

THE GLORY OF GOD

Week 10 - JROC – CHRISTMAS – The Eternal Purpose of God!

December 29, 2024

A clear understanding of God's revelation of Himself – Who He is – provides a clear understanding of the big picture of Scripture with the glory of God at the center. How does this apply to Christmas?

What does Christmas mean to God? What is Christmas from God's perspective?

Understanding Christmas. Believers and nonbelievers celebrate Christmas every year. How many nonbelievers understand what they are celebrating? Re: believers – how many of us comprehend the GLORY of Christmas?

It is the display of God's immeasurable LOVE for the world.

God's love is a pre-existent love. Love has always existed within/among the Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. One God – a composite unity (Dt. 6:4).

What was God doing before He created the universe?

John 1:1 - *In the beginning* (the active cause; to make a beginning) *was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

Before His incarnation – His birth – Jesus existed. Jesus was intimately united with God the Father as God the Son and with God the Holy Spirit. Speaking of relationship...an eternal relationship. Echad – a composite unity.

Jesus is God – He had to exist from eternity past. If He did not pre-exist – He is not God. If Jesus is not God – the Godhead, three in one does not exist.

And then, from where is our salvation?!!!

Jesus is the Second person of the Trinity – God the Son.

Gal. 4:4 - *But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law,* Jesus is God the Son from eternity past.

John 1:1 – Jesus is God; He existed in the beginning because Jesus is eternal; He was not created. Jesus is Creator. He is distinct in personhood from the Father and a member of the triune Godhead.

Word – *davar* in Hebrew; *memra* in Aramaic.

Rabbis taught that *memra*, the “word” as found in Isa. 55:11 – was the same as God and yet distinct – but gave no explanation.

We see that this Word is uniquely related to God – He was/He is WITH God. (John 17:5)
“Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.” (John 1:3) – CREATION.

Col. 1:15-17 - *He is the image of the invisible God* (God is Spirit [John 4:24 - God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit {through the power of the Holy Spirit} and truth), *the firstborn* (a rank; He has priority of position; He is the authority) *over all creation.* ¹⁶ *For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible*

and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities (rulers) or powers (authorities). All things were created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist (Heb. 1:3 – the Son of God upholds all things by the word of His power.) in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also

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He made the worlds; ³ who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

Col. 2:6-9- Paul, in speaking of the Colossians' steadfast faith wrote,

⁶ As you therefore have received Christ Jesus/Messiah Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

*⁸ Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. ⁹ **For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily;** Jesus is God! God from eternity past.*

In continuing to understand Jesus, God the Son, from eternity past, He agreeing to offer Himself as a guilt offering...

Isa. 53:10 - *But the Lord desired to crush Him, causing Him grief; **if** He renders Himself as a guilt offering,* In eternity past Jesus agreed to offer Himself as a sacrifice to REDEEM our sin!

God the Son entered this world as God in the flesh...Immanuel! He came to dwell with us – to die for us. He had to take on flesh to die for us – to shed His blood for us – the ultimate sacrifice for sin!

There was, always has been, and always will be a RELATIONSHIP among/within God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit – our Triune God – the Trinity - FROM ETERNITY PAST THROUGH TO ETERNITY FUTURE!

That's how God so loved the world...there has always been and always will be love among/within the Trinity – from eternity past!

Since love is known among the 3 persons of the Trinity...God created the world BECAUSE He loved and desired a relationship with man! John 3:16.

How did God create the universe?

The spoken word. "And God said. . . ."

Psalms 33:6, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made. . . ."

Why did God speak when He created the universe?

We see the Word being sent on a mission:

Psalms 107:19-20, Isaiah 55:1-10

Psa. 107:19-20 - *Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. ²⁰ He sent His word and healed them, And delivered them from their destructions.*

Isa. 55:11 - *So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.*

Jewish scholar, G.A.F. Knight, in speaking of comic book characters – he was relaying how the words of a character are written with a frame around them – connected to the mouth of the speaker. Once words come out of ones mouth they condense into tangible clouds – and it's too late to do anything about them. You can't push the words back into the mouths of the speakers.

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They have solidified. So also in the OT. Once a word, coming from the heart of man or God is uttered, it condenses, so to speak, and becomes objective, it becomes a thing.

The Rabbis have taken it one step further. Since God was often perceived as somehow “untouchable,” it was necessary to provide some kind of link between the Lord and His earthly creation. One of the important links in Rabbinic thought was “the Word” called “Memra” in Aramaic!

Ask this of a Jewish person – In the Tanakh, God is pictured as enthroned in heaven (Gen. 19:24; Psalm 2) – yet at the same time He manifested Himself in the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire – and He dwelled between the cherubim over the ark and He put His Spirit on His prophets.

Jesus was God the Son in eternity past.

In Jesus' prayer before His crucifixion, Jesus prayed to God the Father - John 17:5 - *And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.*

Scripture teaches us that God is love. Love is an attribute of God which is eternal. God is eternal.

Ex. 3:14 – I AM that I AM – the eternal One; the One Who is self-sufficient – having no needs.

If you take away the Trinity, you lose any possibility of God being eternally loving.

Beginning – the active cause; to make a beginning

During the Christmas Eve services, Ryan Goble shared through John 1:1-14, that what is NOT highlighted is how Jesus came into the world at His incarnation but WHO JESUS IS!!!

The Christmas “story” didn't begin in Bethlehem or in Jerusalem with the Magi. It began as the ETERNAL PURPOSE of God before creation.

Christmas did not begin when the angel Gabriel came to Zacharias or Mary, nor with Isa. 53:10 or Isa. 42 (introduction to the Suffering Servant, nor with King David, nor with Gen. 3:15. If we get the Christmas account wrong, it will sound like God is now presenting Plan B.

The grand narrative of Scripture, the metanarrative: God determined to bring glory to Himself through the salvation of a ppl. Redeemed and purchased by His own Son, the anointed One, the Messiah, the Promised One. Christmas began in the eternal purpose of God.