

**MINISTRY BY MAIL**  
**Lutheran Conference of Confessional Fellowship**  
[www.lutheranlccf.org](http://www.lutheranlccf.org)  
**Sunday after Christmas, December 30, 2012**

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(Hymns found in The Lutheran Hymnal, CPH, 1941)  
Hymns: 76, 70:1, 95, 294, 239.  
Lessons: Genesis 1:1-5, Hebrews 1:1-13, John 1:1-14.  
Sermon Text: John 1:1-3.  
Sermon by Pastor Robert Mehltrittter

In the name of Jesus Christ, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

At the very beginning of his Gospel, John takes us way back in history. So far back, in fact, that nothing except God existed. ***"In the beginning."*** John is the same man who also, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, wrote the book of Revelation, a book which talks about the end of all created things and the beginning of eternity for humans, which will be spent either in heaven or in hell.

Before anything existed. Before man, or anything God created. Before the world, or the solar system, or the universe existed.

John simply writes, by inspiration, ***"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."***

Well, yes, it is simple words. But they say SO much! Today let's begin our study of the Gospel of John by talking about

**THE WORD OF GOD INCARNATE**

1. **Jesus Christ is the "Word of God"**
2. **He was present at creation.**
3. **He lived among us to redeem us.**

John wastes no time getting to the heart of his gospel, and the heart of the entire Bible. As you heard in our gospel lesson, he jumps right into the middle of Jesus Christ and all he is and does.

John uses the word "Word" in such a way that it can have two references, and he uses both references to point to the same thing – the same person – Jesus Christ, called the Word of God.

We need only read to verse 14 to verify that ***"the Word"*** is Jesus Christ: ***"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.*** [John then continues by talking about his personal relationship with Jesus:] ***We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."*** (John 1:14)

That makes it unmistakable that Jesus Christ is the Word of God. You may hear of the term "Logos", or "Logos of God". Logos is the Greek word for "word". From this word we get our English word "logic". The "logic" of God comes to us by his Logos, his Word, meaning both Jesus himself and the written and spoken word. If we seek to understand this by explaining more than what the Scriptures, the "Word of God" tells us, we fall into all sorts of errors.

We don't often use this term "Word" or "Logos" today for the Son of God. Part of the reason for this is because of false teachings and misuse of the word "logos" by Gnostic {pronounced nos' tick} heretics starting in the early centuries after Christ lived on earth. Gnosticism (nos' tis sism) is, in very general terms, a whole group of heresies, with all sorts of variations which teach that some kind of superior knowledge is necessary for salvation, including the idea that you need to know and understand the right "words". Paul in Romans tells us plainly and simply: ***"Consequently, faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ."*** (Romans 10:17) In his letter to the Colossians, Paul condemns the false idea that Jesus

Christ and faith in Jesus Christ was not enough to be saved eternally, and plainly teaches that Jesus Christ is all we need for eternal salvation. Sometimes Gnosticism speaks of Jesus Christ as “the Word” and speaks of some kind of superior knowledge to understand Jesus as “the Word”. Well, we must simply say, in agreement with the Scriptures, that Jesus Christ is called the Word, and he is “the Word”.

We read that Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity, was ***“In the beginning,”*** when only God existed. The Word – Jesus Christ WAS God.

***“The Word was with God, and the Word was God.”*** Simple words, but they communicate so much to us. The Word was face to face with God. He existed in a mutual relationship with the Father, distinct, yet one with the Father. Here we have two divine persons of the one true God interacting. The Word was together with God, yet the Word was God. What the Word was, God was also, and what God was, the Word was: the same essence. We have here one God and two of the three persons we have come to call the Trinity. The Holy Spirit will be introduced later in this chapter of John’s Gospel at the baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist: ***“Then John gave this testimony: ‘I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit. I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.’”*** (John 1:32-34)

How does God communicate with us, with any human? He uses words. He uses language. God doesn’t come into people by some sort of mental telepathy or mental exercises, as if he were just coming into the mind. God uses words – and his Word.

The Word is the means by which God communicates with us. It is his message to us, his divine revelation, his wise counsel. He gives all that to us through his Son. Dozens and dozens of times the Scriptures tell us “The Word of the Lord came” to one of God’s prophets, or priests, or kings and even to simple believers. We read in Psalm 119:105 ***“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”*** Isaiah, quoting the Lord when he spoke to him tells us: ***“my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”*** (Isaiah 55:11)

It is the recorded Word of God that teaches us about Christ as “Word”. Proverbs chapter 8 speaks of divine “wisdom” and the unmistakable similarity and correlation between Jesus, the Word of God, and divine wisdom: ***“I was appointed from eternity, from the beginning, before the world began.”*** (Proverbs 8:23)

God’s Word is personified in Christ. We cannot know God without Christ. Jesus Christ reveals the truth of God to us. God’s Word reveals the truth of God to us. They are one and the same. If you want to see God, look to Jesus. If you want to come close to God, come close to Jesus. If you want to live according to God’s will, live with Jesus. ***“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.”*** (Colossians 1:15) Jesus Christ is God made man, God manifested, God revealed so that all flesh may see him. When he walked this earth, people saw Jesus. They saw God. Today you and I see him by faith. On judgment day we and all flesh shall see him face to face, believers to their joy, unbelievers to their damnation.

He is no creature, no part of the creation, for He existed when no part of creation existed. He is the Word which God spoke from eternity, begotten of God from eternity. And He existed, not as a dead substance or thing, but he was alive and active. He is the only-begotten Son of God. And he was in the beginning. He had no beginning and has no end, for God has no beginning and no end. As we confess in the words of the Athanasian Creed, which you can find on page 53 in the front of The Lutheran Hymnal, “Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate”, that is, uncreated. And using the words of Scripture, we further confess that these three persons are eternal, almighty, and none is greater than the other. Yet, along with Scripture we confess “the Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father alone, not made nor created, but begotten. [And] the Holy Ghost is of the Father and of the Son, neither made nor created nor begotten, but proceeding.” And that is about all we can say. Further attempts may just lead us away from the scriptures and confuse us, and tempt us to use our own logic and wisdom to understand God, rather than letting his Word speak to us.

Jesus Christ was not created but present and active in creation. On each of the six days of creation we read ***“And God said”*** (Genesis 1:3 through 1:29). That shows the presence of the Son of God also at creation.

You heard in our epistle lesson: *"In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe."* (Hebrews 1:1-2) The King James Version tells us *"by whom also he made the worlds."* Jesus, the Word of God, plainly was present and active at creation. Our Old Testament lesson as well as our sermon text makes it clear to us exactly when this was: *"in the beginning"*.

We have just celebrated the birth of the one of whom John tells us in verse 14: *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us."* This Son of God, the Word of God was made human through his birth of the Virgin Mary and was made man. We use the word "incarnate" to speak of Jesus coming to be a human. Incarnate means "come into the flesh". You see the root of the word carnal – referring to "the flesh", and the root of the word carnivore – referring to flesh-eating animals, and the root of the word carnation – originally a "flesh-colored" flower all in the word "incarnate". We will sing about Jesus in our last hymn:

"O Word of God Incarnate,  
O Wisdom from on high,  
O Truth unchanged, unchanging  
O Light of our dark sky,  
We praise Thee for the radiance  
That from the hallowed page,  
A lantern to our footsteps  
Shines on from age to age." (The Lutheran Hymnal 294:1)

And why was He made human? He came to redeem all mankind by his sinless life and by his sufferings and death. We, who are sinners, find redemption from our sins through Jesus Christ, the Word of God. We find the assurance of the forgiveness of our sins in the Word of God who died for us, and we find forgiveness for our sins taught in the written Word of God. When we confess our sins and receive absolution or forgiveness from the minister as from God himself, we can be assured that our sins are forgiven before God. This is because *"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."* You and I have seen his glory because the Word of God was proclaimed, taught, told, preached to us and the Holy Spirit worked faith through that Word.

So what does this all mean for you? You know, you have heard, and you have come to believe who Jesus Christ is and what he has done for you. Never forget that you have everything he wants you to know about himself revealed in the Word of God, the Bible. He is, after all, the Word. So what are you going to read this week? Will it be about Jesus' life on earth? Read in the gospels. Will it be about his teachings? In addition to the gospels, read especially the Acts and the epistles of the New Testament. Will it be about his final victory over the devil, death, and all sin? Read in the book of Revelation. Will it be about God's promises to send his only-begotten Son to earth? Read in the Old Testament. Will it be praise of God and his Son? Read in the Psalms.

So you see, not only is Jesus "the Word", but he also caused "the Word", that is, the printed Words of God to be recorded for us. And that Word of God tells us that Jesus Christ redeemed us from all our sins. May that be your joy as you look forward to days of the New Year about to begin. Amen.