

Christ the Source of All Things
John 1:1-14

Advent: the season we turn special attention to the promise of God to redeem for Himself a people of God according to the sovereign purpose of God by the power of God through the Son of God for the glory of God.

We often think of Christmas and the coming of Christ into the world as something God did and does primarily for our benefit.

- We hear the words of John 3:16, *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life*, and we think we are the primary target of God's promise.
- We are the lost sinners subject to divine justice and wrath who can never save ourselves.
- We are the corrupt of heart whose lives and good works will never match the holiness and glory of God.
- We are the moral rebels, created in the image of God, created to bear His image in the world, against whose image we rebelled and turned away, like sheep gone astray, seeking our own way.
- We often see in the gospel record the coming of Christ as the coming of a Savior, the Son of God, who alone can rescue us from the punishment of death our sin rightly deserves.

In reality, the coming of the Son of God into the world—God in human flesh come to redeem humanity and save us from death and damnation for sin—the record of God's saving grace in Christ is really more about Him than about us.

Before the world was created,

- before the first second ticked away on the clock of time,
- before the first angel wing unfurled and fluttered in heavenlies or the first trumpet blew,
- before the first sounds of praise soared from holy lips in honor of Him Who sits upon the throne,
- in eternity past as Father, Son, and Spirit existed in singular, Trinitarian glory, infinite love, and unbounded perfection;
- before the garden, the fruit, and the Fall;
- before salvation and wrath and hope and joy were ever a thing in the created world,

God the Father determined to manifest His glory and express His incalculable love for the Son with a gift—a redeemed humanity who would love and value and worship the Son in all His worthiness forever, time without end.

Paul writes,

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. ⁷ In him we have redemption

through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. Ephesians 1:3-10 (ESV)

Before God created anything at all, God made a promise to redeem and unite all creation in Christ. The promise of a redeemed people was made to Jesus before ever a single person came into being, because the promise of the Father was not primarily for people but for Christ.

Christmas, the coming of the Son of God into the world according to the will and purpose of God for the glory of God is a major chapter in the story of the eternal Father's love for the one and only Son. Advent is the season for us to wonder in awe at the marvelous work of Father God Who, in His divine wisdom, has worked in the world and in you and me to present us as a gift of love to His Son. God present Christ to us in the Incarnation so that through faith in Jesus, He may present us to Christ!

Just as in the last few weeks we have asked with Israel in the Exodus, "Who is the LORD that we should obey Him?" we now ask, "Who is Christ that I should love His coming with my life?" We will consider over the next five weeks, five life-changing truths about Jesus that have the power to mold the existence of every one who believes.

- Christ the Source of All Things
- Christ the Savior of All Men
- Christ the Shepherd of All Hearts
- Christ the Sovereign Over All Wills
- Christ Supreme Over All

We begin today where any consideration of divine motive and action must always begin. We begin where the Bible begins in its telling of God and His work to redeem people for His glory. We begin where John begins as He recounts Christ and His role in redemption.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1, ESV)

Everything we have seen in God self-revelation in Exodus is true of the Word. The Word bears all the attributes, all the character, all the purposes, all the Personhood of God revealed to Egypt and Israel in the Exodus and the pages of the Old Testament. The God of Israel and the Word of God in John are one and the same. The Word is of the same essence, eternal, self-existent, infinite, glorious, holy, the sovereign Creator God.

Though God and the Word are one in essence, there is a remarkable, discernable, describable difference in their roles relative to each other and to creation. John tells us, "***The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.***" Paul describes the effort of the Word like this,

...Christ Jesus,⁶ ... though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a

servant, being born in the likeness of men. Philippians 2:-7 (ESV)

And you know the ultimate earthly purpose for His action in taking on human flesh was to surrender His life and body to death on the cross, an acceptable substitute sacrifice for all of us, having lived the life of holiness and faith in unbroken love with the Father, a life we were created to live but cannot. He died in our place, on our behalf, satisfying the justice God's glory and holiness demand. He died in our place, on our behalf, the death we deserve, God treating His beloved Son as though He in His body had personally sinned each and every sin the rest of us have ever or will ever commit.

So precious to the Son is the Father's gift of love He willingly and gladly gives His life for the sake of the gift, that the Father's will to give such a gift would be fulfilled, to the glory of the Father and the Son. That's the wonder and awe of Advent. Advent declares the love of the Father for the Son and the love of the Son for the gift the Father gives, a people redeemed from sin—a gift so precious and worthy of the Father to give and the Son to receive the Son gives His life to receive it!

The Word of God Incarnate, Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God; He is the sovereign God who is the Source of all life and light in all creation. He is the One through Whom and for Whom all things exist. Paul informed the early Christians at Colossae

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. Colossians 1:16 (ESV)

All things were created by Him and through Him. He is the Source of all things. But He is also the reason for all created things. They were created by the will of the Father for the benefit of the Son, for His glory, for His joy. The Father's promise in creation is not primarily a promise to creation that involves the Son. It is primarily a promise to the Son that involves creation!

Advent reminds us we were created by Him for Him! Advent reminds us of the otherwise indescribable love of the Father for the Son and the equally glorious love of the Son for the Father expressed in infinite, unconditional love for the redeemed humanity chosen by the Father for the Son. Why would the Son of God set aside the glories of heaven, leave His eternal dwelling with the Father, the Source of life be born of a virgin, the unbounded glory be wrapped in swaddling cloths, the One for whom the earth is a footstool be laid in a manger, nailed to a tree, buried in a tomb? Why would the Way, the Truth, and the Life walk to Calvary, surrender to a lie, and give up His life for the liars? There is but one reason, His inestimable love for the Father and the gift of love the Father chose to give Him, the gift of humanity redeemed through His blood.

May I point you in this direction? You and I and all who believe are not merely the recipients of the gift of grace and Spirit. You and I and all who believe are God's Christmas gift to His Son. All those whom God chooses for salvation, new life, and eternal life through faith in Jesus are the Father's gift of love for the Son.

Without a Savior it is impossible for us to be saved. Without a Redeemer it is impossible for us to be redeemed. Without faith it is impossible for us to please God. God has provided a Savior, a Redeemer in Jesus Christ. God also provides us with faith to believe and put our trust in Christ. In order to present to His Son the love-gift of His choosing, God has provided everything necessary for that gift to exist. God has provided all that sinful human beings need to be redeemed.

John writes,

⁹ The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. ¹¹ He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ¹² But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, ¹³ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. John 1:9-13 (ESV).

God acts in each life He chooses to draw that person to Christ and faith in Him. Through faith God grants salvation and eternal life to all who believe. Then God continues to work in each redeemed believers life to sustain and prepare them for their final presentation as the Father's love-gift for the Son. Each is filled with the Spirit of God and is day after day transformed through the power of the Word and the Spirit into the likeness of Jesus. Nothing is allowed to sabotage the Father's plan for His Son or for this gift of love. Nothing.

³¹ What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? ³³ Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? ³⁶ As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:31-39 (ESV)

God's elect, redeemed people are the Father's gift of love to the Son, and just as nothing stopped the Son from coming and giving His life for the Father's gift, nothing will stop the Son from coming again and receiving the gift to Himself once and for all. Christ, His love for the Father, His love for the Father's gift, is the Source of life, of salvation, of hope, and confidence, and peace, and joy to all who believe.