (lukewarm)

To ward off false teaching: Council of Nicaea 325 AD

Nicene Creed - I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made.

God the father through the son (we've looked at who he is, personhood)

### **V3 What he's done - creative work**

**v. 3** - All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.

created everything "*ex nihilo*" out of nothing

\*species still being discovered today (about 15,000 a year)

all inclusive nature of Jesus' creative work

Father was initiator of Creation and Jesus the direct agent of it

Colossians 1:15-20 - **15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

**16** For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. **17** He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. **18** He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything. **19** For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, **20** and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

Hebrews 1:1-3 - God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, **2** in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. **3** And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

- 1. Jesus has always existed**
- 2. Jesus is God**
- 3. Jesus is the Creator and Sustainer of all things**

I Corinthians 8:6 - yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist.

Acts 17:28 - "for in Him we live and move and have our being"

Romans 11:36 - For from him and through him and to him are all things...

#### **V 4-5 What's he's done - redemptive work**

**v. 4** - In him was life, and the life was the light of men.

all life is derived from and given by Jesus

light - represents holiness, revelation and truth

\*God's word creates life (Gen 1:11,20,26) and Jesus has the right to give eternal life (Jn 6:27, 10:28)

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- 3. Jesus is the Creator and Sustainer of all things**
- 4. Jesus has the right to give eternal life**

**v. 5** - The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

light v. darkness - ongoing spiritual, unseen battle between good and evil

Isaiah 9:2

The people who walked in darkness  
have seen a great light;  
those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness,  
on them has light shone.

John 8:12

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

- 1. Jesus has always existed**
- 2. Jesus is God**
- 3. Jesus is the Creator and Sustainer of all things**
- 4. Jesus has the right to give eternal life**
- 5. Jesus is the Light of the World**

\*I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God. That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said

the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic — on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg — or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God, but let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. —CS Lewis

Liar, lunatic, or Lord (John 14:6)

Prophecy: the incarnation of Christ (the coming Messiah)

Isaiah 7:14 - Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. (God with us)

9:6

For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given;  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Jesus spoke of this:

On the road to Emmaus after his resurrection (hiding his identity, asking questions, they hoped He was the Messiah, rumors of a resurrection)

Luke 24:25-27

And he said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup>Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?” **And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.**

-Some of these literal appearances of Jesus such as a Theophany/Christophany

I Cor. 10:4

For I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, **2** and all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, **3** and all ate the same spiritual food, **4** and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank from the spiritual Rock that followed them, and the Rock was Christ.

In Joshua 5, the commander of the Lord’s army appears to him

Perhaps the “Angel of the Lord” appearances

Daniel 3:24-25

Then King Nebuchadnezzar was astonished and rose up in haste. He declared to his counselors, "Did we not cast three men bound into the fire?" They answered and said to the king, "True, O king." **25** He answered and said, "But I see four men unbound, walking in the midst of the fire, and they are not hurt; and the appearance of the fourth is like a son of the gods."

It was prophesied the Messiah would die (Psalms, Isaiah, etc.)

\*The Resurrection - the linch pin of the Christian faith...

If we can trust the Bible, then we know it's true (the disciples gave their lives for this)

**Action Steps:**

1. Dive deeper into God's Word this Advent season (Bible reading plan, Advent booklet "Behold the Lamb" by Ray Pritchard)
2. Invite someone to church this Christmas (invite cards)
3. Prayerfully consider your role in fulfilling the Great Commission (whether short term or long term, be bold, take risks)

\*Mormonism - when someone goes on mission for 2 years with the LDS church, their friends and family throw a party and hold a celebration...only to spread a false gospel.

So, what do you believe about Jesus? Do you believe he is truly God? Have you made Him Savior AND Lord?

John 20

**30** Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; **31** but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

The most important question you will ever answer: from Matthew 16  
He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

**Communion** - Christmas Connection - the incarnation (He came bodily)