Logos & The Light — Delivery Transcript

John 1:1–9 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Wednesday, December 24, 2025 · *Standalone Sermon (Christmas Eve)*

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The best theology of all of the hymns and all of the hymnal. I don't know if you would agree with that. There are other Christmas songs I could do without. One of them we were listening to on the way to Roby for Christmas Eve dinner and it was sending my firstborn son over the top. It was Mariah Carey's all I Want for Christmas is you. He's like, turn it off, turn it off. And so guess what mom did? Turned it up real loud. It was pretty awesome. Christmas is full of those kind of things, the nostalgia and the memories and the classic songs, you know 'em by heart, and some even the ones you love to hate, like Mariah Carey's.

Still kind of warms you up a little bit, right? This is all the sentimentality and I said earlier that sentimentality isn't all that bad. Nostalgia is not a bad thing. It can be a good thing. In fact it can be somewhat of a gift. It's the one time of year even this service, the one time of year where you kind of know what's going to happen. You almost know what people are going to wear. Kids are going to have matching shirts or outfits of some sort. You probably know what I'm about to preach on, what text I'm going to read.

You probably anticipated the text I read just a minute ago. You knew what songs we were going to sing. And in a in a world that's full of chaos and just crazy. And for many of you, a lives that are just unpredictable and hard and difficult, that familiarity is a gift, right? It's like a warm blanket that you can put on. And just kind of rest for a minute in that and I think that's good. I don't think that's something you should be ashamed of or run from or diminish. But just as it's a beautiful, wonderful gift, it can also be a potential liability, in that the sentimentalization of Christmas, certainly the commercialization of Christmas, can blind us if we're not careful of the original offense of Christmas.

It was, if anything, in the first century when that first Christmas night came when Jesus Christ first entered into the world, it was anything but sentimental. It wasn't any sentimentality whatsoever. It wasn't very warm. It wasn't very fuzzy. And the message that it was sending to the world that we just read from the angels was also kind of disruptive and

offensive. For certain people who heard it. And I don't want us to miss that. So for all of the sin mentality and all the nostalgia, I'm all pro all that. I want us to put ourselves back in the shoes of that first century group of people and what they might have felt.

And to help us do that, I want to read a passage that is in John's gospel, John's Christmas story, if you will. It's very different from Matthew and Luke. Mark doesn't even have a Christmas story. He cuts right to the chase. He goes right to John the Baptist preparing the way of the Lord. Matthew tells the story of Christmas from the perspective of David. I'm sorry, from the perspective of Joseph, who's in the line of David. Whereas Luke tells the Christmas story from the perspective of Mary. But John tells the Christmas story from neither of those sides because he's writing to a different audience, a Greek-speaking audience steeped in Greek philosophy.

And I think has a different agenda, a different purpose. And so here's how he records that first night of Christmas. He says in John chapter 1, verse 1. In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning, and all things were created through him. And apart from him, not one thing was created that has been created. In him was life. And that life was the light of men. That light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The two things that John makes clear about Christmas that are disruptive and unsettling for that audience and even for us today. Are that number one, we are sinners in need of a savior. We have a sin problem that none of us can fix ourselves. We need someone bigger than us, better than us, to save us from that problem. And then secondly, we have a tendency to like the darkness. We live in the darkness. We sometimes don't even want to come out of the darkness because the darkness can make us feel a little bit comfortable, and when the light comes, we can shine it.

Just a little bit, our impulse is to reject it. And both of those things you see in John chapter one. And you see Jesus as the response to both of those things in two different ways. One, John calls him the word, it's a Greek word logos, and then he uses the word light. Now just want us to think about those two words for just a few minutes and then we're going to light our Christ candle and sing our song and nostalgia will reign supreme, I promise you. But I just wanted us to think about those those words.

The word logos this is again it's a Greek word. We don't usually use it today. There's a Bible software called logos. Bible software, it's excellent, but it's a word that meant word in the Greek language. It just meant word, speech, utterance. But what had happened in the years leading up to Jesus' entry into the world through Greek philosophers like Plato and Aristotle And Epicurus and all these different people, they had infused that word, logos, with dense philosophical significance. And it had come to represent what you might call the divine rationality of the universe.

Guys like Plato and Aristotle, they looked at the Greek pantheon and they said, this is nonsense. You know, gods are not like that. Gods are not humans on steroids. If there is a God, there's got to be one source of truth and one source of goodness and beauty because there is this innate Intuition that there is a objective truth and goodness and beauty out there. And whatever that is, whoever is kind of holding that together, that's what God is. And that came to be known as the logos. The logos in Greek philosophy was that Cosmic centering of truth and goodness and beauty.

And John, writing to a Greek audience, says that's Jesus is the logos. But he wasn't just talking about the logos in the Greek philosophical sense. He's also, in the way he structures the verse we just read, going all the way back to the Hebrew Bible in the very first book and the very first verse in Genesis chapter 1. Remember what Genesis 1 1 says. In the beginning, God. In the beginning, God what? Created the heavens and the earth. And how did God create the heavens and the earth? He created it with a spoken word.

It says in Genesis chapter 1, the earth was formless and empty, and darkness covered the surface of the watery depths. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. And then God what? He said, let there be light. And there was light. He said this and there was this and it was good. And Moses repeats that refrain again and again. God said, and there was and it was good. God said, and there was, and it was good. And so John is saying that same thing. He's saying what happened in Genesis happened in Bethlehem.

The word who created all things became created. Not created in the sense like he had a beginning, but he took on flesh. He took the form of a servant in that he condescended to us. He tabernacled. He made God this immaterial, eternal, ineffable majestic divine power and he put flesh on it. He became meat so that we could see him and touch him and know him and all of that's taking place in the incarnation. And that's really for the original audience a very mind-blowing claim that Jesus is the spoken word of God in Genesis 1:1 that created everything that we see today.

He is the word. He is the logos. He is eternal. He is uncreated and yet he is not he is not the same as the father right he's distinct from the father but like god the father he is eternal and he's uncreated. And so there's there's one God but these two distinct persons that are at work in the creation, and that same logos took on flesh. In Bethlehem on that first Christmas night. Between God the Father and God the Son, there's a unity of essence and a distinction of persons. Now, this is a paradox.

Could we agree on that? In fact, it's a paradox a lot of people cannot abide. And even in the first century, you had people who just could not accept the plain biblical teaching that John's giving us here, that Jesus is co-eternal like God the Father. That Jesus is uncreated, that Jesus is distinct from the Father, and yet one essence with the Father. They could not swallow that. It was too difficult. It was blowing their brains up. And so they began to claim

otherwise. There was a guy named Arius who popularized a heresy that today is known as Arianism, and he essentially argued that Jesus was God-like, but he wasn't God in the same way that the Father was God, but God the Father created Jesus.

He had a definite beginning, and that before that beginning there was a time in which he was not. And this heresy still reigns supreme today in certain traditions like Latter-day Saints, Mormonism, and Jehovah's Witnesses and oneness theological traditions of various sorts. All because there is an offense to that message, if you really think about it. To believe that for us to be saved and for us to come out of the dark God himself had to take on flesh. That is that is a powerful, powerful claim. The problem with Arians The view of Arianism and those things is John 1, right?

We just read it. The word was with God and the Word was what? He was God. And just in case you missed it, a little bit later in John chapter 1 verse 14, he says the only God, no one has ever seen God. This is John chapter 1, verse 18. The only, the one and only Son, Jesus, who is himself God and is at the Father's side, he has revealed God the Father. And so this view gaining traction in that first two, three hundred years as Jesus rose from the dead.

Caused the church at that time to get together. They had a big meeting called the Council of Nicaea And at the count I know you probably don't care about all this church history. What you're talking about on Christmas Eve. Get back to the nostalgia. I'll get back in just a second. But just hold with me for a second. At the Council of Nicaea, you had 360 some odd bishops who were representing who knows how many churches all across the known world at that time. Time and they got together and they debated what does the Bible actually say?

Does the Bible say that Jesus had a beginning or does the Bible not say that? Does he say does the Bible say that Jesus is uncreated and eternal just like God the Father And that he's begotten from God the Father, but he is not made in the sense that other creatures are made. And they hashed it out. And this is the statement that they came up with. I think it's a really important statement. It's called the Nicene Creed. It reads, we believe in one God the Father, Almighty, maker of all things, visible and invisible, and we believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Notice this language, begotten from the Father, the only begotten from the Father. That is from the substance of the Father. Notice this phrase: God from God. Jesus is God from God. Light from light. True God from true God begotten in that he comes from the Father but he's not made he's one substance with the Father and then he goes on to say, for those who say that he was not, they anathematize and basically say you're a heretic if you if you believe otherwise. So they're making some claims about Jesus, namely that Jesus is light from light, true God from true God, that Jesus was begotten but not made.

He wasn't created like the other parts of the created world that had been created. And that God the Father and God the Son are one substance. Okay? Now why is that so important when it comes to Christmas? The reason that Jesus could not just be a demigod, a souped-up human being, a great example of what a human being should look like and how they should live the reason that God himself had to enter into the story is because of the problem that you and I face. We have a problem in that every single human has been Stricken and sickened by this thing called sin.

Original sin, we're born into it, we are predisposed to it, we're inclined towards evil and rebellion and while you may not be as bad as the guy to your left or to your right, certainly if it's your spouse, you want to be careful with that. But while you may not be as bad as the person in front of you or behind you, the reality is all of us are kind of turned inward on the self and we're turned away. From God. And because all of us have been tainted by sin, and because to some degree all of us have been overcome by sin, that means none of us could triumph over sin or be the hero that fixes the sin problem all of us.

Have it had to be someone else. It had to be something else. And that someone, John is saying, is Jesus. He's the logos. He's the he's he's God of very God, light of very light, but he took on flesh and he dwelt among us. And as the logos, he did what none of us could do. He was unlike us in some very important ways. He was uncreated. All of us had a definite beginning. Jesus never did. And he was sinless. All of us have an inclination towards sin and eventually sin against the Holy God, but Jesus never did.

And the reason we needed someone like that is because the nature of our condition and the offense of our sin made it such that none of us were would have any hope outside of some kind of out external deliverer like Jesus. Analogies I've heard used of the seriousness of our sin. The seriousness of any sin is not really determined by the action itself, but the person that you offend. So if you knock a hole through your wall, mom or dad might get mad, your spouse might get mad, but that's about it.

If you took that same fist and you knocked a police officer in the head that's going to be a little more serious, right? You're probably going to go to jail at least, pay a big fine. If you took that fist and you knocked the senator in the head, it may depends on the senator, maybe he deserved it, maybe he didn't, but you would you would get a more federal permanent crime because of or more federal punishment because of the scale of the crime of the person that you punched. If you did the president that's even worse.

Or if you did a president qi in China, the communist government, or some kind of king, tyrant of that nature, then it would be high treason and you would be executed the action's the same. All you did was punch someone, punch something, but the person you sinned against made the offense even greater. And that we sin against people is bad. But every time we sin against people, we sin against people who are created in God's image, and in that way

we sin against God Himself. We violate His design. And because we've sinned against an eternal God, a holy God, a God who's unlike any other created thing in the world, it makes that offense all the worse, all the more condemning.

And none of us have the goods to make atonement for that sin. The only way to make atonement for an eternally offensive offense is for someone who is eternal and uncreated to pay the penalty for that offense. And Jesus is the only one uniquely capable of doing that thing. It's what the book of Hebrews talks about, that he's this eternal, perfect priest. Who made one sacrifice once and for all, and that's why Jesus had to be the logos. He had to be the Word. But he doesn't just say that. He says Jesus is also the light.

Look again at verse 3. In him was life, and this light was the light of men. That light shines in the darkness, and yet the darkness did not overcome it. Talks about John the Baptist in verse 6, the man sent from God, his name was John. He came as a witness to testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. He was of the light, but he came to testify about the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. I don't know if you notice this, but he uses the word light seven different times.

That's not accidental. It's very intentional. Jesus is the light. He's not just the logos, he's also the light. The light is separate from the darkness. The light represents order and beauty and goodness and truth, the darkness represents the opposite of those things. And the darkness and the light have been in tension from the very beginning. Remember what Genesis said in Genesis chapter one. In the beginning God created, and he said, let there be light. There was light, what was there? There was darkness. Darkness was hovering over the face of the waters.

And so the light has been overcoming darkness from the very beginning. But what John is saying is human beings, because of our sin nature, are inclined towards the darkness. In fact, we're so inclined towards the darkness when someone who is light enters into our darkness, we have a tendency to say thanks but no thanks. Look at what he says in verse 10. He was in the world, and the world was created through him, and yet the world did not recognize him. He came to his own, the Jewish people, but his own people did not receive him.

Why? Because we're inclined towards evil. This is an offensive statement we don't like to hear on Christmas. And I hate to say it, I hate to bring it up in terms of all this nostalgia and all this, you know, fun and games. But the reality is we were born with a problem none of us could fix, and because of that problem, we don't like the light being shown on us it's inconvenient. It exposes us. It exposes our flaws. It exposes our weaknesses. It shows us that we're lost. It shows us that we've taken a different course than we should have taken.

And that's embarrassing. And so what we tend to do is to reject the life. But John is saying Jesus is the light. And if you're going to receive Jesus, you're going to have to let him draw

near to you, and as you draw near to him, he's going to expose some things, but those things need to be exposed if you're going to know how to live life is in Jesus. Our vision statement is to connect every person to the new life that is in Jesus And that that new life is found in a person.

It's not his teaching. He doesn't say Jesus brought the light. He doesn't say the teachings of Jesus will become the light. He says Jesus is the light. And Satan has been trying to undermine that light and vanquish that light from the very beginning. All the way back in Genesis. From chapter four onward to Matthew one, causing fear in Joseph's heart, causing fear in Mary's heart, creating murderous rage in the heart of Herod. From the very beginning, Satan has been trying to extinguish the light that is in Jesus, but the light what?

It overcomes the darkness. The light always overcomes the darkness. The light has come into the world. The people love darkness rather than light. But Jesus was the life, and that life was the light of men. John 8, verse 12, Jesus says, I'm the light of the world, and anyone who follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. He shows us how to love, when the world shows us how to hate. He shows us how to forgive when the world shows us to hold a grudge.

He shows us how to serve when the world is climbing ladders. He shows us the word of truth in a world full of lies. Jesus is the true light. That never flickers and never fades. And so as we light these Advent candles, we remind ourselves of that very truth. Candle of hope. Finds its fulfillment in Jesus. He is the promises of God made true and fulfilled. We light the candle of peace. Remind ourselves true peace is in Jesus. He has taken our hostility towards God and the enity between God and man, and he has made reconciliation.

He has made peace through his own death and has shed blood on the cross. When we light the pink candle, the candle of joy. We remind ourselves that true joy is centered in Jesus. Why? Because he's the light. He's the light. He's the promise that there will be a better tomorrow, that it can be okay, even when it's not okay. Because of what Jesus Christ has done, is doing, and will ultimately complete. And then finally, he is the light of love. True love finds its perfect fulfillment in the person of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, no greater love is anyone than this, than that he lay down his life for his friends. And he looks to his disciples and he says, I've called you my friends. Love is that which seeks the welfare of the other person. You don't really love somebody if you're going to let them live in the dark. And for some of us here tonight, Jesus is in love, calling out to you, saying. Come home. I'll show you the way back to where you really belong. You'll never naturally get there on your own.

We're always inclined to get lost along the way. You'll never be able to fix yourself. It doesn't matter how much money you have. It doesn't matter how many friends you have. You have a

problem that only Jesus can fix. And so how do you receive the light? Well, John says it this way we've seen his glory, glory as of the one and only from the Father who's full of grace and truth. And then he says, to those who received him, to those who would believe in his name, to them he gave the right to become children of God.

And so tonight as we light this Christ candle, the way of salvation in the Bible is pretty simple. The way to receive the light is to receive Jesus. To believe that you are a sinner, separated from a holy God, and that you are hopeless to save yourself. To believe that God sent Jesus into the world to do what you and I could not do. To live a sinless life of love and light, showing people what it looks like to live well, and then laying down that perfect life on the cross as an atoning sacrifice for your sin and for my sin.

If we had to pay our own sin debt, we'd pay it forever and ever in a place called hell, separated from God. But Jesus took hell onto himself. He absorbed it into his own body so that he could say to you and say to me, You can be forgiven. You can be cleansed, you can be healed, but you've got to receive it. And receiving it requires you to admit your sins have separated you from God and to believe that Jesus is uniquely capable of giving you salvation. And if you've never done that, this evening I want to give you a chance to do that.

So would you bow your heads with me?