

THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD – CHRISTMAS DAY

Text: St. John 1:1-14

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

All plans have a beginning and *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”* God’s plan is the Word, and the Word existed before time began. For again, as Saint John writes, *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”*

The beginning, as St. John expresses it, is not a day on the calendar. It does not exist in some lunar sequence. It exists outside of and beyond time. For time is created and exists at the behest and command of the Word, the Creator of all things, who is, Himself, not created but begotten. Therefore, the beginning and the plan, just as the Word, is timeless and eternal, and our story and the history of our salvation begins and ends with the plan. For the plan is the Word and the Word is CHRIST JESUS, our SAVIOR, and our God.

I know this might sound a bit like theological doublespeak but what I am trying to say is that your salvation has always been a part of God’s plan. You are here this day, a member of the family of God, baptized with water and the SPIRIT and redeemed by the blood of CHRIST, not through some decision you have made, and not due to any merit or worthiness on your part, but because you are loved by God, the FATHER, *“who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth.”*

Therefore, this day is set aside to exalt God and the plan He set in motion even before the first *“Let there be....”* More than 2000 years ago, the plan, which exists in eternity, for our salvation was enfleshed in God, the SON, who is the very Word incarnate, JESUS CHRIST.

This Word, who is CHRIST the LORD, existed from eternity within the heart of the FATHER, and as John writes, through Him, God resolved to create the heavens and the earth. JESUS is the living Word of God who reflects the FATHER’s love, who also resolved to save man from sin, Satan, death, and hell. JESUS is the author of our salvation, without whom we could not be saved. Just as all of creation came to be, so too, it is through JESUS that the plan came to pass.

“For there is born to you this day in the city of David a SAVIOR, who is CHRIST the LORD.” He is the Word made flesh who has come to dwell among us, *“and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the FATHER, full of grace and truth.”* This Babe, wrapped in swaddling cloths, this Babe, who is suckled at His virgin mother’s breast, who like any other infant coos and cries, who wets and soils His diaper and sucks His thumb, He is the glory of God and the perfection of Israel and the Gentiles. He is God with us! He has come that we may know the one true God and receive through Him, eternal life.

This Infant, who is the *“Word”* and was in the *“Beginning with God,”* who was and is God, now speaks God’s Word in the person of CHRIST JESUS. *“The Word of God, spoken in eternity and from all eternity, is now heard by man, seen by man, believed by man, followed by man, [and] experienced by man”* (Weinrich).

For this reason the angels sing, for the plan now has flesh and blood. He walks and talks. He forgives, renews, and restores. He brings light and life to all who believe. He is JESUS, who saves His people by dying and rising again from death. In JESUS the plan of salvation finds its fulfillment through the sacrifice of the Lamb slain before the foundations of the world were put in place, and in Him the *“beginning”* is made complete.

Now the plan, the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST the Word of God, goes out into the world to baptize all nations in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY SPIRIT, teaching them all things and revealing God the FATHER to us with the purpose of making one family of God, and men—to bring all mankind to the FATHER through faith in CHRIST JESUS, our Brother. Through JESUS, the true Light shined into our darkness, and by faith in that Light, we are given *“the right to become children of God... born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”*

With this gift of God’s grace we are given life, full and abundant life, as CHRIST lives it in us, and thus, as the FATHER wills it. For JESUS and the FATHER are one and JESUS is the living will of God. He speaks as His FATHER speaks and wills as His FATHER wills.

Though mankind has not understood God’s Light and rejects the Life it brings, still this Light and Life lives; it is eternal. It shines into the darkness to change the hearts of men by overcoming the darkness that is inside all of us. For the darkness cannot overcome this Light. Wherever it shines, the darkness passes away and Life lives.

This Light and Life now shines here. He proceeds from the Father and the Son to shine into the hearts of sinful men. He is the Holy Spirit, bestowed upon the Church by God that we, as members of His Body, may share His Light and Life with the world. For there is no other God than He who is the Babe of Bethlehem and the Christ of the Cross of Calvary, and there is salvation in no other.

There is no other God than He who came to earth and assumed human flesh and shouldered human sin. There is no other God than He who showed His love for us by dying our death that He may give us His life. There is no other God than He who drowns our sins in the waters of Baptism and clothes us in His righteousness. There is no other God than He who gives Himself from the altar in bread and wine, His Body to eat and His Blood to drink for the forgiveness of sin. There is no other God than JESUS, the Babe, the MESSIAH, the CHRIST, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, our SAVIOR.

IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE ✠ SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

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